Mammals Project Guidance

Introduction

A mammal is a warm-blooded vertebrate animal of a class that is distinguished by the possession of hair or fur, the secretion of milk by females for the nourishment of the young, and (typically) the birth of live young. Mammals are found on all continents (except Antarctica), and in almost all habitat types, including oceans, deserts, tropical forests and grasslands. There are three types of mammals:

- **Monotremes**, which lay eggs
- **Marsupials**, which birth live young that develop while carried in a pouch
- **Placental mammals**, which birth live young that develop inside the womb

Major threats to mammal populations include habitat loss and fragmentation, climate change, invasive and non-native species, pollution, illegal trapping and poaching. Due to these constant threats, mammals are forced to adapt or face extinction. The survival of mammals is critical to preserving biodiversity.

Building Your Program

Projects are divided into four categories: **Habitat**, **Species Management**, **Education and Awareness** and **Other Options.** You can build a program with more than one of each category but you must associate your program with at least one habitat. This Mammals Project Guidance is in the **Species Management** category. You must associate your mammal project with your habitat, and you may choose to also associate it with an **Education and Awareness** project.

Habitat – Projects that focus on conservation actions to protect, restore and manage different habitats.

Species Management – Projects addressing the conservation needs of targeted wildlife species or groups of species.

Education and Awareness – Projects to improve awareness, understanding and skills relating to conservation and the environment.

Other Options – Specialized projects that add value to your conservation efforts.

Browse the Project Guidance library at *wildlifehc.org/pg*.

What Do Mammal Projects Look Like?

Although mammals are comprised of both terrestrial and marine species, this project guidance focuses on terrestrial mammals and excludes marine mammals, bats, and domesticated animals. *If you have a project related to marine mammals, please apply under the Other Species theme. If your project targets bat species, please refer to the Bat Project Guidance and apply under the Bats theme.*

In general, mammal projects seek to create, restore, enhance or manage habitat to benefit mammals. They can also provide movement corridors for mammals that migrate short or long distances between habitats. Where appropriate, mammal projects may also include reintroduction or relocation of a mammal to the area.

Mammal projects do not include projects that are unsustainable, such as deer feeders, which require a dependency on humans to refill as a food source, and food plots consisting of non-native species, which may include plant species that are detrimental to the local ecosystem.

Mammal projects can provide habitat for resident mammals that occur on-site year-round, as well as for migratory mammals that only occur on site during certain times of year. Mammal projects may range in both size and scope, and can be designed to target either a specific species, such as a high-priority mammal species, or a suite of species, such as small mammals or large herbivores.

Considerations for Corporate Lands

Projects implemented on corporate-owned lands have different circumstances and challenges to those on public lands, protected lands or wild lands.

Which types of corporate lands are best suited for mammal projects?

Generally, mid- to large-sized corporate sites are ideal for creating, restoring or protecting specific mammal habitat, particularly when targeting species with larger home ranges. Smaller landholdings may be able to provide at least partial habitat needs for the life cycle of these species. All mammal projects should be designed within a conservation context of what is locally appropriate and suitable for the site.

Educational efforts for mammal conservation are suitable to sites of all types and sizes. These efforts can be tailored to fit the habitat and mammalian species found at the site and in the surrounding landscape.

Addressing challenges

The corporate context presents certain challenges for implementing mammal projects. Understanding these concerns and potential ways to overcome them can help your mammal project succeed in the long term.

Concern	Response
Project managers may not know what type of mammal conservation project would be best suited to the area.	*Teams should access conservation plans for their locality to determine appropriate mammal conservation goals and potential priority mammal species to target.* *Partners such as wildlife agencies and conservation organizations can also provide teams with guidance on appropriate goals and actions.*
Volunteers will likely have knowledge gaps.	*Knowledgeable staff or local experts from an existing initiative, NGO, state/provincial natural resource agency, cooperative extension or university could provide volunteers with the knowledge needed for successful project implementation.*

Concern	Response
Companies may have concerns about safety, particularly when managing for large predators, aggressive species, or other mammalian species that pose an actual or perceived danger to humans.	*Teams can consult with local experts for guidance on determining if management for these species is appropriate given the team's knowledge and resources, and in addressing actual or perceived safety concerns when managing for mammals through safety training, workshops, etc.* *Local experts may also be available to carry out certain project activities that are best implemented by experienced professionals.*

Getting Started with Mammal Projects

For a project to qualify toward Conservation Certification, you must be able to answer "yes" to five questions.

1. Is the project locally appropriate?

2. Does it have a stated conservation or education objective?

3. Does it provide value or benefit to the natural community?

4. Have outcomes been measured and is there supporting documentation?

5. Does it exceed any pertinent regulatory requirements?

Conservation and education objectives

It is a requirement of Conservation Certification that mammal projects be designed to meet one or more conservation objectives. Objectives can guide the direction of the project, help motivate others to participate and provide a basis for evaluation.

