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

Program and Demonstration Gardens

- 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.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

Systems Change

- 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.

Past Pledge Archive

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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

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.).

3000

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.)

150

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.

.1

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 parks

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

The City of Wildwood's parks and recreation department has integrated the pledge into its programming, which serves a diverse community along a wide demographic spectrum.

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 an extraordinarily high rate, its management and elected officials have recognized the need to preserve existing habitat and create additional habitat for monarchs and other important insect and animal pollinators.

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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?

Our initial garden was most benefited by a plant donation. As we will need to replant in the coming year (see next question and response), additional plant donations or discounts would be helpful. Multi-lingual educational materials would help promote projects and information to audiences who speak other languages.

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

The city's plans were significantly thwarted by weather and flooding this year. Our initial pollinator garden site was under water for months along with the rest of the park, which remained closed for most of the season. As a result, garden maintenance, habitat expansion, and demonstration/education events could not occur. In addition, most of the garden ultimately perished after prolonged submersion in floodwaters.

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 14, 2024

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

Monarch Awareness Week

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

Monarch Awareness Week 2024.docx

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.

The city's public works, parks and recreation, and executive departments met to discuss potential pollinator projects and programs. Several sites were identified for possible expansion of the city's pollinator habitat initiative. Elected officials, the city manager, and staff from human resources and development services participated in community events.

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

Staff have stayed in contact throughout the year. As reported in an earlier section, weather events significantly impeded pollinator projects as well as other efforts throughout the city this past year as personnel focused on threats from three hurricanes and resulting flooding.

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.

Jim Rain Barrel Talk 1 HR.JPG

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

Lisa 1.JPG

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

MG and TT counting.jpg

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

Jason Counting 1.JPG

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

The city started and/or strengthened partnerships with several community organizations, including UF/IFAS Extension, Master Gardeners, and The Villages Butterfly Garden Club.

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

UF/IFAS Extension provided consultation on native plants and educational opportunities at city parks and partnered on a community event organized to engage members of the public in the Great Southeast Pollinator Census. The Villages Butterfly Garden Club members and Master Gardeners also assisted in organization and presentations at the community event.

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

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

Screenshot 2024-12-05 105055.jpg

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

The assistant director for the city's development services department has taken considerable interest in learning more about relevant conservation initiatives and has spearheaded a project to analyze the tree mitigation process for development within city limits. Involving a team that includes staff from the executive and utility billing department, the project will determine any recommended process modifications and potential recommendations on changes to the city's land development regulations. Moving forward, potential modifications could include incorporation of native tree and shrub species that provide important shelter, nectar, and food sources for pollinators.

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.

Indoor Talk 1.JPG

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

Census Taker 3.JPG

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

Census Taker 2 HR_1.JPG

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

Census Taker 1.JPG

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

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Jason Counting 1.JPG

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).

18

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

The city partnered with UF/IFAS Extension, Master Gardeners, and The Villages Butterfly Garden Club on this effort. Each provided demonstrations and educational materials for the event and helped promote it. The city also partnered with local garden retailers, which provided pollinator plants and seeds.

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

The City of Wildwood hosted a community event to encourage citizens to participate in the Great Florida Pollinator Census, as part of the Great Southeast Pollinator Census (https://gsepc.org/; https://www.wildwood-fl.gov/parksrec/page/wildwood-community-pollinator-census). Potted pollinator plants were donated by local business partners and set up in a city park for observation. Participants watched a plant for 15 minutes and noted on a count sheet how many of each pollinator category they observed. Some participants completed counts for multiple 15-minute intervals. While the number of observed pollinators on the potted plants was low, the event was successful in engaging citizens in science and raising awareness of the different types and importance of pollinators, including butterflies such as monarchs, and their nectar needs. Participants provided positive feedback about the event both in person and through a brief survey. The potted plants were planted at the city park after the event concluded, adding additional habitat and nectar sources for monarchs and other pollinators.

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?

The city partnered with UF/IFAS Extension, Master Gardeners, The Villages Butterfly Garden Club and local garden retailers on our community event.

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

15

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

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Planting efforts were limited to those following the Great Pollinator Census community event due to flooding at Lake Deaton Park and a delay in a large improvement project at Millennium Park. Moving forward, the city will need to replant the native pollinator garden that was lost at Lake Deaton due to flooding and will be adding pollinator habitat at Millennium Park after the infrastructure upgrades are complete. The city also is looking at other property as potential no-mow and/or native pollinator habitat locations.

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)

14

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

Signs were created by the city's public works department to list plants' common names and scientific names, along with native status, but signs could not be installed because the park was closed for most of the season due to a large infrastructure project and flooded during and after hurricane season. The garden suffered significant damage and will need to be replanted before signs can be installed.

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?

Staff from a neighboring county's government.

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

In progress.

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

The assistant director for the city's development services department has spearheaded a project to analyze the tree mitigation process for development within city limits. The project team include staff from other city departments as well as colleagues from a neighboring county, who provide fresh eyes and insight. Moving forward, potential modifications could include incorporation of native tree and shrub species that provide important shelter, nectar, and food sources for pollinators. These actions will require formal action by others, so no specific completion date can be provided at this time.

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