



## **Conservation Habits = Healthy Habitats Overview**

Each of us can be good stewards of our natural resources at our home and in our communities. When we think about protecting and managing our natural resources we can provide healthy habitats for the ecosystems on our planet. Each of us can make a difference by starting in our own backyard, our school or in our community.

What is conservation? Conservation is careful management of the environment and of our natural resources. How can you expand or add habits to develop healthy habitats? A habit is an action or pattern of behavior that is repeated so often that it becomes typical of somebody, although he or she may be unaware of it. Some habits are not good, like throwing litter out our car windows. But working to improve our environment you can develop good habits that will last your entire life and also inspire others around you. Develop conservation habits so that it becomes second nature and increase healthy habitats.

What is a habitat? A habitat is the place where something lives because it is adapted to find food, water, shelter, and space. It could be a plant, animal or other small organism. People, plants and animals all need a place to live and food to eat. A habitat is where people, animals and plants grow and live. Wherever you are you are in a habitat. People, plants and animals all need each other and they all need clean water, air and soil.

Plants need water and soil. Plants get minerals and other things they need to grow from soil like we get it from the food we eat. Plants need creatures like bees and beetles. Bees and beetles, birds and other creatures pollinate plants so that they can make seeds. Your backyard, the playground at school and the grassy area along the street are all habitats. Animals like birds, squirrels, worms and bees find their food in these habitats.

Most of the flowering plants we need and enjoy are pollinated by insects. When these pollinating insects start shrinking in number many plants either produce less seed or no seed at all. When pollinating animals start disappearing –plants start disappearing. We need to protect pollinating insects. Pollinators aren't just annoying insects, they are an important part of the web of life that we all depend

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upon for our very survival. Over 80% of the world's flowering plants wouldn't survive if it weren't for pollinators. Why do you need those flowering plants? A lot of fruits and vegetables come from flowering plants. Even a glass of milk or hamburger depended on pollinators if they came from cattle raised on alfalfa. Many medicines come from flowering plants. Animals and birds that are an important part of the ecosystem seek food and shelter in flowering plants and trees. Pollinators are fast disappearing. We need to establish and protect the habitats of pollinators.

Habitats are all across North America, you can find them in forests, grasslands, deserts, wetlands, arctic tundra as well as right outside your backdoor and in your community.

There are many ways you can develop habitat area. Find an area at your home to plant trees or native plants. Design an outdoor classroom at your school or volunteer in your community to develop a habitat area. Plant native plants that bloom at different times to provide a food source for a longer period. Even if you don't have to have a lot of space, any place you can plant at least a few native plants or trees will help. As you design up habitats think about food, water, shelter, and space for the creatures that will live or visit the area.

Contact your local conservation district and see how you can help.  
<http://www.nacdnet.org/about/districts/directory/index.phtml>

Help us celebrate the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of NACD (National Association of Conservation Districts) Stewardship Week (April 25-May 2, 2010) with our theme, Conservation Habits = Healthy Habitats. Additional education information can be found at: <http://www.nacdnet.org/stewardship&education/>

**Resources:**

***Pollinator Guides – Ecoregional Planting Guides***

<http://www.pollinator.org/guides.htm>

***National Wildlife Federation/Prince William County Public Schools/Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation names new Director***

<http://happeninhabitats.pwnet.org/index.php>

***WWF***

[http://www.panda.org/about\\_our\\_earth/ecoregions/about/habitat\\_types/](http://www.panda.org/about_our_earth/ecoregions/about/habitat_types/)

***National Geographic***

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/geography-action/habitats.html>

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***Backyard Conservation***

<http://www.nacdnet.org/education/backyard/>

***Rain Barrels, Rain Gardens, Pervious Concrete and More***

[http://www.iaswcd.org/district\\_tools/pwq/home.html](http://www.iaswcd.org/district_tools/pwq/home.html)

***Native Plant Societies***

[http://www.michbotclub.org/links/native\\_plant\\_society.htm](http://www.michbotclub.org/links/native_plant_society.htm)

***National Wildlife Federation: Certify Your Backyard, Community Habitats, School Habitats***

<http://www.nwf.org/gardenforwildlife/>

***Green Schools - Project Learning Tree***

<http://www.pltgreenschools.org/>

***Outdoor Classrooms - Guidelines and Features***

<http://www.in.gov/dnr/nrec/files/OutdoorLabRevised0604.pdf>

***Junior Master Gardner program***

<http://www.jmgkids.us/>

***National Gardening Association***

<http://www.kidsgardening.com/grants.asp>

***Blueprint for a Green School***

<http://www.cceonline.org/greenGuide/greenGuide.aspx>

***US Fish & Wildlife***

[http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/ce/content/for\\_kids/index.cfm](http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/ce/content/for_kids/index.cfm)

**&**

[http://www.fws.gov/educators/S\\_habitat.html](http://www.fws.gov/educators/S_habitat.html)

***Children and Nature Network***

[www.childrenandnature.org/](http://www.childrenandnature.org/)

Additional resources or comments suggestions? Send to [stewardship@nacdn.net](mailto:stewardship@nacdn.net) Subject: Habitat resources