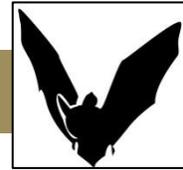


BECOMING A BAT-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY



Developed by the BC Community Bat Program / Bat-friendly Community Working Group

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INTRODUCTION

Bats face many threats, from white-nose syndrome to habitat loss. Developing a bat-friendly community is a way to take local action on many aspects of bat conservation. A bat-friendly community works to incorporate bat habitats into planning processes, reduces direct threats to bats, and promotes education and awareness of bats. The end result: a town where bat habitat is valued and protected, where citizens are aware of bats and the threats they face locally and nationally, and where citizens are engaged in educational and stewardship activities to protect bats and bat habitat.

The steps to becoming a Bat-friendly Community are simple, but it takes a team and ongoing commitment to maintain the program. Here are some guidelines to help you help your community become bat-friendly. An example of the process in action is in [Appendix 1](#).

CONTENTS

Becoming A Bat-friendly Community.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Step 1. Establish a team	2
Step 2. Gather information about bats and habitats in your area.....	2
Step 3. Gather information about current processes in your community.....	2
Step 4. Begin raising awareness and support for bats.....	3
Step 5. Develop a plan to address the three components of the program	4
1. Protect, enhance, or create habitat.....	4
2. Provide information.....	4
3. Promote learning	5
Step 6. Presenting to council.....	5
Step 7. RECEIVE CERTIFICATION.....	7
Step 8. Follow up.....	7
Appendix 1 – Example of process: Peachland, BC	8
Appendix 2 - Links to educational and outreach materials	9

STEP 1. ESTABLISH A TEAM

Gather a team of like-minded people to help you. Consider the need for ongoing involvement, support from local champions, and potential turnover of key people. Consider including:

- Naturalists or conservation groups, watershed societies, environmental clubs or educators.
- Champions within the municipal planning program, parks program, or on council.
- Municipal planners can give advice on what conservation options are already in place, and how to proceed with additional projects. In the Okanagan, you can go through the SOSCP shared environmental planner for advice.

Contact the Community Bat Program [Provincial Coordinator](#) about your idea. They can support you as you work on the different components of bat-friendly communities.

STEP 2. GATHER INFORMATION ABOUT BATS AND HABITATS IN YOUR AREA

Find out what is known about bat species in your area, including species at risk. See the [Bat-Friendly Communities Guide](#) for information and talk to your local [Community Bat Program](#), BC Government Ecosystems or Parks staff, the Conservation Data Centre or other biologists.

Identify and map bat foraging and roosting features that need extra attention in your community (e.g. natural habitats including riparian areas, wetlands, grasslands, open forest, and features including large (> 40 cm diameter) live or dead trees with cavities or sloughing bark, and human-built structures such as old buildings and barns).

Check for municipal environmentally sensitive area mapping or create your own habitat mapping by drawing on Google Earth.

Ask people in the community to identify features (e.g. roosts in trees, cliffs or buildings) they know about, or use a bat detector (e.g. Echometer Touch Pro) to develop an inventory of possible species and relative use (e.g. passes per hour) to identify important sites.



Using bat detectors to monitor bat activity can reveal which species are present and where.

STEP 3. GATHER INFORMATION ABOUT CURRENT PROCESSES IN YOUR COMMUNITY

What is your specific local government doing already to help bats? Compliment them on what they are already doing well and clearly identify the things you want them to do.

- Does the community have an [Official Community Plan](#) (OCP)? OCPs can include “policies relating to the preservation, protection, restoration and enhancement of the natural environment, its

ecosystems and biological diversity”. The OCP may allow for inclusion of guidance to promote or adopt bat-friendly practices as outlined in the BC Bat-friendly Communities Guide.

- Does the OCP have Environmentally Sensitive Development Permit Areas that protect bat habitats (e.g. riparian, wetland, grassland, old growth forest, wildlife trees)?
- How do they support the Riparian Areas Regulation? Most communities have a version of this and, if they are enforcing it, can protect riparian habitats.
- Do they have setbacks on wetlands in their development guidance?
- Do they have parks that protect bat habitats?
- Do they have municipal or park management policies or procedures that protect bat habitats such as wildlife tree protection or management (e.g. http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/bmp/BMPTreeRemoval_WorkingDraft.pdf <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/bmp/HazardTreeRemovalBMP.pdf>)
- Do they use a wildlife tree assessor? <https://www.unbc.ca/continuing-studies/wildlife-danger-tree-assessor-certificate-program>
- Do they have established work windows for dealing with bats in buildings and other developments?

