City of Eaton Rapids

Eaton Rapids, MI

Mayor Pam Colestock

Pledge Summary

The City of Eaton Rapids is a city of nearly 5,300 residents. We are committed to educating the community and providing examples of why and how monarch butterflies and pollinator insects play an important role in our environment health.

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.
- 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.

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.

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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.
- 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.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Pam Colestock	2026	3/10/2026	

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Mayor Pam Colestock	2025	2/18/2025	Leadership Circle
Mayor Pam Colestock	2024	2/16/2024	Leadership Circle
Mayor Pam Colestock	2023	2/22/2023	Leadership Circle
Mayor Pam Colestock	2022	2/3/2022	Leadership Circle
Mayor Paul Malewski	2021	2/19/2021	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.)

200

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.

City Hall, Monarch Park, Hall Street Park

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

The City of Eaton Rapids is classified as a low income community, the Mayor's Monarch Pledge is offering low cost programming to engage community member and their interests with a greater program.

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

The Parks, Recreation & Events Board were looking for a way to reach the community on a program level where anyone with interest could participate, be successful and feel a part of something big happening in our community.

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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?

The overall ease of navigation and ability to see what other communities are doing to achieve their action items has helped us to achieve ours. Some interactive tools such as info sheets, social media outreach posts, and coloring/activity pages would be very helpful to help get the word out to our community.

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

We are looking forward to continuing our efforts and renewing our pledge next year!

Selected Action Items

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.

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

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.

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)

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

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.

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Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

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).

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

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

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)

What was the date of your festival?

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

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).

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?

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.

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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?

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.

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.

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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?

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 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?

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.

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

The City of Eaton Rapids launched a public communication effort encouraging residents to plant monarch-friendly gardens by promoting the use of native plants throughout the community. In May, the City issued an official proclamation declaring the month as Monarch Education and Awareness Month. This information, along with guidance on planting native species, was shared in the City's monthly newsletter to raise awareness and inspire residents to add monarch-supportive plants to their home gardens and neighborhoods.

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.

The City's Parks, Recreation & Events Department partnered with the Earth to Table Garden, a local community garden group, to plant native milkweed and other nectar-producing plants. Seeds grown through this partnership will return to our program and be distributed to students in Eaton Rapids Public Schools, promoting monarch-friendly gardening throughout the community.

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.

City of Eaton Rapids - Parks, Recreation & Events Board - Arts Council - Recreation Sub-Committee - Department of Public Works

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

The Parks, Recreation and Events Department worked in conjunction with the Department of Public Works to maintain a mowing plan that limits contact with native plants the are growing along our river banks. This is an ongoing plan now for 5 years.

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.

Earth to Table Garden, City of Eaton Rapids Parks Boards & Committees, MSU Extension

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

Board Member Emelia Emerson continues to play a vital role in the Mayors Monarch Pledge in Eaton Rapids. Emelia, a Master Gardener, helps the board each year to determine where to focus our attention on communicating with the public in regard to our pledge, getting information out and easily accessible.

Create a community art project to enhance and promote 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.

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

Eaton Rapids Arts 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).

50

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).

In April of 2025 the Eaton Rapids Arts Council created an Eaton Rapids Coloring Book with pages referring to the Monarch Pledge. These coloring books were disbursed to local youth in our community at various Arts Council Events.

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.

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

200-250

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

50

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

Parks, Recreation & Events Board

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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

100

What species were collected or propagated?

Milkweed Seeds and other Native Plants

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

Arts Council and the Parks, Recreation & Events Board

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

During Art in the Park, a booth was set up to pass out milkweed seed and other Native Plants to the event attendees. The booth was manned with members of the boards to discuss the importance of native plants and how to plant/grown the milkweed seeds.

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)

The new Demonstration Garden is located in Hall Street Park at 343 Hall Street in the Northern-most Corner. There is also a demonstration garden at Earth To Table Garden located at 220 Dexter Road.

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

The Eaton Rapids Parks, Recreation & Events Board/Earth to Table Garden

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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.

0.5

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)

For the 5th year, we partnered with our local elementary school to provide each student in that building (400 students in total) with an activity sheet/information sheet about Monarch Butterflies and a packet of pollinator seed mix to be planted at their home.

