WHC Conservation Certification® Standard Revision

Version 1.2 | 2020

WHC Conservation Certification Version 1.2 Overview

Modifications to WHC Conservation Certification as part of Version 1.2 (v1.2) were implemented in early 2020. The decisions were made by an inter-departmental group of WHC staff that represented corporate, site/program, and communication perspectives as well as the credibility, reviewer and data considerations of the Certification Department.

Modifications were enacted for improved consistency, credibility and reporting capabilities. The most substantive of the changes were the removal of one project type (Other Education) and making two upload fields mandatory. Changes were made to the guidance instructions under some application and scoring questions; these alterations were made for additional clarification and context and are not accounted for in this document.

In addition, a significant accommodation was made in light of the impact of the global coronavirus pandemic. This change temporarily alters requirements and is therefore included in this document.

Each v1.2 modification went into effect between January and April 2020. Applicants who applied in 2020 will be evaluated based on the updates that had been made at the time of their application. The Covid-19 Accommodations were announced April 8, 2020 but are effective retroactively.

Habitat

All Habitat Project Types

Application Section	Change Type	Application Question	Updated	Reasoning
Scope	Updated Radio Button Option	Are any aspects of the project related to regulatory requirements?	No - project entirely voluntary	More prominent placement of the information was needed.
Scope	Question Wording	Upload a recent plant inventory (a list of plant species currently in the [Habitat Type]).	Upload a recent plant inventory (a list of plant species currently in the habitat) indicating the date conducted, common and scientific names, and whether each species is native.	More prominent placement of the information was needed.
Management	Added Question		Are you actively managing the [Project Type] project? • Yes • No – just monitoring	Some projects are not being actively managed, yet management questions had to be completed. This added question filters out the subsequent questions if it is answered 'no'.

Species

All Species Project Types

Application Section	Change Type	Application Question	Updated	Reasoning
Scope	Updated Radio Button Option	Are any aspects of the project related to regulatory requirements?	No - project entirely voluntary	More prominent placement of the information was needed.
Management	Added Question		Are you actively managing the [Project Type] project? • Yes • No – just monitoring	Some projects are not being actively managed, yet management questions had to be completed. This added question filters out the subsequent questions if it is answered 'no'.
Management	Made Mandatory	Upload documentation of the activities described in your timeline.		For consistency with habitat management and to ensure applicants provide enough information to earn points.

Education

All Education Project Types

Application Section	Change Type	Application Question	Updated	Reasoning
Scope	Updated Radio Button Option	Are any aspects of the project related to regulatory requirements?	No - project entirely voluntary	More prominent placement of the information was needed.
Evaluation	Updated Wording	Do you evaluate the implementation of the project and the overall experience?	Do you evaluate the logistics of the project and the overall experience?	Correlates with the scoring rubric and improves clarity of meaning of 'implementation.'
Evaluation	Updated Wording and Made Mandatory	Upload documentation of the implementation evaluation, if applicable.	Upload documentation of the evaluation.	For consistency with evaluation of learning and to ensure applicants provide enough information.
Evaluation	Updated Wording	Describe how you use the evaluation of implementation to improve your project.	Describe how you use the evaluation of the logistics of the project and the overall experience to improve your project.	Correlates with the scoring rubric and improves clarity of meaning of 'implementation.'

Other Education

Analysis of all the projects submitted under the Other Education project type showed that all Other Education projects should be categorized under the 3 main education project types: Awareness and Community Engagement, Formal Learning or Training.

To improve consistency in applications, scoring, and reporting, Other Education projects are being discontinued. Applicants with existing Other Education projects can gain recognition for their efforts by applying with a different education project type.

Other Options

All Other Options Project Types

Application Section	Change Type	Application Question	Updated	Reasoning
Scope	Updated Radio Button Option	Are any aspects of the project related to regulatory requirements?	No - project entirely voluntary	More prominent placement of the information was needed.

Covid-19 Accommodations

The global impact of the coronavirus pandemic and the public health measures needed to counter its spread will impact many Conservation Certification programs around the world. During this time, maintenance, monitoring, education and other conservation activities may be challenging at best, impossible at worst.

Applications now include series of questions about the impact of Covid-19 on the program. If continuity of a project (management and monitoring, education efforts etc.) is disrupted by the pandemic, the applicant can provide information on the specifics of the disruption (e.g. facility closed) and the dates of these impacts. The reviewers will consider this information so that gaps associated with Covid-19 will not adversely impact an application's score. Applications will be evaluated based on work that was done outside of the impacted time period.

Although accommodations are being made for disruptions in continuity of projects, the base requirements for Conservation Certification remain the same. New programs must still meet the minimum requirement for how long a project has been on the ground and actively monitored prior to applying.