

Pocket Prairie Project Charter

Goal: Utilizing plants native to our region, create “pocket prairies” within Saugatuck city limits that support wildlife by providing nectar, seeds and shelter.

Objectives

- Support pollinating birds, bees, butterflies, and moths
- Provide food and shelter for birds and small animals
- Pocket Prairies will also qualify as Monarch Waystations, supporting endangered Monarch butterflies
- Promote the concept of pocket prairies within our community with the goal of encouraging residents to include these gardens within their own property

Participants

Leader – Nancy Kimble

PPW Committee Members – Keith Charak, Kelly Roche

External Resources –ODC, Rotary Club, Friends of the Saugatuck Parks

Community Volunteers – Randy Dirosa and Tracy Meyers

Saugatuck City Staff – Mark Ondersma, Michelle Gibson, and TBD

Background

As our community is a very desirable place to live, property development continues to reduce the number of natural areas available to wildlife. Typically, natural areas are replaced with buildings and landscaping that include mowed lawns and shrubbery that do provide only minimal support to native wildlife. For example, iconic monarch butterfly caterpillars require plants in the milkweed family to survive. Milkweed plants are not typically included in most professionally landscaped areas. Reductions in available milkweed have contributed to the drastic reduction in our monarch butterfly populations. Pocket prairies that include milkweed plants can help to reduce this trend and support numerous other species of pollinators. Also, birds are supported by the insects attracted to these areas as well as the seed they produce.

Approach

- Create prototype garden at the Peterson Preserve
- Identify locations suitable for pocket prairies.
- Locations should be a minimum of 100 square feet.
- Determine funds required to convert the identified areas and obtain sources of funding
- Obtain City Council authorization to initiate this project

Project Risks and Mitigation:

Risk: Prairie gardens take time to develop potentially resulting in negative initial public perception

Mitigation Strategy: Include hardy fast growers to add color and beauty in the first year. Also develop signage that sets expectations.

Target End Date: 12/31/2027

Charter Date: 9/17/2026

Charter Prepared by: Nancy Kimble

Attachement A: Peterson Preserve Pocket Prairie – August 2026



Attachment B: MI DNR Publication on Monarch Butterflies



Monarch butterflies winging their way north to Michigan

Several efforts under way to bolster declining populations

With spring now sprung in Michigan, soon we'll be welcoming back to the state one of the most distinctive signs that summer is on its way – the brightly colored monarch butterfly.

Monarchs are on their way north from Mexico, where they spend the winter months. While National Start Seeing Monarchs Day is observed annually on the first Saturday in May, it may be a [few more weeks before they make their way across Michigan](#).

One of the most well-known and beloved butterfly species in North America, with their easily recognized orange and black wing pattern, monarchs have become a much less common sight in recent decades.

The eastern monarch butterfly population has declined by 90 percent over the last 20 years due mainly to habitat loss, both in their summer range – including Michigan – and in Mexico, where they overwinter.

"Because of the tremendous migration they make, monarchs need a variety of habitats," said Dan Kennedy, Michigan Department of Natural Resources endangered species coordinator. "In the early summer, they lay their eggs on milkweed because that's the only plant their caterpillars will eat."

"Monarchs also need habitat to overwinter in, not to mention habitat where they can stop and refuel along the way. They are very active insects and require a wide variety of flowering plants to provide the food they need to survive and make their long journey."

Scientists monitor the eastern overwintering population of monarch butterflies in Mexico. This year's population reports indicate that monarch butterflies continue to decline, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The forest area the eastern monarch population occupied decreased 27 percent from winter 2015-2016, due to a series of severe storms.

"This year's population numbers accentuate how imperative it is for our countries to continue working together to protect and conserve this amazing species – as well as the role every person plays in ensuring a future filled with monarchs," said Tom Melius, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Midwest regional director and the service's lead for the Monarch Butterfly Conservation Initiative.





“It will take all of us working together in city backyards and across vast agricultural acres, to reverse this population decline.”

Monarchs are pollinating insects that travel to flowering plants, drinking nectar and transporting pollen.

