Hastings-on-Hudson

Hastings-on-Hudson, NY

Mayor Nicola Armacost

Pledge Summary

The Village of Hastings-on-Hudson is located in New York State, about 20 miles north of midtown Manhattan, and has a population of about 8,500. It is situated on the banks of the Hudson River and boasts exceptional views of the dramatic geological bluffs known as the Palisades. It has a charming, bucolic character, over 85% of its open space is dedicated parkland and it has a significant trail network. It also has active pollinator pathway and “Adopt-a-Spot” programs that engage and educate residents about the importance of biodiversity, native plants and pollinators. The Mayor of Hastings-on-Hudson, Nicola Armacost, has committed to protecting the monarch butterfly and other pollinators by signing the Mayors’ Monarch Pledge and encourages residents to continue building pollinator habitat throughout the municipality.

Action Items Committed for 2022

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.

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.
- Convert vacant lots to monarch habitat.
- Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.

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- 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 Thomas Drake	2026	3/16/2026	
Mayor Nicola Armacost	2025	4/30/2025	Monarch Champions
Mayor Nicola Armacost	2024	2/10/2024	Leadership Circle
Mayor Nicola Armacost	2023	1/26/2023	Leadership Circle
Mayor Nicola Armacost	2022	4/6/2022	Leadership Circle

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.

1.4

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.

Residences, rights-of-way, roadsides, medians, community gardens, culturally-significant locations, shared public spaces and common areas or parks.

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

We are creating community gardens in central locations where they can be accessed by all members of the community including low-income communities and communities of color.

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

The health of humans and pollinators, such as butterflies and bees, are interdependent. Pollinators provide us with food and other items we depend on, they provide food and habitats for other animals and they are responsible for helping 90% of the world’s flowering plants reproduce. Without pollinators, ecosystems are less resilient due to biodiversity losses, increases in invasive species, and reductions in crops and natural vegetation. The Mayors’ Monarch Pledge encourages municipalities to take practical actions that make a difference and to help spread the word to residents.

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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?

It has been helpful to learn what other communities are doing (peer-learning) including reviewing template resolutions.

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

Hastings-on-Hudson adopted a resolution in support of the New York's Birds and Bees Protection Act (A7429/S699B) banning neonic pesticides. In 2022, although the Act was adopted by both the Assembly and the House it was not sent to the Governor for signature. We will continue to advocate for this important legislation.

Selected Action Items

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:

19 April 2022

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

Mayors' Monarch Pledge Day in Village of Hastings-on-Hudson

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

HoH Monarch Butterfly Proclamation 04.19.22.pdf

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.

Hastings Pollinator Pathway Project - National Pollinator Month 2022.pdf

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

The Hastings Pollinator Pathway (HPP) Project provides information and advice to Hastings-on-Hudson residents about biodiversity, and planting for pollinators including information on milkweed and monarchs. The HPP communicates to the public through its website, newsletter, public events, Facebook, Instagram, flyers, and regular coverage in the Rivertowns Enterprise (the local newspaper). In June 2022, the HPP launched a pollinator awareness drive to celebrate National Pollinators Month. The HPP partnered with the local bookstore to stock books about the importance of pollinators and decorated the window display to create a welcoming environment. The HPP secured participation in its pollinator month initiative by 20 other local downtown businesses, with window displays, discounts, signage, gardens tours, seed and product give-aways (see https://www.hastingspollinatorpathway.org/participate/national-pollinator-month for more information).

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 Hastings Pollinator Pathway (HPP) Project, a group of local volunteers interested in preserving the habitat of pollinators, has established and maintains a community garden that is composed of almost exclusively native plants including multiple types of milkweed (see: https://www.hastingspollinatorpathway.org). In addition, the Hastings-on-Hudson Beautification Committee maintains at least eight sites around the Village, and also focuses on planting native 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.

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

In 2021, the Conservation Commission and the Hastings Pollinator Pathway Project provided recommendations to the Board of Trustees, the Village Manager and the Parks and Recreation Department on potential revisions to the municipal landscaping contract to better preserve pollinator habitat.

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

The Village revised the landscaping service contract to include the following: 1. Delay spring clean up until April to allow more time for emergence of over-wintering pollinators 2. In fall, leave leaves in flower beds in place 3” to 6” deep through the winter. 3. In fall, leave perennial plants and ornamental grasses standing through the winter. Cut back as new growth emerges in April. 4. Mulch mow leaves into lawn areas. 5. Avoid disturbing Adopt-a-

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Spot pollinator gardens established and maintained by Village residents. 6. No pesticides are to be used as part of any regular maintenance program.