STEP 4. BEGIN RAISING AWARENESS AND SUPPORT FOR BATS

Raise awareness of bats and the issues they face. Gather support for a bat-friendly community. Ideas include:

- Present a series of bat talks for schools, naturalist or environmental clubs or organizations and encourage a local follow up bat conservation action (e.g. Okanagan school example). We have example powerpoint presentations about bats that you can use or modify. Remember that people forget, so one talk will not be enough and reminders and updates are needed.
- Host public events (e.g. bat walk, booth at a market) and encourage follow up actions.
- Ask your Community Bat Program about borrowing a bat “edukit.”
- Publicize your findings about local bats, bat habitats, and key local issues in local newspapers or newsletters.
- Ask for written support from your contacts (we have draft letters of support to model).
- Identify trusted messengers and make personal connections - people are more likely to hear messages from people they know (e.g. respected community members who welcome bats in their buildings, have bat boxes, or participate in the annual bat count).
- Publicly recognize community members who are doing bat conservation actions to develop social norms.



The Peachland Bat Education and Ecological Protection Society Bat Van.

- Develop effective messages by always including interesting information about local bats, their values to humans, threats to bats and what your community can do to help.
- For background information on bats, their biology, and habitat needs, or ideas for activities, talk your local coordinator and see [Appendix 2](#) for a list of resources.

STEP 5. DEVELOP A PLAN TO ADDRESS THE THREE COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM

Review the [CRITERIA for becoming certified as a Bat-friendly Community](#), and plan how your group will work on the three main components of the program: 1. Protect/enhance/create habitat, 2. Provide information, 3. Promote learning. See below for some ideas and resources.

1. PROTECT, ENHANCE, OR CREATE HABITAT

Is there a habitat feature that can act as a focal point for protection? Consider:

- historic or other buildings with roosting bats
- a local wetland, river or creek that needs care
- a development that removes or impacts known bat habitat

If you are contemplating installing bat boxes, review [Building Homes for Bats](#) and contact [the BC Community Bat Program](#) for new information. Always promote [registration of bat boxes](#) as well as monitoring through [Annual Bat Counts](#) at any roost creation or enhancement project.



The Denman Old School House harbours a mixed-species colony of 700 bats and is an active community centre and social hub for humans.

Find out about other habitat or species conservation efforts in your area (e.g., a wetland restoration project), and consider working together. For additional ideas, see the [Bat-Friendly Communities Guide](#).

2. PROVIDE INFORMATION

We have six brochures that can be printed and made available by the city/town at their business desk. You will need to work with City Hall to have them put on display or linked online and distributed with building permits and business licenses. Contact the [BC Community Bat Program](#) for files or use the links below.

[Got Bats? A BC Guide for Managing Bats in Buildings](#)

[The Happy Cat](#)

[Got Bats? 7 Steps for Excluding Bats in Buildings: A Guide for Pest Management Professionals in BC](#)

[Got Bats in a house for sale? A bulletin for REALTORS in BC](#)

[Got Bats? A bulletin for Roofers and Chimney Professionals in BC](#)

[Got Bats? A bulletin for Builders in BC](#)



3. PROMOTE LEARNING

Use BatWeek in the fall, when bats begin to hibernate, and Bat Appreciation Day in April, when bats begin to appear in the spring, as anchor-points for bat events and messaging and to promote learning about bats and bat conservation. There are a variety of other bat-related days (see list below). There are endless ideas for education and outreach – bat walks, interpretive signs/trails, school programs, bat-themed dinners, etc. www.BatWeek.org has excellent suggestions. Consider a booth or presence at any local events, and be sure to let local media/press know about your activities.

There are many resources available online and through your regional coordinator to provide in-depth bat information and ideas for activities ([Appendix 2](#)).

Approach council to officially adopt BatWeek (see [Step 6 below](#)). If your town does not support proclamations, consider asking for acknowledgement of International Bat Week and their support of a partnership event or activity during this week. Before seeking mayoral and council support for BatWeek, review guidance available from the [BC Community Bat Program](#). Example proclamations are also available.



