Village of Bull Valley

Bull Valley, IL

Village President Emily Berendt

Pledge Summary

The Village of Bull Valley is a small village of 1128 residents, centrally located in McHenry County. A glacial topography, abundant hardwood trees along rural-style roads, and large open spaces with a country feel are characteristics of the Village and evidence of the Village's collective commitment to natural resource protection. The Mayor's Monarch Pledge is a perfect opportunity to expand that commitment to include native pollinators and the native plants they need to thrive.

Action Items Committed for 2023

Communications and Convening

- 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.

Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and 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.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
President EMILY BERENDT	2025	2/17/2025	Signatories
Village President Emily Berendt	2024	2/14/2024	Signatories
Village President Emily Berendt	2023	1/12/2023	Signatories
Village President Emily Berendt	2022	3/31/2022	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

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number of individuals reached in the answer field below (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only.).

25

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 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.

1.5

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.

Private residences and one HOA common area

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

Still need to find a way to do that.

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

We were encouraged by a local environmental advocacy group to take part the first year. Learning about the Monarch decline and finding the interest and involvement from the community made it clear that it was the right decision to go ahead the second year.

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?

This year's community of individual Monarch Gardeners have been inspiring.

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

We are finding that if we relax the expectation of completing one within the one- year time fame. We will be doing a third. For example, one of our first year projects was finished just this month in year two.

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Selected Action Items

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.)

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

Letter to REsidents 12-9-22.docx

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

Letter to Residents 12-28-22.docx

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

Letter to Residents 2-7-23.docx

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

A series of emails was sent to residents to identify two projects to submit for the 2023 pledge. Each of the emails above has included attached informational brochures, information about a local native gardening seminar and native plant sale. Eleven residents responded with interest. Two were working on large projects that were already being restored to native plantings and were well positioned to focus on Monarch friendly species. The first project is a HOA common area of a Subdivision. This common area was dedicated to conservation as part of the subdivision approval and has recently been undergoing work by the residents to clear out invasive species. They plan to focus primarily on Monarch attracting species as they replace invasives with natives. The second is a private landowner property of just under 3-acres. The owners have committed 2-acres to creation of a native prairie. One acre is almost complete. The second acre will be undertaken this year as part of the Mayor's Monarch Pledge and will focus primarily on Monarch attracting species of natives. A meeting of all eleven participants is being planned for mid-April, to coordinate them into a sharing, supporting group that can sustain itself in the long term.

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.

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The Village has entered into a Partnership Agreement with University of Illinois Extension McHenry County Master Gardener Program. The Bull Valley Garden Club, with support from the Master Gardeners, has been responsible for the landscaping at the Village Hall for several years. Discussion with the Club and the Master Gardeners has been positive in terms of transitioning to native species at Village Hall. The Village also reached out to residents with information about the Pledge and eleven residents responded with an interest in creating their own garden. We held a group meeting on Saturday, May 6, 2023 with a knowledgeable guest speaker on pollinators plants. The speaker brought plant lists and made recommendations to each attendee based on their input about their own garden space. The variety in the scope of the projects was interesting, from a small plot in the corner of a yard to one ambitious gardener converting an entire unused horse pasture.

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)

0

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

This is where we have fallen short. Cost estimates on signs are on being acquired at this time. The first-year projects will be signed first. These are larger projects that will serve as gateway projects on the east and west boundaries of the Village. Private residents' projects will receive the second round of signs. Signs will include information about the project.

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.

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.

The Village pledged to remove invasives from two roadside locations and replace them with monarch habitat areas. The first area was a previously restored site of 4.5 acres that had become a monoculture of Black Eyed Susans and lost its diversity. Thistle, Burdock and other invasives were choking out whatever was left. Two resident volunteers took on this project. The roadside fence line on the eastern boundary had become an overgrown border of woody invasive shrubs and trees with old wire fence supporting it. The trees shrubs and fence on this roadside boundary were completely removed. By matching grants from Trees Forever and the Sierra Club, the Village was able to contract with a local nursery to herbicide throughout the rest of the season. Although delayed by the current

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supply chain issues, pollinator seed has been delivered and will be applied to create new growth next spring. Herbiciding will continue over the next few years and as needed once the native cover is established. The second area was on private property. The landowner, neighbor volunteers and the Village worked together to remove invasive brush and several large non-native trees that were overhanging the road. This approximately half acre will be replanted with monarch friendly natives in the spring.

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