Elm Grove

Elm Grove, WI

Village President Jim Koleski

Pledge Summary

Elm Grove is a village of just 3.29 square miles (6,524 in population) that was incorporated in 1955. The community was named America's best suburb by Business Insider in 2014 and proudly became the first community in the state of Wisconsin to achieve the National Wildlife Federation's Community Habitat designation on 1/27/23. The community takes pride in its Tree City USA, Bird City Wisconsin High Flyer, and Bee City USA designations. Our small community has 8 certified Monarch Waystations via the Monarch Watch, one of which is at our 79 acre village park, which was named in Rob Bignell's book, Wisconsin's Best Wildflower Hikes. Our community has been dedicated to increasing awareness about the plight of the monarch butterfly through ongoing community education and outreach programs including native plant sales, village displays, native plant gardens, book clubs, and monarch activist speakers. Elm Grove is proud to add the Mayors' Monarch Pledge to its list of important commitments.

Action Items Committed for 2023

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.
- Engage with Homeowners Associations (HOAs), Community Associations or neighborhood organizations to identify opportunities to plant monarch gardens and revise maintenance and mowing programs.
- Engage with developers, planners, landscape architects, and other community leaders and organizers engaged in planning processes to identify opportunities to create monarch habitat.

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- Create a community art project to enhance and promote monarch and pollinator conservation as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

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.
- Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.
- Earn or maintain recognition for being a wildlife-friendly city by participating in other wildlife and habitat conservation efforts (i.e., National Wildlife Federation’s Community Wildlife Habitat program).
- Host or support a monarch neighborhood challenge to engage neighborhoods and homeowners' associations within the community to increase awareness, support community unity around a common mission, and/or create habitat for the monarch butterfly.
- Initiate or support community science (or citizen science) efforts that help monitor monarch migration and health.
- 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.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

Systems Change

- Remove milkweed from the list of noxious plants in city weed / landscaping ordinances (if applicable).
- Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.
- Increase the percentage of native plants, shrubs and trees that must be used in city landscaping ordinances and encourage use of milkweed, where appropriate.
- Launch, expand, or continue an effort to change municipal planting ordinances and practices to include more native milkweed and native nectar producing plants at city properties.
- Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the city’s Park Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, Climate Resiliency Plan or other city plans.
- Reduce or eliminate the use of herbicides, pesticides, or other chemicals that are harmful to monarchs and pollinators and urban wildlife.
- Launch, expand, or continue one or more ordinances to reduce light pollution to benefit urban wildlife.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Village President James Koleski	2026	1/23/2026	
Village President Jim Koleski	2025	1/23/2025	Leadership Circle

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Village president Jim Koleski	2024	12/15/2023	Leadership Circle
Village President Jim Koleski	2023	3/8/2023	Leadership Circle

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.).

400

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.)

100 youth, 300 adult

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.

3

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.

yards, schools, community gardens, parks, shared public 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 not given our location within the state

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

Our community is a small 3.28 square mile village on the border of Milwaukee and Waukesha county. Given our proximity to the Milwaukee County Monarch Trail, we have had a close association with the Friends of the Monarch Trail. Once we were made aware of the Mayors' Monarch Pledge through our association with the Community Wildlife Habitat, it became a natural next step. We were not able to accomplish our initial goal of actionable items in 2023, but will be working throughout the winter to take on more action items in 2024.

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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?

What would be the most helpful would be sample ordinances for light pollution--with different levels of wording for communities taking just the first step versus those willing to take a look at revising what they currently have to make it more complete or detailed.

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

This may not be something you want to include in your synopsis, but we were working to get all 24 actions completed. When we discovered how much education and outreach was still needed to increase awareness for the plight of monarchs (and other invertebrates), we decided that it would be best if we just slowed down to focus on what we had accomplished and obtain the Monarch Leadership Circle in 2023. Our thoughts were that the publicity of that would increase awareness within our community and hopefully help propel more people to engage in our efforts and help us achieve the 2024 goal to become a Monarch Champion.

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.

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

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

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

Engage with Homeowners Associations (HOAs), Community Associations or neighborhood organizations to identify opportunities to plant monarch gardens and revise maintenance and mowing programs.

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

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

Engage with developers, planners, landscape architects, and other community leaders and organizers engaged in planning processes to identify opportunities to create monarch habitat.

Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and associated opportunities to create monarch habitat.

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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

What species were collected or propagated?

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

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

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

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

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

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.

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

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

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

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

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.

If this action is In Progress, please describe your progress and a target date when you plan to complete action.

Launch, expand, or continue an effort to change municipal planting ordinances and practices to include more native milkweed and native nectar producing plants at city properties.

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

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

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.

If this action is In Progress, please describe your progress and a target date when you plan to complete action.

Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the city’s Park Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, Climate Resiliency Plan or other city plans.

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

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

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.

If this action is In Progress, please describe your progress and a target date when you plan to complete action.

Launch, expand, or continue one or more ordinances to reduce light pollution to benefit urban wildlife.

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

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

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.

If this action is In Progress, please describe your progress and a target date when you plan to complete action.

Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.

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

Burning, Open.pdf

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

Trees and Vegetation.pdf

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

Village President and Board of Trustees

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

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.

2/24/14--see chapter 266.6 section F for approval of prairie and Chapter 112-3 A for approval of burn for prairies

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.

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Date of Proclamation:

April 6, 2023

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

Village of Elm Grove President's Monarch Pledge

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

Signed Presidents Pledge 2023-04-11_10-52-46.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.)

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

On March 15th, 2023 our community welcomed Barb Agnew the president of Wauwatosa's Monarch Trail to speak on Monarch Conservation. The lecture was very well received and attended. The lecture was recorded and will be placed on our community's website to view by those not in attendance. We also have a quarterly newsletter published that focuses on increasing awareness and engagement in our mission to protect our ecosystem and biodiversity. The newsletter is shared electronically with members subscribed, available on our village website, and printed for distribution at our village hall and all events. Additionally, we have a specific Elm Grove Community Wildlife Habitat group that we share information about our mission to. Our Monarch Milkweed Map (see below) is also key to much of our public communication in increasing support for monarch needs.

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 village of Elm Grove engaged with the Elm Grove Beautification Committee to plant and maintain 2 Monarch Waystations and one rain garden that includes all native plants, including milkweed. With their native plant sale this year, they offered a free milkweed plant with $10 purchase to encourage the support of monarchs, selling out before the end of the sale. A total of 180 milkweed plants were distributed on June 3, 2023.

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

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

1,446

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

75

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

The Elm Grove Business Association, village administration, and the Elm Grove Beautification Committee

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)

There are 3 demonstration gardens within our 79 acre village park--all planted with native plants, including milkweed. They are all in very prominent locations along the walking paths that encircle our village pond.

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

Two of the beds were installed and maintained with the help of the Brookfield East SEED (Students Encouraging Environmental Dedication) Club and the third garden, a rain garden, was installed with the aid of the Boy Scouts as an Eagle project.

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.

0.2

Earn or maintain recognition for being a wildlife-friendly city by participating in other wildlife and habitat conservation efforts (i.e., National Wildlife Federation’s Community Wildlife Habitat program).

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

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NWF Press Release Elm Grove (2).pdf

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

The Elm Grove Beautification Committee in conjunction with the Birders of the Grove.

What program was launched or maintained to complete this effort? (Please include a link to the program, if possible)

Our community became the first community in the state of Wisconsin to earn the National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat certification on 1/27/23.

Host or support a monarch neighborhood challenge to engage neighborhoods and homeowners' associations within the community to increase awareness, support community unity around a common mission, and/or create habitat for the monarch butterfly.

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

Mission of the Monarch Map.docx

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

Monarch Map 2.png

How many estimated individuals participated in your challenge? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 100).

214

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

The Elm Grove Beautification Committee

When did this challenge take place?

It started July 2021 and is ongoing. Our goal for 2024 is to get 300 dots on our map!

What is the total acreage of habitat created? 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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1

Please describe your challenge and the results.

We created a Monarch Milkweed Map of our community to increase awareness about the importance of milkweed to the support of monarch butterflies. On it, we add an orange dot to any home that grows any of the 12 varieties of milkweed native to our area. Each year, we set a goal for how many additional "dots" we hope to add to the map. We have had milkweed sales, we offer free milkweed seedlings, and we have a mission statement (included) to our map to help explain the purpose of our project. The goal for 2023 is to have 200 dots on our map (attached), and we've set our 2024 goal at 300 dots on the map.

