

## How Will the Project Help Our Local Environment?

Citizens involved in the Falls Church Healthy Habitat project envision a local habitat that is healthy for both humans and wildlife, and that promotes clean water, clean air, and environmentally friendly land management.

The project will help to:

- Improve **water quality** by limiting runoff due to impervious surface and lack of vegetation; reducing or eliminating the use of pesticides and fertilizers; and using native plants, which require less supplemental water.
- Improve **air quality** by encouraging more vegetation and trees and discouraging gas-powered tools required to maintain a conventional landscape.
- Encourage **land use that is respectful of a healthy environment**, by creating and preserving more quality open space and natural areas.

Beyond the clear positives, the Healthy Habitat project will assure our children and grandchildren the wonder of seeing a butterfly, chipmunk, or salamander for the first time within City limits, and the healthy environment that comes with it!

*When creating your habitat, always discourage mosquitoes and animal pests by eliminating standing water and keeping garbage cans tightly covered. See the back of this brochure for more "Do's and Don'ts" for your habitat.*

## Healthy Habitat "Do's and Don'ts"

When properly created and maintained, a backyard habitat should not attract more mosquitoes or other pests than a conventional yard. If you follow these simple guidelines while creating and tending to your habitat, you may find that you have less trouble with these pests than before you created your habitat:

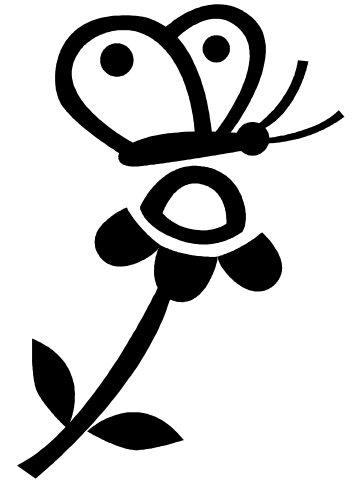
- **Do not allow standing water in your yard.** If you have a birdbath or other water feature, make sure that the water is moving (fountain, "wiggler", etc.) *or* that you change the water every 2-3 days to prevent mosquito larvae. You can also use a biological larvicide ("Mosquito Dunks" at Brown's or other stores), which does not harm birds or other wildlife.
- **Keep garbage in tightly covered, rodent-proof containers.** The best outdoor garbage cans for preventing rodents are galvanized metal cans with tight-fitting lids.
- **Do not compost kitchen waste in an open compost pile.**

***It is critical to remember to never feed or approach wildlife that you may see or encounter in your yard.*** If you see any animal with strange or aggressive behavior, contact the City of Falls Church Police department at 703.241.5052.

***If you find injured wildlife,*** contact the Wildlife Rescue League Hotline at 703.440.0800.

## How Healthy is Your Habitat?

# Falls Church City Healthy Habitat



**A program that promotes a healthy environment for humans and wildlife living in the City of Falls Church, Virginia**



## What is the Falls Church City Healthy Habitat Project?

Thank you for wanting to learn more about the **Falls Church City Healthy Habitat** project. You have taken an important first step toward helping to conserve, protect and restore an ecologically balanced habitat for both humans and wildlife in our urban environment.

The **Falls Church Healthy Habitat** project is a multi-year effort initiated by the City of Falls Church Environmental Services Council and concerned citizens to gain certification from the **National Wildlife Federation** (NWF) as an official Community Wildlife Habitat. Through this program, a select few communities in the United States become certified for providing healthy spaces to wildlife and humans and then managing an ongoing program to sustain and support those healthy spaces. The nearby communities of Reston, Arlington County, and Mason District in Fairfax County are all either seeking certification through this program or have already attained certification.

***Read on to learn more about the project and what you can do...***

At the center of the Falls Church City Healthy Habitat Project is the certification of homes, parks, schools, churches, and other spaces as Backyard Wildlife Habitats through the **National Wildlife Federation** (NWF). Certification of a property through NWF is simple and involves the following steps:

- **Assess Your Yard / Garden Space** - The first thing you need to do is identify the habitat elements that already exist in your yard or garden space.
- **Provide the Four Basic Wildlife Habitat Elements** - All species have four basic requirements for survival. These are Food, Water, Cover, and Places to Raise Young.
- **Practice Resource Conservation in Your Own Back Yard** - Conserving resources and eliminating toxic yard care products will not only help the wildlife in your own yard but will help improve our community's environment.

After you have met these requirements, complete a Backyard Wildlife Habitat Certification Form (online or by mail) providing a profile of your habitat. (There is a \$15 application fee for each property).



## Where Can I Find Out More?

### **Falls Church Healthy Habitat Project**

<http://Habitat.FallsChurchEnvironment.org>.

Learn more about how to make your Falls Church City yard a healthy habitat.

### **National Wildlife Federation Backyard Wildlife Habitat Program**

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

Certify your yard online!

**Contact** Mia Musolino, 703.533.3423 or [Habitat@FallsChurchEnvironment.org](mailto:Habitat@FallsChurchEnvironment.org)

### **Falls Church Healthy Habitat Team**

- Sam Beatty, City of Falls Church Environmental Services Council
- Jane Blumenthal, City resident
- Ellen Gilmore, City of Falls Church Environmental Services Council
- John Hardi, Falls Church Garden Club
- Howard Herman, City of Falls Church Director of Recreation and Parks
- Officer Rebecca Keenan, City of Falls Church Animal Warden
- Annette Mills, City of Falls Church Environmental Programs Specialist
- Mia Musolino, NWF Habitat Steward
- Jill-Anne Spence, City of Falls Church Arborist
- Sandy Tarpinian, Fairfax County Master Gardener
- Melissa Teates, City of Falls Church Environmental Services Council
- Cay Wiant, Falls Church Village Preservation and Improvement Society