

3.5 Create a Natural Resource and Wildlife Inventory

10 Points

20 Points

Action Updates

This action has been revised for the **current certification cycle**. The previous version of this action is [available for comparison](#). Edits are highlighted in yellow. (Last updated 2024)

Objective

Plan for and implement projects to protect and enhance natural resources and habitats.

Complementary Action:

- [Develop an Open Space Plan](#)

What to Do

1. Develop a natural resource and wildlife (NRW) inventory. Inventories must be town wide and can be completed with help from regional or local partners. Detailed wildlife inventories are not required, but are encouraged. Your maps may include data from local, regional, state or national sources but should if possible include information pertaining to the major categories listed in [Appendix A](#) (all data layers are available on [CT ECO](#) unless otherwise noted). **(10 points)**

Submit: A copy of your NRW inventory. Include all mapping and provide a description of what your inventory includes. If your map is online, you may include a hyperlink and a screenshot of the relevant webpage(s). If your NRW inventory was created more than three years ago, also include a brief description of how it is still relevant and used by your municipality.

2. Integrate your NRW inventory into municipal planning documents and/or decision-making processes. **(10 points)**

Examples include (but are not limited to):

- A briefing or series of briefings on the NRI for your town's land use commissions (planning, zoning, inland wetlands, conservation);
- Making maps available to the public by posting them online, whether as an interactive map viewer, static PDFs, or both; or
- Developing and documenting a protocol whereby land use commissions refer to the NRI during their decision-making process, such as planning commissions when reviewing subdivision applications and/or conservation commissions using the NRI when considering open space acquisitions.

Submit: A description of how you integrated your natural resource and wildlife inventory into municipal planning documents and decision-making processes. If this was done more than three years ago, also include a brief description of how it is still relevant and used by your municipality.

Engaging Partners

Sustainable CT encourages regional collaboration and other forms of partnership. For every action, please complete the "Partners" box in your submission, indicating the name(s) of any municipalities and/or organizations

you partnered with (if any) and a brief description of your municipality's role. If you collaborate with other municipalities, each community will receive points. For additional information, please see the ["Partners Guidance Document"](#).

Potential Municipal and Community Collaborators

Staff from the planning department could be helpful in implementing this action.

In addition, the planning and zoning, conservation, and/or land use commissions, local council of governments, local conservation districts, and local land trusts could help implement this action.

Funding

If available, below are potential funding sources specific to this Action. For a complete listing of potential funding opportunities to assist with implementing Sustainable CT Actions, please visit the [Sustainable CT Grants Portal](#), which is searchable by Action. Please also visit the [Support for Your Town](#) page for opportunities for technical assistance and other supports.

- [Urban Act Grant Program](#)
- [Municipal Grant Program \(MGP\)](#)
- [Sustainable CT Community Match Fund](#)

Resources

Toolkits, Calculators, Guidance Documents

- [Aquifer Protection Area Interactive Map](#)
- [Connecticut Environmental Conditions Online](#)
- CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, ["Natural Resources"](#)
- CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, ["Endangered Species Maps"](#)
- CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, ["GIS Data"](#)
- CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, ["Natural Diversity Data Base Maps"](#)
- University of Connecticut, ["Map and Geographic Information Catalog"](#)
- [New Hampshire Natural Resource Inventory Guide](#)
- US Environmental Protection Agency, [EnviroAtlas](#)

Organizations and Relevant Programs

- CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, [Bureau of Natural Resources](#)
- [Connecticut Conservation Districts](#)
- [Nature's Network](#)

Why This Matters

Natural resources and habitats are vital to environmental and human health and wellness, and do not pay attention to municipal boundaries. The first step to maximizing those benefits is understanding what and where the resources are located.

To plan for their protection, or prioritize development in a way that minimizes harm, your community must identify and acknowledge its varied and rich natural resources and habitat types.

Benefits

A comprehensive review of the natural resources and habitat types located within your borders can help shape all municipal planning and development activities.

Keeping the inventory updated will provide the most accurate picture possible to the towns and residents.

CT Success Stories

- [Canaan \(Falls Village\) - Nov 2021 Certification](#)
- [Glastonbury - Nov 2021 Certification](#)
- [Guilford - Oct 2022 Certification](#)
- [Windsor - Oct 2022 Certification](#)