

Comprehensive public golf course program

Pumpkin Ridge is a part of a region that supports a very diverse collection of native plant and animal life. This appeal is part of what influenced many of us to become part of this golf club. It is our responsibility as stewards of the property to encourage this plant and wildlife diversity. The method by which we manipulate and manage the golf course property will have a heavy impact on wildlife habitat.

By simply leaving out-of-play areas as grassland, woodland, wetland and other natural habitat, we encourage many species of wildlife. In doing so we must consider both the needs of wildlife and golfers. Traffic flow and speed of play must be considered. Labor once used to maintain out-of-play areas can concentrate on improving areas more likely to affect playability. So, if handled intelligently, managing out-of-play areas for wildlife will add uniqueness to our course, giving golfers a sense of the variety and beauty found in a natural setting.

To help accomplish this goal, the club has become a member of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System. This program provides information, support, guidance, and recognition for enhancing wildlife habitat, conserving natural resources, and protecting the environmental quality on the golf course. Site information, current management strategies and conservation practices have been recorded and sent to the Audubon staff. They are preparing a report which will suggest habitat enhancement and environmental conservation projects suited

to Pumpkin Ridge Golf Club. The owners then determine which projects to pursue.

The following are some of the ideas being considered or currently in practice:

- Allow out-of-play areas to re-vegetate to native plants.
- Link these natural areas together to provide corridors for animal movement within property boundaries and neighboring properties.
- Allow re-vegetation around lakes to provide cover for water fowl, amphibians and reptiles.
- Extend buffer strips around wetlands. Mark wetlands as lateral water hazards to speed play and encourage golfers not to enter.
- Landscape with trees and shrubs having a high value for a variety of wildlife. Supplement this food supply during winter months with feeding stations.
- Leave dead trees and shrubs to provide important nesting and shelter for mammals and birds. Mount nesting boxes for cavity nesting birds.
- Provide brush piles in woodlands to enhance cover for small birds.
- Use organic fertilizers and pesticides when possible. Reduce pesticide applications by spot treating areas when absolutely necessary.

Editor's Note:
The following is an example of an article for use in your club newsletter.

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The idea of encouraging wildlife does not mean we will allow animal populations to increase uncontrolled that would be harmful to the golf course. Moles, geese, and dangerous animal populations will be controlled if necessary. Site maps describing existing and developing natural habitats will be provided in the golf shop. Anyone interested in the sanctuary program is more than welcome to contact me through the administration office.