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.

HoH Library Seed Exchange June 2022.png

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

The Hastings Pollinator Pathway has hosted three Seed Swaps including native plant seeds. One was on October 17th, 2021 at the Hastings Public Library; one was held on April 2nd, 2022 at the Hastings Farmers market; and a free Seed Exchange was launched at the Hastings Public Library on June 11th, 2022. The seed exchange located at the Library will always have native plants and milkweed available and is “open” during all library hours.

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

50

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

The Hastings Pollinator Pathway and the Village Conservation Commission.

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.

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

2022 Snapshot of HoH Pollinator Gardens.png

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

The municipality has many groups and individuals who serve as local “gardening leaders” including the Village Naturalist, the Hastings Vine Squad, the Village Conservation Commission, the Village Beautification Committee and the Hastings Pollinator Pathway Project as well as individuals who cultivate their own pollinator gardens. The Hastings Pollinator Pathway (HPP) developed an Adopt-a-Spot program in coordination with the Village of Hastings-on-Hudson. Guidelines require that 50% of plants in new gardens be

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native plants, they be pesticide-free, and no invasives can be planted. Currently there are 27 adopted spots, which together account for approximately half an acre of habitat, and, with each spot sporting an Adopt-a-Spot placard, they provide a visible reminder about the importance of supporting pollinators to all who encounter these public spaces.

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

Hastings-on-Hudson Gardening Leaders include: 1. Haven Colgate, who is the current Village Naturalist, the Chair of the Village Conservation Commission, a co-founder of the Hastings Vine Squad and a founding member of the Hastings Pollinator Pathway Project. Haven has been leading efforts to remove invasive vines since 2012 and more recently spearheads the Hillside Woods restoration initiative which includes both removal of invasives and replanting of native trees and shrubs in the woods. She has led several Trees for Tribs projects that focus on planting native trees, shrubs and perennials including milkweed in riparian areas.

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.

Adopt a Spot Spring Street Median near Village Hall.jpg

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

Adopt a Spot Spring Street Tree Pit.png

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

The Village of Hastings-on-Hudson and the Hastings Pollinator Pathway (HPP) Project developed an Adopt-a-Spot program which requires that 50% of plants in new gardens be native plants, be pesticide-free, and no invasives can be planted. Currently there are 27 adopted spots, which together account for approximately half an acre of habitat, and each spot has an Adopt-a-Spot placard which reminds residents about the importance of championing pollinators. Through the Adopt-a-Spot program, a local family established and maintains a native plant garden in a large traffic island directly across from Village Hall and the Hastings-on-Hudson MetroNorth train station on Southside Avenue at Spring Street in Hastings-on-Hudson. Another family maintains a spot in a tree pit close by.

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.

Approximately 1,096 square feet (.03 acre).

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Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

Maintenance is ongoing.

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

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

HoH Vine Squad.pdf

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

Invasive plants have been removed on approximately 50 acres throughout Hastings-on-Hudson. Some removal projects focus on removing vines (such as porcelain berry and Asiatic bittersweet), others focus on shrubs (such as privet or Japanese barberry bushes), some are routine invasive removals only and other projects involve replantings.

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 Hastings Vine Squad has been active annually since 2012 removing invasive vines from area trees. Typically the vine removal season runs every winter from November to March for about 12 weeks, and scores of volunteers are engaged in intensive 2-hr lopping sessions. The Vine Squad lops vines at the ground, and at 4' or higher above the ground, and then returns the next season to cut back regrowth. Vines commonly targeted include porcelain berry, asiatic bittersweet and wisteria, five-leaf akebia, mile-a-minute and English ivy. The Vine Squad has worked on at least 25 acres of public space (most of which have been revisited several times over the years). Examples of vine removal and restoration efforts include the following: 1. The Hillside Woods Restoration Project, which is an ongoing, multi-year effort to restore habitat to our severely degraded hundred acre woods. Volunteers have removed hundreds of privet shrubs, over 450 Japanese barberry bushes and many invasive vines, with tree work on Norway maples, ailanthus trees and others via a contractor. To date, over 500 native tree and shrub seedlings have been planted across several acres. Approximate planted area is 15,000 square feet, with intensive invasive species removal in at least half an acre of distributed land. This project has received county and state funding and will include deer fencing. 2. Boutillier's Brook Riparian Restoration Project, an ongoing collaboration with NYS DEC's Trees for Tribs program, which has resulted in the removal of various invasives including Japanese knotweed, porcelain berry and other exotic vegetation along a local stream. In addition to vine removal, the project resulted in approximately one acre of native trees and shrubs being planted along a stream in the cleared areas. Volunteers cut back the knotweed, porcelain berry and other invasive plants on an ongoing basis. Groundwork Hudson Valley's Green Team, a task force of teens involved in restoration work, have volunteered to keep the invasives at bay while the plantings are established. 3. The South County Trailway's (SCT) restoration work, headed by local resident Steve Pucillo, is a volunteer-led effort to improve habitat and human

