



Coastal Habitat Certification

Transform your landscape into a diverse, healthy and beautiful coastal habitat through our Coastal WildScapes Coastal Habitat Certification. Certification is a process designed to guide your understanding of the natural communities of the coast and your ability to maintain and enhance them in your own landscape. Whether you are working with a large scale landscape or container gardening, you can have a positive impact in supporting the significant biodiversity of the coast. By implementing the concepts of Coastal WildScaping in your garden/landscape and meeting the requirements for our Coastal Habitat Certification, you will make a difference.

Our goal is to facilitate your participation to protect natural communities, restore habitat structure, and sustainably maintain your garden and landscape. We provide educational experiences and information tailored to coastal species and natural communities. Join us to support biodiversity and the natural beauty of the coast.

Coastal Habitat Certification is designed to guide you:

- ☼ Identify your vision for your garden habitat.
- ☼ Understand the function and importance of gardening for biodiversity.
- ☼ Recognize the native species and habitats on your property.
- ☼ Imagine the original native species and habitats that might have been on your property.
- ☼ Identify and safely remove invasive plant species.
- ☼ Provide host and nectar plants for native pollinators.
- ☼ Support wildlife nesting, shelter, food and water resources.

Coastal Habitat Certification lunch and learns are open to the general public but field trips and certification is only available to Coastal WildScapes members. To join Coastal WildScapes or for more information about our organization and other Coastal WildScapes' activities, please visit our website www.coastalwildscapes.org.

Our Coastal WildScapes Certification Assessment and Requirements process is a working tool that will provide a framework to achieve Coastal WildScapes' Coastal Habitat Certification.

Certification Assessment & Requirements

Participant Information:

Date: _____

Name of Individual/Organization/Business	
Contact Person	
Physical Address of Property to be Certified	
City/State/County/Zip	
Telephone	
Email Address	
Mailing Address (if different)	
City/State/Zip	

1. Coastal Habitat Assessment

A. Landscape Description:

1. In what type of area is your property?

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural

2. What size is your property?

- 0 – 1/4 acre
- 1/4 – 1/2 acre
- 1/2 – 1 acre
- 1 – 5 acres
- 5 – 10 acres
- over 10 acres

3. What best describes your property?

- House
 - Apartment/Condominium
 - Commercial
 - Historic Site
 - Residential Development
 - Farm
 - Community Garden/Park
 - Place of Worship
 - School
 - Other Please describe: _____
-

4. What percentage of your landscape is undisturbed native habitat? _____%

What percentage of your landscape is turf? _____%

What percentage of your landscape contains over 60% native plants? _____%

5. Does your property have water or wetland frontage?

- Stream
- Lake/Pond
- River
- Ocean
- Salt Marsh
- Freshwater Wetland/Swamp
- Inter-dunal Swale
- Estuary

6. Does your property have any of these features?

- Beach/Dunes
- Maritime Forest (Live Oak)
- Pine Forest
- Deciduous Hardwood
- Freshwater Pond
- Wetland/Swamp
- Salt Marsh
- Pasture/Open Field
- Forest Edge

7. What percentage of your property has the following habitat structure?

- Tree Canopy _____%
- Shrubby Under Story _____%
- Herbaceous Ground Cover _____%
- Meadow/Field _____%

B. Native Biodiversity Assessment: (Strongly encouraged but OPTIONAL)

To the best of your ability, list the native plants, pollinators and animal species on your property. If you are working with a hard copy of this form, attach your list. Many of the native plants found in coastal areas are listed on the Coastal WildScapes website www.coastalwildscapes.org.

Native Plants

Trees: Evergreen	(example: Southern Red Cedar <i>Juniperus virginiana</i>)
Trees: Deciduous	(example: Red Maple <i>Acer rubrum</i>)
Shrubs: Evergreen	(example: Wax Myrtle <i>Morella cerifera</i>)
Shrubs: Deciduous	(example: Beautyberry <i>Callicarpa americana</i>)
Perennials and Annuals	(example: Blackeyed Susan <i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>)
Ferns	(example: Cinnamon Fern <i>Osmunda cinnamomea</i>)
Grasses	(example: Pink Muhly grass <i>Muhlenbergia capillaris</i>)
Vines: Evergreen	(example: Cross Vine <i>Bignonia capreolata</i>)
Vines: Deciduous	(example: American Wisteria <i>Wisteria frutescens</i>)

Native Animals

Mammals	(example: Gray Squirrel <i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>)
Birds	(example: Northern Cardinal <i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>)
Reptiles	(example: Anole <i>Anolis carolinensis</i>)
Amphibians	(example: Southern Toad <i>Bufo terrestris</i>)
Fish	(example: Mosquito Fish <i>Gambusia holbrooki</i>)
Invertebrates	(example: Insects, Spiders, Worms, Crabs, etc.)

Native Pollinators

Butterflies	(example: Red-spotted Purple <i>Limenitis arthemis</i>)
Moths	(example: Rosy Maple moth <i>Dryocampa rubicunda</i>)
Bees	(example: Southeastern blueberry bee <i>Habropoda laboriosa</i>)

For an extensive list of free online identification guides, go to the *Coastal WildScaping* section of our website www.coastalwildscapes.org.

