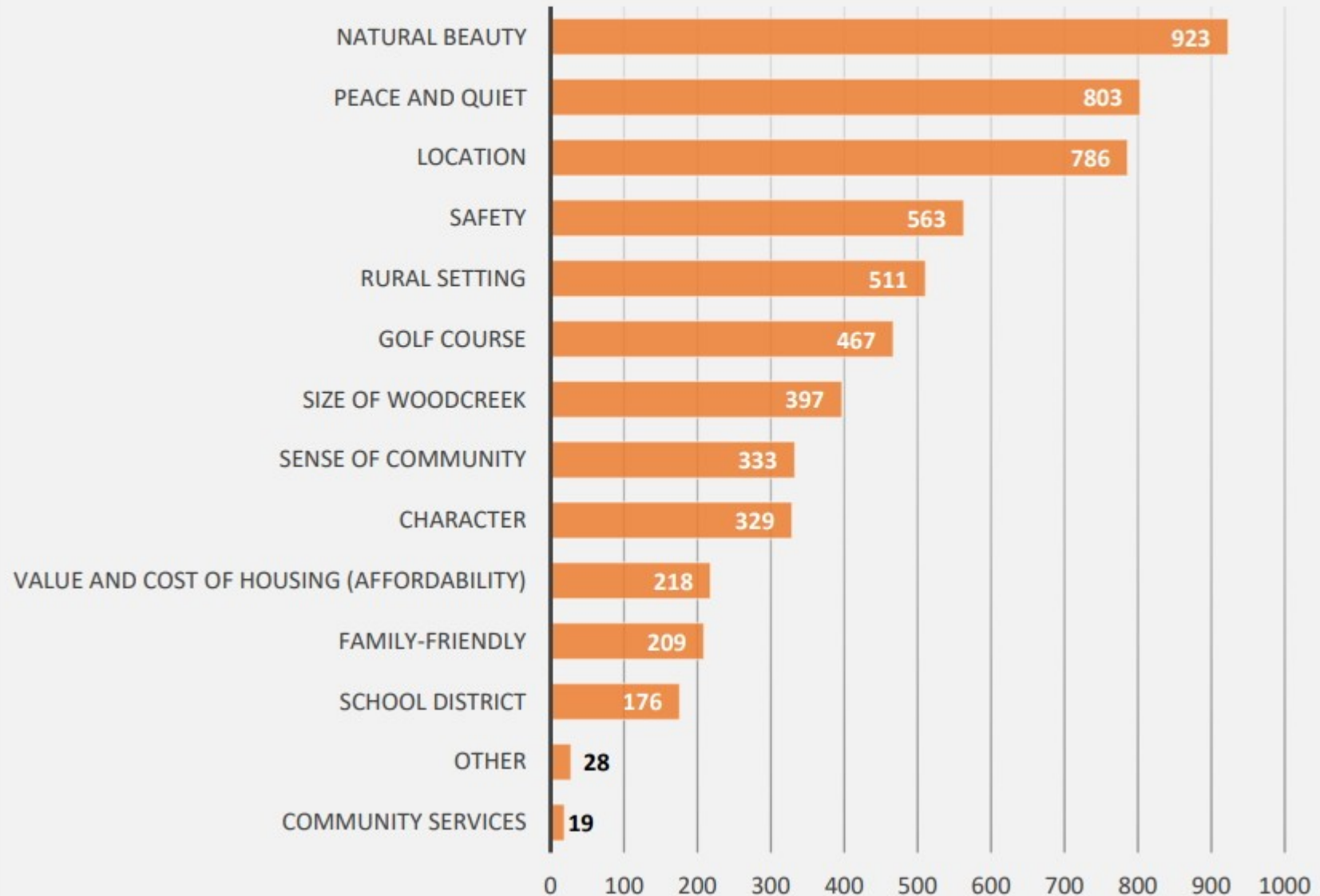


What do you like most about living/working/owning a business in Woodcreek?

**Overall score shown (5 points for Rank 1, 4 points for Rank 2, 3 Points for Rank 3, etc.)*



NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION

How You're Helping Wildlife

Rapid and large-scale changes to our lands and waters mean wildlife are losing the habitats they once knew. Every habitat garden is a step toward replenishing resources for wildlife such as bees, butterflies, birds, and amphibians—both locally and along migratory corridors. By adding pollinator-friendly and monarch-friendly plants when you certify, your garden also counts toward the [Million Pollinator Garden Challenge](#).

When you certify, your \$20 application fee supports the National Wildlife Federation's programs to inspire others to make a difference and address the issues leading to declining habitat for wildlife nationwide. A portion of your fee also supports work for local wildlife in [select affiliate partner states](#).



\$99. for sign

NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION

Certification Requirements

Certified Wildlife Habitat® applicants are asked to confirm they've provided the required number of elements for each of the following:

- **Food**
- **Water**
- **Cover**
- **Places to Raise Young**
- **Sustainable Practices**

<https://www.nwf.org/CertifiedWildlifeHabitat/Habitats/Information?Length=4>

use web address above to certify



The National Wildlife Federation

Uniting all Americans to ensure wildlife thrive in a rapidly changing world

PO Box 1583, Merrifield, VA 22116-1583

800.822.9919

Creating a wildlife habitat

Food: Native plants provide wildlife with a buffet that includes nectar, pollen, nuts, seeds and berries. Plant diversity increases the number of species found in your habitat.

Water: A reliable water source is a key element for a variety of wildlife. Animals need water for drinking, and some need it for breeding.

