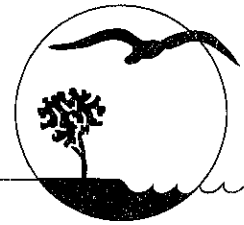


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*Heritage Hunt*

AUDUBON  
INTERNATIONAL



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Phone: 270-869-9419  
Fax: 270-869-9956

May 25, 2010

Joan Rener, Chair  
Heritage Hunt Green Neighborhoods Program  
6901 Arthur Hills Drive  
Gainesville, VA 20155

Dear Joan,

Thank you for returning your *Neighborhood Environmental Assessment and Environmental Plan* -- I enjoyed learning more about your community! Congratulations! The Heritage Hunt Community has been granted the **Neighborhood for Nature Award!**

Enclosed you will find a *Neighborhood for Nature Status Report*, press release, and Certificate. We commend you for all of the projects you've undertaken to enhance wildlife habitat, achieve sensitive maintenance practices, and inform people of your commitment to environmental quality.

As you continue to implement Neighborhood-Wide Awareness and Education Projects, please be sure to contact us with any questions and visit e-source, our online reference library at <http://www.auduboninternational.org/e-source.html>.

Should you find that you need additional resources or educational materials, please don't hesitate to call me at 518-7679051 ext. 124. You can also reach me by email at [szakowski@auduboninternational.org](mailto:szakowski@auduboninternational.org). We're here to serve as a resource for you and help make your cooperative sanctuary a success. We are proud that your property is designated as a Neighborhood for Nature.

We are proud that Heritage Hunt is the first community in Virginia to be recognized as a Neighborhood for Nature. You have set the bar high, and we hope others will follow your strong lead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Suzi Zakowski', written over a horizontal line.

Suzi Zakowski  
Program Manager



FSC

Mixed Sources

Product group from well-managed  
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recycled wood or fibre

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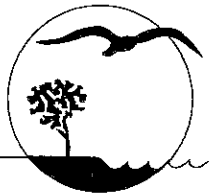
# CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT

Be it known that

*Heritage Hunt Homeowners Association, Inc.*  
has earned

A u d u b o n I n t e r n a t i o n a l ' s  
*Neighborhood for Nature Award*

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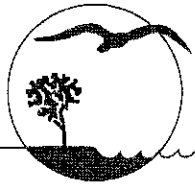


May 25, 2010

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronald G. Dodson". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Ronald G. Dodson  
President

AUDUBON  
INTERNATIONAL



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE- MAY 2010**

**CONTACT:** Suzanne Zakowski, Program Manager  
(518) 767-9051, Ext. 124  
[szakowski@auduboninternational.org](mailto:szakowski@auduboninternational.org)  
[www.auduboninternational.org](http://www.auduboninternational.org)

**Heritage Hunt Homeowners Association Recognized as a Neighborhood for Nature**

GAINESVILLE, VA – Heritage Hunt Homeowners Association, a member of the Green Neighborhoods Program, an international program administered by Audubon International designed to help landowners preserve and enhance the environmental quality of their property, has achieved the Neighborhood for Nature Award. Joan Renner, Chair of the Heritage Hunt Homeowners Association Green Neighborhoods Program, and fellow committee members Matthew Schmitz, Peggy Bruhn, Nancy Hus, Nanette Ross, and Marcia Swanson, are also recognized for their efforts to plan for and promote environmental stewardship within the community.

The Green Neighborhoods Program is designed to help a wide array of “residential communities” take stock of the natural environment around them, foster a sense of community through environmental projects and actions, and inspire better environmental practices on a community-wide basis. Members are required to build a Neighborhood Audubon Committee, conduct an environmental audit of their neighborhood community, and work with Audubon International staff to identify environmental education and improvement projects in the following areas: water quality management, water conservation, waste minimization, chemical use reduction both indoors and outdoors, wildlife habitat protection and enhancement, and outreach and education.

"Ultimately, we look to improve the environmental practices of neighborhood communities, educate residents, and reward actions, while at the same time make it fun for all who participate.," explained Suzi Zakowski, Program Manager for Audubon International. "We welcome Heritage Hunt's commitment to the environment and to managing the neighborhood with wildlife in mind."

