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 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 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.
- 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

- Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.
- 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.

Systems Change

- 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.).

2500

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.)

1000

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

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public spaces, and more.

residences, park land, community gardens

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

Through the Nature in Your Neighborhood Program, we are bringing pollinator education to communities throughout Lexington, rather than expecting people to drive to the outskirts where nature sanctuaries are located.

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

Our community is very dedicated to preserving the environment in many ways and pollinators have long been a priority.

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?

We have the knowledge, but the workforce required to truly make a dent is lacking.

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

There were several initiatives started this year that will carry over into 2026-27 that are exciting for the city!

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).

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)

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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?

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:

June 11, 2025

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

Pollinator Week Proclamation

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

IMG_5864.PNG

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.

Friends of Dogwood Park: maintained a large Monarch Way Station and installed permanent Monarch educational signage; held 4th Annual Marsh Madness event on Aug 23, which was well attended by the community. Down to Earth Garden Club sponsored an educational area consisting of 5 tables highlighting the importance of native pollinators with an emphasis on the Monarch Butterfly and milkweed; coordinated 4 workdays this year and a part of each workday is removing invasive growth, and seeding or planting natives; Friends of Dogwood Park has a monthly newsletter and highlighted swamp milkweed

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blooming this summer. Gardenside Park: continued to remove invasive species along the riparian buffer at the park in order to allow better growing conditions for milkweed

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.

Butterfly Count Results-2025.pdf

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

15

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

Parks and Recreation worked with community organizations to conduct the annual butterfly count in our county. Several parks were surveyed and both Raven Run and Hisle Farm Park were in the top 3 sites for species diversity counted.

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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

500

What species were collected or propagated?

common and swamp milkweed

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

Parks held the annual Monarch Fest at Raven Run, which was open to community groups and the public; Wild Birds Unlimited, North American Butterfly Association (KY Chapter), Cooperative Extension

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

Staff harvested and cold stratified milkweed seeds from fall of 2024 through 2025, as well as purchasing seed, and then used some seeds to sow at the park, others were used to giveaway to individuals who attended the Monarch Festival.

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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.)

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

Lexington's Division of Environmental Services oversees "Live Green Lexington", a program designed to inform residents of what the city is doing to protect the environment and to provide information as to how everyday people can pitch in and help. There are several initiatives that fall under Live Green Lexington that promote pollinators: Plant By Numbers: https://www.lexingtonky.gov/government/departments-programs/environmental-quality-public-works/live-green-lexington/plant-numbers Nature in Your Neighborhood-Pollinators and Other Bug Friends: https://www.lexingtonky.gov/calendar/2025-07-19/nature-your-neighborhood-pollinators-other-bug-friends Lexington Pollinator Week: https://www.lexingtonky.gov/calendar/2025-06-18/pollinator-week-kentucky-bees-101 Monarch Programming Offered: • Jr. Explorers: Caterpillars and Butterflies program (June 2025). K-5 program. • The Magical Monarch Butterfly program for LGUCG's Therapeutic Recreation Nature Explores program (Sept 2025). Program for adults with disabilities. • Monarch Fest. Annual Festival organized by Raven Run. Approximately 500 attendees. All ages. o Monarch Tagging program (part of Monarch Fest). All ages. • Monarch Tagging Training at Raven Run with staff and interns (volunteers).

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.

3

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

Lexington Parks and Recreation staff attended the annual Habitat Symposium in order to learn more about managing land for pollinator species and milkweed/native nectar-bearing plants. Information obtained was used to share with others in Parks, including the newly formed resource management team that is looking at ways to better-manage parkland throughout the city. Staff also used the information in public programming on pollinator- and land management-related programs. Raven Run continues to work on its Meadow Improvement Project through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Part of land management efforts to expand meadow habitat on site, which will provide habitat for many types of wildlife including pollinators and monarchs. 2025 efforts include clearing early successional woodland area (2.5 acres) with plans to plant seed in fall 2025.

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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.

Butterfly Count Results-2025.pdf

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).

50

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

Floracliff and NABA took the lead on the 2025 Butterfly Count

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

Annual butterfly count, which took place in 8 Lexington Parks, as well as other private sites in the city. Volunteers worked on the same day in July of 2025 to count and record species throughout each site. Parks also hosted two bioblitzes at Kelley's Landing Park on 08/16/2025 and 10/4/2025 which engaged 10 participants in citizen science and pollinator education.

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

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

17000 sq ft

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.

Lexington's Lakeside Golf Courser cleared out invasive species in a 17,000 square foot plot with a grant from US Fish and Wildlife and in partnership with NABA. Once cleared, a new monarch butterfly pollinator habitat that is easily accessible to the public was installed and opened this summer.

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

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conservation, as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

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)

500

What was the date of your festival?

September, 2025

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

NABA (KY); LFUCG Live Green Lexington; Cooperative Extension

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 is now an annual event offered at the Raven Run Nature Sanctuary. Staff purposely schedules the event to last all day, so that members of the public have the opportunity to visit and learn. It is hosted in a very accessible part of the park, closer to the parking lot, so that people with any type of special need could have easy access to the tents and educations spaces used. The crowd was larger this year than in years prior and we had an excellent variety of activities, tabling from partners, and more. https://www.lexingtonky.gov/calendar/2025-09-13/monarch-fest

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

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

Parks and Recreation; LFUCG (government in general); stakeholders from across the city

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

complete

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.

2018

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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 action item was completed in 2018 and remains part of Parks and Recreation's Master Plan, which can be viewed at: https://www.lexingtonky.gov/about-parks-and-recreation-master-plan.

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