City of Westerville

Westerville, OH

Mayor Kenneth Wright

Pledge Summary

When a community calls itself a “City Within a Park,” you know there’s a true dedication to parks and recreation. With more than 650 acres of parkland, 18,000 trees, 51 miles of trails and four premier facilities (including an expanded 145,000 square foot community center), Westerville lives up to this vision. In fact, thanks to years thoughtful planning, 95% of City homes are located within a half-mile of a developed park. You see, Westerville’s parks aren’t simply a weekend destination, but a core identifying feature of the community. City Council developed a set of Strategic Initiatives the guides decisions about how the city is managed. Environmental sustainability is one of the three lenses the City of Westerville uses to achieve safe and vibrant neighborhoods, connected and engaged residents, an authentic and alive Uptown and a thriving business climate. Westerville has many environmental and sustainable programs and projects underway that demonstrate this commitment and strong public support for sustainability programs/efforts. Efforts in the Parks Department to help the pollinators, and Monarch Butterflies include restoration of garden beds to include pollinator friendly, and native, plant materials; creation of no mow zones; installation of additional pollinator beds; and restoration of wetland areas.

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

Program and Demonstration Gardens

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

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor David Grimes	2026	3/12/2026	
Mayor Kenneth Wright	2025	1/15/2025	Signatories
Mayor Kathy Cocuzzi	2021	3/4/2021	

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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.

0.14

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

The Mayor's Monarch Pledge aligns with City Council's Strategic Initiatives. Specifically, Westerville pursues current and emerging opportunities for environmental sustainability, including being mindful of the impact of our actions on natural resources and biodiversity.

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?

We have been relying on our community partners, including the Westerville Garden Club and a Planting Life, to help fund and install native pollinator gardens throughout the community. Any information on nationwide grant programs that fund monarch habitat creation or pollinator garden installation, would be appreciated.

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.).

200

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.

All of the installations have been on public property within our park system or rights-of-way. While we have done outreach on the benefits of using native and pollinator friendly species, we do not include private property installation in our counts.

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

Our installations are being done throughout Westerville, so there is no noticeable difference between our affluent and marginalized neighborhoods. Westerville is one community. All public property is treated the same.

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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.)

12

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

We partnered with a Planting Life and some of our local garden club members to design and install native pollinator habitat in two parks. These areas are divided into six separate areas in the respective locations. Planting Life supported the initiative with a $5,000 donation and helped provide feedback on the designs. In addition to these new plantings, landscape procedures in the department continue to support and encourage the retention of milkweed wherever it may pop up in landscape beds.

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:

2/18/2025

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

Monarch Pledge Day Proclamation

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

MONARCH_PLEDGE_DAY_PROCLAMATION_2025.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.

Our Parks Maintenance Superintendent had email correspondence with the Westerville Garden Club, that has roughly 200 members.

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

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Fwd_ Westerville Initiatives.pdf

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

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

425

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

We added 6,250 square feet of monarch habitat with 425 nectar producing plants. The City partnered with a Planting Life and local garden club members to design and install native pollinator habitat in two parks. These areas are divided into six separate areas in the respective locations. Planting Life supported the initiative with a $5,000 donation and helped provide feedback on the designs.

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

The City worked with the Westerville Garden Club and a Planting Life on the installation.

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