By joining and participating in the Green Neighborhoods Program, the Heritage Hunt Homeowners Association will be involved in projects that enhance habitat for wildlife and preserve natural resources for the benefit of the local community. These projects may include: enhancing the property for native wildlife, placing nesting boxes for cavity-nesting birds, conserving water and energy, recycling waste, utilizing integrated pest management techniques, and driving green purchasing decisions.

# Neighborhood for Nature Status Report

Green Neighborhoods

**Neighborhood:** Heritage Hunt Homeowners Association  
**Date:** May 25, 2010  
**Steps Completed:** Neighborhood Audubon Committee Information  
Neighborhood Environmental Assessment  
Neighborhood Environmental Plan  
Neighborhood-Wide Environmental Projects  
Track 1: Wildlife  
Track 2: Water  
Track 3: Education  
Track 4: Resource Management  
Track 5: Community Awareness

## ■ Overview

Your community has an excellent opportunity to become a successful cooperative sanctuary by providing valuable wildlife habitat and educating staff and patrons about environmental management. We appreciate your commitment to managing for environmental quality. By joining with other Audubon International cooperators, your efforts are helping to enhance, protect, and connect wildlife habitat and resources across the world.

## ■ Environmental Assessment

This section provides an assessment of current conservation projects you have implemented and provides recommendations for additional projects. Information on how to implement some of these projects is provided on in the Publications section of our website at [www.auduboninternational.org](http://www.auduboninternational.org) or the member only website at [www.auduboninternational.org/members/gn](http://www.auduboninternational.org/members/gn). Your username is **NE0116** (capitalization counts) and password is **audubon**.

Given that about 220 out of 800 acres of the community is natural plant community, the Heritage Hunt Homeowners Association is in an ideal position to model how a community can protect and enhance wildlife habitat and water quality. Natural areas have tremendous benefits for communities – they provide space for wildlife, moderate heat island climate effects, clean the air making it healthier to breathe, protect drinking water, and offer opportunities for outdoor recreation. Strive to protect natural areas in and around your community.

Most of your categories looked good and we were pleased with the diversity of plans and projects in progress you included. It looks like water conservation and waste management are areas that can be addressed in almost all areas of the community and can be highlighted in a demonstration site. Critical projects are recycling and waste reduction, including composting, and purchasing materials made of

# Neighborhood for Nature Status Report

## Green Neighborhoods

recycled materials. Reducing the amount of waste sent to the landfill and closing the loop by providing a market for materials made of recycled materials are the basic, underlying components of a strong Waste Management program. Spreading a layer of organic mulch around plants retains moisture and saves water, time and money.

The other areas for emphasis would be Wildlife Habitat and Landscaping Practices. Properties can be managed to provide habitat for a diversity of wildlife species. The location, size, and layout of the property and the variety of existing habitats will affect what you are able to do. Actions you will take include naturalizing landscapes, minimizing chemical and pesticide use, and understanding wildlife habitat. While aesthetics are always a big concern of private communities, native vegetation is adapted to your areas' climate and soils, reducing the need for chemical inputs and extensive watering, and providing a valuable food and shelter source to which the local wildlife have adapted.

### ■ Comments and Further Recommendations

#### **Creating a Demonstration Site**

Models play an important role in the Green Neighborhoods Program. The Committee may want to consider focusing on either a clubhouse or common building, or a single residence of an individual who would be willing to occasionally make their home accessible for a garden or home tour. The constraint you mentioned of not having normalized or accepted Best Management Practices can be challenging; however, educating residents about the *value* of your efforts is the key. This is especially true in reference to naturalization projects where aesthetics may change. Often residents do not initially like the look of these areas. However, we have had success with other members through educating residents about the economic importance of these areas. You can use your newsletter, leave information in the clubhouse, or send letters to neighbors and members. You can also place signs in front of these areas and describe their economic and environmental value. If you need additional help in this endeavor, don't hesitate to give us a call.

The purpose of the Demonstration Site is to demonstrate ways to promote ecologically sound land management, conserve natural resources, and promote environmental education and awareness. As citizens visit the site, they will see the commitment to environmental stewardship and a challenge to the community members to follow their lead. Some areas that you should focus on include:

#### *Wildlife & Habitat Management*

Properties can be managed to provide habitat for a diversity of wildlife species. The location, size, and layout of the Demonstration Site will affect what you are able to do. Actions you will take include naturalizing landscapes, minimizing chemical and pesticide use, and communicating an understanding of wildlife habitat.

