City of Charleston

Charleston, IL

Mayor Dr. Brandon Combs

Pledge Summary

Charleston is a city in east central Illinois with a population of roughly 21,000. The city is home to Eastern Illinois University, beautiful Lake Charleston, and is nearby the Warbler Ridge Conservation Area and Fox Ridge State Park. These amenities create a conservation corridor that spans over 4,000 acres. In partnership with the Urban Butterfly Initiative, the City has created 7 dedicated butterfly habitat “hotspots” in and around the City. With these efforts, in 2020 the NWF announced Charleston a "Monarch Champion" and Charleston has been named the “Butterfly Capital of Illinois”. Mayor Combs has committed to saving the monarch butterfly and other pollinators with the signing of the Mayor’s Monarch Pledge and looks forward to engaging residents in building more pollinator habitat throughout the city.

Action Items Committed for 2021

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.
- Engage with Homeowners Associations (HOAs), Community Associations or neighborhood organizations to identify opportunities to plant monarch gardens and revise maintenance and mowing programs.
- Engage with developers, planners, landscape architects, and other community leaders and organizers engaged in planning processes to identify opportunities to create monarch habitat.
- Create a community-driven educational conservation strategy, initiative, or practice that focuses on and benefits local, underserved residents.
- Create a community art project to enhance and promote monarch and pollinator conservation as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

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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.
- Convert vacant lots to monarch habitat.
- Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.
- 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).
- 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).
- Host or support a monarch neighborhood challenge to engage neighborhoods and homeowners' associations within the community to increase awareness, support community unity around a common mission, and/or create habitat for the monarch butterfly.
- Initiate or support community science (or citizen science) efforts that help monitor monarch migration and health.
- 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.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

Systems Change

- Remove milkweed from the list of noxious plants in city weed / landscaping ordinances (if applicable).
- Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.
- 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.
- Launch, expand, or continue one or more ordinances to reduce light pollution to benefit urban wildlife.

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Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Dr. Brandon Combs	2026	3/17/2026	
Mayor Dr. Brandon Combs	2023	2/17/2023	
Mayor Dr. Brandon Combs	2022	2/3/2022	Monarch Champions
Mayor Dr. Brandon Combs	2021	2/19/2021	Monarch Champions

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.).

2000

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.)

2000 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.

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.

yards, public spaces and parks, rights-of-way, community gardens

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

work being done in all areas of the city

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

sustainable environment and preserve nature

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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?

marketing efforts

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

continued 2021 with maintenance of existing sites and working to create new sites

Selected Action Items

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:

March 19, 2019

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

A RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT OF THE URBAN BUTTERFLY INITIATIVE'S PROCLAMATION OF CHARLESTON AS THE BUTTERFLY CAPITAL OF ILLINOIS AND PROCLAMATION OF THE MAYOR'S MONARCH PLEDGE DAY

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

19-R-22--In Support of UBI Designation and Mayor's Monarch Proclamation (CC 3-19-2019).pdf

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.

We've worked with the Coles County Master Gardeners and Coles County Health Department to integrate butterfly/pollinator friendly plants in their efforts.

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.

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

Coles County Health Department, CCAR, City of Charleston.

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

Mowing schedules have been modified. For example, at our local lake, mowing was shifted to late October to accommodate monarchs.

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.

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

Coles County Master Gardeners, Coles County Soil and Water Conservation

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

We've met with several gardening-oriented local groups, including the local nature center (Douglas-Hart Nature Center) and Coles County Master Gardeners, to educate them about our efforts and to get them to help spread the word. One tangible outcome: both groups are specifically including monarch/pollinator plants in their local spring plant sale.

Convert vacant lots to monarch habitat.

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

5th and Van Buren

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

Urban Butterfly Initiative

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.

1

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)

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4

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

We have converted abandoned lots to habitat, including sites at the city library that total approximately 1 acre.

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?

City of Charleston and Urban Butterfly Initiative

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.

