

Reach out and teach someone.

The remaining pages of the Stewardship section is a potpourri of examples of ways golf course superintendents can reach out and educate. Each of the examples could be adapted to almost any golf course.

Why should you bother?

Here are the thoughts of eight people who are important to our industry.

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“Golf course superintendents are much more than “golf course superintendents.” They are managers, caretakers if you will, of natural resources. The results of their efforts can benefit much more than just those that choose to walk, or ride around their course. The entire community, the wildlife of an area, and the water quality of the area can benefit from superintendent stewardship.

Superintendents are doing themselves and the game of golf a disservice by not spreading the message about their efforts to their members, and everyone else in the community. Environmental change, or any kind of change for that matter is brought about through leadership. Leadership includes informing others, and encouraging action to be taken. Be a leader. Share your efforts with others and encourage them to follow your example.”

Ron Dodson, President,
Audubon International

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“History has shown that people will listen, and respect, a strong united voice. However, a single voice, regardless of how strong or how well spoken, will be dismissed as rebellious chatter.”

Darren Davis, Golf Course Superintendent,
Olde Florida Golf Club

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“It doesn’t matter what maintenance topic you’re discussing. The important fact is that you share this information with the crew, especially the student interns. This is your opportunity to demonstrate your commitment to doing the best job possible, and show them how everyday actions can positively impact the environment. You not only pass on your experience, but you are raising the awareness of future superintendents.”

Kimberly Erusha, Director of
Education, USGA Green Section

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“What kids can see, touch and hear sticks in their memories much more than just verbal communication. When a child sees a bird, a fish or other animals at a golf course, then that child will begin to understand and remember that a golf course can be a great home and sanctuary for wildlife. But unless they are afforded the opportunity to experience first hand the multi-faceted benefits that golf courses provide for the environment, then all they have to judge by, and base decisions on, is what they hear through the media — which, historically, has been negative, exaggerated, and often inaccurate. Now, ask yourself this question: How important is it to educate kids, first hand, about your golf course? Remember, while considering your answer, that one day they could be voting about issues that impact you and your golf course.

Tim Heirs, CGCS, Collier’s Reserve
Country Club

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“First of all, golfers and the general public are not aware of the numerous positive benefits of a golf course to the environment. Secondly, there are others that are firmly convinced that

golf courses have a negative impact on the environment. If golf course superintendents do not take a proactive position and educate as many people as possible, unrealistic regulations will be enforced to the point that a good quality facility cannot be maintained.”

John H. Foy, Director,
USGA Green Section

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“Most superintendents are in this business because they love their job. Therefore, we owe it to our profession and our peers to let others know of the many benefits that are provided by our golf courses. Golf courses are all unique, and not every golf course is carved out of pristine woods and left undeveloped. Unfortunately these are an exception and are certainly NOT the only good golf courses! Every superintendent needs to understand all of the benefits that they provide daily and more importantly, let others know. If you would like additional information, it is available. It is as easy as calling the USGA, the GCSAA, and also watch your mail for a free video that is currently being written and produced by the FGCSA.”

Darren Davis, Golf Course Superintendent,
Olde Florida Golf Club

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“What drives a person to choose a career as a golf course superintendent? Is it their love for the game of golf? Possibly. Is it their love of working outdoors with nature? Possibly. Is it their love of implementing one’s own ways of enhancing the environment? Possibly. Is it their love of educating others about the positive benefits of golf courses and their importance to our economy here in Florida? Probably not.

With that in mind, the following article is written for those superin-

tendents who are possibly looking for ideas to use in educating the people they encounter in their every day work environment. I honestly believe that superintendents truly want to teach others to understand what we do as superintendents and why we do it. What I really think stops us from accomplishing this goal is not having the educational tools needed to perform this task all assembled in an easy to read guide. Well, ladies and gentlemen, look no further. The Florida Green is your guide to success.

Shelly Foy and I have been working together on environmental stewardship articles for several years now. This article will highlight accomplishments of superintendents in Florida, as well as other areas of the country. From participation in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program; to the airing of television commercials about the importance of golf courses; to a new video being produced on the role of a golf course superintendent. These and other ideas will be shared with you. Hopefully from what is provided, there will be an idea mentioned that you can use to start educating others.

Greg Plotner, Past President, FGCSA



“Environmental issues and concerns on golf courses are here to stay. They may very well be the most important and time consuming part of your job for many years to come. With more and more regulations being placed on chemical use, as well as water usage and quality, every superintendent in the state will need to become more aware and protective of the resources you have.

This Outreach and Education article is designed to provide you with examples of things that you can use to educate your golfers, members, and the public about the benefits that golf courses offer to people, wildlife and the environment. Some of the information provided is specific to a particular golf course, but should provide you with some insight into projects that you can implement at your

facility.

The good news is that the word is getting out! Thanks to the efforts of the USGA, Audubon International, the GCSAA and others, people are starting to hear about the positive benefits of a properly maintained golf course. However, who is going to sell your side of the story better than yourself? Don't wait till you find yourself

against the wall having to defend your management and environmental practices.

Take a pro-active stance today. Will it take a little effort? Yes. Will it take a little nerve? Yes. Will it take a little time? Yes. But if you think education is expensive, try ignorance.”

Shelly Foy, USGA Green Section

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