#### *Resource Conservation*

Establishing a comprehensive water and energy conservation program helps to demonstrate commitment to environmental stewardship. The Demonstration Center will audit current energy

# Neighborhood for Nature Status Report

## Green Neighborhoods

and water use and implement projects to reduce the use of these natural resources. Resource conservation improves your economic bottom line as well as the environment.

### *Waste Management*

The generation of waste products is a central economic and environmental issue faced by every neighborhood. Recycling seems to be a successful endeavor at Heritage Hunt. However, composting is an important waste reduction strategy for homeowners, and the Demonstration Center can evaluate the average household waste generated and implement strategies to compost while simultaneously reducing, reusing, and recycling the solid waste on site.

### *Outreach and Education*

This section is designed to increase people's understanding of good environmental stewardship. It will also help you to gain recognition and support for your environmental programs, increase employee participation, and let the public know that your business is being managed to maximize environmental quality which in turn fosters the public's sense of stewardship and environmental connection.

Put simply, site-specific actions taken at the Demonstration Site will help to showcase the Green Neighborhoods approach to environmental stewardship.

## ■ **Green Neighborhoods Tracks**

Congratulations! Heritage Hunt has done an excellent job of documenting projects in each of the five program tracks. For your next steps, we will be looking for you to further document your Neighborhood Environmental Projects. Compiling Case Studies for your residents and other neighborhoods will be an important focus. Pictures and quotes for the five submitted projects should be emailed to us for our websites and newsletters. Further, the journey doesn't stop here! Complete any one additional project to be eligible for an Audubon Project Award. Complete any three additional projects in a year to be eligible for an Environmental Stewardship Award. See page 25 of the Green Neighborhoods Award Handbook for a list of project ideas, if needed.

### **Track 1: Wildlife Habitat Enhancement**

You should be proud of the Heritage Hunt Association's commitment to the diverse wildlife on the property! You are off to a great start in enhancing your neighborhood for wildlife through landscaping and habitat conservation projects. Since you listed the Bluebird as a species of special concern, the The Bluebird Project is a perfect fit for this track. We look forward to updates and photos for a Case Study. There are a variety of additional projects you may want to implement to provide valuable food, cover, and water sources for wildlife, such as the butterfly garden you mentioned in the plan. The landscaping should be maintained and monitored with wildlife in mind. Creating vegetative buffers around water features is a critical habitat component, especially for aquatic wildlife who can use these areas for nesting and cover from predation. Vegetative buffers are also valuable from a water quality perspective as they reduce erosion and filter runoff, minimizing impacts from landscape management

# Neighborhood for Nature Status Report

## Green Neighborhoods

practices. According to the best available research, the buffer should be a minimum of 25 feet surrounding the water feature, where the turf grasses are at least 3 inches high, with a slight slope that allows the buffer to filter the drainage.

In your Neighborhood Assessment and Plan, you mention multiple species of special concern. These species provide a good foundation for educational opportunities about wildlife habitat. Several members have found that unobtrusive natural looking kiosks or signage help increase educational opportunities for residents to learn about the importance of wildlife habitat and the preservation of ecosystems for all species. Incorporating resident involvement through volunteer projects, nature walks, or wildlife inventories and photographs would be a great way to ensure buy-in.

Other resources you might find helpful are:

### **Native Plants**

Native vegetation is adapted to your areas' climate and soils, reducing the need for chemical inputs and extensive watering, and providing a valuable food and shelter source that local wildlife have adapted to. Exotic species are not adapted to the area and sometimes needing significantly more labor and inputs than native plants. The importation of exotics is responsible for the introduction of some devastating plant diseases and insects. In addition, exotic plants can become invasive, replacing diverse native systems with a single variety of plant, such as has occurred with purple loosestrife in wetland systems. When incorporating new vegetation into the landscape, we would like to see you emphasize native plants. To help with education and research on native plants, we recommend visiting the following websites:

- <http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/>
- <http://www.invasivespecies.gov/>

