

## Lake and Hills Garden Club Celebrates Keowee Key National Wildlife Community Certification

by Alice Fleming Guzick

National Wildlife Federation project, Team Leader

On October 3, 2018, a bright sunny day with butterflies and birds flitting around us, Keowee Key celebrated a milestone. Thirty-five people, including outside guests, joined to recognize Keowee Key as the **first** National Wildlife Federation Community Wildlife Habitat in Midlands and Upstate South Carolina, the fifth community within the state, and the 112<sup>th</sup> community in the nation.

This National Wildlife Federation certification demonstrates that the residents of Keowee Key care about local wildlife, native plants, and their symbiotic relationships. When we welcome wildlife into our spaces, we look out our windows, walk around our homes, and we see that our yards are **alive with activity!** We share notes about how many creatures or blooms we have seen, we enhance our overall environment, and we build community.

At our Certification Celebration, Sara Green, Director of Education at South Carolina Wildlife Federation, congratulated Keowee Key for having more than 20 residents who had certified their yards 15 or more years ago and continue to “garden with wildlife in mind.” Ms. Green also congratulated Keowee Key for attaining certification in only eight months, which demonstrates the community’s widespread and enthusiastic interest in nature.



Sara Green, SC Wildlife Federation Director of Education, presents Keowee Key’s National Wildlife Federation certificate to Alice Guzick NWF Project Team Leader. Committee members (L to R) Lynn Pode, Dianne McGee and Lisa Thomas applaud proudly.



Marguerite Warren, Director of the West Piedmont District Garden Club of South Carolina (L) and Dee LeMay (R), Co-Director of the West Piedmont District GCSC congratulate Alice Guzick on Keowee Key’s designation as the first National Wildlife Federation Community Wildlife Habitat in Midlands and Upstate South Carolina, the fifth community within the state, and the 112th community in the nation.

Guests Marguerite Warren and Dee LeMay, from the West Piedmont District of South Carolina Garden Clubs, admired the newly planted commemorative Butterfly Garden at South Marina/Marina Villas. Spotted on that day were a buckeye butterfly, a yellow cloudless sulphur butterfly, and one monarch. Even from a distance, these knowledgeable guests could identify the plants they knew will bring more butterflies and pollinators to that sunny hillside on warm days. Erika Hollis, from Upstate Forever, was impressed with the cleanliness and natural beauty of Lake Keowee, which she saw for the first time from Keowee Key. If you haven’t seen one of the new butterfly gardens at South Marina or the Leisure Trail, be sure to visit!

## **How did Keowee Key attain certification?**

Sponsored by the Lake and Hills Garden Club, the NWF Community Wildlife Habitat project showed commitment from a core team, led by Alice Guzick. The project received unanimous approval in early 2018 from the KKPOA Board. Following a PowerPoint presentation to the Lake and Hills Garden Club, the project was approved by the garden club. A core team performed education and outreach activities to encourage and inform homeowners how to certify their own yards. Lists of site-specific native plant species are available at each garden club meeting and on the garden club's website and Facebook page. Lists of birds, how to attract them, and bird nesting boxes are available at many garden club meetings. Information pages showing which native plants attract specific types of butterflies are available on Keowee Key's National Wildlife Federation homepage. Clean up activities within Keowee Key have kept the community attractive and earned points towards our certification.

In addition to the education and outreach activities, also required are certifications of individual backyards and garden spaces. Keowee Key has nearly 100 individual homes and 4 common spaces certified. The certified common spaces are: Chestnut Point, Laurel Park, Leisure Trail, and Marina Villas. Be sure to visit these sites and see our newly installed National Wildlife Federation signs recognizing these spaces as wildlife-friendly.

Through a combination of registration, administration, education, outreach points, as well as certification points of garden spaces, Keowee Key attained the requisite 250 total points for our population. On August 10, 2018, we were officially certified! Please view our certificate on the garden club website listed below. The certificate will also be proudly displayed in the newly renovated Clubhouse.

If you would like to certify your own yard, go to: [www.nwf.org/certify](http://www.nwf.org/certify).

Cost is a one-time fee of \$20, payable online, at the weblink above.

Keowee Key's page on the National Wildlife Federation website offers resources mentioned in this article about native plants, deer resistant plants, attracting Eastern Bluebirds, attracting butterflies and much more. View these resources and many photographs at:

<https://www.nwf.org/CommunityWildlifeHabitat/Communities/Community/349>

To connect with other people interested in gardening with wildlife in mind, please join the Lake and Hills Garden Club. Meetings are held the second Friday of each month. For more details, go to:

[www.lakeandhillsgardenclub.com](http://www.lakeandhillsgardenclub.com)