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 2026

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 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

- Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.
- Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.
- Convert vacant lots to monarch habitat.
- Earn or maintain recognition for being a wildlife-friendly city by participating in other wildlife and habitat conservation efforts (i.e., National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat program).

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- 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.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

Systems Change

- Increase the percentage of native plants, shrubs and trees that must be used in city landscaping ordinances and encourage use of milkweed, where appropriate.
- Launch, expand, or continue an effort to change municipal planting ordinances and practices to include more native milkweed and native nectar producing plants at city properties.
- Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the city's Park Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, Climate Resiliency Plan or other city plans.
- Reduce or eliminate the use of herbicides, pesticides, or other chemicals that are harmful to monarchs and pollinators and urban wildlife.

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.).

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.)

300

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.

2.07

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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.

Buyout lot/vacant lots

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

Partnering with Neighborhood groups and school districts within the community. Additionally, as part of the "Your City, Your Parks," master plan, community input was collected and information presented about habitat conservation.

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

Continuing to build and support awareness in the community about pollinators and the role they play in the urban environment.

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?

Funding for signage and for hosting community engagement events.

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

We are continually seeking ways to incorporate native plant materials into plantings throughout the city and ways to reduce the total of weekly mowed turf areas.

Selected Action Items

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.

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

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

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.

Increase the percentage of native plants, shrubs and trees that must be used in city landscaping ordinances and encourage use of milkweed, where appropriate.

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.

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.

Launch, expand, or continue an effort to change municipal planting ordinances and practices to include more native milkweed and native nectar producing plants at city properties.

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.

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.

Reduce or eliminate the use of herbicides, pesticides, or other chemicals that are harmful to monarchs and pollinators and urban wildlife.

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

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

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.

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.

Social media example.png

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

media example2.jpeg

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

Currents1.jpeg

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

currents2.jpeg

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

Currents3.jpeg

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

currents4.jpeg

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

Engaged the public through our social media page on Facebook, through our quarterly Currents publication and City website.

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

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

partnership2.jpeg

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

partnership1.jpeg

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

partnership3.jpeg

Please describe the groups you engaged with and how you engaged with these groups below.

These various groups and events have partnered with the city in promoting environmental stewardship and native planting. Bird Friendly Iowa, North Cedar Neighborhood Association, A Practical Backyard Tour. Our engagement with these groups can be described as direct engagement. City staff participated in co-organizing, co-promoting, and final execution of various programs and activities throughout the year.

Convert vacant lots to monarch habitat.

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

planted lots.jpg

Where is the monarch habitat located? (Please provide an address, if possible)

2225 Central Ave, 2313 Central Ave, 127,121,115,109,& 103 Stickfort St.

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

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North Cedar Neighborhood Association

What is the total acreage of land that has been converted? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 2 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.

2.07

How many lots were converted to monarch habitat? Please limit your answer to only the number of lots in the answer field below (e.g., 3)

8

Please describe when the lots were converted to monarch habitat and the planned maintenance schedule.

Lots were planted Fall of 2026. The planted area will be removed from a regular mowing route and the native planting area will be maintained utilizing prescribed fire, mowing of encroaching woody plants, and hand/spot spraying of noxious or undesirable species.

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.

earthfest.JPG

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

300

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

1050

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

Cedar Falls Utilities, Cedar Falls Public Library, Cedar Falls Rec, Black Hawk Co Solid Waste Commission, Black Hawk Co soil & water conservation district, and various others.

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

tour.PNG

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

Two groups: The North Cedar Neighborhood Association and "A practical Backyard tour"

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

Removed several areas from a weekly mowing route, partnered with both groups to promote and educate the community on bio-cells and lawn to native plant conversion.

Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.

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)

City Hall at 220 Clay Street

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

City of Cedar Falls Parks staff

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.

.01

Earn or maintain recognition for being a wildlife-friendly city by participating in other wildlife and habitat conservation efforts (i.e., National Wildlife Federation’s Community Wildlife Habitat program).

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

Hartman reserve plant sale.png

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

Bird Friendly.jpg

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

Hartman Reserve Nature Center, Bird Friendly Iowa

What program was launched or maintained to complete this effort? (Please include a link to the program, if possible)

Native plant sale, and continued maintenance and action items to earn Bird Friendly Iowa recognition.

Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

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

biocells.jpg

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

3

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

Sign regarding the Monarch Club and links to this groups webpage Signs describing bio-cells and their role in water conservation Signs at various trail locations highlighting the native species nearby.

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.

planted lots.jpg

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

City of Cedar Falls Parks Staff, Iowa Tallgrass Prairie Center

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

1200

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

The following wildflower species were included in our seeding of the buyout lots in North Cedar. Butterfly Milkweed Purple Coneflower Black-eyed Susan Wild Bergamot Grayheaded Coneflower Eco Blue Vervain Purple Prairie Clover

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.

Master Plan page 82.jpg

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

HKGi Consulting, City Council, Parks & Rec Commission

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.

Action is ongoing and incorporation of Native Butterfly friendly plantings and educational signage is expected in each of the phased park reconstruction plans.

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:

April 25, 2026

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

Proclamation

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

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proclamation.jpg

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