Oct 24 - 31: Bat week www.batweek.org

Oct 24: Take me outside day <http://takemeoutside.ca/tmo-day/>

Feb 2: World Wetlands Day <https://www.ramsar.org/activity/world-wetlands-day>

Apr 17: Bat Appreciation Day

Apr 22: Earth day <https://www.earthday.org/earthday/> (bats are returning after hibernation)

Jun 1- 22: BC Annual Bat Count <http://www.bcbats.ca/index.php/get-involved/participate-in-the-bc-bat-count>

Jul 11 – Aug 5: BC Annual Bat Count (post-pup counts)

Jul 24: Tequila day (bats pollinate agave plants that tequila is made from)

August – last full weekend: International Bat Night/Weekend

http://www.eurobats.org/international_bat_night



STEP 6. PRESENTING TO COUNCIL

Once you have a team, a plan, and good community and council support, you need to prepare to present to council and explain what a Bat-friendly Community involves.

First, contact individual council members to prepare them, make a personal connection and gauge their support. If support is strong, you are ready to present to council. If support is weak, you may need to raise more awareness of bats before presenting to council. If support is not there, you may not get a second chance so it is better to wait until you are sure of success.

- Ask at the local government front desk if it is possible to add Community Bat brochures to other available brochures and identify someone who can keep these stocked.
- Ask if links to brochures can be included in environmental guidance, development permits, and business licenses
- You will need to have a council member who is ready to propose that council adopt bat friendly communities (section c below).

Second, check the municipal website for directions on presenting to council, or go to City Hall front desk in person to indicate you would like to present to mayor and council. The City may require you to request to present as a delegation and provide forms for you to fill out ([contact us for an example](#)). You may want to send a letter to Council letting them know what the request is about and provide background that they can read in advance (very brief). Plan ahead as many delegations present to mayor and council and there are only certain time slots that allow this to happen. You may see a lag time of many months before you can present.

Once you have been approved and the delegation date has been given to you:

- a. review our short (5 minute) presentation and customize for your area ([contact us to access an example](#)).
- b. prepare information packages for each councillor and the mayor. This information package should include:
 - the [Criteria for Becoming a Bat-friendly Community](#)
 - examples of habitat enhancement options including bat boxes (images of what the options might look like, and possibly a set of instructions for building bat houses as council will have to decide if their public works staff can take this on in addition to their regular duties)

EXAMPLES OF THE BROCHURES YOU WOULD LIKE THEM TO STOCK AT THEIR PERMITTING AND LICENCING OFFICES/DESKS (SEE 2. PROVIDE INFORMATION

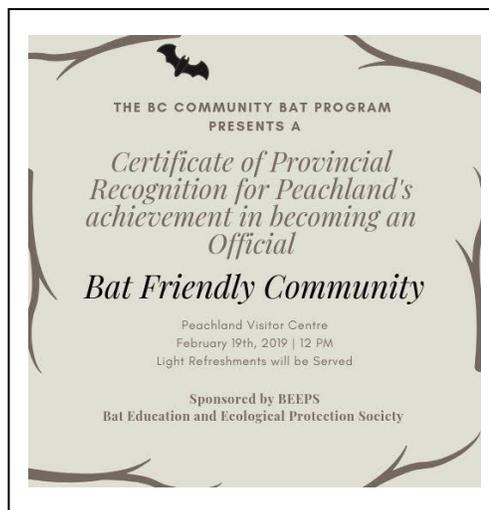
- , above)
 - Before presenting, try to make it as easy as possible for them to achieve the criteria and sign on to the program (e.g. have brochures already on display if you can, compliment them on existing habitat protection, apply for funding if needed)
 - your BC Community Bat program or organization business card (plus bring a few extra as the mayor and council will delegate work to the appropriate city staff and you are likely to be introduced that day)
- c. Present!
 - Time is short - it is rare to be given more than 15 minutes as a delegation.
 - After the presentation, indicate that you are hoping mayor and council will elect to become a Bat Friendly Community and provide them with a shortened version of the criteria (e.g. “in three easy steps”).

- emphasize that other communities are already becoming bat-friendly (e.g. Dawson Creek is certified, Calgary has officially adopted Bat Week). You will likely have to explain International Bat Week and provide some examples of possible activities.
- Make it very clear what you are asking them for, and be prepared to address any costs.

STEP 7. RECEIVE CERTIFICATION

After your city/town has voted to become bat friendly, contact the BC Community Bat Program to provide details on your accomplishments and receive an official certificate (which can be presented formally to the town). The BC Community Bat Program will recognize the certification on the bcbats.ca website as well as a Facebook posting, and provide a BFC logo to display on the town's website.

