



# SCDNR WILDLIFE HABITAT

## Green Steps Schools Project

This document serves as a guideline for South Carolina schools to complete the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) Wildlife Habitat - Green Steps Schools project. Any school statewide can complete this project annually – whether it be creating a new habitat garden at your school, maintaining an existing one, or adding new elements to it such as nesting boxes.



803-394-3920



<https://www.dnr.sc.gov/education/conservation/education.html>



David Lynn Photography

# SCDNR WILDLIFE HABITAT

Green Steps Schools Project

**Beth Foley**

Conservation Education Manager

FoleyE@dnr.sc.gov

## What You'll Learn:



### Wildlife Habitats

Learn what is needed for wildlife habitat and how to create a Certified Wildlife Habitat.



### Pollinators & Native Plants

Learn what plants work best for your region and how they will benefit invertebrates.



### Bird Nest Boxes

Learn how to build a variety of bird nest boxes or explore options available for purchase.



### Citizen Science Collection

Learn how to participate in data collection and nest monitoring.

## Program Logistics



Suitable for all grade levels



Year-long project



Open to any school participating in GSS

*Annual document form must be submitted by April 1<sup>st</sup> to Beth Foley*



**Click here to  
certify a  
wildlife habitat  
garden!**



803-394-3920



<https://www.dnr.sc.gov/education/conservation/education.html>

# What is a Green Step School?

Green Step Schools (GSS) is a program designed to help South Carolina schools earn awards for establishing sustainability projects where students learn, do, and teach others. Teachers are connected to mentors to help guide and evaluate these projects.



**Jane Hiller**

SC Green Steps Coordinator

[gss@eeasc.org](mailto:gss@eeasc.org)

## How to become a Green Steps School

- ✓ **Form a Green Team**
- ✓ **Attend an annual training and update session**
- ✓ **Pick one or more sustainability projects to learn, do, and teach others**
- ✓ **Fill out the yearly form with your mentor**



**[Click here to learn more](#)**





# What Makes a Certified

# HABITAT

Need a total of:

Food

3

- Nuts/Cones
- Foliage/Twigs
- Fallen Leaf Litter
- Berries/Fruits
- Invertebrates

- Native Plants
- Seeds
- Host Plants
- Nectar and Pollen

Water

1

- Bird Bath
- Butterfly Puddling Area
- Mister
- Vernal Pond
- Rain or Water Garden

- River or Stream
- Lake or Pond

Cover

2

- Groundcover
- Dense Shrubs/Thicket
- Leaving Dead Stems
- Rock Pile
- Pond or Water Garden

- Evergreen Trees
- Meadow or Prairie
- Bramble Patch
- Brush or Log Pile

Places to  
Raise Young

2

- Host Plants
- Dead Trees (Snags)
- Pond or Water Garden
- Mature Trees
- Dense Shrubs/Thicket

- Animal Burrow
- Meadow or Prairie
- Fallen Leaf Layer
- Hollow Stems

Sustainable  
Garden  
Practices

2

- Soil and Water Conservation
- Control Non-Natives
- Reduce Pollution
- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle



Checklist and certification developed by  
the National Wildlife Federation



**Scan or click  
here to see a full  
checklist.**





# Creating Habitat For

# BIRDS

## Build Your Own Nest Box

★ Easy Build   ★★ Moderate Build   ★★★ Hard Build

Click on each bird's name to download the nest box plan.



### Right Bird, Right House

Want to help birds but not sure which ones you can attract? Use this interactive tool to find out which birds are likely to nest in your region and habitat, and download the appropriate nest box plans.

