Bella Vista

Bella Vista, AR

Mayor John Flynn

Pledge Summary

Bella Vista is a scenic city of over 30,000 residents, located in the Ozark Mountains of northwest Arkansas, where nature lovers can enjoy numerous amenities, such as, multiple lakes, golf courses, and biking and hiking trails. The city also has a vibrant community that is committed to creating habitat for pollinators, especially the monarch butterfly. In 2024, Mayor Flynn has committed to restoring the monarch population by encouraging development of pollinator friendly spaces and by educating our residents about the importance of pollinator conservation.

Action Items Committed for 2024

Communications and Convening

- Issue a proclamation to raise awareness about the decline of the monarch butterfly and the species' need for habitat. This proclamation must incorporate a focus on monarch conservation.
- Launch or maintain a public communication effort to encourage residents to plant monarch gardens at their homes or in their neighborhoods. (If you have community members who speak a language other than English, we encourage you to also communicate in that language; Champion Pledges must communicate in that language.)
- Engage with community garden groups and urge them to plant native milkweeds and nectar-producing plants.
- Engage with city parks and recreation, public works, sustainability, and other relevant staff to identify opportunities to revise and maintain mowing programs and milkweed / native nectar plant planting programs.
- 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.
- Engage with Homeowners Associations (HOAs), Community Associations or neighborhood organizations to identify opportunities to plant monarch gardens and revise maintenance and mowing programs.
- Engage with developers, planners, landscape architects, and other community leaders and organizers engaged in planning processes to identify opportunities to create monarch habitat.
- Create a community art project to enhance and promote monarch and pollinator conservation as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

Program and Demonstration Gardens

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

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- 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.

Systems Change

- Launch, expand, or continue one or more ordinances to reduce light pollution to benefit urban wildlife.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor John Flynn	2026	3/31/2026	
Mayor John Flynn	2025	3/5/2025	Leadership Circle
Mayor John Flynn	2024	2/14/2024	Leadership Circle
Mayor John Flynn	2023	2/3/2023	Leadership Circle
Mayor Peter Christie	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.).

7098

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.)

We do not currently have the age breakout analytics, but Bella Vista's is made up of a large portion of retirees that would likely push our numbers to primarily 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.

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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.

Currently there is habitat created in our community garden space located at one of our bike/hiking trailheads. Large-scale development proposals have been approved that will include pollinator spaces once completed in 2024.

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

Currently steps we've taken have revolved around the community as a whole, but the City of Bella Vista will work to identify low income areas and communities of color with projects in 2024.

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

Bella Vista is a very nature oriented city located in the Ozark Mountains and is facing a large amount of developments. A key driver for taking the pledge was to establish the importance of protecting our natural resources and habitats to work in a cohesive manner with new projects taking place in the city.

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?

More model ordinances and supporting data for changes and their benefits to residents from the WWF would be helpful for future educational opportunities.

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

We are actively in discussion with developers on adding pollinator friendly spaces to developments as they are proposed to the Planning Department. Along with this, we worked on plans for public art and education for our residents.

Selected Action Items

Engage with city parks and recreation, public works, sustainability, and other relevant staff to identify opportunities to revise and maintain mowing programs and milkweed / native nectar plant planting programs.

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

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Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and revisions/maintenance implemented for mowing or planting programs.

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

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

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

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.

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

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)

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)

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

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

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).

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

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

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(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.

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

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.

0

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.

The City wasn't able to establish a removal program in 2023, however conversations are still in process and we will work to establish a program with the Bella Vista Property Owner's Association.

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.

Bella Vista Garden Club

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

The Garden Club helps to promote the importance of pollinator gardens more directly with city residents.

Create a community art project to enhance and promote monarch and pollinator conservation as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

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

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

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IMG_0253.jpeg

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

This was directly a city endeavor.

How many individuals were engaged in this effort? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 50).

1

Please describe the community art project that was implemented in your community and how it contributed to cultural awareness and recognition (e.g., number of art installations, type of art).

The city worked with a local artist to paint a mural at one of the cities trailheads. The piece recognizes the beauty of Bella Vista while incorporating elements of pollinator friendly plants.

Engage with community garden groups and urge them to plant native milkweeds and nectar-producing plants.

Please describe the groups you engaged with and how you engaged with these groups below.

The City of Bella Vista engaged with the local gardening club and members of the Master Gardeners to assist with coming up with education ideas, as well as, plantings around the city that incorporated native pollinator plants. The Master Gardeners donated a tree for the City's Arbor Day celebration.

Engage with developers, planners, landscape architects, and other community leaders and organizers engaged in planning processes to identify opportunities to create monarch habitat.

