



Tualatin – Annual Report FY24-25

July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

Background

The Backyard Habitat Certification Program (BHCP) is a partnership between Bird Alliance of Oregon and Columbia Land Trust. The program provides assistance and incentives to residents with small lots (an acre or smaller) who seek to restore native wildlife habitat to their backyards. Participants act as partners in conservation by integrating native plants, removing noxious weeds, reducing pesticides, stewarding wildlife and managing storm water on their land. Today, there are **over 14,055 enrolled properties**, spanning nearly **3,537 acres** region wide. These properties are mostly single-family residential lots, but also include multi-family dwellings, and public demonstration sites at schools and places of worship.

Happy Tualatin Program Participants!



Bridget & Brian – Gold Certified

Primary Deliverables

- **Engaging Site Stewards** – Site stewards (program participants) are inspired to contribute to a healthy regional ecosystem through information provided throughout the course of the program. They receive tips for natural gardening, information on the benefits of weed removal and native plantings, on-site stormwater management, and

how each of these works together to keep our water and air clean, while providing crucial habitat for wildlife.

07/01/24 - 06/30/25

City	# Site Visits	# Certifications
Tualatin	17	5

Total Sites (2019-2025)

City	# Site Visits	# Certifications
Tualatin	91	31

- **Community Outreach** – During this report period, BHCP completed **5 outreach activities within the City of Tualatin**. The program tabled at Arbor Day Planting at Atfalati Park. Presentations were given to P.E.O International (a non-profit women's education organization), residents at Tualatin Public Library, and the Tualatin City Council.
- **Tools, resources, and incentives for BHCP Participants** - Incentives help drive success in Backyard Habitat certification by reducing barriers to restoration activities and creating motivation. **Each of the new participants in FY24-25 received a resource packet full of educational materials, a site-specific report with plant and habitat recommendations, access to our online Resource Library, and our Native Plant Discount Flyer as well as a one-year free membership to Bird Alliance of Oregon.** Additionally, each of the participants who became certified received a Certification Benefits Package that recognizes and honors their efforts with a gift card to the Backyard Bird Shop and a coupon to One Green World Nursery.
- **Online Resources** – Historically, BHCP handouts and resources were listed on a hidden Resource Library page of our website that only program participants had access to. In fall 2020, BHCP staff made a strategic decision to copy all handouts and resources to the front end of the website, which is accessible to everyone, in order to provide equal access to anyone interested in gardening sustainably and creating wildlife habitat, regardless of whether they're able to enroll in the program. These **130+ handouts** include information on creating habitat, managing stormwater, removing noxious weeds, planting for pollinators, and much more. With the launch of a newly redesigned website in January 2024, these resources have become even easier to access with a more user-friendly Resource Library design and a higher level of ADA accessibility to the entire site.
- **Native Plant Discount Flyer** – In an effort to provide program participants with more equitable access to native plant discounts, BHCP created a Native Plant Discount Flyer that offers **approximately \$160+ in discounts to 16 local retail nurseries** that sell native plants. The coupon is good for one year and participants can register their interest to

receive a new one by the end of September each year. This incentivizes neighborhood nurseries to increase the quantity and diversity of native plants they stock, which in turn allows participants to shop locally, providing easier access to native plants and boosting the local green economy.

- **Professional Arborist and Landscape Professionals Directory** – BHCP offers a directory of local arborist and landscape professionals who specialize in habitat-friendly tree care, landscape design, installation, and maintenance. Our 24-25 annual training was held on December 11, 2024. This year, Northwest Alternatives to Pesticides (NCAP) gave a presentation on the hazards of pesticides and alternatives. Staff created advertisements encouraging Latino landscapers to join our Professionals Directory and to share habitat stewardship information with them on Latino radio stations and podcasts. The directory currently highlights a total of **60+ landscape professionals** committed to landscaping practices that contribute to wildlife habitat and healthy rivers. The next directory training will be held in December 2025.
- **Follow Up Phone Calls** – 6-9 months after the initial site assessment the habitat technician contacts the participant (if they aren't yet certified) to check in and see if the participant has any questions, could use additional resources/information, or needs some verbal support to stay motivated.
- **Annual Open Gardens Project** – All participants receive an invitation to our regional Open Garden Project which is hosted by BHCP staff and includes participants from all 4 counties of the program's service area. Open gardens serve to support program participants in their certification goals and to deepen their understanding of local ecology. The concept is based on program participants agreeing to open their certified backyard habitats for viewing during prearranged dates. It is largely volunteer-managed, making it an excellent investment. Some hosts also share information about their habitat projects via our Backyard Habitat blog. One benefit to hosting Open Gardens virtually is that we can open it up to anyone, even if they're not a program participant. In March, the Open Gardens Project for 2025 began with **51 gardens signed up** to be hosts, with most hosts opening their yards for multiple days. Cumulatively, there are **124 opportunities** to visit one of the gardens **and 13,166 participants** have been invited to attend.
- **E-Newsletter** – In June, we sent out **the fourth of four editions of the Backyard Habitat E-News for FY24-25**. More than **17,263 individuals** received this e-newsletter. The content is brimming with resources, information about region-wide workshops, plant sales, presentations, and other habitat-friendly programming and encouragement.
- **Website and Social Media** – The Backyard Habitat Facebook page now has **+14,000 followers**. We celebrate each participant who achieves certification by posting their photo and a description of how they created a habitat to become certified. We also post information about local plant sales and other helpful information. In addition to our

official program Facebook presence, a program volunteer started an unofficial program fan page called “Friends of Backyard Habitats.” Its **+16,300 members** use the online community as a tool for crowd-sourcing plant identification, sharing plants, and getting answers to gardening questions. This Facebook group has proven to be an extraordinarily effective tool for building community and support around participants working toward certification. We more recently became active on Instagram, as well. We currently have **2,756+ followers** and plan to increase our presence on this platform to reach a more diverse group of social media users and better connect with and promote our fiscal and community partners. In January 2024, staff launched a website redesign. The new website will help participants find resources they’re looking for, is more user-friendly, and has significantly better accessibility.

- **Remote consultations** - To provide additional support to participants as they work toward certification, we developed a remote consultation process that has been implemented long-term. Throughout our 4-county service area, participants who have been working towards certification for a year or more will have the option of a follow-up consultation via phone, email, or video chat with a Habitat Technician. As part of these consultations, we are soliciting & tracking feedback from participants on barriers to reaching certification and what would be most helpful in removing those barriers.
- **Volunteers** - This past year **59+ Backyard Habitat volunteers dedicated 827+ hours** to the program. Their activities include time conducting certification visits, stuffing resource packets, doing data entry, supporting special outreach events, compiling certification benefits, and planning a multi-month Backyard open garden tour.