



BIRD CITY WISCONSIN: Making our communities healthy for birds ... and people

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10 more Wisconsin communities approved as “Bird Cities”

39 now recognized as rapidly growing conservation project enters 2nd year

Bayside, Wis. -- The Bird City Wisconsin project announced today that it had awarded recognition to 10 additional communities in its innovative and collaborative approach to urban bird conservation. The awards brought to 39 the number of cities, villages, towns and counties committed to making their communities a better place for people, birds and other wildlife.

The newest Bird City communities range widely and include the cities of Kenosha, Plymouth, Beaver Dam and Mayville; the villages of Ephraim, Fontana, Shorewood Hills, Grantsburg and Sherwood, and the Town of Baileys Harbor.

Each will be presented with a special Bird City Wisconsin flag, plaque and street signs at ceremonies to honor their conservation achievements.

In making the announcement, BCW coordinator Carl Schwartz said the project was continuing to surpass its goals for growth and had spurred communities statewide to initiate a number of new bird conservation projects. It also has raised the profile of International Migratory Bird Day, celebrated across two continents, including at nearly three dozen public events this spring in Wisconsin.

Noel Cutright, BCW Steering Committee member and founder of the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory, added: "Every community that has qualified to become a Bird City should feel proud and wear a feather in their cap. Over and over again, it has been demonstrated that a place that is a haven for birds and is doing good things to benefit them is a better place in which to live and work."

Bird City's recognition program is tailored to fit communities of all sizes, from cities like Kenosha (99,218) to villages like Ephraim (353). It accepts applications for initial certification three times each year, with the next deadline March 1. Recognition is renewable each year and runs from April 1 to March 31. Those communities announced today have been awarded recognition through March 31, 2013.

The 15 inaugural Bird Cities announced on Dec. 2, 2010, are in the process of renewing their recognition, and Schwartz said a number of them have undertaken additional conservation efforts and are applying for the "High Flyer Award" on top of their "Sustained Flight" renewal.

Schwartz also said that efforts to gain Bird City status are under way in more than 30 additional communities.

Previously recognized BCW communities include the cities of Mequon, Stevens Point, Green Bay, Racine, Evansville, Muskego, Oshkosh, New London, Lake Geneva, Brookfield, River Falls, La Crosse, Manitowoc, Middleton and West Bend; the villages of Bayside, Chenequa, Hales Corners, McFarland, Williams Bay, Newburg, Elm Grove and Trempealeau; the Towns of Manitowish Waters, Presque Isle and Grafton, and Ozaukee, Brown and Taylor counties.

Modeled on the "Tree City USA" program, Bird City Wisconsin was awarded a *TogetherGreen* Planning Grant in 2009 to help develop 22 criteria across five categories, including habitat creation and protection, community forest management, limiting hazards, public education, and recognizing International Migratory Bird Day. If a community meets at least seven criteria, it becomes an official "Bird City."



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Schwartz said the Bird City project was using its web site, www.birdcitywisconsin.org, to reach out across the state and guide communities through the application process. The site walks birdwatchers, natural landscaping advocates, foresters, parks directors, city planners and other interested officials and public citizens through the application process, and includes how-to details on implementing new conservation strategies. It also features details on how each of its current communities earned their recognition, providing tips for those who will follow.

The Milwaukee Audubon Society partnered with eight Wisconsin conservation organizations to seek the initial *TogetherGreen* funding. Audubon and Toyota launched the five-year *TogetherGreen* initiative in 2008 to fund innovative conservation projects, support conservation leadership, and offer volunteer opportunities that significantly benefit the environment and reach new audiences.

In 2010 and 2011, it granted Bird City a total of \$51,000 to launch and expand the project. Last year, the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin pledged to raise \$20,000 a year over three years through its Bird Protection Fund in support of Bird City Wisconsin. The Bird City partnership also includes the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, the Madison Audubon Society, Wisconsin Audubon Council, Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative, Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin, Riveredge Bird Club, and Aldo Leopold Audubon Society.

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About *TogetherGreen*

Audubon and Toyota launched the five-year *TogetherGreen* initiative in 2008 to build the promise of a greener, healthier future through innovation, leadership and volunteerism. For more information, visit www.togethergreen.org.

About Audubon

Now in its second century, Audubon connects people with birds, nature and the environment that supports us all. Our national network of community-based nature centers, chapters, scientific, education, and advocacy programs engages millions of people from all walks of life in conservation action to protect and restore the natural world. Visit Audubon online at www.audubon.org.

About Toyota

Toyota (NYSE: TM) established operations in the United States in 1957 and currently operates 10 manufacturing plants, including one under construction. Toyota directly employs nearly 30,000 people in the U.S. and its investment here is currently valued at more than \$18 billion, including sales and manufacturing operations, research and development, financial services and design. Toyota is committed to being a good corporate citizen in the communities where it does business and believes in supporting programs with long-term sustainable results. Toyota supports numerous organizations across the country, focusing on education, the environment and safety. Since 1991, Toyota has contributed over half a billion dollars to philanthropic programs in the U.S. For more information on Toyota's commitment to improving communities nationwide, visit <http://www.toyota.com/community>.