NestWatch /

## Songbird Boxes

### Mourning Dove



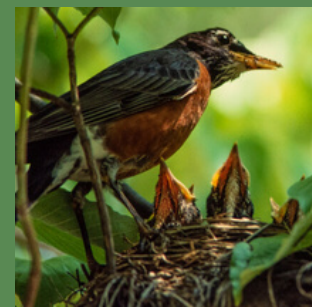
### Carolina Chickadee



### Tufted Titmouse



### American Robin

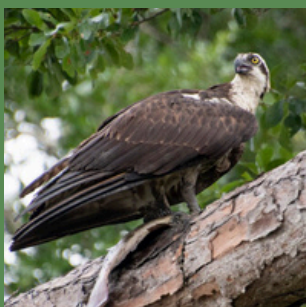


## Birds of Prey Boxes

### Eastern Screech-Owl



### Osprey



### Peregrine Falcon



**[Click here to see boxes available for purchase.](#)**

- Wood Duck
- Eastern Bluebird
- Eastern Screech Owl



# Introducing Native

# PLANTS

## Suitable Plants Based on Location

Please do not use pesticides or insecticides in your garden to protect our pollinators!



### Plants

Plants Archive



South Carolina Native Plant Society

[Click here to view the best plants for your area.](#)

## Looking to Buy Native Plants?



**Native Plant Nursery**

Monarch Ranch Butterfly Conservatory LLC is a certified native plant grower in the state of South Carolina located in the Lowcountry of Bamberg SC, growing host plants for native and migratory butterfly species, pollinator powerhouses and native milkweed. All products are completely chemical free from seed to plant.

Contact Sean Reid at 803-758-3275 or email [monarchranch11@gmail.com](mailto:monarchranch11@gmail.com)



# SCDNR WILDLIFE HABITAT

## Green Steps Schools Project

### Wildlife Habitat GSS Project Options



#### Learn

- Invite a GSS mentor or other environmental educator to lead a lesson on the importance of wildlife habitat, pollinators, native plants, soil health, water conservation, and more.
- Lead a lesson plan listed on page 9.



#### Do

- Build and certify a wildlife habitat
- Annual garden maintenance
- Nest box installation
- Nest box monitoring/citizen science



#### Teach

- Have students create a short video/advertisement about the habitat garden for the school announcements.
- Have students make posters about the work that was completed in the garden.
- Have students share their Nest Watch results or other citizen science data.
- Have students lead a habitat lesson with a younger class in the garden.
- Have students create a book on how native plants benefit wildlife.
- Have students create a mural of native plants and wildlife found in the garden.

These are suggestions (not requirements) of different ways to participate in this GSS project. For other wildlife habitat project ideas, please visit [www.eeasc.org/Restore-HabitatGardens](http://www.eeasc.org/Restore-HabitatGardens).

School teams must work with an approved mentor to help plan, establish, sustain, and evaluate projects for the SC Green Steps Schools award. SCDNR project documentation needs to be submitted to Beth Foley for initial approval of annual project completion.

Then GGS project documentation needs to be submitted via Google Form to Jane Hiller, as well as 3 pictures of the project with detailed captions documenting the “Learn, Do, and Teach” requirements for the current school year.





# Wildlife Habitat Project Documentation

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

School Name: **PLEASE DO NOT FILL OUT THIS DOCUMENT.** County: \_\_\_\_\_  
**DOWNLOAD THE FILLABLE PDF HERE.**

School Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

## CONTACT INFORMATION (LEAD TEACHER SUBMITTING FORM)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe what activities/lessons/tasks were completed this school year to meet the requirements of “Learn, Do, and Teach” for the SC Green Steps Schools program. *Pictures are not required for this documentation, however, they are required for the GSS documentation that is submitted to Green Step Schools at [gss@deasc.org](mailto:gss@deasc.org).*

Learn from an adult:

Do the project:

Teach others:

Other Comments/Suggestions/Stories to Share:

## THIS SECTION FOR OFFICIAL SCDNR USE ONLY.

☐ This project has met the annual requirements of the Wildlife Habitat GSS project.

☐ This project has not met the annual requirements of the Wildlife Habitat GSS project.

Suggestions to meet requirements:

Coordinator Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# SCDNR WILDLIFE HABITAT

## Green Steps Schools Project

### Lesson Plans

*Click on each organization's logo to learn more.*



Nature Lab offers a habitat and pollinators lesson plan geared towards 6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.



