



Walter Wright, Jr.
wwright@mwlaw.com
(501) 688.8839

Wildlife Habitat Programs: Jodi Reynolds-Coffelt (Waste Management of Arkansas, Inc.) Arkansas Environmental Federation Regulation Waste Seminar Presentation

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Ms. Jodi Reynolds-Coffelt undertook a presentation at the Arkansas Environmental Federation Regulated Waste Seminar titled:

Wildlife Habitat Programs – It's Easier Than You Think ("Presentation")

Ms. Reynolds-Coffelt serves as Environmental Protection Manager – Arkansas – for Waste Management of Arkansas, Inc.

The *Presentation* focused on how to gain certification through the Wildlife Habitat Council ("WHC").

Ms. Reynolds-Coffelt initially noted that native species depend on private land (and responsible land stewardship), noting:

- 80 percent of the habitat that species listed under the Endangered Species Act depend on exists on private lands.
- Arkansas is home to 37 threatened and endangered species.
- An estimated 82 percent of the total land base in Arkansas is privately owned.

The WHC was noted to have a mission that promotes and certifies habitat conservation and management on corporate lands through partnerships and education. The organization's vision (every act of conservation matters) and values (open, true, driven and bold team, and every act of conservation matters) were addressed.

Requirements for WHC conservation certification were identified, which include:

- Are locally appropriate
- Exceed regulatory requirements
- Provide conservation or education value
- Have documented measurable outcomes

The steps in planning a project were discussed, such as:

- Defining objectives
- Evaluating resources and establishing a team

- Knowing your habitat

Initiating the project includes:

- Selection
- Seeking partnerships
- Scheduling events/allocation of resources
- Implementation of projects

Program implementation and reporting were discussed which included:

- Regular meetings/evaluations
- Routine maintenance
- Routine monitoring
- Reporting results

The types of WHC programs were addressed, which may include 26 possible themes. Characteristics of projects were noted, such as:

- No minimum acreage requirements
- Ability to have one or more programs
- Ability to set your own monitoring requirements and goals
- Applications can be submitted online
- Certification is good for 2 years
- Certification fee is \$1,000
- WHC staff is available to help (different levels)

Ms. Reynolds-Coffelt discussed a Waste Management example involving the 2009 Eco-Vista Landfill WHC project. The project was stated to include 75 acres of prairie unit improvement/conservation area in six phases. Also involved was the Woodland Unit/Bluebird Trail and a Butterfly Garden/Fish Pond.

Finally, five key takeaways for a successful program were noted, which included:

1. A great Wildlife Habitat Program does not necessarily require lots of time and money
2. Consider comprehensive site plan when designing your Wildlife Habitat Program
3. Employee participation and interest is crucial
4. Teaming with local groups who have similar interests can be a great asset
5. If you don't document, it didn't happen

[A copy of the slides can be downloaded here.](#)