They’re not the only pollinators on the decline – bee populations worldwide also have decreased dramatically in recent decades, and the rusty patched bumble bee recently was listed as an endangered species.

“Pollinators, like butterflies and bees, are responsible for approximately one-third of the world’s food source,”

said Kennedy. “Because of the important role pollinators play in people’s lives, it is up to us to help keep these pollinator populations abundant and healthy.”

The alarming declines in monarchs and other pollinators have sparked conservation programs across the nation.

Kennedy said the DNR has been working with the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies to develop a regional monarch conservation strategy that will cover key breeding and migration habitat across 16 states.

In addition, the DNR and more than 25 partners in the state have been working to develop Michigan’s Monarch and Wild Pollinator Strategy.

The Michigan Farm Bureau, the state’s largest general farm organization, is one of the key partners in the strategy to conserve monarch butterflies.

“Michigan’s farmers recognize the importance of both native and managed pollinators to support our state’s incredible diversity of crop production,” said Laura Campbell, manager of Michigan Farm Bureau’s Ag Ecology Department. “We help support farmers in this interest.”

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has developed a [Protection Plan for Managed Pollinators in Michigan](#), which is our state’s response to the national strategy to protect managed pollinators from pesticide risk.

In addition to partnering with other agencies on both a pollinator protection plan for pesticide management and a monarch and native pollinator habitat plan, the Michigan Farm Bureau also encourages farmers to take advantage of technical assistance and cost-share programs available through the U.S. Department of Agriculture.



These programs have helped farmers establish almost 10,000 acres of pollinator habitat across nearly 500 farms, according to the USDA.

“We look forward to continuing our support of farmers’ efforts to implement smart, strategic and effective pollinator protection practices across the state,” Campbell said. “These efforts will help both pollinator populations and the success of Michigan’s farms.”

PROPOSAL FOR CONSERVATION SERVICES



This proposal was created for:

City of Saugatuck
102 Butler St, Saugatuck, MI 49453

General Background and Scope of Work:

This proposal is to address the conversion of two areas that are currently turfgrass lawn into native plant communities, including a basin/bioswale in Coughlin Park, and a tough-to-mow slope on a dead end of Mason St near downtown. The restoration of these areas into native plant communities would offer several environmental benefits including the reduction of mowing, irrigation, the creation of wildlife/pollinator habitat, and to serve as community examples for native landscaping. Based on the in-person site assessment discussing the project, we recommend the following ecological restoration plan in 2027:

1. Coughlin Park – Bioswale/Rain Garden

- The 3,280 ft² restoration area (see *Appendix C* for map) will be treated with multiple applications of broad-spectrum herbicide to eliminate existing turfgrass, invasive, and noxious species in the seed bank prior to planting.
 - First application: **Fall 2026**
 - Second application: **April 2027**
 - Third (final) application: **May 2027** (if necessary)
- A few weeks following the final application, the restoration areas will be planted with the following:
 - Oats/rye as a nurse crop
 - Michigan-native dry stormwater basin (see *Appendix A*)
 - Custom short-lived wildflower mix (to provide blooms as natives become established)
 - Additionally, **325** (4"-size) native plugs will be installed on randomized triangular spacing, highlighting species that take longer to establish from seed, including: Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), Indian Grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), Swamp Milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*), Blazing Star (*Liatris spicata*), Rattlesnake Master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*), etc.
- Single-net straw blanket will be used on any slopes greater than 3:1, and a light layer of straw mulch will be used to help retain moisture for new plugs and improve germination.

2. Mason Street - Hillside Turfgrass Conversion

- The 3,280 ft² potential hillside restoration area (see *Appendix C* for map) will require the same site preparation process as above to eliminate unwanted vegetation.
- Once site preparation is complete, the restoration area will be planted with the following:
 - Oats/rye as a nurse crop
 - Michigan-native wood's edge prairie mix (see *Appendix B*)
 - Custom short-lived wildflower mix (to provide blooms as natives become established)
 - Additionally, **250** (4"-size) native plugs will be installed on randomized triangular spacing, highlighting species that take longer to establish from seed, including: Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), Prairie Dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*), Penn Sedge (*Carex pensylvanica*), Aromatic Aster (*Symphotrichum oblongifolium*), Wild Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), etc.
- Single-net straw blanket will be used on any slopes greater than 3:1.

