Lexington Fayette Urban County Government

Lexington, KY

Mayor Linda Gorton

Pledge Summary

Lexington and Fayette County are located in the Inner Bluegrass Region of Central Kentucky. The Lexington Fayette Urban County Government is a merged city/county government that serves the citizens of this community. Lexington is the 2nd largest city in Kentucky and is considered cultural hub for the region. Agriculture and tourism are key industries to the area as we are known as the Horse Capital of the World and internationally known for the Bourbon produced locally. Without pollinators these industries that are part of the cultural identity of the Bluegrass State wouldn't exist. Lexington hopes to lead the way for our neighbors across the state in promoting and protecting vulnerable pollinator habitat.

Action Items Committed for 2022

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 community garden groups and urge them to plant native milkweeds and nectar-producing plants.
- 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.

Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.
- Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.
- Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.
- 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).

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- Initiate or support community science (or citizen science) efforts that help monitor monarch migration and health.
- 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.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

Systems Change

- Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.
- Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the city's Park Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, Climate Resiliency Plan or other city plans.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Linda Gorton	2026	12/23/2025	
Mayor Linda Gorton	2025	1/22/2025	Leadership Circle
Mayor Linda Gorton	2024	1/22/2024	Leadership Circle
Mayor Linda Gorton	2023	2/3/2023	Leadership Circle
Mayor Linda Gorton	2022	1/31/2022	Leadership Circle
Mayor Linda Gorton	2021	2/8/2021	Leadership Circle

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.).

1000

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.)

400 youth and 600 adults

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.

2

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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.

Parks

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

Monarch and pollinator education programs were offered by Lexington Parks and Recreation within Parks and Community Centers in neighborhoods that are historically predominantly communities of color. These programs were offered by a Neighborhood Environmental Educator and an AmeriCorps Service Member that provided nature programs.

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

To continue to promote the importance of the Monarch Butterfly as an indicator species and to raise awareness for the perseveration of their habitats. Our community has a great connection to nature and a large interest in preserving our natural landscape.

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 monthly newsletters are helpful to see updates and upcoming events within the program. It would be great to see some nation wide programming added for the Mayors Monarch Pledge, like a community bio blitz or tagging events, this would help connect our programming better with the Pledge.

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

This was the first year that we held Monarch Fest, a festival dedicated to educating the public on Monarch Butterflies.

Selected Action Items

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).

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

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

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

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).

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

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 is the maintenance schedule to ensure planted habitat is maintained?

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).

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

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

BBBG.pdf

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

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

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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.

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:

6/20/2022

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

Monarch Pledge Day

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

2022proc.jpg

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.

livegreenlex.jpg

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

PBN.pdf

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

Lexington's Division of Environmental Services operates a public program called Plant by Numbers. This program is designed to create an easy to follow to templet for citizens to follow so that they can plant pollinator friendly gardens in the own backyard. They host workshops to educate citizens about the program and have materials available online at

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lexingtonky.gov/plant-numbers-0. They also do regular promotion of the program through their social media accounts.

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.

McConnell Springs Nature Park hosted several garden groups from the community and surrounding counites over the past year for tours of native pollinator habitat. Part of the discussion was to promote the use of native nectar plants and Milkweed for Monarchs. The groups included Wild Ones Native Plants and Members from the Garden Club of Kentucky. A Garden Party was held at William Wells Brown Community Center on July 13, 2022 and educators from Lexington Parks and Recreation attended to promote Monarch habitat and provide a program about the importance of pollinators.

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.

BBBG.pdf

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

Lexington Parks and Recreation and contract mowing companies

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

Lexington Parks and Recreation implemented a program called Bring Back the Bluegrass that focuses on reducing mowing practices within existing Parks locations. Working with existing contracted mowing companies we identified areas that could have mowing reduced to allow for the reintroduction of native habitats including prairies and pollinator habitat. This is an on going program and Parks is continuously seeking new partners to aid in the progress of the development of habitat. In 2022, the Lexington Rotary Club began installing native pollinator plants, including milkweed, on one of these sites.

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.

Milkweedseedpackets.pdf

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

100 packets of seeds / 45 plants. Mixed seeds were available for visitors to collect from bowls to make their own custom wildflower mix for pollinators that included milkweed seed.

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

700

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

Lexington Parks and Recreation collected the seeds, students from Transylvania University packaged and labelled the seed, and the packets were given away at an event held at Raven Run Nature Sanctuary

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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

The Growing Our Own Project Class Schedule.png

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

40

What species were collected or propagated?

