City of Wildwood

Wildwood, FL

Mayor Ed Wolf

Pledge Summary

Wildwood, FL, is a rapidly growing municipality with a population of about 30,000 residents, situated approximately 20 miles south of Ocala and 50 miles northwest of Orlando. As growth and development accelerates, the city is committing to conservation of monarchs and pollinators through a multifaceted, cross-departmental approach that will engage local experts and community members to provide habitat crucial to these species.

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.
- 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

- 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.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Ed Wolf	2026	3/23/2026	
Mayor Ed Wolf	2025	3/19/2025	Leadership Circle
Mayor Ed Wolf	2024	1/17/2024	Signatories
Mayor Ed Wolf	2023	4/26/2023	Signatories

Action Items

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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.).

2000

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.)

Age breakdown of virtual and print audiences is unknown.

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.

Public park

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

The park selected for the project is used by a diverse population, including those in low-income communities and communities of color. The city has and continues to distribute information via social media, email, and printed materials to broaden its reach.

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

As the City of Wildwood continues to grow and develop at a rapid rate, its leaders recognized the need to preserve existing habitat and create additional habitat for monarchs and other important pollinators.

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?

Educational webinars have been very helpful, as has the plant donation received through Garden for Wildlife. Access to additional educational materials and plant donations would increase opportunities to expand the project.

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

Our first year has provided a launchpad for future conservation efforts in a rapidly growing and developing city. Mayor Wolf's signing the pledge provided the impetus for city staff to learn about native flora and fauna and embrace animal pollinators of all shapes, sizes, colors, and forms. The monarch's plight has provided an urgency to undertake measures now, while the city is still relatively small, and a recognition that the unprecedented growth in this area presents real threats to both butterflies and other species at risk. The experience of this past year has created opportunities to add host and nectar sources in areas not previously considered, and fueled a desire to educate residents and encourage them to add resources at their homes, whether large or small, in a unified effort to connect habitat throughout the city. The pledge has connected the city with subject matter experts who will undoubtedly enhance future efforts to expand conservation projects.

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:

October 9, 2023

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

Monarch Awareness Month

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

Monarch Awareness Month_10.09.23.pdf

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.

City of Wildwood Executive Department, Public Works Department, and Parks and Recreation Department; The Villages® Butterfly Garden Club (includes Master Gardeners); The Florida Native Plant Society, The Villages® Chapter (includes Master Gardeners).

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

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Participants met in person, engaged by phone, and conducted individual research to learn more about best practices and potential opportunities. A planting site at Lake Deaton Park was identified, prepared, and planted. Existing native plants beneficial to pollinators were identified at that park. City staff continue to meet to discuss additional opportunities on city-owned and -maintained property.

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.

Deaton existing 1.JPG

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

Deaton existing 2.JPG

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

Deaton existing 3.JPG

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

Deaton existing 4.JPG

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.

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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.

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Deaton existing 8.JPG

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

Deaton existing 9.JPG

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

Deaton existing 10.JPG

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

Planting Day 3.JPG

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

Planting Day 7.JPG

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

frogfruit on the move.JPG

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

frogfruit flowers.JPG

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

dragonfly.JPG

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

garden.JPG

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

The Villages® Butterfly Garden Club (includes Master Gardeners); The Florida Native Plant Society, The Villages® Chapter (includes Master Gardeners); Wildwood Street Sweepers;

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VyStar Credit Union community volunteers.

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

448

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

Lake Deaton Park was the first planting location identified and planted, as described elsewhere in this report. That location will serve as an educational and demonstration garden as it becomes established. Numerous existing beneficial natives have been identified at Lake Deaton and will be preserved during infrastructure renovations to support pollinators. Project participants are now meeting to explore other locations on city-owned and -maintained property, including parks, rights-of-way, wastewater treatement facilities, and vacant lots, to preserve existing natives, expand planting and conservation efforts. They are also discussing ways to increase outreach and further engage the community.

Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.

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

Planting Day 3.JPG

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

Planting Day 4.JPG

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

Planting Day 5.JPG

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Planting Day 7.JPG

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garden.JPG

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dragonfly.JPG

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

aster.JPG

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

aquatic milkweed flowers .JPG

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

blue mistflower.JPG

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

tropical sage flowers.JPG

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

frogfruit flowers.JPG

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

Sunflower 1.JPG

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

Yellowtops 1.JPG

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

Planting Day.jpg

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

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Planting Day.jpg

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)

Lake Deaton Park, 5300 County Road 155, Wildwood, Florida

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

Master Gardeners, local butterfly gardeners, and members of the FL Native Plant Society collaborated with key city staff in both planning and planting the new garden. Several potential public sites were carefully considered. Ultimately, Lake Deaton Park was chosen for its location, existing native flora and fauna, use by a wide cross-section of the community, particularly for enjoying its natural resources, and straightforward integration into the park's master plan. The project received strong support from different community groups, including a litter control/beautification collaborative and local credit union, who contributed time, tools, and labor. The undertaking brought together dedicated volunteers who were excited, and in some cases pleasantly surprised, to witness conservation initiatives in such a rapidly developing city. The project also enhanced teamwork among varied employees from multiple city departments, including human resources, public works, development services, parks and recreation, and the executive office. These individuals are now enthusiastically watching the garden grow, seeing their contributions take roots and bloom, both figuratively and literally. In addition to all of these benefits, the project has generated offers of future volunteering, which promises to unite additional members of Wildwoods diverse population.

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.

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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.

presentation 2.JPG

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presentation 1.JPG

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

chrysalis.JPG

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

caterpillars.JPG

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

June 2023 newsletter article.jpg

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

October 2023 newsletter article.jpg

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

The Villages® Butterfly Garden Club (includes Master Gardeners); The Florida Native Plant Society, The Villages® Chapter (includes Master Gardeners); Wildwood Street Sweepers; VyStar Credit Union community volunteers.

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

Members of the garden club and native plant society provided invaluable guidance, experience, and lessons learned. They engaged in both planning and implementation, with offers to assist in future maintenance and expansion. One member gave a presentation at the 10/9/23 city commission meeting before the mayor proclaimed October as Monarch Awareness Month. Her slides were accompanied by information on biology and gardening, handouts, and live caterpillars. All groups participated in planting the first site at Lake Deaton Park. The city has shared information about the plight of the monarch butterfly, importance of pollinators, and its commitment to the Mayor’s Monarch Pledge through citizen newsletter articles, photos, social media posts, and printed handouts. This information has been shared by readers and followers, expanding its reach. As the demonstration garden becomes established, on-site events will be held to educate students and other members of the public.

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