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infrastructure on the “Old Put” railway-turned-trailway. This paved trail runs from Yonkers to Croton and beyond, with about 1.5 miles running through Hastings-on-Hudson. Heavily trafficked, it is used by runners, walkers, rollerbladers and bicyclists. Steve has led numerous volunteers and also partnered with Groundwork Hudson Valley to remove invasive species along the length of the SCT Hastings – about 22 acres – with some additional work in neighboring jurisdictions. Steve and his volunteers have established five butterfly gardens along the Hastings stretch, which are labeled as such to inform the many passersby about the initiative. 4. The Burke Estate Wetlands Restoration Project is a citizen-led effort to restore habitat to Hastings-on-Hudson’s largest wetland, a neglected, spring-fed marsh full of phragmites and porcelain berry. The area is owned by the local school district, and the project engages high school students and their teachers. To date, over 3,000 square feet of phragmites has been cut back, and native trees and plants have been established in their stead in an area of approximately 2,000 square feet. NYS DEC has donated tree protection for 100 of the over 300 stems planted.

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)

The Village has established and maintains a pollinator-friendly demonstration community garden that is composed almost exclusively of native plants including multiple types of milkweed, located at the 5 Corners gateway to the Village at Chauncey Lane and Broadway, adjacent to the Old Croton Aqueduct trail. The garden is approximately 1,750 square feet (.04 acres).

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

The Hastings Pollinator Pathways and the Hastings Beautification Committee.

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.

0.04

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

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

HoH Community Gardens final.docx

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

Hastings Vine Squad

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

A vacant lot in the Northeast Corner of the Zinsser Commuter Lot at 131 Southside Avenue in Hastings-on-Hudson, was adopted by the Hastings Vine Squad in 2021 and turned into a community garden. The area was overgrown with porcelain berry vine and the goal of the Vine Squad was to cut back the vines that were imperiling the trees to the south of the lot and replace them with pollinator friendly nectar producing plants. In January 2021, viney roots were extracted and the site was cleared, and in April, a carpet of the lesser celandine was removed. The Vine Squad planted some DEC donated seedlings: native witch hazel, dogwood and ninebark shrubs, tubing the witch hazel and dogwood from deer, and added some native flowers, from violets to goldenrod. Volunteers watered the garden in the intense summer heat and created a charming community garden.

Convert vacant lots to monarch habitat.

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

HoH Conversion of Vacant Lots final.docx

Where is the monarch habitat located? (Please provide an address, if possible)

The vacant lot which was converted into a monarch habitat is located at "Five Corners" in the Village of Hastings-on-Hudson, where Chauncey Lane and Broadway intersect, adjacent to the Old Croton Aqueduct trail. The garden is composed almost exclusively of native plants: 7 new native trees have been planted that serve as host plants to over 500 species of native butterflies, moths, and birds, as well as over 1,550 plants of grasses, shrubs, and nectar-producing perennials - including 30 Asclepias incarnata and Asclepias tuberosa milkweed plants. The newly created pollinator garden is approximately 1,750 square feet (.04 acre) (see: https://www.hastingspollinatorpathway.org/adopt-a-spot/5-corners-spot).

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

The Hastings Pollinator Pathways (HPP) Project and the Hastings Beautification Committee.

What is the total acreage of land that has been converted? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 2 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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.04

How many lots were converted to monarch habitat? Please limit your answer to only the number of lots in the answer field below (e.g., 3)

1

Please describe when the lots were converted to monarch habitat and the planned maintenance schedule.

The process of converting the lot began with planning in February 2021. Planting occurred in the spring and summer of 2021 and 2022. Maintenance is ongoing.

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