2021 The City's Comprehensive Plan can be found at www.charlestonillinois.org.

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

Pollinator restoration, and butterfly conservation is explicitly detailed in the City's adopted comprehensive plan of 2020. For example, one recommendation of the plan is "implementing the "Mayor's Monarch Pledge" action items" (comp plan page 92). The Urban Butterfly Initiative's action items and conservation efforts are included on pages 111-112.

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?

City of Charleston and UBI

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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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.

2021 The City's Comprehensive Plan can be found at www.charlestonillinois.org.

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

The City's comprehensive plan states "native planting and invasive removal programs will be especially important around the Lake Charleston area..." (page 92); and the "city should continue building and setting aside land for native habitat and pollinator projects and coordinating with groups like the Urban Butterfly Initiative by creating new "Butterfly Hotspots" on public land..." (page 92).

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?

City of Charleston, Charleston Tree Commission, Urban Butterfly Initiative

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

complete and ongoing

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.

2021 The City's Comprehensive Plan can be found at www.charlestonillinois.org; and 2003. The City Code including Title 10 "Unified Development Code" can be found at www.charlestonillinois.org.

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

The City's comprehensive plan states "native planting and invasive removal programs will be especially important around the Lake Charleston area..." (page 92); and the "city should continue building and setting aside land for native habitat and pollinator projects and coordinating with groups like the Urban Butterfly Initiative by creating new "Butterfly Hotspots" on public land..." (page 92). The City's Unified Development Code outlines a list

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of "Trees Suitable for Parkway Planting". The City's Tree Commission and Planning Department work hand-in-hand to plant native trees as a priority.

Remove milkweed from the list of noxious plants in city weed / landscaping ordinances (if applicable).

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

City of Charleston

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.

2008

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

Milkweed is not specifically listed as a "noxious plant" in the City Code.

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).

We've continued to use social media (Facebook & Instagram), met with local groups (e.g. master gardeners), given talks at schools, and had local news coverage (newspapers, TV, regional magazines).

Create a community art project to enhance and promote monarch and pollinator conservation as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

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

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Coles County Art Council

How many individuals were engaged in this effort? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 50).

100

Please describe the community art project that was implemented in your community and how it contributed to cultural awareness and recognition (e.g., number of art installations, type of art).

The Coles County Art Council held a photography contest relating to butterflies, flowers, and birds, specifically to support the messaging of Butterflies and Butterfly Habitat in Charleston and at approximately the same time as our Charleston Butterfly Blitz. The winners of the contest were displayed at a mobile gallery, occupying nature sites such as near one of our butterfly habitats at Lake Charleston and at the Douglas Hart Nature Center. We do not know the actual number of people who viewed the displays but the locations are heavily visited so 100 is a very conservative estimate.

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

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

100

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

100

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

We support (by reviewing plant lists and making suggestions, helping advertise plant sales, etc.) the native plant sales of Coles County Master Gardeners, Douglas Hart Nature Center, and Grand Prairie Friends. Combined they have 100's of participants and sell hundreds of plants.

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)

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Coles County Health Department, which is the site of our local farmer's market, held weekly during the growing season.

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

Urban Butterfly Initiative and City of Charleston

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.

0.1

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)

The Urban Butterfly Initiative (UBI) is a nonprofit organization initiated in 2018 that partners with and is supported by the City of Charleston. UBI helps support the creation of habitat, community outreach for environmental education related to nature in general and butterflies specifically (to the pubic, to schools, to organizations, etc.), and encourages and supports research related to the effort.

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)

20

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

Sprouts Nature School Jefferson Elementary School Charleston High School Eastern Illinois University

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

We have created a free e-guide to common butterflies in our region, we have lists of recommended plants for home gardens (that include general landscape design tips,

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sources of plants, etc.), and we give lots of direct consultation help.

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).

200 students and 10 educators

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

Urban Butterfly Initiative, Charleston Carnegie Public Library

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.

10

What is the maintenance schedule to ensure planted habitat is maintained?

Same schedule as for other public sites (regular volunteer maintenance plus annual clean up)

Host or support a monarch neighborhood challenge to engage neighborhoods and homeowners' associations within the community to increase awareness, support community unity around a common mission, and/or create habitat for the monarch butterfly.

How many estimated individuals participated in your challenge? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 100).