Cover: Evergreen shrubs and stacked rock walls are two ways to offer wildlife shelter from predators and bad weather. Layers of vegetation also ensure safe places for critters.

Raising young: Dense shrubs, nesting boxes and ponds are examples of places wildlife need to mate and raise their young. Certify your habitat through:

h Texas Parks and Wildlife

Department:

tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/wildlife_diversity/wildscapes/wildscape_certification.phtml

h National Wildlife Federation:

nwf.org/CERTIFY

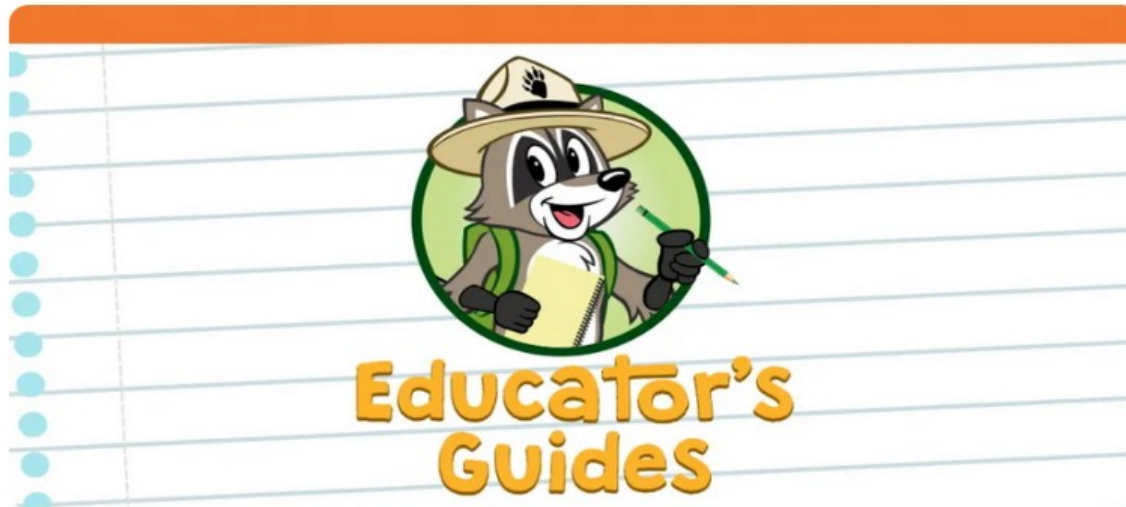
NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION



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There is a very long list of guides focused on children's education

“A certified backyard wildlife habitat is basically where a homeowner plants native plants in their front or back yards,” Davis said, explaining that the four major components are food, water, shelter and an appropriately arranged space where animals can raise their young. “When we create them, then all of the pollinator species, the bees, the beetles, the butterflies, the lizards and the birds, begin to return. We can recreate and restore what was lost.”

Dwindling wildlife

Bees, butterflies and beetles are just some of the wildlife needed to pollinate local plant life and improve soil quality.

In the early 1990s, an estimated 1 billion monarch butterflies would migrate through the Central Flyway, the path birds and insects take from north to south each year that includes Austin, Dallas and San Antonio.

In recent years, the migration has dwindled to about 300 million monarchs, sparking scientists’ efforts to place the butterflies on the nation’s endangered species list. Habitat loss and pesticide use contribute to their rapid decline, according to experts.

Beekeepers report losing about 29%, sometimes nearly as high as 40%, of all honeybee colonies every winter in Texas, according to the nonprofit advocacy group Environment Texas. Wild bee populations also are in decline.

More than 30 pollinator insect species are among animals in greatest need for conservation, according to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. That is worrisome because 90% of wild flowering plants need these insects to pollinate them.

If these populations continue to dwindle, flowering plants will also sharply decline, triggering a domino effect that could harm ecosystems, according to Environment Texas, which is campaigning to add more pollinatorfriendly plants to urban areas.

The collapse of these ecosystems can alter the landscape enough to contribute to climate change, which the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has linked to premature deaths from extreme weather events and more food- and water-borne illnesses for humans.

“Areas that once provided food, water and shelter for wildlife have undergone radical land use change,” Davis said. “In the process of urbanization, we end up paving over habitats and place homes and parking lots on top of habitats.”

And when many developers choose to landscape with exotic plants instead of native species, Davis said, “the overall impact is, at best, habitat simplification and, at worst, habitat destruction.”

Understanding the ecology

Before you consider creating a wildlife habitat in your own yard, it’s important to first understand the Central Texas landscape.

Interstate 35 as the boundary line. The Blackland Prairie is to the east of I-35 and the Edwards Plateau is to the west.

Plants native to one region might not thrive in another, so Davis said the first stop in your journey to a natural landscape should be the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Southwest Austin to learn about which plants belong in your yard.

The wildflower center is a state botanical garden that features more than 900 species of native Texas plants and has regular programs and events to teach people about flowers such as the sunshine-yellow tipped Rio Grande abutilon and the bright pink desert sand-verbena.

A quick browse of the wildflower center’s website will bring you to a native plant database, which will show the plants that grow best in certain soils and thrive in direct sunlight, partial sun or full shade.

Apartment dwellers can participate in this too, but on a smaller scale by planting these native species in pots on their balconies or doorsteps.

“It’s always best to start with your backyard until you really know how to do things in an appealing way,” said Davis, who also has a backyard wildlife habitat.

Several organizations certify wildlife habitats in Central Texas, such as the National Wildlife Federation and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, so it’s important to look at the specific requirements for each before investing in plants, seeds and water fixtures.

-Heather Osbourne