Arrange a formal presentation time to present the certificate. Inform the press by sending out a press release or notice ([contact us](#) for an example), and consider inviting the mayor and council, local stewardship groups, your regional Community Bat Program coordinator, and local media.



- Provide twice-yearly updates (March and September) to the BC Community Bat Program on bat-friendly activities to maintain 'certified' status. An updated certificate will be provided yearly if status is maintained.

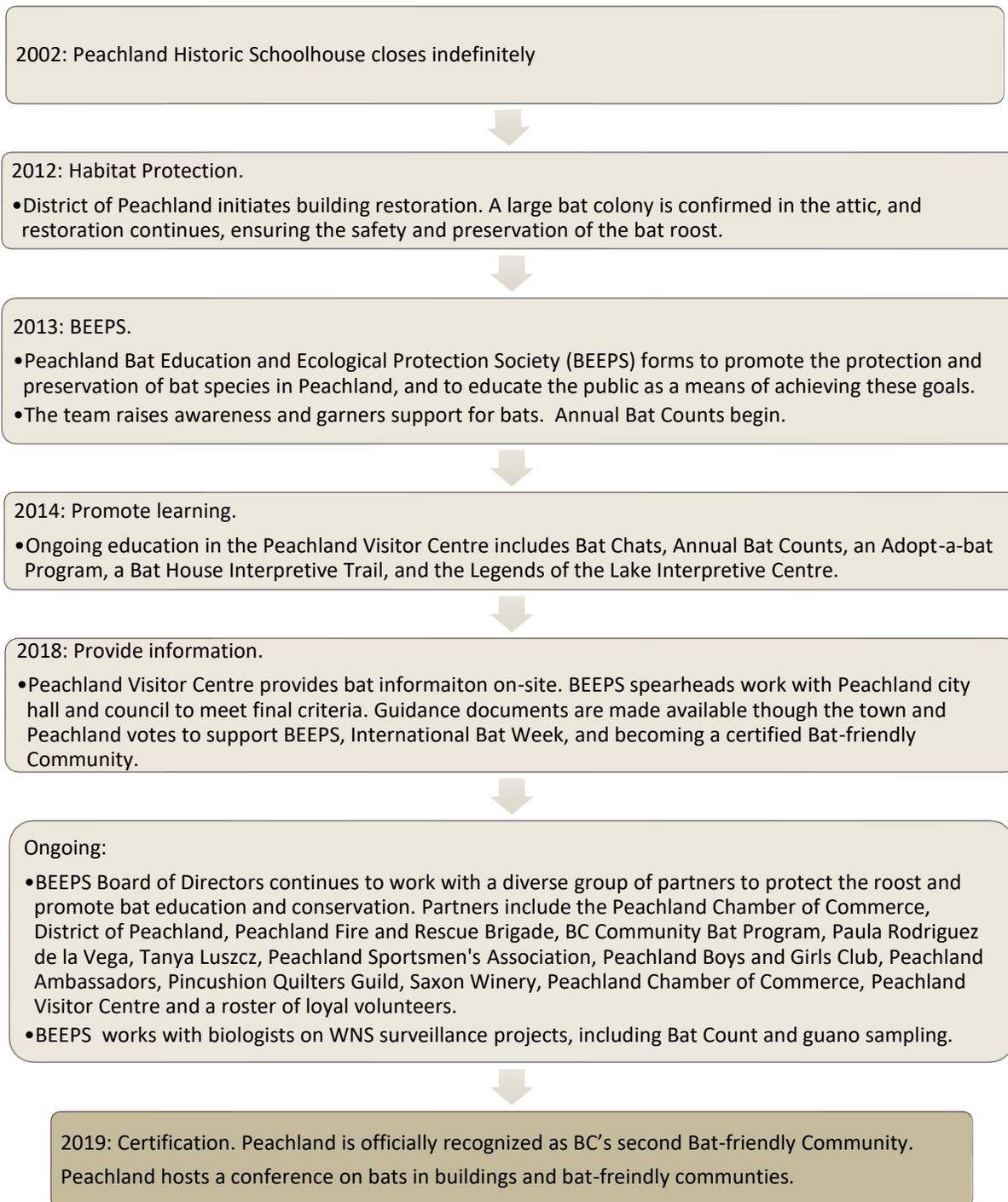
STEP 8. FOLLOW UP

If your town becomes bat friendly, make sure to follow up. Set reminders to check on commitments, particularly at City Hall - staff and elected officials are busy and may not be thinking of bats everyday. For example:

