Sustainable CT
Local Actions. Statewide Impact.®

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**. A version of this action from the prior program year is available for comparison. Edits are highlighted in yellow. (Last updated 2020)

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 following major categories (all data layers are available on CT ECO unless otherwise noted): **(10 points)**

    - Base Map (examples: roads, imagery)
    - Land Cover (***Note:*** this layer is not yet on CT ECO but is available on the UConn CLEAR website)
    - Soils (examples: farmland soils, inland wetland/hydric soils, soils suitable for septic systems)
    - Water Resources (examples: hydrography, watersheds, water quality classifications, impaired waters, aquifer protection areas)
    - Unique and Fragile Lands (examples: Natural Diversity Database areas, critical habitat areas)
    - Elevation (examples: contours, elevation)
    - Wildlife (***Note:*** there is no statewide data layer currently available)
    - Committed Open Space (***Note:*** there is a partial statewide data layer on CT ECO but is circa 2010)

    See also Action Develop an Open Space Plan, which requires an open space inventory and also needs natural resource information for prioritization of open space acquisitions.

    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). Potential sources of data include:

    - CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, "GIS Data"
    - CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, "Natural Diversity Data Base Maps"
    - CT Environmental Conditions Online
    - University of Connecticut, "Map and Geographic Information Catalog"

- CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, "Endangered Species Maps"
- Your Council of Government or Local Conservation District(s)

Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit and rolling credit. This action falls under the action type "Websites, Maps, Inventories, Checklists, Assessments, Plans, Ordinances, Policies, Regulations and Resolutions" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

2. Integrate your NRW inventory into municipal planning documents and/or decision-making processes. If relevant, include such documents. **(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.

   Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit and rolling credit. This action falls under the action type "Websites, Maps, Inventories, Checklists, Assessments, Plans, Ordinances, Policies, Regulations and Resolutions" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

Timeframe for Credit

Actions can either be "New" or considered for "Rolling Credit."

New Action Credit. Any action completed within the past three years (from January 1 of the year seeking certification) is eligible for potential certification points. If you are applying for recertification in your year of expiration, you may not claim New Action Credit for items that previously received credit.

Rolling Credit. For any action older than three years (from January 1 of the year seeking certification), you must demonstrate ongoing, currently relevant, and meaningful impact in your community to be considered for certification points. If you are applying for recertification in your year of expiration, you must apply for Rolling Credit for any item that previously received credit, even if it was completed within the past three years.

View the "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for detailed submission requirements.

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)
- 2021 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 Citizen Planner, "Natural Resources Inventories: A Guide for New Hampshire Communities and Conservation Groups"
- US Environmental Protection Agency, EnviroAtlas

Organizations and Relevant Programs

- CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Bureau of Natural Resources
- Connecticut Conservation Districts

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

- Glastonbury - Oct 2018 Certification
- Woodbury - Oct 2019 Certification
- Norwalk - Oct 2020 Certification