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

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

Monarch migration.pdf

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).

9

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

Our Village President, the president of The Monarch Trail in Wauwatosa, and local schools

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

Starting at the end of March 2023, our community encouraged residents to create and log sightings on Journey North. A flyer was created and distributed via social media platforms and to all of the schools. Updates were made to social media platforms whenever a Journey North report came out and challenges were made for community residents to be the first to report emerging milkweed and/or monarchs. This first attempt was not as well received as we had hoped. Expanding in 2024 to perform butterfly surveys, hands on demonstrations, and partnerships with our recreation department are planned.

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?

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The Elm Grove Beautification Committee and the Elm Grove Junior Guild (200+ members!)

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

50

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

Additional swamp milkweed plants were added to the rain garden demonstration bed at our village park near our village hall and police station. Ongoing work with our Veteran's Park (2 acre) restoration was completed. This included weekly Invasive Species task Force meetings to remove invasive plants while educating volunteers. Grant application was accepted from community Junior Guild group for $500 to get a comprehensive professional landscape plan for invasive species removal and introduction of more diverse native plants. This grant, which was in association with our village administration was widely publicized within the community. The Junior Guild votes on their grant applications, and the Veteran's Park comprehensive plan was a unanimous decision.

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.

IMG_9044.jpeg

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

IMG_8936.jpeg

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

IMG_8830.jpeg

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

IMG_8737.jpeg

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

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

IMG_8028.jpeg

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

IMG_8130.jpeg

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

~90

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.

A group of community volunteers formed the Invasive Species Task Force (ISTF) August of 2020 and meets every Sunday at 11am for one hour within the village, usually at one of the village parks. An email goes out each Thursday or Friday notifying the group where we will be meeting and what we will be working on. The group has tackled garlic mustard, Dame's rocket, thistle, Queen Anne's lace, teasel, buckthorn, honeysuckle, phragmites, bindweed, and purple loosestrife. There are currently 66 emails that the message goes out to with passersby showing interest and some joining in. The group is gaining momentum throughout the community with more and more people showing up to help remove invasive for one hour each week. The Elm Grove Beautification Committee has purchased 4 Pullerbear tree wrenches that they loan out to homeowners for the removal of buckthorn.

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)

1

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

One of the demonstration gardens was certified as a Monarch Waystation by The Monarch Watch and a sign is on display in that bed. The garden is one of the most visible in our 79 acre village park as it is at the entrance to the park path.

Remove milkweed from the list of noxious plants in city weed / landscaping ordinances (if applicable).

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

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Trees and Vegetation.pdf

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

This effort was completed prior to the formation of our committee

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

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.

Per chapter 266.1 of the Village bylaws, milkweed is not listed as a noxious weed

Reduce or eliminate the use of herbicides, pesticides, or other chemicals that are harmful to monarchs and pollinators and urban wildlife.

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

Pollinator Protection Program.pdf

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

Village president and village forester

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

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.

6/28/21

Create a community art project to enhance and promote monarch and pollinator conservation as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

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

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IMG_7763.jpeg

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

IMG_1892.jpeg

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

IMG_1891.jpeg

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

IMG_4935.jpeg

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

Our local public library and members of the community

How many individuals were engaged in this effort? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 50).

500

Please describe the community art project that was implemented in your community and how it contributed to cultural awareness and recognition (e.g., number of art installations, type of art).

For the last two years, a live monarch display window was installed in our public library. In 2022 the window was in place for almost one month because it was so popular! Community resident, Jennifer Morris, would tend to the window once or twice a day the entire time, engaging with innumerable residents each day. The 10 ft by 5 foot by 2 foot display window had a plethora of information about monarchs, included cut plants of 4 different varieties of milkweed, and had actual eggs, caterpillars in various stages of development, and chrysalides! People came from outside communities to see the display! It was promoted and updated on social media daily. Although we understand that captive rearing is discouraged, there was a large portion of our village that was engaged with this project and learned the importance of monarch conservation through it. We were shocked with the high percentage of people that didn't know monarchs migrated, that milkweed was a host plant, that there was more than one variety of milkweed, and that monarchs needed nectar plants as well.

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