### **Track 2: Water Quality & Conservation**

Often times, the issues faced by communities cannot be defined by political boundaries. Environmental issues, for example, are more often defined by watershed boundaries, ecological regions, and landscape features such as rivers, lakes, mountains, and forests. While Heritage Hunt is a private community, there are always opportunities to manage neighborhood water runoff and water quality, ways to educate home owners about individual use, and implement projects in which residents can participate that contribute to the larger community of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Audubon International places great emphasis on wildlife and water. They are interrelated and complimentary. Water features on the property provide one of the most sensitive habitats possible for wildlife species. Our Principles for Sustainable Resource Management state "using land in a habitat sensitive way includes 1) protecting ecologically sensitive areas from all impacts and 2) not posing threats to species indirectly or directly through increased air and water pollution." Any maintained turf has the potential to degrade water features. Developing and conducting a water quality testing program is a critical component of this category, as it helps determine if there are any impacts to water features

# Neighborhood for Nature Status Report

## Green Neighborhoods

from property management practices.

Nutrient loading can be reduced or prevented by reducing the amount of fertilizers; using slow release fertilizers; timing applications to avoid heavy rain events; establishing no-spray zones around wetlands, lakes, ponds, streams, and ditches; and creating vegetative buffers around these areas. This information is for residents and homeowners. There are two types of vegetative buffers - the first type is for wildlife and includes shoreline and emergent water plants which provide food, shelter, and nesting material. The second type of vegetative buffer is for water quality and erosion control. These filter strips are wide bands of dense vegetation around water features which slow water from running directly into the water, trap particles, and utilize excess fertilizers before it reaches the water.

The restoration of the proffered conservation area is a great example of water quality protection for this track area and an excellent reference point for education. You mentioned watershed education as a major concern in the community. Just like golf courses, homeowners need to manage their properties for water concerns including watershed training, raising the mowing height to help slow and filter runoff, building rain gardens and unobtrusive cisterns, and monitor and track water use in landscaping daily. Involving the various community committees in implementing similar water management projects or highlighting the value of the restored area can help with educating residents about the importance of these efforts.

Some resources you might find helpful are:

### **Indoor Water Conservation**

Created by the California Urban Water Conservation Council, H<sub>2</sub>Ouse provides a virtual house tour, water budget calculator, and tips for saving water in and around the house. The website can be found at [www.h2ouse.net/index.cfm](http://www.h2ouse.net/index.cfm).

### **Native Plant Landscaping**

To help with education and research, we recommend visiting the Fish and Wildlife Service Bayscapes website (<http://www.fws.gov/chesapeakebay/bayscapes.htm>). The site has links that could help you identify native plants that will provide habitat and require less inputs. You may also look to this organization to help supplement your Resource Advisory Group.

### **Education**

A valuable reference containing information about natural landscaping and community education is *A Sourcebook on Natural Landscaping for Public Officials* found at: [www.epa.gov/glnpo/greenacres/toolkit/](http://www.epa.gov/glnpo/greenacres/toolkit/)

### **Track 3: Outreach and Education**

Letting people know about your environmental commitment and ongoing stewardship efforts, why the efforts are being made, and how they directly benefit the residents is vital to developing ownership of



# Neighborhood for Nature Status Report

## Green Neighborhoods

the program by individuals and encouraging action in their homes. Audubon International considers outreach and education to be a critical component of any project or policy change to ensure good individual environmental stewardship. For Heritage Hunt Homeowners Association, this area is an especially important because of the lack of normalized property maintenance standards. With members like Heritage Hunt, we advocate for educating and involving homeowners in maintenance practices, so they gain a full understanding of the importance of the policies and practices. Ideally, education changes behavior, which leads to better stewardship.

The “Spring Clinic For Your Yard” project is a comprehensive and solid start to homeowner education efforts. Many times the subject matter can be overwhelming to residents, and having peer experts take an afternoon to share knowledge and resources is a valuable educational tool. Inviting community organizations helps residents gain an understanding of the larger implications of their actions in their own backyards. Continuing this clinic as often as possible will help perpetuate the education process.

There are multiple other ways to provide residents with information and a few include:

### **Neighborhood as a Nature Trail**

Placing wildlife gardens (hummingbird, butterfly, and songbird), birdhouses, and naturalized areas along a “nature trail” can create an excellent education project which, along with well-placed seating, would also allow for quiet contemplation. Some points you might highlight are the Southern Red Oak, Bull Run Mountain, and the Little Bull Run. A pamphlet can be designed to create a self-guided tour along the trail. Your trail should include as many ecosystems as possible and can focus on different types of wildlife habitat and projects, the history of the property, and particularly interesting trees and land formations. We encourage you to be creative. This type of project will help you reach your goal of receiving public recognition.