3. Establishment Period Maintenance

- Throughout the remainder of the 2027, as well as the 2028 growing season, the ODC Conservation Services team will assess the restoration areas a minimum of **once per month** throughout the entire growing season to inspect for issues such as: water stress, invading pests, rates of native seed germination, and the presence of invasive or noxious weeds.

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- Targeted herbicide treatments, hand-pulling, and/or mechanical control methods will be used where most applicable to remove noxious or invasive plant species throughout the restoration areas.

GENERAL NOTE: The typical establishment period for prairie restoration from seed ranges between 2-5 years. Many native species generally spend the first 1-2 growing seasons developing extensive root systems with little foliage to show above the soil's surface. For this reason, reducing competition from opportunistic species is crucial to ensure the success of prairie restoration projects. Given the frequency of invasive species in this area and their ability to outcompete native species; the control of invasive species will be our top priority in 2026 and beyond. At the end of the growing season of 2027, our team will re-address the establishment maintenance plan and provide a new proposal with updated pricing for additional years (if necessary).

Project Timeline:

- Site preparation ongoing between fall 2026-spring 2027
- Seeding and planting following site preparation in spring 2027

Project Cost:

- **Coughlin Park Rain Garden - \$6,500** (billed in spring 2027) ☐
- **Mason Street Hillside Restoration - \$4,900** (billed in spring 2027) ☐
- **Establishment Period Maintenance - \$3,000** (billed in April 2028) ☐

***PLEASE CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOXES ABOVE TO INDICATE ACCEPTED SERVICES. TO ENSURE TIMELY SCHEDULING AND SERVICE DELIVERY, PLEASE RESPOND PROMPTLY. DELAYS IN RESPONSE MAY RESULT IN CHANGES TO PROPOSED PROJECT TIMELINE OR AVAILABILITY.**

Note: This proposal accounts for pricing of all labor, materials, and equipment necessary to execute the outlined restoration project(s). If additional work is required beyond the scope of this proposal, we will provide written notification and pricing will be determined on a time and materials basis.

Exclusions: This proposal does not account for the following:

1. Mowing of the outlined restoration area(s) prior to the first herbicide application.
2. Maintenance of existing lawn or trails nearby, or directly within the restoration area(s).
3. Installation or maintenance of irrigation mechanisms.
4. Installation of exclusion fencing.
5. Removal or relocation of existing equipment/features on site.
6. Additionally, we are unable to warranty the failure of restoration projects due to incidents (by landowner or other party) related to:
 - Accidental or incidental herbicide applications within the restoration area such as, but not limited to, weed & feed (2-4D), glyphosate, and triclopyr.
 - Disturbance from vehicle or heavy equipment use within the restoration area.
 - Disturbance from excessive animal grazing or foot traffic within the restoration area.
 - Excessive drought, extreme weather, or natural disasters.
 - Improper watering and/or fertilization practices.

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Qualifications:

ODC Conservation Services staff is staffed by highly qualified conservation professionals with extensive experience in invasive species management, habitat assessment, and ecological restoration.

- ODC Network, and its subsidiaries, is a fully insured 501c3 and carries an extensive liability policy to conduct habitat improvement services in Michigan.
- State licensed herbicide applicators with certifications in Forest Pest, Right-of-Way, and Aquatic pesticide application.
- Manage 2,500+ acres of natural area across Michigan.
- Combined 25+ years' experience in invasive species management.
- Successfully restored over 250 acres of native prairie habitat.
- Experienced consultants in invasive species management, habitat assessment, and ecological restoration.
- Experience designing, installing, and maintaining native gardens/landscape beds.
- Proficient in identification of native and non-native Michigan flora and fauna.
- Advanced wetland delineation certification.
- Experienced GIS professionals.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit this proposal. We look forward to discussing the opportunity further with you. Please do not hesitate to ask questions or clarifications. If you choose to accept this proposal, please sign and return a copy.



