City of St. Louis Park

St. Louis Park, MN

Mayor Jake Spano

Pledge Summary

The City of St. Louis Park is a fully developed first tier suburb of Minneapolis. Understanding the impacts of this development level, St. Louis Park has committed to being a leader in environmental stewardship as one of its strategic objectives. St. Louis Park is also home to 52 parks and the Westwood Hills Nature Center which educates and connects the urban population with the natural environment. Mayor Spano of St. Louis Park is committing to promote the addition and enhancement of habitat in parks and throughout the city that supports and protects the monarch butterfly and other pollinators by signing the Mayor's Pledge.

Action Items Committed for 2022

Communications and Convening

- Engage with gardening leaders and partners (e.g., Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Nature Centers, Native Plant Society Chapters , other long-standing and influential community leaders) to support monarch butterfly conservation.

Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.
- Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.
- Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.
- Launch or maintain an outdoor education program(s) (e.g., at schools, after-school programs, community centers and groups) that builds awareness and creates habitat by engaging students, educators, and the community in planting native milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants (i.e., National Wildlife Federation's Schoolyard Habitats program and Monarch Mission curriculum).
- Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.
- Launch, expand, or continue an invasive species removal program that will support the re-establishment of native habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement

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Mayor Nadia Mohamed	2026	3/31/2026	
Mayor Nadia Mohamed	2025	3/28/2025	Leadership Circle
Mayor Nadia Mohamed	2024	3/27/2024	Leadership Circle
Mayor Jake Spano	2023	3/27/2023	Leadership Circle
Mayor Jake Spano	2022	3/14/2022	Leadership Circle

Action Items

In total, how many individuals have been reached through the Mayors' Monarch Pledge in your community this year (Jan-Dec)? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field below (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only.).

400

Of the total number of individuals engaged, how many youth (0-18) were reached through the Mayors' Monarch Pledge in your community this year (Jan. - Dec.)? If none, please write 0." (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only.)

100 youth; 300 adults

In total, how many acres of monarch habitat have been created in your city in the last 12 months? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 3). Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

1.9

Where was the habitat created this year? Example locations may include residences, schools, places of worship, rights-of-way, roadsides, community gardens, shared public spaces, and more.

Recreation Center/Public Facility, road right of way, public parks, and vacant public lots.

How are you leveraging the Mayors' Monarch Pledge program to engage marginalized communities, such as low-income communities or communities of color?

We have planted pollinator habitat in all parks across the city including in our Environmental Justice areas. We hope all residents will be inspired to put a patch of pollinator garden in their own gardens at home when they experience our gardens in the parks. To make buying the native plants more affordable we offered a flat of native plants to the first 150 people at the reduced price of 35.00.

What was your community's motivation for taking and continuing to work on the Mayors' Monarch Pledge?

This pledge fits well with what our residents told us they wanted in our focus groups and surveys back when the Louis Park Comprehensive plan was being developed in 2017 and

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2018. In natural resources we focus on the strategic priorities that our residents care about including to continue to lead in environmental stewardship, create opportunities to build social capital through community engagement, racial equity and inclusion and a broad range of development for our residents. Our parks offer the usual play equipment along with trees, bushes and flower gardens that are rich in native plants which provide the opportunity for families to witness pollinators up close. Our gardens are not just decorations, they are an experience for people, and also nourishment and a home for wildlife.

What resources have been most helpful to you thus far and what new resources would you like to see to help meet your goals? What resources would be useful to help expand equitable engagement in community processes and access to high-quality, usable nature?

Resources provided are adequate.

What else should we know about your monarch butterfly conservation efforts over the last year?

The city has made a big push to convert exotic annual flower bed in all of our parks to native plantings that support monarchs as well as other pollinators throughout the year. This was continued this year as was as additional efforts to convert turf to pollinator patches in public spaces and provide affordable monarch supporting plants for residents on private property.

Selected Action Items

Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.

Where is the demonstration garden located and how does this location relate to the cultural significance of the monarch (if relevant)? (Please provide an address or coordinates, if possible)

St. Louis Park Recreation Center and Aquatic Center, 3700 Monterey Dr. St. Louis Park, MN 55416.