### **Public Display Kiosks**

Informational display kiosks located in public locations – areas such as parks, office buildings, and entryways – are an excellent way to showcase your efforts, make announcements, and educate the public about your efforts. We recommend incorporating a wildlife inventory with a map designating where certain types of wildlife were seen in which part of the property. Locating these maps near the golf course clubhouse or at the beginning of a nature trail is a fun way to prepare people for observing wildlife and nature and, at the same time, allow them to contribute their own observations.

### **Brochures**

Providing take-home brochures in public locations is another excellent way to educate citizens in your community. Brochures can be general and informational in content, such as describing your community’s sustainability efforts, or can be specific and provide detailed information on specific topics, such as selecting “green” household cleaners, or maintaining an environmentally-sensitive lawn.

# Neighborhood for Nature Status Report

Green Neighborhoods

## **Invitations to Meetings**

Promote individual engagement by actively inviting residents to attend Neighborhood Audubon Committee meetings and have their voice and opinion heard on important issues.

## **AI Presentation Series – Public Sessions**

Schedule a regular speaker series, which can include Audubon International staff and/or other local experts to give educational public talks, presentations, and slide shows on selected issues of importance for the community (environmental issues and education, sustainability, case studies from other communities, etc.)

## **The Treasuring Home Initiative**

Valuing and caring for your community's natural resources and unique landscapes is critical to creating a healthier and more sustainable environment for the future...and it all starts in our own backyards. Practicing good environmental stewardship in and around residents' homes is a vital way to make a positive contribution to the quality of the environment where you live. Treasuring Home includes information on what your residents can do indoors, beyond their backyards, additional resources, and the Treasuring Home Pledge of commitment. For more information, visit: [www.auduboninternational.org/homepledge/index.htm](http://www.auduboninternational.org/homepledge/index.htm).

## **Agriculture**

Not only will making a commitment to purchase local foods for clubhouses or restaurants educate residents about the impacts of their own buying habits, the collective buying power of your residents can go a long way to help support local agriculture.

## **Webinars**

Audubon International offers free educational webinars about Green Neighborhoods. Heritage Hunt projects will be used as examples and it is a good opportunity for residents to see progress in action. Further, the webinars will highlight other members and the importance of the principles of the program. They are free to the public; all you need is a computer. Visit our website for a schedule and to sign up for the free educational service. Regularly check in to see the monthly schedule. (<http://www.auduboninternational.org/webinars>)

## **Track 4: Waste Management & Resource Conservation**

There are many facets to waste management and recycling. All facets are driven by the goal of reducing your community's waste stream, the amount of garbage that is deposited in landfills, and by incorporating reuse and recycling efforts to minimize our impact on natural resources, find valuable uses for materials, and "close the loop" by purchasing goods made from recycled content (i.e. office paper, carpets). Reducing energy consumption, improving efficiency, and seeking out alternative renewable sources of energy are paramount for the future of our communities. Heritage Hunt Homeowners Association has several good policies and practices already in place. The Little Bull Run clean-up clearly demonstrated a commitment to reduce waste in naturalized areas. Some additional

# Neighborhood for Nature Status Report

## Green Neighborhoods

focus areas for Heritage Hunt may be purchasing policies, further waste reduction techniques, and resource management for buildings (insulation).

Some resources for this process include:

### **Energy Conservation**

The Ontario Ministry of Energy has created a section of their website dedicated to energy conservation. In Particular, they have an easy home energy use calculator. You can access this site at <http://www.mei.gov.on.ca/en/energy/electricity/?page=calculators>

The US Department of Energy has valuable tools and resources for weatherization and curbing energy use. Information can be found: <http://www.energysavers.gov/>

### **Environmentally-Preferable Purchasing**

In a free market society, we vote with our dollars. We can create a demand for energy efficient, low waste materials, and you are in a position to harness the purchasing power of all residents. In community offices and facilities, purchase items which can be reused or recycled. Approach local suppliers to determine if you can get a reduced price on compact fluorescent light bulbs, low-flow showerheads and faucets, and items made from recycled materials. By increasing demand for a product, producers will be able to increase production, which will lead to future price reductions, allowing others to purchase more environmentally sensitive products at a lower cost in the future. A good example of this premise is recycled office paper. Environmental organizations, governments, and environmentally-minded businesses made it a policy to purchase office paper with recycled content, despite its higher cost. Today, we can buy recycled paper for the same, and sometimes lower, cost of paper made from virgin material.

