City of Fergus Falls

Fergus Falls, MN

Mayor Ben Schierer

Pledge Summary

Fergus Falls is a city in western Minnesota with a population of approximately 14,500 people and is the Otter Tail County seat. The city is located in North America's grassland biome, on the eastern edge of the tallgrass prairie, and within the prairie pothole region, a key location for migrating, nectaring, and breeding monarch butterflies. The city grew adjacent to the Otter Tail River and has 27 beautiful parks along with six different trail systems and two community vegetable gardens. In addition, it is home to the Fergus Falls Wetland Management District and the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center, part of the National Wildlife Refuge System, managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Mayor Ben Schierer committed to saving the monarch butterfly and other pollinators by originally signing the Mayors Monarch Pledge in 2017 and each year since then. He looks forward to engaging residents and partners in creating more pollinator habitat throughout the city. Additional partners include the Friends of the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center, Wildlife Forever, United Prairie Foundation and the city's Natural Resources Committee and Human Rights Commission. Fergus Falls is working towards designation as the first Prairie City USA through Wildlife Forever in St. Paul, Minnesota, and is working to develop and invite other cities to earn this recognition. It also earned a 2019 Pollinator Friendly Community Award from the Pollinator Friendly Alliance in Stillwater, Minnesota.

Action Items Committed for 2021

Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.
- Initiate or support community science (or citizen science) efforts that help monitor monarch migration and health.
- 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 native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.
- 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).
- Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.
- Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.
- Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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

Systems Change

- Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the city's Park Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, Climate Resiliency Plan or other city plans.
- 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.
- Remove milkweed from the list of noxious plants in city weed / landscaping ordinances (if applicable).
- Increase the percentage of native plants, shrubs and trees that must be used in city landscaping ordinances and encourage use of milkweed, where appropriate.
- Reduce or eliminate the use of herbicides, pesticides, or other chemicals that are harmful to monarchs and pollinators and urban wildlife.
- Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.

Communications and Convening

- Create a community art project to enhance and promote monarch and pollinator conservation as well as cultural awareness and recognition.
- 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 developers, planners, landscape architects, and other community leaders and organizers engaged in planning processes to identify opportunities to create monarch habitat.
- 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 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.
- Create a community-driven educational conservation strategy, initiative, or practice that focuses on and benefits local, underserved residents.
- 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.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Ben Schierer	2021	2/2/2021	

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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.

14.3

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

Demonstrating financial responsibility with less mowing in city parks and helping the monarch butterfly while engaging children and other people in the process

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?

We need more local sources of native plants and seeds. How can we educate more garden centers and landscapers to increase the number of native plants they sell? Is this an effort that National Wildlife Federation could lead on a national level that we could support on a local level? Could you please provide a way to save this form before and after submitting?

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.).

1400

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.

Golf course, Prairie Wetlands Learning Center: We planted a total of one acre at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center in a total of 3 plots near the barn and bridge. Additionally, 30 acres have been identified on city property that are currently mowed to be restored to prairie and pollinator habitat over the next 2 years on 6 different sites (Golf Course, Delagoon Park, Adams Park on Grotto Lake, both water towers, and Kennedy Park).

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

We continued a public communication effort through tabling at the Otter County Fair and through monarch tagging at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center. We also promoted plantings at home through Facebook posts and a neighborhood flyer to the Adams School neighborhood. The PWLC also hosted a Butterfly Hunt during which we promoted planting

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milkweed at home. The Friends of the PWLC hosted Jim Piehl for a native plant walk. They also hosted an on-line presentation about planting natives provided by Morning Sky Greenery in Morris MN. They hosted a presentation about the Monarchs in Michoacán, Mexico which promoted helping monarchs by planting milkweed at home and in communities. Any new restoration site created on city property will now be getting Prairie City USA signs to educate the public about the benefits of prairie and pollinator habitat.

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.)

1,000 kids and 400 Adults

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

Despite the pandemic, 2 Prairie Wetlands Learning Center volunteer families, more than 300 visitors, 4 employees,10-2nd grade classes, and 4 Prairie Science Class 5th grade classes safely captured, tagged, and released 83 monarch butterflies at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center. One PWLC volunteer tagged and released 60 more monarchs from her residence as well. That volunteer sent in 10 samples for OE from the 60 monarchs she reared at home. The Friends of the PWLC hosted a nature photography contest with pollinator category this year. Fergus Falls Public Schools and PWLC staff created a short educational video introducing 1st and 2nd grade students to their native plant and monarch butterfly rain garden at Adams Elementary school and provided them with short tours of the garden. The PWLC hosted a monarch exhibit at the county fair and for a Fergus Falls Fish and Game Club annual gathering.

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).

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?

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

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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.

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

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).

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

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).

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

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

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).

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

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.

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.

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.

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

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

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

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.

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).

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

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

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.

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

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

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

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

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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 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.

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

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

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?

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)

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.

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

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

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).

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

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NUMBERS only)

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

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)

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

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.

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.

Create a community-driven educational conservation strategy, initiative, or practice that focuses on and benefits local, underserved residents.

Please describe the process to create the strategy , the strategy goals and content, and/or results of implementation. Please also identify who was engaged in this process, what partnerships were established, and how you engaged these groups. Provide a link, if possible.

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

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

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below.

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

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

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.

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

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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

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

What species were collected or propagated?

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

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

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.

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

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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.

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.

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:

2/6/17

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

Fergus Falls Mayors' Monarch Pledge Day Proclamation

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

Mayors Monarch Pledge Proclamation.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).

We continued a public communication effort through tabling at the Otter County Fair and through monarch tagging at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center. We also promoted plantings at home through Facebook posts and a neighborhood flyer to the Adams School neighborhood. The PWLC also hosted a Butterfly Hunt during which we promoted planting milkweed at home. The Friends of the PWLC hosted Jim Piehl for a native plant walk. They also hosted an on-line presentation about planting natives provided by Morning Sky Greenery in Morris MN. They hosted a presentation about the Monarchs in Michoacán, Mexico which promoted helping monarchs by planting milkweed at home and in communities. Any new restoration site created on city property will now be getting Prairie City USA signs to educate the public about the benefits of prairie and pollinator habitat.

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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.

Prairie Wetlands Learning Center staff promoted with Master Gardeners locally regarding monarchs and natives during a meeting. The Prairie Wetlands Learning Center gave away about 750 milkweed seed packets to the public this year including some classes visiting the center. We also gave away about 350 native plants at the county fair and another 300 plants during our Monarch Tagging event. We gave about 1,500 plants to the public library during two planting events and 435 plants to the rain garden at Adams School during three planting events. We gave away about 100 plants at National Public Lands Day as well. The Prairie Science Class collected, separated and/or planted milkweed seeds. Third grade classes visiting the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center this fall hand collected a variety of native grasses and forbs including a lot of milkweed for prairie restoration efforts next year. The Friends of the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center gave away about 50 native plants at their annual fundraiser event to guests and the host business site.

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.

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

Through the newly adopted Prairie City USA program, the city is working to identify city properties that are currently being mowed that can be converted to prairie and pollinator habitat. The program has levels starting at converting 10% of mowed acres all the way up to 25%.

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