City of Rochester

Rochester, IN

Mayor Trent O'Dell

Pledge Summary

Rochester is located in northern Indiana and is home to Lake Manitou. It is nestled in the center of Fulton County and is home to nearly 15,000 people. For the 2025 monarch conversation year, we pledge to expand resources to the Butterfly Garden to increase the number of native plants. Additionally, our Summer Park's Program will focus on raising awareness of the Monarch conversation initiative through community art and literacy projects.

Action Items Committed for 2025

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 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.
- Create a community-driven educational conservation strategy, initiative, or practice that focuses on and benefits local, underserved residents.
- 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.
- Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.
- 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

- Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.
- Reduce or eliminate the use of herbicides, pesticides, or other chemicals that are harmful to monarchs and pollinators and urban wildlife.

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Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Trent O'Dell	2025	2/9/2025	
Mayor Trent O'dell	2024	1/25/2024	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.).

120

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.)

80

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.

10

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, homes, and parks

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

We are teaching them through the Summer Parks Program which is open to all and targets low-income families as well as going into the school and educating on inexpensive pesticides..

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

To save the Monarchs and decrease toxic lawn maintenance/farming practices.

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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?

Social Media, the Mayor, Park Board, Newspaper, Fulton County Soil and Water, and the Summer Parks Programs

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

We are learning and growing! Expect more next year!

Selected Action Items

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

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

The City Parks Staff, Mayors Office, and Soil and Water

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

Complete and In Progress

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.

Complete. The document above publicly announces this decision.
https://issuu.com/thepapersinc/docs/rs-03-06-24

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

We will be relaunching this initiative this year and raising awareness again about it in the paper similarly to how we did last year but also try to extend it to all county parks as well.

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

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

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

Around $10,000

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

80

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

Fulton County Soil and Water

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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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_5473.jpeg

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

IMG_5467.jpeg

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

City Parks of Rochester, Full Tilt Arts, Rochester Streets Department, and the Northern Indiana Community Foundation

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).

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100

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).

We painted trash cans that are places around the city with a "pollinator theme". This connects our purpose of raising awareness about the decline of our Monarch population, the story walk with Senorita Mariposa, and our beautification initiatives of keeping our parks clean and free of weeds.

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.

The strategy we have is using the Monarch Pledge as a platform for the Mayor to spearhead the initiative to not spray pesticides in your Parks, reform our mowing practices, and educate the community through art and activities with children and adolescents to pass the knowledge on to the rest of the citizens. We also work loosely with the Fulton County Soil and Water and Tree Board to promote the planting of trees for our earth to be clean and rebuilding/enhancing the native plant population that attracts the Monarch population, as well as, other pollinators. We launched this effort by making a press release in the local newspaper publication, as well as, art & education opportunities through the county-wide Summer Parks Program. We continue this project by integrating more social media information and school visits, as well as, strengthening our mowing a lawn maintenance practices. We will also start to work with Purdue Extension to further their outreach of nature preservation/conservation practices that can be used by gardeners and farmers in our area.

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:

March 6, 2024

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

Rochester Mayor O'dell signs the Monarch Pledge

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

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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.)

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

On May 19th, President Park Board Member Kim Landis, and Mayor Trent O'Dell conducted a read aloud of Senorita Mariposa and a demonstration of how to make all nature week killer at home to preschool students. They also gave swamp seed plants to the preschool teacher to plant outside when they do their butterfly unit. We lost the pictures to this, and the article in the local newspaper, but other residents we have started integrating into our mission are communicating this publicly. https://www.rochsent.com/news/rochester-man-raises-tracks-monarchs/article_782d355e-1aad-5470-b46e-145cc92016b3.html

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.

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

Screenshot 2025-04-01 10.21.05 AM.png

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

The Mayors Office, The City Parks, Fulton County Soil and Water Conservation and The Street Department

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

They mow only the parks where there is public access and they do not spray, they only weed eat. We will continue to work on more planting programs. We purchased $1500 worth of native plants from the plant sale to plant in public places around the the city.

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.

Screenshot 2025-04-01 10.21.05 AM.png

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

The Mayor agreed to pass an order that there will be no more spraying in the Parks to kill weeds, or there will be an all natural remedy.

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

Complete and In Progress for 2025

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.

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

This order continues into this year as well.

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.

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

City Parks

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

20

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

Butterfly bushes were removed from the Butterfly Garden and replaced with swamp and milk week plants, as well as, other native/nectar producing plants. Pollinator gardens were also added to parks around the city.

Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

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

Screenshot 2025-04-01 11.06.24 AM.png

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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How many garden signs are being displayed and where are they located? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

15

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

Every season, there is a story walk at one of the nature walk areas in town of a book called Senorita Mariposa that tells the story of the declining Monarch population and what we can do to help support the regrowth of the population. A mural was also added to one of the city's parks.

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)

We are still working on this.

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

70

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.

1/8th of an acre

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

We are still working on growing our acreage this year!

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