Tanner Bricker, Conservation Services Director

If you wish to accept this proposal, please initial each page, as well as sign and date below:

Signature of Authorized Property Owner/Manager

Date



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Appendix A: Dry Stormwater Basin Mix

WILDFLOWERS	
Botanical Name (Common Name)	% by wt.
Achillea millefolium (Yarrow)	0.36
Agastache foeniculum (Anise Hyssop)	1.08
Allium stellatum (Prairie Onion)	1.44
Anemone canadensis (Canada Anemone)	0.36
Apocynum cannabinum (Dogbane)	0.36
Asclepias incarnata (Rose Milkweed)	1.08
Asclepias syriaca (Common Milkweed)	0.90
Asclepias tuberosa (Butterfly Weed)	1.08
Chamaecrista fasciculata (Partridge Pea)	11.51
Coreopsis lanceolata (Lance-leaf Coreopsis)	5.57
Coreopsis palmata (Prairie Coreopsis)	0.36
Dalea candida (White Prairie Clover)	2.52
Dalea purpurea (Purple Prairie Clover)	3.24
Eryngium yuccifolium (Rattlesnake Master)	2.88
Euthamia graminifolia (Grass-leaved Goldenrod)	0.18
Helianthus pauciflorus (Showy Sunflower)	0.36
Helianthus helianthoides (Early Sunflower)	3.60
Liatris pycnostachya (Prairie Blazing Star)	1.44
Lobelia siphilitica (Great Blue Lobelia)	0.58
Monarda fistulosa (Wild Bergamot)	0.72
Monarda punctata (Spotted Bee Balm)	1.44
Parthenium integrifolium (Wild Quinine)	1.80
Pycnanthemum virginianum (Mountain Mint)	1.08
Ratibida pinnata (Yellow Coneflower)	0.72
Rudbeckia hirta (Black-eyed Susan)	2.16
Scrophularia lanceolata (Early Figwort)	0.72
Solidago speciosa (Showy Goldenrod)	0.54
Symphyotrichum laeve (Smooth Blue Aster)	0.90
Symphyotrichum oblongifolium (Aromatic Aster)	0.36
Tradescantia ohimensis (Ohio Spiderwort)	2.16
Verbena stricta (Hoary Vervain)	1.80
Veronicastrum virginicum (Culver's Root)	0.36
Zizia aurea (Golden Alexanders)	4.31
Totals of WILDFLOWERS:	59.73 %
GRASSES, SEDGES & RUSHES	
Botanical Name (Common Name)	% by wt.
Bouteloua curtipendula (Side-oats Grama)	7.19
Elymus canadensis (Canada Wild Rye)	11.51
Carex vulpinoidea (Fox Sedge)	3.60
Schizachyrium scoparium (Little Bluestem)	15.82
Sporobolus heterolepis (Prairie Dropseed)	2.06
Totals of GRASSES, SEDGES & RUSHES:	40.27 %

**All of our seed mixes are thoughtfully custom-curated for each project and site. Final seed mix specifications may be adjusted as needed to account for subtle variations in sunlight exposure, soil conditions, and other site-specific factors.*

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Appendix B: Hillside Prairie Mix

