# City of Cedar Falls

Cedar Falls, IA

Mayor Danny Laudick

## Pledge Summary

Cedar Falls is a city in North East Iowa with a population of roughly 41,000. The City is home to the University of Northern Iowa, one of the three regent universities in the state, and widely recognized for it's endearing mix of bigger city amenities with a small town feel. A nationally recognized downtown and eclectic mix of both urban and rural living lend toward a feeling of home whether you've lived here all your life or are just visiting. But a part of that feeling is only possible because of the balance of city life and natural beauty that Cedar Falls has. Mayor Danny Laudick has committed to ensuring we protect our natural spaces, and part of that commitment includes protecting the native environment and wellbeing of our monarch butterfly and other pollinator 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 Homeowners Associations (HOAs), Community Associations or neighborhood organizations to identify opportunities to plant monarch gardens and revise maintenance and mowing programs.

### Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.
- Launch, expand, or continue an invasive species removal program that will support the re-establishment of native habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators.

### 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 Danny Laudick | 2026 | 2/17/2026 | |
| Mayor Danny Laudick | 2025 | 3/19/2025 | Leadership Circle |
| Mayor Danny Laudick | 2024 | 3/31/2024 | 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.).**

250

**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.)**

50

**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.**

3

**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, Parks, Community Gardens, Common Areas

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

Encouraging all neighborhoods to plant pollinators by giving out free milkweed seedlings.

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

By seeing young individuals getting excited to plant pollinators throughout our community.

**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**

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**help expand equitable engagement in community processes and access to high-quality, usable nature?**

Cedar Valley Monarch Zone, North Cedar Neighborhood Association and local Monarch Club have have been great partners in planting and maintaining our pollinators. Continue posting on social media to show the progress of our planting throughout our community.

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

Citizens of all ages have been really excited about the pollinator gardens thus far and plan to plant many more in the upcoming years.

## Selected Action Items

### 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.**

plantings.docx

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

Current - 2021 grass and prairie plantings.docx

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

North Cedar Neighborhood Association, Monarch Club,

**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 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.**

This will be an ongoing project that city staff supports.

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

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This action is in progress and we continue to promoted native pollinator plantings throughout the community.

## 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.**

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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?**

Good Neighbors, City Staff

**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 City of Cedar Falls Parks staff has implemented a pesticide reduction plan that's been ongoing for the past 5 years. We have limited pesticides to athletic fields, public buildings, right of way and certain parks. There is very little herbicide and pesticides applied to 70% of our parks.

## 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:**

September 10th, 2024

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

Monarch Day

**Upload a copy of your proclamation.**

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Monarch Proclamation_9-10-24.pdf

## 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.**

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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.**

Monarch Club, North Cedar Neighborhood Association, Cedar Valley Monarch Zone

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

The Monarch Club has assisted city staff with planting a milkweed garden to pull from in the future for additional plantings around the community. The North Cedar Neighborhood Association has helped plant and maintains the pollinator areas by mowing and burning when needed to promote growth. The Cedar Valley Monarch Zone donates the majority of the pollinator seed to the city.

## 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.**

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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.**

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Community Gardens, North Cedar Neighborhood Association

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

Community Gardens is a group that manages leased vegetable and flower gardens to Cedar Falls Residence. These gardens reduce mowing for city staff and creates pollinators for the community. Jim Newcomb is the President of the North Cedar Neighborhood Association and has been influential in recognizing areas in the northern part of cedar falls for pollinators and has volunteered a countless amount of hours to planting and maintaining these natural areas.

## 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.**

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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 people attended your event? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)**

10

**What species were collected or propagated?**

Common Milkweed

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

Monarch club and Community Gardens

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

Collected Common Milkweed seed from existing prairies around the community and planted them in a 40'x40' plot to create a nursery with plans to collect the seed in the future.

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

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

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

3

**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.**

City park staff along with the North Cedar Neighborhood association removed invasive woody vegetation and weeds in a stand of oaks 3 acres in size and planted native pollinator and prairie seed to the understory, creating a oak savanna. The areas was mowed off and treated with herbicide and then seeded in the spring of 2024.

## Engage with Homeowners Associations (HOAs), Community Associations or neighborhood organizations to identify opportunities to plant monarch gardens and revise maintenance and mowing programs.

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