



## REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

**DATE:** SEPTEMBER 28, 2016

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** GREG RAMIREZ, CITY MANAGER 

**BY:** LOUIS CELAYA, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER 

**SUBJECT:** REQUEST FOR CONSIDERATION TO ENROLL THE CITY OF AGOURA HILLS IN THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION'S COMMUNITY WILDLIFE HABITAT PROGRAM

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The City has received a request from the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) to consider enrollment into the National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat Program (Wildlife Habitat Program).

The Wildlife Habitat Program looks to promote gardening for wildlife by creating community wildlife habitats (i.e., residential backyard, school grounds, parks, community gardens, etc.) throughout the City. From preliminary information received, there is a certification process required from applicants, whereby one of the first goals for a community seeking to take on their endeavor must be to identify a certain number of homes, schools and common areas that can become habitats. The certification process can take up to one year to complete, and there is an annual recertification process, whereby the achieving of modest established annual goals are met. This is then followed by education and outreach efforts that can include tables at community events, native plant sales, stream clean ups, and hosting workshops.

Currently, in California, there are four "certified communities". They are as follows:

- Alpine (May 1998)
- Scripps Ranch Estates (November 2009)
- Somona (May 2006)
- Chula Vista (April 2011)

The NWF requires a point of contact, and identification of "core team members" who will facilitate this program. Application submittals require a one-time application fee of \$99.

The NWF is planning a series of events in October, highlighting the Santa Monica Mountains and the Los Angeles areas efforts to co-exist with mountain lions and other wildlife. The NWF would like to announce the City's enrollment into the program at their October 19<sup>th</sup> kick-off press event. As the next regular meeting of the City Council is scheduled for October 26, 2016, after the October 19<sup>th</sup> press event, staff is requesting

the City Council consider this request. Staff has been advised that Beth Pratt-Bergstrom, NWF, and her organization, would undertake the majority of the application preparation work and certification process, with minimal assistance from City staff.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff is recommending the City Council authorize the preliminary enrollment of the City of Agoura Hills in the National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat Program, conditional upon minimal support work from City staff.

Attachments: National Wildlife Federal Letter to Mayor Schwartz – September 8, 2016  
NWF Community Wildlife Habitats Informational Sheet



September 8, 2016

Dear Mayor Schwarz,

I would like to thank you, the council members, and the City of Agoura Hills for being supporters of the Liberty Canyon Wildlife Crossing and other initiatives that promote the well-being of both wildlife and people.

We are planning a high profile series of events October 16-22 called "P-22 Day and Urban Wildlife Week" to highlight the Santa Monica Mountains and Los Angeles areas' amazing efforts to coexist with a mountain lion and other wildlife. The events will start in Agoura Hills, and I will be leading a 40 mile hike from there to Griffith Park, to symbolically trace P-22's route. The week will end with a big P-22 Day Festival in Griffith Park on 10/22. We have a virtual map component to the events and the 40 mile hike, and anticipate millions tuning in across the city and world (as we know P-22 is news). National Geographic and other outlets have expressed an interest in covering.

For the hike retracing P-22's route, we begin at the Liberty Canyon site in Agoura Hills with a kick-off press event on October 19. We hope to be able to have you and other council members announce at that event that the City of Agoura Hills has enrolled in the National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat Certification Program, which demonstrates leadership in environmental efforts. Austin and Baltimore are two of the many cities across the country who have completed certification, and Topanga just signed up this spring.

What does Agoura Hills enrolling in this program mean? At this point, we will just be announcing that you have enrolled and are working toward certification. It does not mean you have to complete any of the requirements at this time. Some cities take six months, others can take two years. Please see attached for more information.

Since we hope to announce this on October 19, I request that the City Council consider this item at the September 28 meeting. I am happy to answer any questions, or provide additional information.

Thank you so much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Beth Pratt-Bergstrom  
California Director  
The National Wildlife Federation

cc. Greg Ramirez



NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION®

# COMMUNITY Wildlife HABITATS

*Creating Healthier Communities,  
One Wildlife Habitat at a Time*

When your community becomes an NWF Community Wildlife Habitat, you join a select group of communities that have made gardening for wildlife a priority. By providing habitat, reducing chemicals, adding native plants, adjusting local policies to benefit pollinators and wildlife, reducing polluted runoff and conserving water, you will have made your community a healthier place for wildlife and humans alike. From major cities and counties to medium-size towns to small neighborhoods and homeowners associations, communities of all sizes can become NWF Community Wildlife Habitats.

## **What is an NWF Community Wildlife Habitat?**

NWF Community Wildlife Habitats **provide habitat for wildlife throughout the community**—where people live, work, learn, play and worship. Communities do this by certifying individual backyards, school grounds and public areas like parks, community gardens, places of worship and businesses, 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.

