Crystal Lake Park District

Crystal Lake, IL

Executive Director Jason Herbster

Pledge Summary

Charged with providing park and recreation services for approximately 55,000 residents, the Crystal Lake Park District system includes 42 parks spanning over 1,400 acres and program offerings of over 1,000 annually. Facilities include the Nature Center, Main and West Beaches, Colonel Palmer House, Lippold Family Golf Center, Boncosky Softball Complex at Lippold Park, Grand Oaks Recreation/Active Adult Center, the Racket Club, Barlina House Preschool, and numerous picnic shelters. In addition to parks, facilities and programs, the district maintains miles of bike and hiking trails enjoyed by many throughout the year. It is the mission of the Crystal Lake Park District to enrich all lives through Recreation, Parks and Nature.

Action Items Committed for 2023

Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.
- Initiate or support community science (or citizen science) efforts that help monitor monarch migration and health.
- Host or support a monarch butterfly festival that is accessible to all residents in the community and promotes monarch and pollinator conservation, as well as cultural awareness and recognition.
- Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.
- 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.
- Launch, expand, or continue an invasive species removal program that will support the re-establishment of native habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Executive Director Jason Herbster	2026	4/8/2026	
Executive Director Jason Herbster	2025	3/27/2025	Signatories
Executive Director Jason Herbster	2024	3/29/2024	Signatories
Executive Director Jason Herbster	2023	3/3/2023	Signatories
Executive Director Jason Herbster	2022	3/22/2022	Signatories

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Action Items

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.

2

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

The Crystal Lake Park District was motivated to continue working on the Mayors' Monarch Pledge due to our longstanding commitment to creating and caring for habitats for monarchs and other native pollinators. By joining the pledge for a second year, we saw an opportunity to effectively communicate the importance of our conservation efforts to the community, fostering awareness and collective action for the well-being of these essential species.

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?

Community support, through local environmental organizations and natural area volunteers, has been the greatest resource in our efforts to meet our goals. Our conservation efforts have also benefitted from state and local grants.

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.).

12000

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.

Public parks and open spaces

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

We have created monarch plantings and installed informative signage in a diverse array of neighborhood parks. This approach aimsto bring the beauty of monarch conservation directly to these communities, fostering a sense of connection and ownership. Additionally, we continue to provide free programs centered around monarchs and native pollinators,

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offering educational opportunities and hands-on experiences to make the benefits of the pledge accessible to everyone, regardless of economic or cultural background.

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.)

6000 youth and 6000 adult

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

Over the past year, our monarch butterfly conservation efforts have been noteworthy in their dual focus on existing high-quality natural areas and the expansion of smaller plantings. Historically, the Crystal Lake park District has been dedicated to providing native habitat through well-maintained natural spaces. The Mayors' Monarch Pledge has played a pivotal role in elevating awareness of these areas, emphasizing their significance in monarch conservation.

Selected Action Items

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

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

600

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

The event was conducted through the Crystal Lake Park District Nature Center with assistance from the Crystal Lake Park District Environmental Committee

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

600 packets of native seeds were distributed

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)

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The demonstration garden is located at the Crystal Lake Park District Nature Center (330 N. Main St., Crystal Lake, Il 60014)

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

The demonstration garden was created in 2022 with funding provided by the Crystal Lake Dawnbreakers Rotary Club. Maintenance of the garden has been conducted by Crystal Lake Park District Staff.

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.

0.1

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

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

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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.

.1

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

Plants were planted, watered and mulched in June, 2023. Planting was watered weekly throughout growing season, and weeds were removed on an as needed basis.

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

Planting was created adjacent to park path at Ken Bird Park (1800 Thomasville Ln. Crystal Lake, IL 60014)

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

40

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Initiate or support community science (or citizen science) efforts that help monitor monarch migration and health.

Please describe the community science program that you supported or initiated. Provide a link to any relevant programs, if possible.

The Crystal Lake Park District, through our nature center, took part in the National Recreation and Parks Association's "Parks for Pollinators" program by offering a Pollinator Bio Blitz during the month of September (https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/Three-Pillars/conservation/parks4pollinators/bioblitz/). Utilizing the iNaturalist smartphone application, participants were invited to record occurrences of pollinators within Crystal Lake Park District properties.

How many estimated individuals participated in your community science effort? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 150).

80

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

Immanuel Lutheran Church and local National Honor Society members

Host or support a monarch butterfly festival that is accessible to all residents in the community and promotes monarch and pollinator conservation, as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

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

Friends of Hackmatack Wildlife Refuge

How many estimated individuals attended the event? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field ((Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only), e.g. 500)

500

Please describe the details of your monarch butterfly festival and how you ensured the event was accessible by all residents in the community (e.g., events, length, notable successes, outreach, location).

The Crystal Lake Park District provides the use of Main Beach, one of our most popular parks, free of charge to the Friends of Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge for their one day Monarchs and Music. The is free to the public and features educational

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demonstrations about the importance of monarchs and live music. The event was attended by a culturally diverse population.

What was the date of your festival?

August 13, 2023

Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

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

3

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

The signs are located at the Crystal Lake Park Nature Center, Main Beach, and Four Colonies Park. They have been designed to highlight the need for increased habitat for monarchs and other pollinators. The signs contain "QR codes" linked to additional web-based information on creating pollinator habitat.

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.

200

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 Crystal Lake Park District has maintained an extensive and robust natural area volunteer program conducting a minimum of seven workdays per month. These dedicated volunteers primarily focus on the removal of invasive species from two dedicated Illinois Nature Preserves. Throughout the 2023 calendar year, our volunteers have contributed over 300 hours of labor to invasive species control efforts across various park district natural areas. The invasive species removal programs undergo continuous evaluation and adaptation to address the specific challenges presented by different invasive species. Our approach involves a combination of mechanical and chemical controls, depending on the nature of the invasive species. Mechanical methods such as cutting, prescribed fire, and hand pulling are employed, tailored to the unique characteristics of each invasive plant. Simultaneously, chemical controls are strategically utilized where necessary, ensuring a comprehensive and effective management strategy. This dynamic and responsive approach underscores our commitment to preserving the ecological integrity of our natural areas through proactive and adaptive invasive species control measures.

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