Smithsonian

The Smithsonian Gardens has resources including lesson plans, posters, and hands-on activities on topics such as horticulture, history, and sustainability.



Kids Gardening offers a wide variety of lesson plans for different ages and topics such as pollinators, state flowers, garden mentorship, and food exploration



This guide will help you plan, build, and maintain your National Wildlife Federation Schoolyard Habitats® garden, leading you through a clear, step-by-step process. You'll also find Green STEAM learning opportunities for students and many environment-based teaching tools.





# SCDNR WILDLIFE HABITAT

## Green Steps Schools Project

## Additional Resources

Click on each organization's logo to learn more.



The South Carolina Wildlife Federation hosts the Palmetto Wildlife Habitat Program which provides a variety of ways to certify your habitat and has many additional resources available.



The South Carolina Native Plant Society in cooperation with Clemson Extension offers a native plant directory which highlights which plants grow best in what regions.



All certifications go through the National Wildlife Federation, and can be purchased through their website.



Learn how to “nest watch” and report your data in this citizen science effort

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology  
**NestWatch**

### Nest check data sheet

Use this form to describe your nest site and to record data from each visit. Use a separate form for each nest monitored and each new nesting attempt. See back for explanations of codes and fields. When finished, please enter completed forms online at: [www.nestwatch.org](http://www.nestwatch.org).

Year \_\_\_\_\_ Species \_\_\_\_\_

1. NEST SITE LOCATION		2. DESCRIPTION (see key on back)	
Nest site name _____		Nest is located (circle one) IN ON UNDER	
Address: Nearest street address OR _____		Nesting substrate _____	
Latitude (decimal degrees; ex 47.67932) _____		Cavity orientation (circle one) N, S, E, W, NE, SE, NW, SW	
N _____		Cavity opening width _____ <input type="checkbox"/> ins. or <input type="checkbox"/> cm	
Longitude (decimal degrees; ex -76.45448) _____		Predator guard <input type="checkbox"/> None or <input type="checkbox"/> Type: _____	
W _____		Habitat within 1 arm length _____	
Height above ground _____ <input type="checkbox"/> ft. or <input type="checkbox"/> m		Human modified description _____	

3. BREEDING DATA # eggs or young are present but not countable, enter "u" for unknown.												
DATE Month / Day (1-12) (1-31)	HOST SPECIES			STATUS & ACTIVITY CODES				COWBIRD ACTIVITY			MORE INFO Notes (or mark X for notes below)	
	Eggs	Live Young	Dead Young	Nest Status	Adult Status	Young Status	Mgmt. Activity	Eggs	Live Young	Dead Young		
Ex. 05 / 06	1	0	0	CR	BR	NO	NO	0	0	0	BB	X
1	/											
2	/											
3	/											
4	/											
5	/											
6	/											
7	/											
8	/											
9	/											
10	/											

4. NESTING ATTEMPT SUMMARY Fill in information for HOST SPECIES TOTALS below after the nesting attempt is complete.						
IMPORTANT DATES		HOST SPECIES TOTALS				
First Egg Date		Visits to nest	Clutch Size	Unhatched Eggs	Live Young	Fledglings
Hatch Date						
Fledge Date						

NEST FATE: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

Please enter data online at [www.NestWatch.org](http://www.NestWatch.org)



# SCDNR Conservation Education



The SCDNR Conservation Education program creates educational opportunities through outdoor recreation and environmental learning.

**Will Mundhenke**

SCDNR State Naturalist

[mundhenkew@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:mundhenkew@dnr.sc.gov)

## Offered Programs

- ✓ **Hikes with a Naturalist**
  - Introductory naturalist hikes led statewide by Conservation Education Staff.
- ✓ **K-12 Education Programs**
  - Field Trip and in-school environmental programs.
- ✓ **Conservation Outreach**
  - Outreach opportunities on topics such as fisheries, wildlife, and outdoor recreation.
- ✓ **SC Project WILD**
  - Professional development training and environmental-based teaching resources for educators.

