City of Greensboro

Greensboro, NC

Mayor Nancy Vaughan

Pledge Summary

The City of Greensboro resides in the piedmont region of North Carolina with a population of roughly 300,000. Greensboro manages nearly 12,000 acres of parks and open spaces with assets including public gardens, regional and neighborhood parks, beautification areas, over 100 miles of trails and greenways, lakes, several community gardens, and numerous other passive and active recreational amenities and facilities. Through the establishment of multiple pollinator gardens and meadows, the development of educational signage and programming, and the identification of an ongoing need to reduce mowing and increase native habitat, the city has taken steps toward supporting our natural environment. Mayor Vaughan of Greensboro, NC has committed to saving the monarch butterfly and other pollinators with the signing of the Mayors' Monarch Pledge and looks forward to further engaging residents in expanding pollinator habitat throughout the city. Current efforts that the City of Greensboro is undertaking to support monarch habitats are the Bird & Butterfly Meadow at Price Park, pollinator gardens at the Keeley Park Community Garden, Wovenworks Park, and the Meeting Place Cornerstone along the Downtown Greenway, a partnership with the Guilford County Extension Master Gardeners to provide environmental education (currently virtual) and multiple community partnerships for smaller pollinator gardens in parks. Additional extensive efforts by City of Greensboro involve partnering with Greensboro Beautiful at the Greensboro Arboretum, which includes a formal butterfly garden, a certified Monarch Waystation, interpretive signage specifically dedicated to monarchs, and an Ornamental Grass and Pollinator Meadow. The Pollinator Meadow includes Asclepias among its perennial plantings and features interpretive signage dedicated to broader pollinator preservation. Monarch butterflies have seen a decline in the past 50 years and by informing the public and plants for this species, the Greensboro Science Center plays a critical role in helping save these unique and crucial animals. The Greensboro Science Center is home to three butterfly gardens located throughout the zoo and is the home of the Cole Family Butterfly House and Monarch Conservation Project. The horticulture staff at the Greensboro Science Center maintain the gardens, which contain butterfly loving plants including milkweed. Water from rain collecting barrels help to irrigate the gardens. The Cole Family Butterfly House and Monarch Conservation Project spotlights native butterfly species, with a special emphasis on the iconic, but diminishing, monarch butterfly and creates a lush, verdant garden space that will bring attention to the life and plight of monarch butterflies; serves as another focal-point species to the Greensboro Science Center's new Conservation & Research Department; informs the community of the importance of planting milkweed (monarch caterpillars' sole source of food); creates a fun and dynamic seasonal exhibit filled with native butterflies; and adds a new educational experience focused on pollinators and their importance.

Action Items Committed for 2023

Communications and Convening

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- 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.

Program and Demonstration Gardens

- 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.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Marikay Abuzuaiter	2026	3/31/2026	
Mayor Nancy Vaughan	2025	3/19/2025	Signatories
Mayor Nancy Vaughan	2024	3/25/2024	Signatories
Mayor Nancy Vaughan	2023	3/15/2023	Signatories
Mayor Nancy Vaughan	2022	3/23/2022	Signatories

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.).

150

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.)

25 youth 125 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

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.

Shared public spaces, recreation centers, parks

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

We've installed plantings at a regional park, a recreation center, and a public garden located in marginalized communities. We have also included Mayors' Monarch Pledge participation in a grant proposal to help address equity in regards to tree canopy in our city.

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

The primary motivation is to continue to push forward against invasive plants and in support of more native plantings that better support our environment. While Greensboro does not lie in the primary migratory range of the monarch, this program does help draw attention to the larger plight of pollinators in general.

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?

Many of the resources around plant selection have been useful, as have presentations from other communities actively engaged in these efforts. Seeing what else is being done helps provide ideas for how we can better engage our community.

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

Efforts have focused on pollinator habitat and eliminating competitive invasive plants. We had an educational event "Pollinator Palooza" targeted at kids and have had several kids book days with books targeting pollinators.

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.

8 - City of Greensboro (Parks and Recreation, Field Operations, Office of Sustainability, Transportation, Stormwater), Greensboro Beautiful, Sunset Hills Neighborhood Association, Fisher Park Neighborhood Association

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

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Internal conversations with the city regarding tree planting, invasive management, and native plant usage. Using community use data to identify potential areas to reduce mowing through tree planting or meadows. Engagement with multiple neighborhoods around park management to limit mowing and increase natural areas.

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?

Greensboro Beautiful, Sunset Hills Environmental Affairs Committee

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

350

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

New pollinator gardens were installed at Peeler Recreation Center and Hester Park. A garden area within the Greensboro Arboretum was renovated to consist of pollinator friendly plants. A stream restoration project within the Arboretum also served a dual purpose of removing invasive species and replacing with pollinator friendly species as part of the riparian plant mixture. Pollinator plants were installed at Sunset Hills Park and in the Gateway Gardens Children's Garden.

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.

95 acres

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.

This acreage is a combination of staff efforts to mechanically reduce overgrown areas consumed by invasives by hand and contracted invasive management through both mechanical removal and targeted herbicide treatment. Most of this work is restricted to park land and stream buffers throughout the city. Technique was primarily cut and treat with some targeted herbicide application after regrowth. Certain areas that were invasive dominant were cleaned with a forestry mulcher. The City of Greensboro has also been working through drafts over the last several months to implement policy directing the use of native plants and eliminating the use of invasive plants on any city owned property that we hope to have in place by early 2024. Final document can be uploaded upon adoption by City Council.

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