NWF communities also **do outreach to and educate residents** about sustainable gardening practices such as reducing or eliminating chemical fertilizers and pesticides, conserving water, planting native plants and trees, composting and more. The community hosts workshops about gardening for wildlife and holds community events such as stream clean-ups and invasive species removal to make the community healthier for people and wildlife alike. **Local citizens become knowledgeable advocates** for wildlife and sustainability.

## **How Does a Community Get Certified?**

To achieve certification through the National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat program, the community must meet two sets of goals. First, a **certain number of homes, schools and common areas must become NWF Certified Wildlife Habitats®** by providing the four basic elements that all wildlife need: food, water, cover and places to raise young. Certified Wildlife Habitats® also require sustainable gardening practices such as using rain barrels, reducing water usage, removing invasive plants, using native plants or eliminating chemicals. Second, communities earn **education and outreach points** through a menu of options that includes setting up tables at community events, having a native plant sale, organizing a stream clean-up, bringing



### **Community Wildlife Habitats**

National Wildlife Federation  
11100 Wildlife Center Drive  
Reston, VA 20190  
community@nwf.org

[www.nwf.org/community](http://www.nwf.org/community)

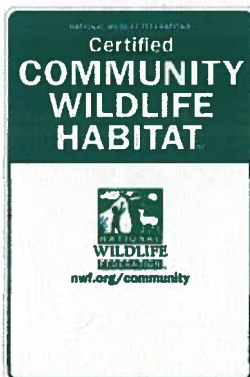
# Community WILDLIFE Habitats

new partners to the effort and hosting workshops. See the full list of requirements at [www.nwf.org/community](http://www.nwf.org/community).

## Benefits of NWF Certification

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

- Engaging local citizens in meeting your local goals around pollinators, wildlife, water conservation and more
- Reducing polluted runoff
- Maintaining attractive landscapes through use of drought-resistant native plants
- Beautifying your community—more trees, wildflowers and greenery
- Receiving national recognition for your efforts to protect wildlife with opportunities for signage
- Engaging local volunteers for restoration projects



## Getting Started

Visit [www.nwf.org/community](http://www.nwf.org/community) to access all the information and materials you need to register with NWF.

One of the first things you'll need to do is define the area you wish to get certified and assess who your local partners might be. After you review the materials online, you can fill out an application to join the program and officially begin work towards certification. Over time you will work with NWF and your team to achieve certification—this takes two years on average.

## Annual Recertification

Every year certified NWF Community Wildlife Habitat teams continue to educate and engage their community and certify habitats by meeting modest annual goals.



*Native Plant Installation in the Reservoir Hill Area of Baltimore, MD*



*The Kirkland, WA Community Wildlife Habitat Team*



*Concord, NC Celebrates Their Certification and Unveils New Sign*



## Application for the NWF Community Wildlife Habitat

Application form is online at [www.nwf.org/community](http://www.nwf.org/community)

Thank you for your interest in the NWF Community Wildlife Habitat program. Please complete the following application form.

### Basic Information:

- A. Name
- B. Email Address
- C. Phone Number
- D. Would You Like Us to Follow Up by Email or Phone? (Yes/No/No Preference)
- E. Your Address
- F. Will You Be the Team Leader for Your Community? The team leader organizes the project, is the primary contact for NWF and keeps the team focused on meeting its goals. (Yes/No/Unsure)

### Define Your Community

- G. Community Type (Choose One)
  - a. Neighborhood or Homeowners Association (HOA)
  - b. City or Town
  - c. County
- H. Name of Community (Official Name)
- I. Location of Community (City, State)
- J. Population of Community (Most Recent Census Data or Best Estimate)
- K. Links to Community Websites or Social Media
- L. Community Boundaries - Please tell us any details that may be helpful in identifying the boundaries of the community that you wish to get certified. This is particularly important if you are a neighborhood or a homeowners association (HOA). Helpful details include a link to a map of your community, a list of streets or a list of zip codes for properties in your community, etc. (For most cities, towns and counties, these details are not necessary as we are able to define your boundaries through standardized postal information.)
- M. Any Questions for Us? Do you have any other questions at this time about the NWF Community Wildlife Habitat program?

### What Should I Expect Next?

An NWF staff member will review your application and follow up within 5 business days. The application process will take some time as we answer your questions (every community is unique!). As part of this application process you will be required to submit a one-time \$99.00 registration fee, a written summary of your community for the NWF website and a list of your "core team members" for this project. If you have any questions, you can always contact us at [community@nwf.org](mailto:community@nwf.org). Thank you for completing the application for the NWF Community Wildlife Habitat program!