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

The St. Louis Park Mayor was a proponent and encouraged the installation of pollinator/monarch habitat gardens and was a driver of this effort.

What is the size of the demonstration garden (in acres)? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 0.5 acres). For reference, 1 acre = 43,560 square feet and is about the size of a football field without the end zones. Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

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0.01

Launch, expand, or continue an invasive species removal program that will support the re-establishment of native habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators.

What is the total acreage of land treated to remove invasive plants? Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

20.5

Please describe the extent of revisions or maintenance to invasive species removal programs, as well as the practices or techniques used to remove the invasive plants.

We have partnered with the non-profit Great River Greening to utilize Minnesota state grant funds to remove invasive species and replant native species. Buckthorn and garlic mustard are our primary target. Buckthorn is controlled by either cutting the tree down and treating the stump with herbicide, or forestry mowing the site and treating the regrowth with herbicide the following fall after the native plants have gone dormant. Garlic mustard is controlled through mechanical means by pulling the whole plant or cutting off the flower heads before going to seed. Areas are replanted with native herbaceous and woody plants to try and out compete the invasive plants and establish to provide habitat for vertebrates and invertebrates.

Engage with gardening leaders and partners (e.g., Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Nature Centers, Native Plant Society Chapters , other long-standing and influential community leaders) to support monarch butterfly conservation.

How many community organizations and groups participated? Please list them below.

Friends of Bass Lake; Youth Environmental Activists; Master Naturalists (Judy Voigt and Debbie Johnson); Master Water Steward (Barb Patterson); Master Gardeners (Hannah Schoneman & Kathleen Perkins); Wildones (Judy Voigt)

Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and their monarch butterfly conservation efforts.

Friends of Bass Lake: Combination Wetland and Woodland Restoration Project at Bass Lake: Our Oldest restoration project started 10 years ago to work on water quality and restoration of Bass Lake, a waste dump site from early 1900’s. Work is being done both to try to restore Bass lake which has transitioned to a wetland. Most of the cities run off ends up here. Nancy Rose has been leading this group from the start but the new president is Don so and so. They started a “Friends of Bass lake “ non profit with their group. Waste debris has been a challenge both in the lake itself (Chemicals and trash) and in the woodland (cement). They have been organizing volunteers every year to remove invasive species including buckthorn, garlic mustard and invasive knotweed species along oriental bittersweet, bishops weed, creeping Charlie and white poplar. This group has planted many

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native trees and native woodland species with milkweed and other nectar rich plants planted along the trail. Youth Environmental Activists: Prairie Planting Engaged with a group of young people ages 9-13 called the Youth Environmental Activist (YEA) to plant and support a prairie garden in a parking lot bump out. Guided by the City Natural Resources Manager Mike Bahe, City Gardener and Urban Ecologist, Master Naturalist Judy Voigt and Hannah Schoneman, Master Gardner. More projects in 2022 included a bioremediation project at a Superfund site nearby using aspen tree seedlings and pollinator planting in this area and an adjacent grassy hillside. Master Naturalists: Woodland along a storm drainage pond: Browndale Park, Master Water Steward Barb Patterson is Lead over volunteers who remove invasive buckthorn, and garlic mustard. Native plants including milkweed and seedings were carried out throughout the spring, summer, and fall of 2022. Woodland edge: Cavell roundabout is being seeded and planted by St. Louis Park City Natural Resources crew members overseen by an urban ecologist and master naturalist, Judy Voigt , Nearby neighbors Carol Appel waters new plantings weekly. Two species of milkweed are planted here. Seeding took place in late October. Oak Savana/ Woodland Edge along a storm drainage pond, Utah Pond/ Westwood Hills Community Bird Sanctuary. Neighborhood gatherings here and volunteers help to remove invasive creeping Charlie, garlic mustard, buckthorn, thistle and honeysuckle. Events on Earth-day included a demonstration of soil pH and planting live stakes of dogwood and willow. Wetland Meadowbrook Road: Master Naturalist Debbie Johnson and Gardener/ artist Nora Wildgen team up to organize volunteer buckthorn pulls, removal of Canada Thistle, miscanthus grass, reed canary grass, dames rocket, creeping charlie and garlic mustard. Years ago, neighbors were allowed to plant exotic species along the meadow including daylilies, ajuga, and bishops weed that also need to be controlled. A butterfly waystation was planted near a bench that looks out over the wetland that includes 2 types of milkweed and other native nectar rich plants and annuals.

Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.

How many plants were sold and/or given away at your event? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

200 flats of native plants including a monarch mix were sold at a native plant sale that was subsidized with city dollars to offer discounts to residents. Also, city hosted a garden swap which included a plant exchange.

How many people attended your event? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

180

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to host the event?

0

Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.

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Where are the medians, roadsides and public rights-of-way? (Please provide an address or coordinates, if possible, or describe the location)

44.930975, -93.365242 44.927768, -93.365066 44.937341, -93.340088 44.937955, -93.341561

How many milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants were planted? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

2000

What is the total acreage of median and public right-of-way that has been planted with milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants? Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

0.478

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

Gardens planted by city staff: New gardens with plugs or potted plants are watered weekly for the first year and as needed once established. They are weeded at least monthly. Gardens installed by contractors: these are weeded regularly and warrantied through year one. Weeding will continue to take place regularly throughout the growing season and plants replaced as needed. Plants that are cut back are delayed until after stem hibernating pollinators emerge in the spring.

Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

Community Gardeners maintain these communal garden areas at Nelson and Shelard City Parks.

How many plants were planted? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

0

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

These were existing native plant gardens that were planted in 2019 and and have filled in so no additional plants were needed. We continue to monitor and maintain these spaces.

Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

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Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Keegan's sign_A.JPG

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Mayors Pledge Temp Sign.jpg

How many garden signs are being displayed and where are they located? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

2

Please describe the educational information on the sign(s), and provide any links to externally purchased sign(s).

One sign explains what pollinators are with a graphic of flower reproductive parts as well as tips for making your own pollinator garden. The second sign is a temporary place holder for a sign in development for our new monarch demonstration garden. This sign explains that the gardens is in development as part of the Mayor's Monarch pledge and encourages people to come back and visit the garden as it evolves/matures. A permanent sign will be installed. Images of both signs are attached.

Launch or maintain an outdoor education program(s) (e.g., at schools, after-school programs, community centers and groups) that builds awareness and creates habitat by engaging students, educators, and the community in planting native milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants (i.e., National Wildlife Federation’s Schoolyard Habitats program and Monarch Mission curriculum).

What program was launched or maintained to complete this effort? If you are involved with another National Wildlife Federation program, please mention that below. (Please include a link to the program, if possible)

Westwood Hills Nature Center offers the following elementary school field trip programs that include discussions of pollinators and pollinator-friendly habitats: • Autumn Trees and Apples • Honeybees and Beekeeping • Seed Dispersal • Spring plants Education about pollinators is also often a part of our preschool, family and summer camp programs.

How many schools, community groups, leaders, or centers were engaged in this effort? How many of these collaborations and partnerships are "new"? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

10

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Please list the names of the schools you are working with.

The following schools attend one or more of the above programs every year: • St Louis Park Elementary Schools, grades K - 3: Aquila, Park Spanish Immersion, Peter Hobart, Susan Lindgren. • Meadowbrook Elementary (Hopkins Schools), grade K • School Of Engineering and Art (Robbinsdale Schools), grade K • Zachary Lane Elementary (Robbinsdale Schools), grade K • Cornelia Elementary (Edina Schools), grade K • Blake School (private), grade K • Good Shepherd School (private), grades K – 3

What resources, if any, are you providing to educators?

Field trip program materials upon request.

How many students and educators would you estimate are being reached? Please limit your answer to only number of adults and youths engaged in the answer field (e.g., 200 students and 20 educators).

1875

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

Teachers from the above schools

How many acres of monarch and pollinator habitat have been planted through this effort? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 0.5 acres). For reference, 1 acre = 43,560 square feet and is about the size of a football field without the end zones. Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

1

What is the maintenance schedule to ensure planted habitat is maintained?

The planted habitat is maintained on a regular basis throughout the growing season by Westwood Hills and other city staff, volunteers and periodic, contracted visits from Prairie Restorations.

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