City of Polk City

Polk City, IA

Mayor Steve Karsjen

Pledge Summary

Polk City is a growing community located in central Iowa, northwest of the Des Moines metro, with a population of 6500. Polk City is uniquely located between Big Creek State Park and Saylorville Lake, two thriving outdoor destinations with a variety of flora and fauna. Priding itself on outdoor recreation and natural areas, Polk City is excited to take the Mayors' Monarch Pledge. Mayor Karsjen of Polk City, IA is ready to help the monarch butterfly and other pollinators by public engagement, awareness, and providing more pollinator habitat.

Action Items Committed for 2025

Communications and Convening

- Issue a proclamation to raise awareness about the decline of the monarch butterfly and the species' need for habitat. This proclamation must incorporate a focus on monarch conservation.

Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.
- Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.
- Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Steve Karsjen	2026	4/30/2026	
Mayor Steve Karsjen	2025	4/30/2025	Signatories

Action Items

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.

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

Polk City is surrounded by beautiful native areas. As Polk City has developed, some of those areas have been impacted. Polk City has made it a priority to reestablish native/pollinator areas where possible.

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?

Being able to see what other communities have done was very beneficial as a first time pledge community.

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.).

650

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.

Common areas and parks

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

The areas being planted are all near or in Polk City parks. These parks serve different areas of our community, but are all easily accessible by car, bike, or foot.

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.)

325

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

It has been a lot of fun engaging with the public as these areas develop. At first, some explanations were met with skepticism. As the areas grew and flowered, skepticism has evolved into admiration.

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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:

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

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

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

20

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

Planting new milkweed plants was a priority in 2025. 20 new plants were added to several native areas throughout Polk City. 2 were added to the town square, 6 were added to existing "pollinator patches" in Lost Lake Park, and 12 were added to a new planting area at Leonard Park.

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

Polk City Parks and Recreation partnered with Polk City's Public Works department as well as Polk City Friends of the Parks (501c3).

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)

Polk City prioritized the establishment of additional pollinator friendly gardens in 2025. Areas selected were Leonard Park (413 N. Parker Boulevard) and Twelve Oaks Park (1349 Twelve Oaks Drive). The Leonard Park location is on a main N-S road through Polk City and is near the Neal Smith Trail, a 26-mile regional multiuse trail.

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

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Polk City Parks and Recreation and Public works coordinated the implementation of these areas. Polk City Friends of the Parks (501c3) provided assistance.

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

Leonard Park 1.jpeg

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

Leonard Park 2.jpeg

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

Leonard Park 3.jpeg

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.

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

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

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

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

Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

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

Signage 1.jpeg

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

Signage 2.jpeg

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

4

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

Polk City established our first two "pollinator patches" in 2024, located at Lost Lake Park. Two signs displaying no mow/no spray and pollinator friendly are present at each patch. Signage was purchased from Amazon. Polk City intends to purchase additional signage in 2026 for areas at Twelve Oaks Park and Leonard Park.
https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0D6W4BWT7?ref=fed_asin_title&th=1
https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0DJQH7DG5?ref=fed_asin_title&th=1

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