City of Lakeland

Lakeland, FL

Mayor Bill Mutz

Pledge Summary

Lakeland is a city in Central Florida with a current population of 126,248 and a population growth of 2.51% annually. Lakeland is located just south of the Green Swamp Wilderness Preserve and has 38 named lakes within its city limits. Lakeland prides itself in having 76 park facilities and an urban forest consisting of 65,000 plus trees. Hollis Garden, Lakeland's downtown botanical display garden, is a Certified Butterfly Garden with the North American Butterfly Association (NABA) and many other park areas throughout the city are dedicated to native plantings that provide habitats for Monarch Butterflies and other pollinators. This includes Crago Park and a 1.2-acre wetland prairie dedicated specifically to Monarchs. Mayor Mutz of Lakeland, Florida has committed to saving the monarch butterfly and other pollinators by signing the Mayor's Monarch Pledge and looks forward to engaging residents in building more pollinator habitats throughout the city.

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.

Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.
- Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.
- 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.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.
- Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.

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Systems Change

- Increase the percentage of native plants, shrubs and trees that must be used in city landscaping ordinances and encourage use of milkweed, where appropriate.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Bill Mutz	2024	3/29/2024	Leadership Circle
Mayor Bill Mutz	2023	1/24/2023	Leadership Circle
Mayor Bill Mutz	2022	4/27/2022	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.).

80000

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.)

72

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.

.14

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.

This year 1/8th acre of Monarch habitat was created on Hourglass Lake within Lake Crago Park. This is a drier, steeper habitat in which Asclepias tuberosa was established.

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

Primarily through volunteerism and the various volunteer groups that engage with the City of Lakeland Parks Division every year, which includes Publix Supermarkets, Amazon & the Girl Scouts.

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

Volunteerism and conservation efforts were the main motivating factors.

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?

Sources for the relevant and "Monarch-specific" plants.

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

It was in slow progress because of hurricanes, flooding, and related duties, but we are inching forward.

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:

6-17-24

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

Mayor's Monarch Pledge Day6-17-24

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

2024 Proclamation.pdf

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.

One hundred Publix Supermarket employees volunteered on April 4th, 2024 to restore a lake bank at Crago Park and to plant Asclepias incarnata and Asclepias perennis at the Lake Crago Monarch Butterfly Habitat.

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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.

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

February Mowing.jpg

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

The Parks Division staff at Lake Crago Park (3 employees) have agreed to the once per year mowing schedule. This includes the Grounds Maintenace III, Grounds Maintenance II, and Grounds Maintenance I personnel.

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

The new 'once per year' mowing schedule commenced in February of 2024. From this point on, the Lake Crago Monarch Habitat will be bushhogged every February, as opposed to 4 times per year. Thus far the Asclepias species have been unaffected by the yearly mowing. The planting programs are accomplished by volunteers and the City of Lakeland Landscape Crew (4 employees). Plantings take place 2 to 3 times per year.

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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

3

What species were collected or propagated?

Asclepias incarnata & Asclepias perennis

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

City of Lakeland Parks Dept.

Please describe the milkweed seed collection and propagation effort that you hosted.

We collect seeds from established milkweeds and nectar plants at the Lake Crago Monarch Habitat yearly, although just a handful of seeds were collected this year due to hurricanes and inundation. The seeds are sown & transplanted into 4" pots at the City of Lakeland Nursery for installation throughout the year.

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

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

24 Plantae Palooza_Social_Vertical Social.png

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

1000+

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

1500

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

6

Convert vacant lots to monarch habitat.

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

525 Lake Crago Dr on the southern shoreline of Hourglass Lake.

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

Publix Supermarkets

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.

.14

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 southern Shoreline of Hourglass Lake was restored with native Florida trees and shrubs. This included Asclepias tuberosa, Cephalanthus occidentalis, Symphyotrichum

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carolinianum, etc. The area will be maintained throughout the year by the Crago maintenance crew. There will be yearly additional plantings and seed collection.

Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

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

Habitat Signs.jpg

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).

At this time there is no informational aspect. The larger sign with the Life cycle of the Monarch is on hold. There are QR Codes on the habitat delineation signs for future information.

Increase the percentage of native plants, shrubs and trees that must be used in city landscaping ordinances and encourage use of milkweed, where appropriate.

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

Tree Planting Log 2023-2024.pdf

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

We worked with the Lakeland City Commision and City of Lakeland Community Development Division to update the plant selection guide within the City of Lakeland Land Developmnent Code (https://library.municode.com/fl/lakeland/codes/land_development_code?nodeId=LADECO_ART4GESIDEST_4.5LATRBU). This allowed us to remove invasive species and add additional native plants. We also, previously, were able to install "Supplemental Florida Monarch Butterfly Attracting Plants" at the bottom of the listing. This required a vote from the City Commission for adjustment. It is now available for commercial businesses and subdivisions for consideration in their landscape plans. As for actual plantings by the Parks Division, our landscape crew planted 270 native plants last year. This year the total was 1114 - a difference of 884 additional native plants.atives

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

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Complete

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.

https://library.municode.com/fl/lakeland/codes/land_development_code?nodeId=LADECO_ART4GESIDEST_4.5LATRBU . As stated above, the commission ratified the changes made to the City of Lakeland Landscape Ordinance in September of this year.

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).

We have not launched a formal communication effort at this time. However, on November 21st of this year, I was able to give a presentation to three elementary classes at Clem Churchwell Elementary School for the Great American Teach In. The presentation was about the City of Lakeland's Butterfly Gardening efforts and why. we do it. The National Wildlife Federation & The Mayor's Monarch Pledge were a portion of the presentation.

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 demonstration garden is now officially at Lake Crago Park and is designated with signage.

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

We work primarily with volunteer groups such as the Girl Scouts, Publix Supermarket employees who perform community projects yearly, and with Amazon employees who have a similar program.

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

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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.

.8

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.

Publix 100 Volunteer Planting at Hourglass, butterfly Habitat & Soccer Field Parking Lot 4-24-24l.jpg

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

One hundred Publix Supermarket employees volunteered on April 4th, 2024 to restore a lake bank at Crago Park and to plant Asclepias incarnata and Asclepias perennis at the Lake Crago Monarch Butterfly Habitat.

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

852

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

We worked with 100 Publix volunteers to restore the Hourglass lake bank at Lake Crago Park. We broke the 100 volunteers up into groups of 10. Of the 852 native species that were planted by the volunteers on April 4th, 132 plants were specific to Monarch Butterflies, either being a host plant or a nectar plant. Instruction on proper planting techniques and the purpose for this project were given by City of Lakeland Parks Division and COL Public Works Lakes Division staff. The lake bank restoration and butterfly garden were water with the Parks division water-truck until rainy season (mid-June).

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