- a. Protect, enhance, or create habitat: If building a bat house is part of the plan, ensure it gets mounted and monitored! Supply roost monitors (at natural and/or artificial roosts) with [Annual Bat Count protocols and data sheets](#), and tell them the date window for doing exit counts. Remind monitors to submit data in August and report results to the town.
- b. Provide information: A quick check with the permitting and licencing staff will be required once a year to remind them to re-stock pamphlets and as staff turnover is likely, new staff may need to be brought up to speed.
- c. Promote learning: get in touch with your team and City in late September and early October to check on plans for International Bat Week that year.

APPENDIX 1 – EXAMPLE OF PROCESS: PEACHLAND, BC

Peachland's bat-friendly community work began with the identification and protection of a large maternal roost site, described in our [Living with Bats](#) document. Today Peachland has an extensive education and monitoring program spearheaded by BEEPS – the Bat Education and Ecological Protection Society of Peachland: www.beepspeachland.com .



APPENDIX 2 - LINKS TO EDUCATIONAL AND OUTREACH MATERIALS

BOOKS AND EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL

BC Bat EduKit: includes Activity Guide, PowerPoint, list of props for making an EduKit

<https://bcbats.ca/bat-basics/bat-resources-for-teachers-and-educators/>

Bat Ambassador Training: [information](#) and [Handbook](#)

NatureKids BC Bat Citizen Science Program: <https://naturekidsbc.ca/be-a-naturekid/stewardship-citizen-science/bat-citizen-science/>

BatsLive Project EduBat activities and curriculum: <https://batslive.pwnet.org/edubat/curriculum.php>

Bats of British Columbia (non-fiction book): [coming soon](#)

Stellaluna

Brian Lies: Bats at the Beach, Bats in the band, etc

PROPS

Bat EduKits may be available in your area – contact your local [Community Bat Program Coordinator](#) (e.g., Fraser Valley Libraries BatPacks: <https://www.fvrl.bc.ca/batpacks.php>)

Bat puppet: <https://www.folkmanis.com/prod-154-1-507-1/bat-little-brown.htm>

Bat finger puppet: <https://www.folkmanis.com/prod-154-1-115-3/mini-bat.htm>

Bat skeleton: <https://www.skullsunlimited.com/products/real-bat-skeleton-sk-300> (however, we do not know if these are ethically-sourced. Stay tuned for possible skeletons from BC carcasses or made by a 3D printer!)

Bat detectors: Many available. Ranging from low cost (<https://www.batseeker.com/> or <https://somesetbat.group/advice/which-bat-detector/audiomoth/>) to survey quality (<https://www.wildlifeacoustics.com/products/echo-meter-touch-2-pro-ios> (or Android version)) and up. Lots of cool things here: <http://www.batgoods.com/shop/>

ONLINE RESOURCES

- BatWeek: www.batweek.org
- Project EduBat: <http://batslive.pwnet.org/edubat/>
- Video of someone reading “Stellaluna” <http://www.storylineonline.net/>
- Colouring pages <http://www.theteachersguide.com/batslessonplans.htm>
- Bat crafts http://www.dltk-holidays.com/halloween/bat_crafts.html
- Bat math activities <http://mathwire.com/themes/themebat.html>
- Bat reading and making a bat-shaped book <http://www.kidzone.ws/animals/bats/activities-books.htm>
- Bat games (including smelling pups and echolocation) <http://www.twigglemagazine.com/October-activities/Bats-kids-lesson-kindergarten.html>
- Make an itsy bitsy book <http://www.kidzone.ws/animals/bats/ws16.htm>
- Lots of good bat activities <http://www.kidzone.ws/animals/bats/activities.htm>
- Lesson plans from BatsLive http://batslive.pwnet.org/resource/lesson_plans.php

- Bat toilet paper roll craft <http://www.dltk-kids.com/animals/mbat.htm>
- Paper bag bat puppet <https://www.dltk-kids.com/animals/mbagbat.htm>
- Bat Conservation International : <http://www.batcon.org/resources/media-education/learning>
- White-nose Syndrome information: <https://www.whitenoosesyndrome.org/>

VIDEOS

Texas bats (video)

Our very own BC Community Bat Program You Tube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGcqaQng0XFnlV0rIjzrIXw/videos>

The Bats of Alberta : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n77odL1Hk8>