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)

1

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

Lockwood Elementary School

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

We provided the school with a script to read to their students about the importance of pollinators and how to help support habitats for monarch butterflies.

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).

400 Students, 20 Educators

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

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The City of Eaton Rapids Parks, Recreation & Events Board worked to create the materials and prepare the seed packets

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.

0.89

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

Much like last year, we checked in with teachers and students near the end of the year to see how their gardens were growing and what they could expect to see in the coming months.

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?

Eaton Rapids Public Schools, Eaton Rapids Parks, Recreation & Events Department, Eaton Rapids Arts Council

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

50

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

While partnering with Eaton Rapids Public Schools to disburse Milkweed Seeds, kids were encouraged to plant the seed in their gardens. Furthermore, we handed out Milkweed plants at the Eaton Rapids Art in the Park Event in June, 2025. Attendees were provided information on Milkweed plants and the importance they play in the Monarch Ecosystem and took free plants home to plant in their gardens.

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.

34.8

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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.

The Oak Ridge Park Recreation Cooperative has been removing invasive species throughout their trail system at Oak Ridge Park over the last three years. While doing this, they are continuing to plant native species plants in their place.

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)

1

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

Located in the new Hall Street Habitat at 343 Hall St, Eaton Rapids, MI Our sign was a very basic sign that explained the importance of habitats for pollinator insects. It also explained that the habitat was in the early stages of development.

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 Mayor, City Manager, Eaton Rapids Parks, Recreation & Events Board.

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.

In our 2025-2029 Eaton Rapids Area Parks & Recreation Master Plan we added "Natural Barrier" areas for parks along rivers to help with Bank Stabilization. In addition - at Hall Street Park, we added an action item of planting Native Flower in a small plot within the park along the river.

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:

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April 28, 2025

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

May 2025 Monarch Education and Awareness Month

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

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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.

The City of Eaton Rapids has developed a community-driven conservation initiative focused on increasing access to environmental education for underserved residents. Through partnerships with local schools, the Earth to Table Garden, and community organizations, the Parks, Recreation & Events Department provides free, hands-on learning opportunities centered on native plants, pollinator protection, and monarch conservation. This initiative includes distributing free native plant seeds to students and families, offering educational workshops in accessible neighborhood locations, and creating small demonstration gardens in parks that residents can visit and learn from at no cost. The strategy ensures that environmental education and conservation resources reach all community members, especially those who may have limited access to traditional programming.

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).

50

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

City of Eaton Rapids Summer Camps, Arts Council, Eaton Rapids Schools, Earth to Table Garden

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

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The City of Eaton Rapids supported community science efforts by sharing monarch monitoring resources with local schools and incorporating them into the curriculum for our Summer Kids Camps. Students and families were introduced to the National Wildlife Federation's Butterfly Heroes program (https://butterfly.nwf.org/), which provides tools for observing monarch behavior, understanding migration patterns, and reporting findings. By integrating these resources into educational settings, we encouraged youth participation in citizen science and helped build community awareness around monarch health and conservation.

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).

12

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

Parks, Recreation & Events Board, Eaton Rapids Residents

When did this challenge take place?

May-September

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 = 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

Please describe your challenge and the results.

The City of Eaton Rapids supported a monarch-themed neighborhood engagement effort by encouraging residents and neighborhood groups to participate in a community-wide planting challenge throughout the spring and summer. Through our public communications —including the City newsletter and social media—we invited neighborhoods to showcase their use of native milkweed and nectar-producing plants, share photos of their pollinator-friendly spaces, and celebrate collective progress toward expanding monarch habitat. This informal challenge helped raise awareness, promote friendly neighborhood participation, and inspire residents across Eaton Rapids to contribute to monarch conservation efforts.

Convert vacant lots to monarch habitat.

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

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

Hall Street Park - 343 Hall Street, Eaton Rapids, MI 48827

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

Parks, Recreation & Events Department

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.

0.03

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)

1

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

The northern corner of the lot at Hall Street Park is currently in the process of being converted to a dedicated monarch habitat. Initial preparation and planting began in 2025, with additional native plantings planned over the next two growing seasons to fully establish the habitat. The area will be maintained through seasonal mowing and invasive species removal each spring and fall, with ongoing monitoring by the Parks, Recreation & Events Department to support long-term habitat health and native plant growth.

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