### **Waste Management**

Recycling is the most well recognized method of reducing the amount of waste sent to the landfill or incinerator. Encouraging homeowners to recycle as much as they can through special recycling "events," or sponsored collections can highlight the fact that almost everything in the average trash bin may be recycled. You may want to look into trying to find a nearby business that can assist to involve the local community. For example, animal shelters or veterinary clinics may be able to use shredded paper for bedding or a mail-order business may use it for cushioning packages. We encourage you to be creative!

### **Track 5: Community Awareness**

Models are an important tool in cultivating awareness. You should be proud of the projects and policies in your neighborhood and this track encourage you to raise awareness through implementing projects that let the bigger community know what you are doing, and how to do it. The Heritage Hunt Grounds Committee's Donate a Tree Project is a great example of cultivating community awareness. By reaching out to the city, town, or regional community, you can teach good environmental stewardship by example.

# Neighborhood for Nature Status Report

Green Neighborhoods

## **Schools and Youth**

Planning to include children in projects is an excellent way to encourage action by both youth and their parents. Even if your neighborhood has no families, there might be residents that are actively involved in scouting or other youth groups. Providing a place for youth groups to create gardens, build a nestbox trail, or help remove invasive plants from a natural area, you can help young people learn valuable skills while helping to meet some of your environmental objectives.

## **Community Projects**

Involve the youth from your local community in neighborhood projects, such as garden plantings, painting and clean-ups, and other community-oriented efforts.

## **Partnerships**

You are in an excellent position to partner with local initiatives to further your environmental efforts. There are a variety of websites that list local resources; here are just a few:

- The Biodiversity Partnership - [http://www.defenders.org/programs\\_and\\_policy/biodiversity\\_partners/index.php](http://www.defenders.org/programs_and_policy/biodiversity_partners/index.php)
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation- [www.cbf.org](http://www.cbf.org)
- Chesapeake Bay Organizations- [http://www.chesapeakebay.net/index\\_watershedorgs.cfm](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/index_watershedorgs.cfm)
- Local Harvest - [www.localharvest.org/](http://www.localharvest.org/)
- Tax Incentives Assistance Program - [www.energytaxincentives.org](http://www.energytaxincentives.org)

## **Farmer's Market**

Farmer's markets can be a wonderful component of community sustainability – local produce is fresh, tastes great, and often organic (thus reducing environmental and human health impacts), supports your local economy, and fosters a strengthened sense of community. Eufaula, AL revived a farmer's market that had been dormant for more than ten years, and has seen it grow into a vibrant and thriving element of community life.

## **Community Gardens**

Community gardens – gardens in public locations maintained by residents – are a great way to beautify your community, and foster a sense of pride that motivates citizens to keep your community great.

## ■ **Additional Considerations**

### **Creating Incentives**

Strive to create incentives for members of your community to make sustainability “the way they do things.” Offer fast tracking of permits for developers who use sustainable land use and green design principles, create or find tax incentives for residents who retrofit their homes with water or energy

# Neighborhood for Nature Status Report

## Green Neighborhoods

saving devices, or to attract the “right” types of businesses and residents to your community, or develop other economic incentives. Many of our members have found success in creating awards and recognition as a base for ensuring participation. It sounds simple, but people like to be thanked and recognized publicly when they practice good environmental stewardship.

### **Documentation**

We are always looking for promotional-quality pictures and slides to use in slide presentations, documents, and our website. Pictures should be clear, in-focus, and have good contrasts. They can be in color or black-and-white. We cannot use Polaroid pictures or color copies of photos for our promotional materials, although we can use them to review certification requests. The subject matter we need includes: naturalized areas, vegetative buffers, close-ups of wildlife and native plants, before and after pictures of projects, and people involved in projects such as planting or monitoring nest boxes.

Thanks for your commitment to environmental quality. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you need assistance. We look forward to hearing about your progress.

Suzi Zakowski  
Green Neighborhoods Program Manager