WILDFLOWERS	
Botanical Name (Common Name)	% by wt.
Agastache foeniculum (Anise Hyssop)	0.56
Allium stellatum (Prairie Onion)	1.12
Asclepias incarnata (Rose Milkweed)	1.12
Astragalus canadensis (Canada Milk Vetch)	0.28
Bidens polylepis (Bearded Beggarticks)	0.56
Chamaecrista fasciculata (Partridge Pea)	17.95
Coreopsis lanceolata (Lance-leaf Coreopsis)	2.81
Crotalaria sagittalis (Rattlebox)	4.49
Dalea candida (White Prairie Clover)	1.68
Dalea purpurea (Purple Prairie Clover)	2.24
Drymocallis arguta (Prairie Cinquefoil)	0.56
Echinacea purpurea (Purple Coneflower)	3.37
Eryngium yuccifolium (Rattlesnake Master)	1.12
Gentianella quinquefolia (Stiff Gentian)	0.14
Helenium autumnale (Sneezeweed)	0.56
Heliopsis helianthoides (Early Sunflower)	0.56
Lobelia siphilitica (Great Blue Lobelia)	1.12
Monarda fistulosa (Wild Bergamot)	0.56
Oligoneuron rigidum (Stiff Goldenrod)	0.56
Penstemon digitalis (Foxglove Beardtongue)	1.12
Pycnanthemum virginianum (Mountain Mint)	0.56
Ratibida pinnata (Yellow Coneflower)	0.56
Rudbeckia hirta (Black-eyed Susan)	6.73
Rudbeckia triloba (Brown-eyed Susan)	0.28
Symphyotrichum laeve (Smooth Blue Aster)	1.12
Verbena hastata (Blue Vervain)	1.12
Verbena stricta (Hoary Vervain)	0.56
Zizia aurea (Golden Alexanders)	2.24
Total of WILDFLOWERS:	55.68 %
GRASSES, SEDGES & RUSHES	
Botanical Name (Common Name)	% by wt.
Bouteloua curtipendula (Side-oats Grama)	17.95
Carex brevior (Plains Oval Sedge)	2.24
Carex vulpinoidea (Brown Fox Sedge)	1.12
Elymus canadensis (Canada Wild Rye)	8.98
Juncus tenuis (Path Rush)	0.56
Schizachyrium scoparium (Little Bluestem)	13.46
Totals of GRASSES, SEDGES & RUSHES:	44.32 %

****All of our seed mixes are thoughtfully custom-curated for each project and site. Final seed mix specifications may be adjusted as needed to account for subtle variations in sunlight exposure, soil conditions, and other site-specific factors.***

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Appendix C: Map of Restoration Area(s)



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Rotary

Saugatuck-Douglas



Dear Nancy,

This letter is a confirmation that the Rotary Club of Saugatuck-Douglas, in partnership with Rotary District 6360 (D6360) and The Rotary Foundation (TRF), will provide up to \$10,000 for the purpose of offsetting the costs of converting the ground cover of two public areas in Saugatuck City from turf grass to native species grasses and wildflowers (known colloquially as the “Pocket Prairies” project) at the base of the hill on the eastern terminus of Mason Street downtown and the eastern swale of Coghlin Park, subject to the following requirements:

- the installation of the project be managed by the City of Saugatuck or a competent third party, such as the Outdoor Discovery Center, in collaboration and consultation with the City of Saugatuck and its relevant internal departments;
- that ongoing maintenance be the sole responsibility of the City of Saugatuck and/or its internal departments;
- the actual expenditures be documented and all purchase orders, invoices, and receipts be provided to RCSD before April 30, 2027.

Payment by RCSD to the City of Saugatuck or its contractors can only be made after invoices including itemized elements of actual expenditures are provided to RCSD by the City of Saugatuck.

Thank you,

Jim Sullivan
Foundation Committee Chair
The Rotary Club of Saugatuck-Douglas





Ryan Cummins, Manager
Saugatuck City
102 Butler Street
Saugatuck, MI 49453

September 17, 2026

Dear Ryan,

This letter is a confirmation that the Friends of the Saugatuck Parks will provide up to \$5,000 for the purpose of converting two public areas in Saugatuck City from turf grass and miscellaneous plants to native species grasses and wildflowers, commonly called “Pocket Prairies,” on the hill at the Mason Street End, located behind the SCA, and the bioswale at Coughlin Park.

The project will be managed and installed by the Outdoor Discovery Center (ODC) in collaboration and consultation with the City of Saugatuck’s Department of Public Works. The ODC will monitor and maintain the installations through December 2028. Afterwards, maintenance of the “Pocket Prairies” will be the responsibility of Saugatuck City.

Payment to the City of Saugatuck will be made upon completion of the installation of the plantings.

Thank you,

Keith Charak
President
Friends of the Saugatuck Parks