City of East Chicago

East Chicago, IN

Mayor Anthony Copeland

Pledge Summary

The city of East Chicago is committed to providing habitat and spreading awareness for the Monarch butterfly. East Chicago has a large population of residents from Mexican descent for which the Monarch butterfly has deep cultural significance. East Chicago has two native pollinator gardens to support breeding Monarch populations, Cypra Garden in Washington Park and The Monarch Butterfly Garden in Kosciuszko Park. The city also has an annual Festival de la Monarca in the fall where it celebrates the Monarch butterfly's migration through East Chicago and its cultural connections to Mexico through music, food and dance.

Action Items Committed for 2026

Communications and Convening

- 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

- Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.
- Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.
- Launch, expand, or continue an invasive species removal program that will support the re-establishment of native habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators.
- Host or support a monarch butterfly festival that is accessible to all residents in the community and promotes monarch and pollinator conservation, as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Anthony Copeland	2026	3/20/2026	
Mayor Anthony Copeland	2024	3/15/2024	

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.).

1500

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.)

450

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.

School, parks, public spaces

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

The whole city is primarily low-income and people of color.

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

Monarch conservation, wildlife habitat creation and public education on these topics.

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 grant money from the Legacy Foundation was instrumental in the stewardship work and the funding of educational events. We also have a lot of support from other local organizations that we collaborated with. In the future, we will need funding to improve the garden at Kosciuszko Park, including the installation of Monarch specific educational signs. We would also like funding to convert empty lots around the city to pollinator gardens.

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

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Our efforts are just beginning. We plan to expand our current programs throughout the city and encourage people to learn about and establish their own pollinator gardens.

Selected Action Items

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.

Native Plant Giveaway Handouts (1).pdf

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

Screenshot 2026-09-21 131336.png

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

Screenshot 2026-09-21 131459.png

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

East Chicago Parks and Recreation The Nature Conservancy Green EC Earth Charter Indiana Legacy Foundation Wild Ones, Gibson Woods

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

East Chicago Parks and Recreation provided resources and support for the stewardship of the two native pollinator gardens in the city, the growing of native plants for giveaway, and co-hosted the annual Monarch Festival. The Nature Conservancy co-hosted the annual Monarch Festival and provided resources and support for conservation efforts including a park clean-up and the upcoming Weed Wrangle. Green EC has coordinated stewardship work of the gardens and has established an East Chicago garden club which will include a native plants component. Green EC also helped secure the grant money to support these activities. Earth Charter Indiana (ECI) has offered their support for this work and administers the grant money funds from the Legacy Foundation. Legacy Foundation awarded Green EC and ECI $10,000 to support conservation efforts and other activities. Wild Ones, Gibson Woods has provided support and volunteers for various events. They also ordered some of the native plants we gave away at the Monarch Festival.

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

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

Native Plant Giveaway Handouts (1).pdf

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

Screenshot 2026-09-21 131459.png

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

250

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

1200

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

The Nature Conservancy, East Chicago Parks and Recreation, Green EC

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.

IMG_9074.JPG

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

East Chicago Central High School, Green EC, Earth Charter Indiana, Legacy Foundation, East Chicago Parks and Recreation

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

30

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

We added an extension to the current native plant garden, doubling the total size. Swamp milkweed and other native pollinator plants and grasses were planted. We also had the garden certified as a Community Wildlife Habitat.

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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.

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

Pizzo Proposal 2page.pdf

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

EC Weed Wrangle.jpg

What is the total acreage of land treated to remove invasive plants? Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

1-2

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.

Grant money was secured to maintain the two native pollinator gardens at Washington and Kosciuszko parks. Invasive species removal includes spraying herbicide, wicking, cutting and stump treating, and collecting seedheads. There is also an upcoming Weed Wrangle event to address the invasive species on the strip of land that runs along the bike path at Kosciuszko Park.

Host or support a monarch butterfly festival that is accessible to all residents in the community and promotes 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.

Monarch Festival Flyer B.pdf

How many estimated individuals attended the event? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field ((Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only), e.g. 500)

1200

What was the date of your festival?

8/29/26

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

The Nature Conservancy, East Chicago Parks and Recreation, Green EC, Just Transition, Wild Ones - Gibson Woods Chapter, Earth Charter Indiana, Region Resilience NWI, Faith in Place, Lake County Parks, Field Museum, etc.

Please describe the details of your monarch butterfly festival and how you ensured the event was accessible by all residents in the community (e.g., events, length, notable successes, outreach, location).

Organized by The Nature Conservancy in partnership with the City of East Chicago, Festival de la Monarca celebrated the monarch butterfly as it migrates through Northwest Indiana as well as Mexican cultural connections through music, food, crafts & dance. Educational tables from conservation groups throughout the region are present to inform the public about Monarch conservation efforts and what they can do to help. The event took place at Kosciuszko Park on Indianapolis Blvd and 151st St., in East Chicago, IN from 11am to 5pm. It was open to the public and efforts are taken to make it accessible to all. Entry is free. Attendants are encouraged to visit each of the educational booths via a stamp card that, once complete, was used to enter a raffle for prizes. They also receive free giveaways including native plant plugs, native seeds, info sheets, stickers, etc. There were several performances including music groups and traditional folkloric dancers. The Mayor's Pledge proclamation was read and live Monarch butterflies were released to begin their migration south.

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