



## Identify Your Core Team Members

The key to a successful Community Wildlife Habitat certification effort is to have a strong “core team” that can work collaboratively to meet your goals. Core teams are composed of community leaders, municipal staff and others that wish to contribute to the overall success of the project. It is nearly impossible to reach certification on your own, so don’t be shy about asking colleagues, friends and neighbors to get involved. Most core teams are 2-6 people depending on the size of the community. All core team members and the team leader are subject to basic background checks which is standard practice for volunteers that work with the community and children.

**Team Leader Job Description:** The team leader is typically the individual that signs a community up for the program and is the main driver of the Community Wildlife Habitat program. The team leader is the primary point of contact for NWF and their community. Team leaders should be self-motivated, comfortable communicating with NWF staff and members of their community and local government. At least some experience with gardening and knowledge about wildlife is helpful, but not strictly necessary. The team leader should have an active interest in helping to contribute to a healthy and sustainable environment in their own backyards and communities. Team leaders help to form a “core team” by recruiting additional team members into the program.

**Habitat Core Team Members:** Most team leaders choose 2-6 people to join the core team that works to get the community certified. Habitat team members should be self-motivated, reliable and have a strong interest in creating their own wildlife habitat and encouraging others to do the same. While there is occasional turnover in any team, make sure that your team members are in it for the long haul. Certifying your community usually takes about 2 years, so make sure your team knows what they are getting in to!

Things to consider when selecting core team members, select someone who:

- Has complementary strengths. For example, if you are more of a broad, visionary thinker, find someone who is good at thinking through the smaller details. If you are not so savvy with computers, perhaps find someone who is.
- Is good with social media and/or software with which to create brochures, flyers, posters, etc.
- Is good at creating budgets, keeping track of money, and coming up with fundraising ideas.
- Is an “ideas” person, who searches for and plans opportunities that will broaden your program - for example, finding a local festival where you can set up an informational booth
- Has contacts or experience in the local government, they may have ideas about who to talk, or an “in” with certain key community leaders
- Is a good writer and researcher. This is an important when you are sending letters to officials, or writing a sample script for talking with the public at an event