

FACTSHEET

Community Wildlife Habitat® Program



Concord, NC unveils its Community Wildlife Habitat sign at a local park

Photo Credit – Independent Tribune

More than 100 communities have earned the National Wildlife Federation's wildlife-friendly certification through the Community Wildlife Habitat program. These cities commit to create and restore wildlife habitat within their communities and educate citizens about how they can support local wildlife conservation.

Requirements to Certify Your Community

First, you must provide habitat for wildlife throughout the community – where people live, work, learn, play and worship.

- Communities do this by certifying individual backyards, school grounds, public parks, community gardens, places of worship, businesses & other properties as NWF Certified Wildlife Habitats®.
- Each individual certified site within the community provides the four basic elements that all wildlife need: food, water, cover and places to raise young, while integrating sustainable gardening practices.

- The number of sites a community must certify is determined by the community's population.

Second, NWF Community Wildlife Habitat® team's do outreach to educate residents about wildlife conservation and sustainable gardening practices such as reducing or eliminating chemical fertilizers and pesticides, conserving water, planting native plants and trees, composting and more.

- NWF Community Wildlife Habitats often do this by hosting workshops about gardening for wildlife, holding community events to clean up streams or remove invasive plant species and other projects to make the community healthier for people and wildlife alike.

CONTACT

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10 LARGEST CERTIFIED COMMUNITIES

Houston, TX

Broward County, FL

Fairfax County, VA

Austin, TX

Charlotte, NC

Sonoma County, CA

Collier County, FL

Greater Mason District, VA

Chula Vista, CA

Fort Lauderdale, FL

LARGEST REGISTERED COMMUNITIES

Chicago, IL

Oakland County, MI

Baltimore, MD

Washtenaw County, MI

Knoxville, TN

Medina County, OH

Benefits of Certification

There are many benefits to becoming certified by the National Wildlife Federation as a Community Wildlife Habitat. The Community Wildlife Habitat® program:

1) Provides a **proven program framework to engage citizens** in taking action to make their communities healthier, greener and wildlife-friendly.

2) Aligns with other community priorities such as **reducing polluted runoff**, becoming **more resilient** in the face of climate change, and expanding **urban tree canopy**.

3) Supports communities in creating and **implementing wildlife conservation strategies** such as creating corridors for wildlife and addressing pollinator decline through the use of native plants and reduction of pesticides.

4) Helps meet **clean water goals** by promoting the reduction or elimination of fertilizers and the use of native plants and trees which absorb more water than turf grass (especially when designed as rain gardens, bio-swales or other green infrastructure) and can **prevent polluted runoff** from reaching waterways.

5) **Beautifies a community** by creating habitat for wildlife with native wildflowers, trees and shrubs, adding water features such as ponds, and welcoming wildlife such as butterflies and birds.

6) **Builds community** by engaging community members in projects like installing a wildlife-friendly demonstration garden, conducting a workshop or volunteering to support larger events such as a restoration project or tree planting event.

7) Provides **national recognition** for your efforts to protect wildlife with opportunities for signage.

Getting Started

- Visit www.nwf.org/community to access all the information and materials you might need.
- One of the first steps is define the “community” you wish to get certified – your neighborhood, homeowners’ association, or your city, town, or county.
- After you review the materials online, you can fill out an application to join the program and officially begin work towards certification at www.nwf.org/community.
- Over time you will work with NWF and your team to achieve certification – this takes two years on average. NWF provides:
 - 1) Member-Only access to a wide variety of best practices resources that include detailed case studies, template websites and brochures, a how-to guide for hosting a native plant garden tour and much more.
 - 2) Member-Only networking opportunities with fellow Community Wildlife Habitats through regular conference calls, webinars and our online message boards / forums.
 - 3) The ability to create a customized home page for your community at www.nwf.org that will be included in our national map of wildlife-friendly communities.
 - 4) An automated system for tracking your certification, education and outreach points.
 - 5) Free paper applications and paper tip sheets for distribution at educational events on key topics like pollinators, neighbor-friendly wildlife gardening, nesting boxes, bird feeders, lawn reduction and more.
 - 6) Consultations with NWF staff by email and phone and a visit from an NWF official upon the certification of your community.
 - 7) A 30% discount on merchandise from the NWF catalog.

EXAMPLES OF CERTIFIED PROPERTIES

City of Hollywood Water Plant, FL

National Aquarium, MD

Houston Arboretum and Nature Center, TX

Dicken Elementary School, Ann Arbor, MI

Barnabee Farm, Bainbridge Island, WA

Jordan Orthodontics, Alpharetta, GA

Town of Cary Fire Station #8, NC

Irons Brothers Construction, Shoreline, WA

Nibley Elementary School, UT

Lincoln Park, City of Falls Church, VA

Lutheran Ministry in Christ, Coral Spring, FL

Quail Botanical Gardens, Encinitas, CA

Native American Center, University of Montana in Missoula

Inn The Woods B&B, Hyde Park, NY

Glenbarr at Muirfield Condos, Dublin, OH

City of Heston Golf Course, KS

Norton Public Library, MA

Cary Senior Center, NC

Woodlawn Cemetery, Knoxville, TN

Ferndale High School, MI