Whether in the classroom, on the trail, or in the field, Conservation Education staff seek to promote Heritage Preserves and Wildlife Management Areas while increasing public understanding and appreciation for wildlife, fisheries, forests, and landscapes. Through guided naturalist hikes, K-12 educational programs, outreach efforts, and interpretation, Conservation Education's goal is to create new environmental stewards and help you live life outdoors.



**[Click here to learn more](#)**



[ConservationEd@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:ConservationEd@dnr.sc.gov)



# SCDNR

## Trout in the Classroom

Green Steps Schools Project

Trout Unlimited's environmental education program is a gateway stewardship experience for students. It fosters a new generation of advocates for salmonids and the watersheds in which they live. In South Carolina, the Trout in the Classroom program is administered and coordinated by SCDNR's Aquatic Education Coordinator. It serves as another great state-wide Green Steps School project.

**Mary Rhett Davidson**

Aquatic Education Coordinator

Davidsonmr@dnr.sc.gov

*Program available in  
Anderson, Oconee, Pickens,  
Greenville, Lexington and  
Richland County.*

**Teacher Application**

**Program Timeline**

**Lesson Plans**

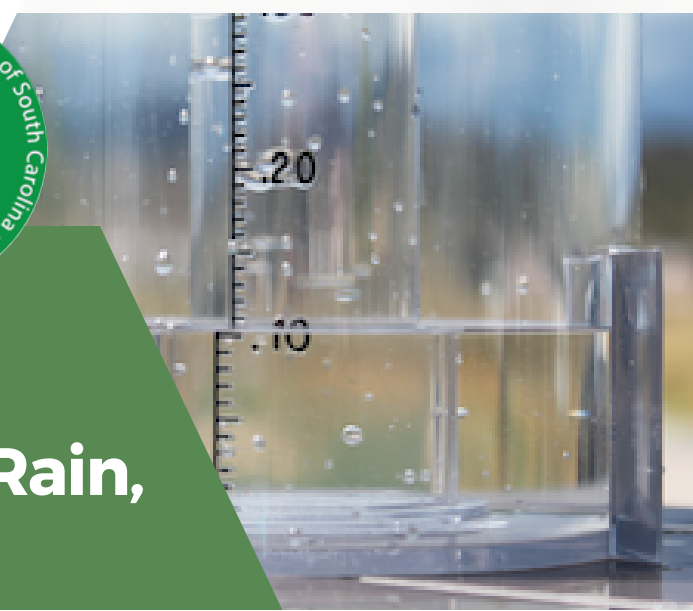
**Additional Resources**



803-730-9522



<https://www.dnr.sc.gov/aquaticed/trout/>



# SCDNR

## Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Soil Network

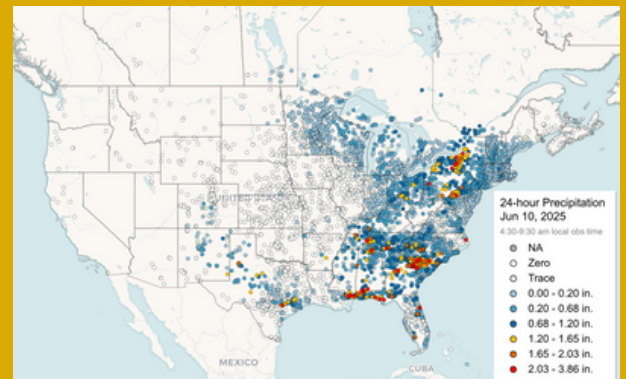
Green Steps Schools Project

Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Soil Network (CoCoRaHS) is a unique, non-profit, community-based network of volunteers of all ages and backgrounds working together to measure and map precipitation (rain, hail and snow). South Carolina's division is through SCDNR's State Climatology Office.

**Melissa Griffin**

Assistant State Climatologist

griffinm@dnr.sc.gov



**Report on your mobile device  
with the CoCoRaHS App!**



GET IT ON

**Google Play**



Download on the

**App Store**



803-312-1787



<https://www.cocorahs.org/>