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

Ord 2023-56.pdf

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

Ord 2024-09.pdf

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Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and associated opportunities to create monarch habitat.

As part of our development review process, we engaged with developers, engineers, and architects to design pollinator spaces into the landscape plans of their large-scale developments. This request has been met with positive responses, however larger commercial projects did not occur in 2024. While the pollinator spaces did not come to fruition this year, the City and its staff did work on larger picture items that help tackle environmental issues that effect pollinators. These steps consisted of creating and passing ordinances regarding mowing and landscaping height limitations, and a lighting ordinance that promoted dark sky principles for the City. On January 28, 2024, our new mowing and landscaping ordinance took effect, allowing for native plants to be placed in residential lots and not be restricted by the 10 inch height restrictions that were previously in place. This will promote the growth of healthy pollinator plants for insects. Also in 2024, the City adopted a new lighting ordinance that promotes dark sky principles that will help support a preferred habitat for pollinators.

Launch or maintain a public communication effort to encourage residents to plant monarch gardens at their homes or in their neighborhoods. (If you have community members who speak a language other than English, we encourage you to also communicate in that language; Champion Pledges must communicate in that language.)

Please describe the methods of public communication below (e.g., printed materials, social media, print media).

Social media posts were created to engage with the public and raise awareness about the importance of pollinator gardens. This expanded into general lawn maintenance, as well as, education on ordinance changes and how pollinator gardens were now encouraged with said changes. Tracking the total engagement is tough, but through our social media outreach, we were able to hit 10,158 unique impressions on top of in person interactions with residents.

Engage with Homeowners Associations (HOAs), Community Associations or neighborhood organizations to identify opportunities to plant monarch gardens and revise maintenance and mowing programs.

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

The City of Bella Vista is very unique in the fact that the entire city is under one Property Owner's Association. Discussions were had on various project ideas with the Bella Vista Property Owner's Association.

Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and revisions implemented for mowing and maintenance programs.

Discussions are still in progress on mowing and maintenance program changes, but previously an opportunity did arise that allowed the City to utilize newly acquired mountain

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bike/hiking trail and establish a community garden located at a trailhead. Throughout 2024, discussions were had with the POA regarding the 7 lakes within the city and how we could utilize the sides of the dams to grow native plants. A historic drought prevented any controlled burns on the next scheduled dam, but there are plans for a burn, weather permitting, in early 2025, so discussions will continue to hopefully create a large pollinator space post burn and inspection.

Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

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

1.jpg

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

2.jpg

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

3.jpg

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

4.jpg

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

5.jpg

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

6.jpg

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

7.jpg

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

7

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

These signs are located along bike/hiking trailheads and large community gathering spaces. They highlight the biodiversity that makes up our region of the Ozark Mountains correlating the importance of our major tree types and their influence on wildlife, as well as, our native pollinators and the flowers and plants that support their life cycles.

Launch, expand, or continue one or more ordinances to reduce light pollution to benefit urban wildlife.

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

Ord 2024-09.pdf

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

Research was done on other cities around the nation and discussions were had with the City's code reform consultant on model ordinances. Additionally the Planning Commission provided input on a new proposal.

What is the status of this action? Please limit your answer to either "complete" or "in progress" in the answer field below.

Completed

If this action is Complete, please include the date it was completed and share a 1-2 sentence description. Please include a copy of the policy by uploading or linking below.

March 25, 2024. The purpose of this new ordinance was to amend the code of ordinances of the City of Bella Vista to adopt a new Article 10: Outdoor lighting to Chapter 109 Zoning to provide for outdoor lighting regulations for new commercial developments.

If this action is In Progress, please describe your progress and a target date when you plan to complete action.

The new lighting ordinance was passed by City Council on March 25, 2024

Issue a proclamation to raise awareness about the decline of the monarch butterfly and the species' need for habitat. This proclamation must incorporate a focus on monarch conservation.

Date of Proclamation:

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February 3, 2023

Title of Proclamation (i.e. – Monarch Day or Pollinator Week):

Mayor's Monarch Pledge Day

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

PROCLAMATION 2024.docx

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

Monarch Pledge Post.jpg

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

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

Fall Tree Giveaway Post.jpg

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

Spring Tree Giveaway Post.jpg

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

550 Native trees/large shrubs were given away via the City's Spring and Fall giveaways.

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

500

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

The City's giveaways are made possible via a grant in collaboration with the Peel Compton Foundation.

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?

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Bella Vista Garden Club

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

20

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

Along with our educational signage, the city partnered to plant a variety of species of pollinator friendly plants at one of our major trailheads to beautify the space as well as have an example to go along with our educational signage. The Garden Club continues to maintain the space.

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