

Community Housing Partnership Corporation

Christiansburg, Virginia



Sustainability Assessments and Master Planning

In September, 2008 we conducted an SSC Green Audit at Community Housing Partners Corporation (CHP), surveying their employees, calculating their carbon footprint, and suggesting the most strategic and cost-effective way to go green. Since the audit, CHP has implemented many green initiatives.

Local Business Travel

To avoid the financial and environmental costs of automobile travel, Community Housing Partners (CHP) has implemented a video conferencing system for internal meetings between its Richmond, Virginia Beach, and Christiansburg offices. When working with CHP, outside clients and partners may also benefit from the time and cost-saving technology by borrowing CHP-loaned video cameras for remote meetings. When traveling for business is necessary, CHP highly encourages car pooling. Often individuals will link up with staff in nearby departments or offices to travel to a mutual destination. The company is also eco-conscious when selecting modes of transportation—always opting for travel by vehicle or rail before flying. CHP employees have readily accepted the idea of greening their business travel, for it reduces both costs and stresses associated travel, while still enabling staff to stay in regular communication with each other and clients.



Eco-friendly Landscaping

CHP is located in the rural southwest region of Virginia in the small town of Christiansburg. Its offices are located in a stand-alone building surrounded by grass and shrubbery on two sides. Not content with simply greening their affordable housing properties, CHP has taken the step of creating a wildlife habitat on its own office property. CHP followed the four steps outlined by the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) for creating a Certified Wildlife Habitat:

1. Providing Food for Wildlife. Planting native plants (such as forbs, shrubs, and trees) or hanging feeders in safe places are two easy ways to “go green” and create a welcoming atmosphere for wildlife.
2. Providing Water for Wildlife. Clean water is used by wildlife for drinking, bathing, and reproduction. Habitats can provide water through natural sources (such as ponds, springs, and wetlands) or through manmade features (such as bird baths, puddling areas, and rain gardens).
3. Providing Place for Cover. Wildlife require places to hide in order to feel safe from people, predators, and inclement weather. Using native vegetation (such as shrubs, thickets, and brush piles) or other “natural” hiding places (such as logs or rocks) makes your wildlife visitors feel safe!
4. Gardening in an eco-friendly way. Sustainable gardening techniques (such as mulching, and reduced lawn areas) have a positive effect on soil, air, and water health—and make a safe and healthy place for wildlife.



Client

Community Housing Partnership Corporation

Industry

Non-profit, Affordable Housing

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Date

September 2008

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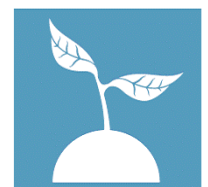
In addition to providing an attractive setting for the building, NWF notes that a wildlife habitat also has the following advantages:

1. It's fun! Watching wildlife in action can be fun and relaxing for everyone. Your habitat may attract beautiful songbirds, butterflies, frogs, and other interesting wildlife for viewing from your very own window.
2. Curb appeal! Replacing grass lawns with native wildflowers, shrubs, and trees will increase the beauty of your property and provide a nurturing refuge for wildlife.
3. Bring wildlife home! Restoring habitats where commercial and residential development have degraded natural ecosystems can be your way of giving back to wildlife.
4. Eco-friendly! Gardening practices that help wildlife, like reducing the use of chemicals, conserving energy and water, and composting also help to improve air, water and soil quality.
5. Community! Gardening for wildlife can help you share your love of wildlife with your neighbors and help them get involved in creating a home for wildlife.

Learn more about creating a wildlife habitat on your office property by visiting the National Wildlife Federations website at www.nwf.org. Their website has lots of helpful hints—from which native plants are best in your state to tips for sustainable gardening.

Customer Awareness

Since its inception in 1975, CHP has been an environmental steward, striving to create housing that is both affordable and environmentally responsible. From the organization's earliest days when it began providing emergency home repairs and energy conservation services to low-income households, to the launch of its company-wide Down to Earth green initiative in 2003, CHP has made green, sustainable living a way of life for its staff and clients. The Down to Earth program led to the implementation of measurable, green objectives within every department in the company, as well as the continuing education of employees in environmental issues. In order to spread the eco-friendly word to its residents, CHP issues a Green Home Buyer Manual to all new homeowners. The manual includes helpful tips on how to conserve water and energy; information on the care and maintenance of the home's building materials and appliances so that they will last longer; recommendations for eco-friendly cleaning products; and contact information for local recycling centers. An 11-month post-survey is also disseminated to the residents, which informs the company of the likes and dislikes about the residents' homes and helps with ideas for future development. The survey also allows the organization time to address any concerns or issues with the property before Virginia's one-year builder's warranty expires.



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