

Proposed
National Wildlife Federation Certified Community Wildlife Habitat®
for
City of Fort Lauderdale

The City of Fort Lauderdale is interested in becoming a Certified Community Wildlife Habitat® (CCWH) as designated by the National Wildlife Federation (NWF). Currently, there are a number of communities throughout Florida certified and/or registered to become Certified Community Wildlife Habitats.

The City of Fort Lauderdale, a subtropical urban epicenter, is a place where our wildlife neighbors live and thrive. They are HERE, enhancing our neighborhoods and providing many benefits. For example dragonflies, frogs, lizards, and owls naturally serve as pest control; butterflies, honeybees, and hummingbirds are productive pollinators. The natural environment interwoven throughout our urban landscape is a treasure. Wildlife habitats encompass basic elements which all wildlife need: **food, water, shelter** and **places to raise their young**. In addition, by encouraging Florida-friendly landscapes and gardens, we help sustain native species and all of nature's helpers.

Becoming a CCWH supports wildlife by providing habitat throughout individual properties including residences and businesses, on school grounds and in public areas such as parks, community gardens, and places of worship. Participating in activities such as educational events and community projects helps foster greater knowledge and understanding the principles of the Certified Wildlife Habitat program.

As a CCWH, neighbors learn about supporting wildlife, becoming educated for example by emphasizing sustainable gardening practices such as reducing or eliminating chemical fertilizers and pesticides, conserving water, planting native plants, removing invasive plants and composting.

The NWF outlines two benchmark goals for becoming a CCWH:

1. Goal One: Determine the Number and Types of Properties to Certify
2. Goal Two: Engage your Community

After a city registers, the NWF applies a sliding scale system according to population size. A certification is awarded to a community by counting the total number of individual certified properties (the minimum for population size 100,001-300,000 = 639 properties) and earning enough points by conducting activities within the following four areas:

- Education and Outreach Projects - 40 (min.) project points required
- Community Conservation Projects - 50 (min.) project points required
- Volunteer Trainings - 10 (min.) project points required
- Partnerships - 20 (min.) project points required

Once a city becomes a Certified Community Wildlife Habitat®, a minimum number of activities are required to retain certification.

As an outcome, the benefits of having achieved official certification include but are not limited to:

1. National recognition of our community's commitment to creating a place where people, wildlife and native plants can co-exist and thrive;
2. Press release sent by NWF to local media;
3. Ongoing support from and partnership opportunities with NWF;
4. A listing on NWF's Community Wildlife Habitat webpage.

The City has already begun accumulating points by means of individual properties' registrations, existing and on-going educational activities, and community projects. In addition, staff has learned much about the process having received expert guidance from both Broward County and NWF staff.

The City of Fort Lauderdale is already well on its way toward becoming a more sustainable city. Registering to become a Certified Community Wildlife Habitat® is in alignment with the City's Vision Plan Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale, Strategic Planning for Neighborhood Enhancement as well as Broward County's and Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact's adaptation and resilience initiatives.