20

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

Urban Butterfly Initiative and City of Charleston

When did this challenge take place?

ongoing

What is the total acreage of habitat created? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 2 acres). For reference, 1 acre =

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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

Please describe your challenge and the results.

The City is a relatively small community and does not have active homeowner's associations, however, many community members have created new butterfly gardens and others have planted butterfly supporting plants throughout the City. In 2021 as just one example, a local church upgraded and resurfaced its parking lot; and as part of its parking lot work, milkweed plants were included in the island and buffer landscape.

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)

10

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

Several "Butterfly Habitat in Progress" signs have been posted at the city's "butterfly hotspots". In 2022, the City plans to install 10 more "Butterfly Habitat in Progress" signs; along with NWF "Certified Wildlife Habitat" signs and IDOT "Operation Habitat / Under Construction" signs. In addition, we are working with Tarble Arts Center to design interpretive signs for butterflies and associated native plants for installation at our butterfly hotspots.

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.

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)

50

What was the date of your festival?

"Butterfly Blitz" event began in 2019 and is our annual event

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

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City of Charleston and Urban Butterfly Initiative

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).

Each year, we average 50 participants in the annual "Butterfly Blitz" event that occurs at the end of July. The event includes marketing on social media and in local newspapers, so the impact is much larger than the participants. Also, when possible, it has a public celebration at the end of the Blitz, in addition to dissemination of the results on social and print media platforms.

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

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

City of Charleston and Urban Butterfly Initiative

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 continues to discuss ordinances related to native prairie and plant habitats. Currently, residents may establish "intentional" looking native plant habitats within their yards (e.g. planned, with edging, etc.), as long as those habitats are maintained and do not interfere with pedestrian and motor traffic.

Launch, expand, or continue one or more ordinances to reduce light pollution to benefit urban wildlife.

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

City of Charleston

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.

2003. The City Code including Title 10 "Unified Development Code" can be found at www.charlestonillinois.org.

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

In 2003, the City adopted its Unified Development Code which requires luminary types to be: "down-light", indirect, diffused or shielded. In addition the code states "any light used for illumination of buildings, signs, parking areas, security, or for any other purposes shall be arranged so as to contain lighting on the property on which the light source is located..."

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

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

Coles County Soil and Water Conservation and Master Gardeners

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

Charleston is a small community without active HOAs or neighborhood organizations. However, on a broader scale, we have engaged with community members through social media, presentations, had informational tables at street fairs, and maintained milkweed demonstration gardens to encourage community members to adjust their current approaches to gardening and "lawn." We have also supported the native plant sales of Douglas-Hart Nature Center and Coles County Master Gardeners by reviewing plant lists, giving them plant suggestions, and helping make people aware of their sales on our promotional materials.

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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

5

What species were collected or propagated?

swamp and common milkweed

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

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City of Charleston

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

We have organized milkweed seed collection at local sites for use in our new habitat creation and propagated milkweed to give away free to local gardeners who maintain flower garden “adopt-a-corner's" along the main city avenue.

Initiate or support community science (or citizen science) efforts that help monitor monarch migration and health.

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).

150

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

Urban Butterfly Initiative

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

We have initiated iNaturalist projects to engage local community members and university students to submit observations of butterflies in our area.

Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.

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

City of Charleston and Urban Butterfly Initiative

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

200

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

For several years, milkweed and nectar producing plants have been planted within the dozens of "Butterfly Hotspots" throughout the City. In 2021, 50 new butterfly weed plants were planted in a pollinator garden at Lake Charleston. The Coles County Health Department manages its community garden, which is where our MIlkweed Demonstration

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Garden is located with several varieties of milkweed and other nectar and host plants can be found. This effort is ongoing.

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.

20

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.

Every year the Embarras Volunteer Stewards offer invasive removal program dates nearly every weekend throughout the summer. In addition, in 2021 the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (Nature Preserves Commission) hired contractors to conduct stewardship (invasive removal program) at Woodyard Conservation area and other volunteer efforts help remove invasive species and replant native species at Reasor Park.

Engage with developers, planners, landscape architects, and other community leaders and organizers engaged in planning processes to identify opportunities to create monarch habitat.

Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and associated opportunities to create monarch habitat.

We have organized milkweed seed collection at local sites for use in our new habitat creation and propagated milkweed to give away free to local gardeners who maintain flower garden “adopt-a-corner”s along the main city avenue. All new city development now looks for opportunities to include native plantings. For example, at Lake Charleston, new construction created spaces along an access road that were planted with milkweed, asters, etc. And through the visibility of our butterfly hotspots throughout the city, our marketing as the "Butterfly Capital of Illinois," and our use of social and print media, other developers/planners/leaders in the area are now coming to us with opportunities. For example, the Urban Butterfly Initiative is now partnering with Camp New Hope (an organization with a 40-acre site near Charleston that creates opportunities for physically and mentally disabled people and their families) to convert multiple acres of their turf grass into butterfly habitat and manage their forested areas for invasive species (replacing with native). In addition, we are working with Eastern Illinois University in Charleston to convert up to 10-20 acres of turf grass.

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

City of Charleston, Monarch City-USA, Pheasants Forever, NWF

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

NWF Certified Wildlife Habitat Sites at Reasor Park, Woodyard Park and the Lincoln Prairie Grass Trail, Monarch City-USA; 2018-2019 Polaris Habitat Stewardship Award (Pheasants Forever / Quail Forever); IDOT

Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.

Where are the medians, roadsides and public rights-of-way? (Please provide an address or coordinates, if possible, or describe the location)

We have planted more than 1 acre of native butterfly habitat along public right-of-way that coincides with a popular biking/walking trail and are including butterfly plants for our adopt-a-corner gardens along the main city avenue. We are currently working with IDOT to convert right of way into pollinator habitat along State Highways in the area - specifically starting with Highway 130 between Woodyard Park and Lake Charleston. IDOT has provided signage to the City stating "Under Construction" "Operation Habitat" to help make sure these areas are not mowed by IDOT crews and to educate the public.

How many milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants were planted? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

1000

What is the total acreage of median and public right-of-way that has been planted with milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants? Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

1

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

Maintained by City of Charleston, volunteers, Rotary Club and Urban Butterfly Initiative. This includes regular volunteer events (e.g. "Butterfly Tuesdays") hosted by UBI and annual major "clean up" (mowing/trail maintenance) by the city. The City completed its first scheduled burn of several of the sites in 2021. Additional burns are planned for 2022 and we hope to burn on a 3-5 year schedule for each site. We are creating a burn plan for the public right-of-way at the Lincoln Prairie Grass Trail which we hope to conduct in 2022.

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

Urban Butterfly Initiative

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.

www.charlestonillinois.org

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

The city has reviewed common practices and on city-owned land (parks, city facilities, etc), the city maintenance crews minimize the use of insecticides and other pesticides that might be harmful to pollinators. Specifically, in the Charleston City Code Title 10, Chapter 11 (1993) the city adopted ordinance 93-O-14 where the use of pesticides and herbicides are regulated on land situated in the Charleston side channel watershed. The Charleston City Code can be found at www.charlestonillinois.org.

Create a community-driven educational conservation strategy, initiative, or practice that focuses on and benefits local, underserved residents.

Please describe the process to create the strategy , the strategy goals and content, and/or results of implementation. Please also identify who was engaged in this process, what partnerships were established, and how you engaged these groups. Provide a link, if possible.

We have a prominent butterfly garden/habitat at the Charleston Carnegie City Library, at highly visible sites at the much-visited city lake, and are developing butterfly habitat along a popular biking/walking trail. The City of Charleston adopted its 2020 Comprehensive Plan which encourages coordination with the Urban Butterfly Initiative, Schools and Eastern Illinois University to continue to fins ways to expand our programs. The plan specifically identifies coordinating with schools and EIU to expand this work to all areas of the community. Working with our local CUSD #1, we have expanded our education conservation strategy to all sectors including underserved residents - by using classroom presenters to discuss these topics. We are currently offering talks in schools and working with teachers and administration to expand conservation programs. The City's Comprehensive Plan can be found at www.charlestonillinois.org.

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