



COMMUNITY WILDLIFE
HABITAT[™]

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for the NWF Community Wildlife Habitat Program (Pre-Registration)

This FAQ will help answer some of your questions about the registration process for the National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat program. You will find much of what you need to learn about and register for the program online at www.nwf.org/community. This FAQ presents the answers to some questions that go into more detail about the program and how to sign up.

Q: How long has the Community Wildlife Habitat Program been in existence?

A: The Community Wildlife Habitat certified its first community, Alpine, CA, in 1998 and has been growing ever since.

Q: How is the Community Wildlife Habitat program different from "Garden for Wildlife?"

A: The Garden for Wildlife program is the National Wildlife Federation's umbrella program that encourages homeowners and other property owners to garden and landscape with wildlife in mind by providing all the key elements that wildlife need to survive – food, water, cover and places to raise young. The program also emphasizes sustainable gardening practices and the use of native plants. Through the Garden for Wildlife program, NWF provides information about how to attract birds, butterflies and other wildlife and offers a Certification program – Certified Wildlife Habitats – to recognize homeowners that garden for wildlife and certify wildlife-friendly habitats on their property. The Community Wildlife Habitat program takes this a step farther, supporting municipalities and community leaders who want to create and improve habitats for wildlife throughout their entire community.

Q: How is the Community Wildlife Habitat program different from a "Certified Wildlife Habitat?"

A: A Certified Wildlife Habitat is a single habitat/garden that meets NWF's requirements for providing food, water, cover, places to raise young and sustainable gardening practices. A Community Wildlife Habitat is a community that has officially entered into a partnership with the National Wildlife Federation and made the commitment to create dozens or hundreds of Certified Wildlife Habitats and implement community-wide education and outreach, thereby creating a community-wide habitat for wildlife.

Q: What are the benefits starting the Community Wildlife Habitat program where I live?

A: The Community Wildlife Habitat program offers many benefits – learn more on the at www.nwf.org/community on the “Benefits” page.

Q: Where can I find a list of registered and certified communities?

A: To view a map of our registered and certified communities, please visit the “Current Communities” page at www.nwf.org/community.

Q: What is the difference between a registered and certified community?

You become a registered community when you fill out the online application to sign up for the program. Registered communities are those working to become certified. Certified communities have reached this milestone.

Q: What does a community have to do to get certified?

A: The first step is to register by clicking “Sign Up Your Community” at www.nwf.org/community. Once you register, you are in our system and have access to all of our materials and support. Each community must earn “**Certification**” Points and “**Education and Outreach**” Points. The number of Certification Points needed to certify depends on the population of your community. The number of Education and Outreach Points required is the same for every community. You can see the specific ways you can earn Points at www.nwf.org/community on the “About” page. Once you have completed your goals and acquired enough Points, your community will be certified.

Q: What is the difference between “Education and Outreach” Points and “Certification” Points?

A: You earn **Certification Points** by certifying individual properties in your community. The number of certified properties required depends on your population. You have to earn to certify your community, and this is based on the population of your community. Each *home* certified is worth 1 Certification Point, each *common area* (public park, business, farm, place of worship, university and HOA common area, etc.) is 3 Points, and each *school* (Pre-K through 12 school or nature center) is worth 5 Points. **Education and Outreach Points** are tracked separately and include activities such as organizing a kickoff celebration, providing a Garden for Wildlife information booth at community events, participating in Community Wildlife Habitat conference calls, creating a native plant list for your community, organizing community cleanups, and other actions that spread the word and educate your community.

Q: How long does it take to go from registration to certification?

A: It typically takes two years to go from registration to certification; however some communities have taken longer than two years, while other small communities have reached certification within a few months!

Q: What kind of support does the Community Wildlife Habitat program provide team leaders?

NWF supports community teams in meeting their goals and achieving certification by providing access to our online resource center, free printed application and educational materials, networking opportunities and more. Learn more on the “About” page of www.nwf.org/community.

Q: Are there any costs associated with the program?

A: There is a one-time fee of \$99.00 to register your community. This one-time fee covers the cost for NWF to send you a “welcome package” that includes 2 Certified Wildlife Habitat signs and 1 Schoolyard Habitat sign for educational purposes. There are no other certification or annual fees for the community. There is however a \$20 certification fee for individual properties that are typically paid for by the habitat owner. These are typically homeowners, but for communities that wish to certify parks or common areas, the community may need to budget for those individual property certification fees as well. Everyone that does certify a property with NWF gets a personalized certificate with your name and habitat numbers, NWF’s *National Wildlife* magazine for one year and a discount on NWF’s catalog site. These individual property certification fees help offset a portion of the cost of running the program. As of 2016, schools can certify for free!

Q: What should I do before I register / sign up?

A: There are a few things to think about before you register. First, you need to decide if you wish to certify your neighborhood or HOA, your city or town or even your entire county. You will also want to consider who will help you to get your community certified. Every community has a core team that works to get their community certified. This might be a team of municipal staff from different departments, the landscaping committee of and HOA, a subcommittee of a town’s Environmental Action Committee or just a small team of community leaders with different strengths that want to earn this credential for their community.

Q: I need help convincing my community to join the program, can you help?

A: Yes, we can help. You might want to first consider printing off our program fact sheet on the “About” page of www.nwf.org/community. You can also contact us at community@nwf.org and we provide you with guidance on how to approach your town council or board.

Q: How do I register?

A: Registration is easy! Sign up your community at www.nwf.org/community. The website will guide you through the steps to take, including online payment (credit card only), inviting your team members to join your community and your next steps, such as conducting a community assessment and a launch event.

CERTIFYING INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

Q: How can I create a Certified Wildlife Habitat on my property?

A: Create a Certified Wildlife Habitat by providing food, water, cover and a place for wildlife to raise their young, and by using sustainable gardening practices.

- Information on how to create a wildlife habitat can be found here: <http://www.nwf.org/Garden-For-Wildlife/Create.aspx>
- Additional gardening tips and downloadable factsheets on how to create wildlife habitat can be found at here: www.nwf.org/gardenresources

Q: What is required to certify an individual property as a Certified Wildlife Habitat?

A: Certifying a site is as simple as providing the four habitat components — food, water, cover, places to raise young — and practicing sustainable gardening techniques such as eliminating pesticides, conserving water and planting native species. View our [Habitat Requirements Checklist](#).

Q: What are native plants, and why should I plant them?

A: Native plants are plants that have grown in a specific region for hundreds of years. They are well adapted to the climate, soils, rainfall and availability of pollinators and seed dispersers in a particular geographic area. Because they are suited to a specific region, native plants usually require less maintenance and are welcomed by wildlife, serving an important role in the local ecosystem. For more information visit [NWFs Native Plant Finder](#).