Common Milkweed, Columbine, Brown Eyed Susan, Purple Cone Flower, Swamp Milkweed, Bee Balm, Cardinal Flower

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

Friends of McConnell Springs / Fayette County Conservation District

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

The program was called Growing Our Own Project (GOOP) and was funded by the Friends of McConnell Springs through a grant from the Fayette County Conservation District. The program was structured to provide participants with first hand experience in collecting seeds from native plants and then showing them how to grow those plants from seed. Part of the program included a display at the Kentucky American Water Education Center that showed visitors how to grow plants indoors. Those plants were later given away to program participants and used in Natural Area Parks across Lexington. Seeds were again collected in the fall of 2022 so that the program can run again in 2023.

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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.

thoroughbred1.jpg

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

thoroughbred2.jpg

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

thoroughbred3.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)

The garden is located at Thoroughbred Park (100 Midland Ave, Lexington, KY 40507) in Downtown right off of Main Street. The park is dedicated to the connection that Central Kentucky has to the Thoroughbred Horse racing industry and the Bluegrass landscape that is iconic for this region. A landscape that has long supported not only horses but pollinators and Monarch Butterflies.

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

The garden was installed by staff from Parks Landscaping and Parks Natural Areas. Shortly after the garden was installed, citizens in the community noticed weeds beginning to grow in the raised bed and volunteered to weed the garden during the growing season. The volunteers reached out to their local Urban County Council Member who put them in touch with me. It was truly a community 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.

.1

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

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and other pollinators.

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

kenawood.jpg

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

BBBG.pdf

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

50+

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.

Invasive plant species are remove regularly in places such as natural areas, park lands, right of ways, public green spaces, and on private lands. The Bring Back the Bluegrass program in Lexington Parks and Recreation has a goal of reducing mowing and removing invasive plants such as Bradford Pear, Bush Honesuckle, Wintercreeper, Johnson Grass and more then establishing native habitats in these areas. Plants were removed in a section of Kenawood Park by volunteers and park staff using a broadcast herbicide spray system. The volunteers with with the Rotary Club of the Bluegrass and installed native flowers including Milkweed, see attached. Other program leaders such as Natural Area Park managers work regularly to remove invasive plant species and plant natives back in their place. Natural Areas and Maintenance staff members keep pesticide applicators licenses and go through Continuing Education so that they can apply herbicides to invasive plants using various techniques depending on the target species. One way that the public can engage in invasive plant removal is by participating in the Garlic Mustard Roundup at Raven Run. Park staff will provide bags and gloves to visitors and educate them on how identify and remove the invasive plants. Then visitors can remove the plants as they walk along the trail system at the park. Several trash bag full of the plant were removed this year using this technique.

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.

monarchfest.jpg

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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)

700

What was the date of your festival?

September 10, 2022

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

Lexington Parks and Recreation, North American Butterfly Association, Wild Birds Unlimited

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).

The event was held at Raven Run Nature Sanctuary on September 10, 2022 and was a free event to make it accessible. The event lasted from 10:00am-3:00pm and was available for anyone in the community to attend. It included a butterfly tent, live Monarch Caterpillars, arts and crafts, educational talks, guided walks for adults and kids, Milkweed Plant and seed give away, staff was on hand to answer questions about the displays and the opportunity for visitors to search for caterpillars through the fields. The event was considered a great success due to the number of people that participated and the positive reactions that visitors gave to to the experience.

Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the city's Park Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, Climate Resiliency Plan or other city plans.

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

Masterplan.docx

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

Lexington Parks and Recreation / The Lexington Fayette Urban County Government

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

Complete

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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.

June 2018 https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XfqW8KGlKQv5uUf7qGgwcNFVdFIyJaqE/view

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.

Parks4Pollinators Bioblitz Flier 2022.pdf

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

citynaturechallenge.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).

190

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

National Recreation and Parks Association, Lexington Parks and Recreation, FloraCliff Nature Sanctuary, North American Butterfly Association Lexington Chapter

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

The City Nature Challenge, https://citynaturechallenge.org/collective-results-2022/, was organized locally by Naturalists with Lexington Parks and Recreation and FloraCliff Nature Sanctuary. The results were great with 145 people participating and 845 species observed on iNaturalist as part of our program. Parks 4 Pollinators BioBlitz also used iNaturalist and was part of a larger campaign that was promoted by National Recreation and Parks Association. Several programs were held during September and self guided materials were created to help people learn how to use iNaturalist.

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