The following are suggested objectives for mammal projects. Your team may choose one or more of these objectives, or develop your own relevant objectives.

- Creating, enhancing, restoring or managing habitat:
  - for a specific mammal species to maintain or increase its population and overall biodiversity
  - for a sub-group of mammal species, such as small mammals
  - on a large or landscape scale
  - that connects to other mammal habitats – inside or outside the property boundaries, along movement corridors or across international borders
- Reintroducing or relocating an appropriate mammal species to the area
- Managing or protecting existing mammal habitat to decrease a conservation threat, loss or disturbance

- Increasing understanding and implementation of safe practices including maintaining safe distances, safe handling, etc.

- Addressing one or more research questions related to mammals

- Using mammal habitat to facilitate conservation education

- Increasing overall landscape maintenance and management through partnerships to restore movement corridors for wildlife

- Contributing to a citizen science project focused on mammals, or to provide general awareness of conservation issues and education opportunities

The following strategies are recommended to strengthen the conservation impact of your project:

- Establish a baseline of target mammal species in the habitat, upon which desired outcomes can be based and evaluated

- Connect to larger local, regional and landscape-scale initiatives for mammal conservation

- Work with a relevant partner such as a government wildlife agency or a species-specific NGO to develop proper goals and population targets for the target species

- Be meticulous about sourcing native plants and other engineering materials that benefit the target mammal species, or use appropriate management practices to provide diversity appropriate to the region and the target species

- Include artificial or assembled structures that meet a conservation or education outcome, such as brush piles or hibernacula

- Monitor and control invasive species that negatively impact mammals

- Provide opportunities for credible, scientifically-rigorous research and monitoring of target mammal species by university professors and students, contractors or other scientific professionals that is used to inform the project

- Manage target mammal species and habitat in a holistic manner to benefit overall biodiversity and environmental health as well as the target species

- Be located adjacent to or near an existing protected mammal habitat and managed in alignment with that habitat

- Modify operations to enhance mammal habitat and prevent harm to mammals, as appropriate, either at the site level or as part of a company-wide initiative

- Include credible monitoring that contributes to a citizen science program or the database of an established mammal conservation organization, and use this data to inform the project

- Implement sustainable hunting of a game species, such as deer, to improve the health of the species' population locally

Partnerships

Mammal projects implemented on corporate lands can benefit from partnerships with groups that have established conservation or education objectives related to mammals. A team can use such a partnership to help design, create or monitor its mammal conservation project and provide educational opportunities for employees and community members. Partners may also be able to assist the team with leveraging funds for implementing and maintaining the project, and can help create links between the on-site project and other mammal projects or conservation priorities in the region.

Resources

Your project may benefit from online or printed resources available for your region to support the design, delivery, maintenance and monitoring of mammal projects.

A search for "mammal" in the Conservation Registry returns over 80 projects implemented through WHC's certification program. This is a great place to find inspiration for your project and see what others are doing in and around your location.

The following terms, in any combination, may be useful when searching online for items related to this theme:

mammals	**mammal dens**
monotremes	**mammalogy**
marsupials	**hibernation**
placental mammals	**wildlife corridors**
predatory mammals	**brush piles**
small mammals	**sustainable hunting**
primates	**game management**
ungulates	

Understanding the Application Process

Documentation

When applying for Conservation Certification, you will provide documentation of the planning, implementation, maintenance and monitoring of your mammal project. The following is required documentation for mammal projects; however, you may also submit additional supporting materials.

Map/image of the project area, showing the relative size and approximate location of the project (other relevant information can be shown in the map as well, but is not required).

Photographs or videos that depict the progress of the project implementation and management over time.

Monitoring logs that show the frequency, type, and results of project monitoring of target mammal species and other project aspects, whether conducted in an informal manner or a scientifically rigorous manner.

Maintenance plans demonstrating that activities satisfy habitat needs, fully support target species, and support the conservation and education objectives.

Design plans/planting lists that show the project has been designed for success and meets the life cycle needs of the target species. Recommended items to include in the design plan are:

- Conservation or education objective

- Baseline data and brief analysis demonstrating a need for the project

- Target species and habitat(s) based on need, available time and resources, potential alignments with existing efforts, etc.

- Planting list with information about function that includes:

    - Name of plant species (common and scientific names)

    - Blooming time

    - If the species is native to the region

    - What mammal species it attracts and what habitat function it provides

- Plan that shows design consideration for siting, spacing and time of implementation

- Creation of structures for specific habitat needs such as

    - Brush piles or other cover habitat for small mammals

    - Denning habitat for hibernation or raising young

- Any additional steps taken

Application questions

As you complete the application online, you will be asked the following questions about your mammal project. These questions will help us understand and evaluate your project.

