December 8, 1995

Schoolyard Habitats Program
Britt Slattery
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Education & Training Center
4401 North Fairfax Drive (MS 304 Webb)
Arlington, VA 22203

Dear Britt:

For over 20 years, the National Wildlife Federation has promoted and offered instruction to individuals and communities as to how they can conserve and enhance wildlife habitat in one's own backyard. Through a program called Backyard Wildlife Habitat, the National Wildlife Federation offers participants planning and planting guidelines to address the needs of wildlife, information about environmentally sound landscaping practices, and recognition in a national program and in their local communities. In North America, there are over 17,250 certified Backyard Wildlife Habitats. Some 350 of these habitats are at schools or other educational institutions.

Backyard Wildlife Habitat Programs staff have long advocated that schools use campus habitats to enrich learning opportunities and to provide a base for resource stewardship within the school community. We have recently received funding from the Dannon Company to establish the National Wildlife Federation's Schoolyard Habitat Program. The new program will consist in time of a certification component, an annual recertification option and newsletter, written instructional materials, a series of videos, a place on the Backyard Wildlife Habitat World Wide Web home page, and documentation of the development of five demonstration schoolyard habitat sites.

Because you have been involved in similar endeavors, we would like to invite you to share your insights about school habitats with us, to join with us in letting educators know of the opportunities and resources pertinent to these learning habitats through our World Wide Web site, and to inform us how we might obtain materials, bibliographies, videos, and software that you have developed for instructional purposes on this topic.

- over, please -
In implementing our program, we want to find our niche in this educational community. We would also like your feedback about how we might build and sustain an information umbrella for the many groups and agencies involved with hands-on school habitats, including ecological restoration, urban greening and community open space stewardship efforts as they relate to schools throughout North America.

We look forward to hearing from you in developing this exciting new program.

Sincerely,

Craig Tufts
Chief Naturalist and Manager
Backyard Wildlife Habitat Programs