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Elm Grove is first Wisconsin community to earn National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat certification

Elm Grove Becomes 150th Certified Community Wildlife Habitat in the Nation

ELM GROVE, WI—The **National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat™** program has announced that the village of Elm Grove has officially been certified as the first community in the state of Wisconsin to achieve this designation. Through the program, Elm Grove aims to become healthier, sustainable, and more wildlife-friendly by committing to create wildlife habitat throughout its community while also educating and engaging residents through events, educational workshops, and hands-on service projects.

"The Elm Grove Beautification Committee led the Community Wildlife Habitat certification effort," according to Wisconsin Wildlife Federation Executive Director Mark LaBarbera, who said he hopes other communities in the state will follow Elm Grove's lead.

The volunteer committee hosts several activities each year to help educate and engage residents in creating a beautiful community for homeowners and wildlife alike. The activities include native plant, shrub and tree sales, weekly invasive species removal in the village, establishing and registering monarch butterfly habitat throughout the community, engaging residents in No Mow May, hosting an Earth & Arbor Day celebration, establishing a rain garden in the village park, and sponsoring a Winter Lecture Series and a Book Club.

"Earning this certification by engaging residents to take action to make our community healthier, more sustainable, and more wildlife friendly makes perfect sense given our community's previous attainment of Tree City USA, Bird City Wisconsin High Flyer status, and Bee City USA" said Village President Neil Palmer.

Healthy habitats and healthy communities go hand-in-hand. Looking beyond the more visible wildlife, the program seeks to encourage participants to understand the important interconnectedness of plants, insects, and the whole breadth of the ecosystem. Protection of

species such as the federally endangered rusty-patched bumblebee are at the heart of this community's motivation.

“By becoming certified with the National Wildlife Federation’s Community Wildlife Habitat program, Elm Grove is sending a clear and powerful message to communities all over America that people working together can create healthy habitats and healthy communities, and make a difference in their own community and beyond,” said Patrick Fitzgerald, Senior Director of Community Wildlife.

The well organized and supported National Wildlife Federation Community Habitat program has been in existence since 1997. Elm Grove is proud of becoming the first certified community in the state of Wisconsin and looks forward to partnering with other Wisconsin communities to help them achieve their goals of certification.

WWF’s LaBarbera added, “This program is vital in helping implement wildlife conservation strategies equitably across communities by creating corridors for wildlife, increasing the use of native plants, removing invasive species, and reducing the use of chemicals.”

Attaining this certification requires each community to earn 150 points in four supporting categories (community outreach, education, registration, and administrative) along with habitat points that are based on each community’s population.

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For more information about the National Wildlife Federation’s Community Wildlife Habitat network, please go to: www.nwf.org/community.

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About Elm Grove, WI -- Elm Grove is a village in Waukesha County, Wisconsin, with 6,629 residents living among 3.29 square miles. The village of tree-lined streets and expansive, well-maintained yards and gardens is a sanctuary for birds and other wildlife. Its 79-acre village park is named in Rob Bignell’s 2021 book entitled Wisconsin’s Best Wildflower Hikes. The community takes pride in its Tree City USA, Bird City Wisconsin High Flyer and Bee City USA designations. The community also was named America’s best suburb by Business Insider in 2014. <https://elmgrovetwi.org/>