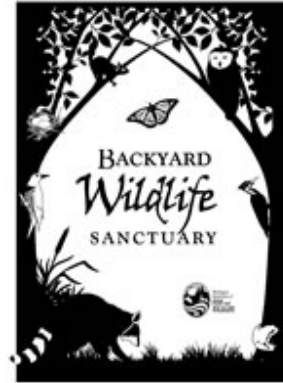


# History of Landscaping for Wildlife in Bellingham

Bellingham citizens, beginning in the mid 1980's, participated in Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary certification program. This program educated citizens about wildlife friendly features for their backyards, focusing on wildlife's needs: food, water, shelter, and cover. During the next two decades the community interest in this topic grew.



In 2003 a group of volunteers began meeting to explore ways to educate more gardeners about beneficial gardening for wildlife. A **SEED Grant** was received in 2005 to provide training and support for volunteers as **backyard habitat mentors**. These volunteers provided interested homeowners, schools, and businesses with resources, yard visits and general guidance on ways to make their properties more wildlife friendly.

These efforts inspired a group of mentors and community volunteers, working with the Bellingham Parks Volunteer Program and the support of Mayor Mark Asmundson, to register Bellingham for certification as a Community Wildlife Habitat with the National Wildlife Federation.



**Community Wildlife Habitat Certification** is a process that begins with a team of people who registers the community with National Wildlife Federation and then work toward a set of goals. The goals are based on the size of the community and are focused on providing habitat for wildlife. A habitat certification will include the following items:

- **Food sources** - native plants with seeds, fruits, nuts, berries, nectar
- **Water sources** - birdbath, pond, stream, water garden
- **Places for cover** - thickets, hedge rows, rock piles
- **Places to raise young** - dense shrubs, different layers of vegetation, nesting box, pond
- **Sustainable gardening** - using mulch, compost, rain garden, chemical-free fertilizer

When the goals are reached certification is granted by the National Wildlife Federation.

The Bellingham team worked with the local chapter of the Washington Native Plant Society, North Cascades Audubon Society, the Backyard Habitat Mentors and the regional office of the National Wildlife Federation to certify wildlife habitats at 283 homes, 7 schools, and 14 common places including City Hall. There are continuing annual goals after certification.

**Bellingham, Washington** is the nation's 37th certified **Community Wildlife Habitat**, and is the seventh community in Washington State to receive this honor from the National Wildlife Federation. A celebration of this achievement took place at Fairhaven Village Green May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Mayor Dan Pike was presented with the Community Wildlife Habitat Certification by Courtney Sullivan of the National Wildlife Federation.

Currently, the mentor program is not available due to budget constraints. However, the significant resources collected over the years are available on this website with links to other resources and information. We hope this will help you provide wildlife a place in your yard. When you certify your yard, you help Bellingham maintain its Community Wildlife Habitat status!