C. Invasive Species Assessment

To the best of your ability, list any exotic invasive plant species of high concern for coastal habitats in your landscape. Go to www.coastalwildscapes.org for this coastal list and see the statewide Category 1 Invasive Plant Species or the Category 1 Alert species by the Georgia Exotic Pest Plant Council at www.gaepcc.org or the Coastal Georgia Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area list at www.coastalgeorgiacisma.org.

Coastal WildScapes will present educational programming to aid you in invasive exotic species identification and safe removal of these species.

2. Coastal Habitat Requirements (minimum of two in each section)

A. Provide and Maintain Habitat Structure

- Canopy
- Midstory
- Understory
- Leaf Litter

B. Provide and Maintain Critical Habitat Elements

1. Food Source

Native plants are the best food source for wildlife because they provide just the right size food at the right time with the right nutrition.

a) Native Plant Foods

- Fruits
- Nuts
- Pollen
- Berries
- Sap
- Nectar
- Seed
- Larval Host Plants

b) Supplemental Feeders

- Tube Feeder
- Platform Feeder
- Suet
- Squirrel Feeder
- Hummingbird Feeder
- Bluebird Feeder
- Other: _____

Please indicate the types of supplemental food you use (i.e. mixed seeds, sunflower seeds, millet, meal worms). _____

Is your feeding schedule seasonal or throughout the year? _____

2. Water Source

A clean water source is a must for drinking and bathing.

- Natural Wetland
- Artificial Pond/Lake
- Rain-water Garden
- River/Stream
- Puddling Area (saucer with moist sand)
- Birdbath/Mister
- Other: _____

3. Natural and Artificial Nesting Sites

Maintain natural and artificial nesting sites to support habitats.

- Snags, Dead Trees, Hollow Tree
- Blue Bird Box
- Wood Duck Box
- Owl Box
- Chimney Swift/Swallow Houses
- Bat Box
- Squirrel Boxes (Fox, Flying, Grey)
- Toad Houses
- Butterfly Structures
- Other: _____

4. Natural Cover Areas

Wildlife needs cover which provides nesting areas, shelter from weather and escape from predators.

- Wooded Areas
- Burrows
- Ground Cover/Leaf Litter
- Bramble Patch
- High Grass/Wildflower Meadows
- Dense Shrubs/Thickets
- Brush Piles/Logs
- Wattle
- Tree Snags
- Standing Dead Trees (if not a safety issue)

5. Sustainable Gardening Practices

How you manage your garden and landscape can have an effect on wildlife habitat as well as the human community. We recommend using sustainable conservation gardening practices to protect and conserve our natural resources.

Organic Practices

- Compost
- Use organic fertilizers or natural sources of nutrients (i.e. bone meal) to encourage natural pest control.

5. Sustainable Gardening Practices (continued)

Enhancement of Biodiversity

- Plant for a variety of species
- Reduce monocultures such as grass/turf lawns
- Save and use native seeds
- Use environmentally responsible wood for garden projects
- Do not poach plants from the wild
- Plant the right plant in the right place

Conservation of Water

- Rain water capture from roof
- Rain garden/bioswale
- Mulch
- Reduce turf area
- Irrigate with drip/soaker hose
- Xeriscape in dry locations
- Fix leaky outdoor faucets
- A/C condensate or graywater capture/re-use

Protection of Water Quality

- Maintain natural buffer zone around water features
- Reduce or eliminate chemical use
- Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
- Test soil before adding amendments
- Reduce impervious surfaces
- Responsibly remove dog feces

6. Exotic Invasive Plant Control

To prevent the establishment of exotic invasive species is vitally important.

- Do not plant any species on the Coastal WildScapes website or the statewide Category 1 Invasive Plant Species or Category 1 Alert species as listed by the Georgia Exotic Pest Plant Council.
- Implement a plan to actively and safely remove any exotic invasive plants in your landscape as listed on the Coastal WildScapes website or the statewide Category 1 Invasive Plant Species or Category 1 Alert species as listed by the Georgia Exotic Pest Plant Council.
- Replace invasive exotic plant species in your landscape with regional native plants.

7. Exotic Animal Species Control

- Do not maintain outdoor feeding stations for cats.
- Monitor pets such as dogs and cats when outdoors.
- Exclude your pets from critical nesting and foraging locations to reduce negative impacts on native wildlife.
- Report exotic animal species to animal control for removal.

NEXT STEPS

Use this form as a guide to assess your readiness to apply for Coastal WildScapes' **Coastal Habitat Certification**. We invite you to sign up for the ongoing Coastal WildScapes workshop series designed to assist you in the certification process.

To apply for certification, complete the assessment and certification form and include three to six photographs of the garden or landscape to be certified, along with a \$25 certification fee. Developments and other for profit businesses will have a sliding scale fee. Mail or email your completed forms, photographs and certification fee to:

Coastal WildScapes, P.O. Box 1106, Darien, Georgia 31305
info@coastalwildscapes.org

Once your certification package has been received, your certification package will be reviewed by a Coastal WildScapes committee. Should any questions arise, committee members may schedule a site visit or may make recommendations to help you certify your habitat. Once certified, you will receive a personalized certificate and a signature Coastal WildScapes birdhouse to grace your landscape.

Date Certified: _____

Certification Number: _____

Certifying Coastal WildScapes Committee Member:

www.coastalwildscapes.org
912.437.1234 - info@coastalwildscapes.org.
P.O. Box 1106, Darien Georgia, 31305