City of Perris

Perris, CA

Mayor Michael Vargas

Pledge Summary

The City of Perris is in Southern California with a population of roughly 80,000. The city is centrally located in the Inland Empire and home to nearly 30 community gardens. Mayor Vargas of Perris, CA has committed to signing the Mayors' Monarch Pledge and looks forward to engaging with residents to create healthy, sustainable habitats for the monarch butterflies and pollinators, while educating residents about how they can make a difference at home and in their community.

Action Items Committed for 2024

Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.
- Launch or maintain an outdoor education program(s) (e.g., at schools, after-school programs, community centers and groups) that builds awareness and creates habitat by engaging students, educators, and the community in planting native milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants (i.e., National Wildlife Federation's Schoolyard Habitats program and Monarch Mission curriculum).
- Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.

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.
- Engage with community garden groups and urge them to plant native milkweeds and nectar-producing plants.
- 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.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Michael Vargas	2026	4/14/2026	
Mayor Michael Vargas	2025	12/6/2024	Signatories
Mayor Michael Vargas	2024	2/20/2024	Signatories

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Mayor Michael Vargas	2023	3/22/2023	Signatories

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.

0

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

Mayor Vargas was motivated in taking the pledge, because of how the initiative aligns with the city's Grow Perris initiative, which aims to improve health outcomes for Perris residents by expanding health equity through urban farming and creation of platforms to promote healthy behaviors.

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?

The resource center is very helpful and I hope it continues to be updated with the latest information continually. We would also like to see further sharing of funding opportunities for local governments to continue expanding monarch habitats.

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.).

300

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.

Schools, parks, and community gardens

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

Through Grow Perris the City intends to achieve the following goals: (1) reduce risk of chronic diseases amongst Perris residents and improve their overall wellbeing, (2) increase accessibility and affordability of healthy foods to underserved communities, (3) develop 31 food gardens throughout the City to create a sustainability platform of crop development, sale, and health education, (4) create platforms for promoting healthy behaviors through

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collaboration with community-based organizations and City health education programs at community garden sites.

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.)

240

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

Mayor Vargas has been continually meeting with the new school district Superintendents from Perris Union High, Perris Elementary, and Val Verde. With various retirements in the community Mayor Vargas has made it a priority this year to establish a good relationship with the incoming superintendents. Mayor Vargas hopes to continue expanding the community garden program in the city, by initiating a Seeds for Change challenge where schools can participate in improving their garden and receive funding to support this initiative if they meet their goals. In 2025, we expect to begin sharing more on this initiative.

Selected Action Items

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)

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

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.

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

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

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

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

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

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

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:

September 30, 2024

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

Monarch Pledge Day

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

Proclamation - Mayors' Monarch Pledge 2024.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.

In 2016, The City of Perris built a Community Garden Demonstration Center (As part of the "Grow Perris" initiative) on the north side of the City Hall Campus. Exhibiting a variety of produce growing systems ideal for small areas or urban settings, the long-term vision for the project is to build a sustainable edible garden to facilitate horticultural and nutrition education for the community. Part of that vision includes having the youth, adult and senior populations assist with planting, harvesting and management of the Garden. The City of Perris uses responsible and sustainable gardening by not using pesticides and allowing for a suitable environment for pollinators. Most recently, the city was awarded a grant from the Urban Greening Program to expand the demonstration garden and that would add additional native plants with space for the pollinator garden portion. As an extension of this new development, the city established a "Yoga in the Garden" program, offering free yoga classes to community members of all ages with the same vision in mind. Participants engage in a balance between physical activity and meditation, learning yoga postures and breathing techniques that will help their bodies become stronger. This activity promotes an active lifestyle while supporting the perpetual growth of our community. The City of Perris also hosts various Garden Workshops with the intention of distributing knowledge on how residents can create their own home garden or maintain a pre-existing one. These interactive workshops, hosted by Christine Lampe (UCCE Master Gardener), are aimed at fostering community engagement and promoting horticultural development. During the workshops the youth are educated on the importance of pollinators and their impact. In November 2023, the City of Perris was awarded $2.8 million from the Clean California Local Grant to add new amenities to Copper Creek Park! Among these exciting implementations is a Butterfly Garden with educational signage on monarchs to educate

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the public. This committed project seeks to revamp our community and promote general horticultural knowledge to our residents. With this additional amenity for Copper Creek Park, the city plans to include native milkweed and native nectar producing plants.

Launch or maintain an outdoor education program(s) (e.g., at schools, after-school programs, community centers and groups) that builds awareness and creates habitat by engaging students, educators, and the community in planting native milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants (i.e., National Wildlife Federation's Schoolyard Habitats program and Monarch Mission curriculum).

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

Christine Lampe (UCCE Master Gardener), Chef Lee Burton

What program was launched or maintained to complete this effort? If you are involved with another National Wildlife Federation program, please mention that below. (Please include a link to the program, if possible)

Perris Green City Farm, an urban community demonstration garden located on City Hall Campus, Community Garden Grand Opening for Pinacate Middle School, City of Perris dedicated its first "satellite community garden" at Columbia Elementary School

How many acres of monarch and pollinator habitat have been planted through this effort? 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

What resources, if any, are you providing to educators?

Educators are provided horticulture and nutrition education and information on planting pollinator-friendly plants. They are also provided tips on how to start their own garden and how to build awareness on the importance of pollinator-friendly plants.

What is the maintenance schedule to ensure planted habitat is maintained?

The schools work with their maintenance staff and student volunteers to upkeep their gardens weekly. The City of Perris' community services staff maintains the community garden weekly

How many students and educators would you estimate are being reached? Please limit your answer to only number of adults and youths engaged in the answer field (e.g., 200 students and 20 educators).

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15 educators and 240 students

How many schools, community groups, leaders, or centers were engaged in this effort? How many of these collaborations and partnerships are "new"? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

12

Please list the names of the schools you are working with.

Columbia Elementary, May Ranch Elementary, Triple Crown Elementary, Heritage High School, Pinacate Middle School, Perris High School, Clearwater Elementary, Sky View Elementary, Avalon Elementary, Sierra Vista Elementary, Perris Lake High School, and California Military Institute

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