	Question	Why this question is important
Overview	Does the project target a specific species or a group of species?	*This provides us with a description of your project to allow us to assess it.*
	Name the group of species being targeted and list several of the species in this group (common or scientific names).	
	Name the species being targeted (both common and scientific names).	
	What plants or structures have been added or maintained to benefit the species?	
	Briefly describe what activities are taking place to address the targeted species.	
	Upload photos showing the mammal project.	
	When did on the ground work for the project begin?	
Objective	What are the project's conservation objectives?	*Having a conservation objective is a requirement for certification.*

	Question	Why this question is important
Habitat and Life Cycle Needs	Which of the major habitat and/or life cycle needs does your project address for the targeted species?	*Certain conservation actions are very valuable to the target species.*
	What plants or structures have been added or maintained to benefit the species?	
	Describe how the plants or structures address the habitat and/or life cycle needs.	
	Upload documentation of the plants or structures that benefit the species.	
Design of New Features	Have you added new plants or structures?	*Additions and expansions of your project since previous applications for recognition signify increased habitat value.*
	Did specific design or placement considerations maximize the benefit of the new plants and structures for the targeted species?	
	Upload documentation of the specific considerations.	

	Question	Why this question is important
Species Management	Select the types of management you are doing for the targeted species.	*Appropriate management policies and practices are also important for achieving healthy populations of the target species.*
	Select the types of population management you are doing.	
	Describe the measures being taken to achieve or maintain a healthy population.	
	Upload a management plan if applicable.	
	Identify the specific threat to the targeted species and describe measures being taken to address the threat.	
	List the steps taken to implement or maintain the mammal project.	
	Provide a timeline of the completed activities such as maintenance, implementation, population management, etc.	
	Upload documentation of these activities.	

	Question	Why this question is important
Monitoring	Was baseline data collected for this project?	*Monitoring is essential to understand the impact of the project and to be able to adapt the project develops.*
	Explain the types of baseline data collected.	
	Upload the baseline data.	
	Select each type of monitoring that is being carried out.	
	List each type of monitoring, including the frequency and list any plans or protocols used.	
	Upload the monitoring protocols, if applicable.	
	Upload the monitoring data and any analysis, if applicable.	
	Provide a brief summary of results from monitoring.	
	Evaluate the success of the project. If there were any concerns, what are the plans to address them in the future?	
Employee Participation	Do employees actively contribute to the mammal project?	*Employee participation can strengthen a project and secure its future.*
	How many employees actively contribute to the project on a regular basis?	
	Describe how employees are involved in this project.	
	How many employee hours were spent on the following activities each year?	

	Question	Why this question is important
Other Participants	Do any groups or individuals outside of your company actively contribute to the project on a regular basis?	*It is not always possible to recruit outside groups to a project. Conservation and education partners can strengthen a project and provide different audiences to use it for lessons or recreation, thus broadening its reach.*
	Select the types of groups.	
	List the names of the groups you work with.	
	Describe their involvement in this project.	
	How many hours were spent by the groups on the following activities each year?	
	If you work with a mammal specialist and have a current letter of support from them, upload it here.	
	List additional sources of technical advice (e.g. website, guidebook, etc.) and describe how they were used.	
Regulatory Requirements	Are any aspects of the project done in relation to regulatory requirements?	*Going beyond compliance is a requirement for certification.*
	Explain how the project exceeds requirements.	
Connectivity	Does the project connect with other mammal projects on neighboring land?	*Connectivity on site and across fence lines helps to decrease fragmentation, one of the leading causes of habitat loss.*
	Describe how the project connects with the other mammal projects.	

	Question	Why this question is important
Alignment	Does the project align with any larger scale initiatives? (e.g. corporate strategy, regional conservation plan, migratory pathway, watershed plan, etc.)	*Aligning conservation efforts with large-scale conservation plans and other regional conservation initiatives allows a site-based activity to support a landscape-scale objective.*
	Is the project part of a corporate level commitment to mammal conservation?	
	Upload documentation of your corporate commitment to mammal conservation.	
	Does the project align with an existing conservation plan or other large scale initiative?	
	List the conservation plans or other large-scale initiatives the project aligns with and provide website links, if available.	
	How does your project align with these large-scale initiatives?	
Existing Certifications	Does this project have third party mammal certification?	*Other certifications or recognitions illustrate strong efforts and commitments.*
	List the certifications and provide a website link if available.	

Content development for Conservation Certification

To inform the development of Conservation Certification, WHC analyzed the projects it was recognizing through its certification program to assess whether they were aligned with contemporary conservation and education priorities.

Following this assessment and using information from it, WHC convened Advisory Committees around many of the conservation and education themes to develop the content that would guide practitioners and applicants in the future. Some themes, including mammal projects, that have not yet been informed by external stakeholders, are presented to allow applicants to receive recognition. WHC plans to have all themes informed by stakeholders.

More information can be found about this process in the "Our Impact" section of *wildlifehc.org* under "Commitment to Transparency."

WILDLIFE HABITAT COUNCIL ℠

The WHC Strategy and Planning team can help you build a successful project by identifying needs, making connections with partners and resources, and providing strategies that meet business and conservation goals. Contact us today.

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Every act of conservation matters.