

Hole-in-the-Wall is unique in South Florida. It is a golf course adapted to its natural surroundings. Nature and golf are to be enjoyed equally.



Don't hurry, don't worry, and be sure to smell the flowers along the way

BY SHELLY FOY
USGA Green Section

From: The introduction of Hole-in-the-Wall Golf Club: A History

"Hole-in-the-wall" is unique in South Florida. It is a golf course and only a golf course.

It is adapted to the natural surroundings. The flora and the fauna remain intact. Nature and golf are to be enjoyed equally. "

"You're only here for a short stay
Don't Hurry, Don't Worry,

And be sure to smell the flowers along the way."

Located a couple of miles north of the center of Naples, Hole-in-the-Wall is 200 acres with an 18 hole golf course and no houses on property. There are 90 acres of

play area, 20 acres of non-play area, 30 acres of roughs, 50 acres of swamps and woodlands and 8 to 10 acres of open fresh water. There are no natural streams or creeks, however, the Gordon River, although not visible, runs along the eastern boundary of the property.

Ron Sanborn, Golf Course Superintendent, gives a little history of the golf course: "Back at the turn of the century, what is now Naples and its surrounding areas was divided by a swamp known as "The Wall" because it could not be crossed by land traffic. Eventually a path was built through the swamp and became known as "The Hole in the Wall."

In 1944, Ed Frank purchased 200 acres

which was named "Hole-in-the-Wall Ranch".

Mr. Frank was responsible for many things around town, including his invention, the swamp buggy.

At the time, the Naples Beach Hotel and Golf Club was the only golf course in town.

The course was used primarily by hotel guests, but annual memberships were sold to local residents. At the same time, Port Royal was being developed with only a social club and no golf course. As Naples continued to grow, it was apparent that one golf course would not accommodate everyone.

In 1957, Naples watched the birth of

Hole-in-the-Wall Golf Club. Dick Wilson was hired as the golf course architect. The club opened in 1958 as the first private golf course in Naples. The members today play a Par 72, 6,286 yard course."

On January 4, 1994, Hole-in-the-Wall Golf Club became the 11th golf course in the country and the 2nd in the State of Florida to become a fully certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary. Becoming fully certified was only the beginning for Hole-in-the-Wall however, and they continue to implement the principles of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP) as part of every day operation of the golf course.

Constant and committed leadership

Every project needs a leader, and in the case of Hole-in-the-Wall, Fred Yarrington has really made a difference. Since joining the program in January, 1992, Hole-in-the-Wall Golf Club has had a constant and dedicated leader of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program. Mr. Yarrington is a former Green

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Chairman and Board Member of Hole in the Wall Golf Club. He is a current member of the U.S. Junior Championship Committee and former Director of the Connecticut State Golf Association.

According to Mr. Yarrington, "I think it would be difficult to generalize on how to become certified in each of the categories. So much is dependent on the characteristics of each individual golf course. We're lucky to be located in an area friendly to wildlife and with no housing bordering the golf course.

We have been amazed at how little cost and effort there can be in a program of making a golf course more compatible with the environment. To anyone considering the program, I would point out that they should expect a great deal of interest and support from their membership.

Although it is difficult to evaluate the program in dollars and cents, I am certain by following Audubon suggestions, we will save much more long term from the program than any of the modest expenditures we have made directly. The plus in all of our efforts is that raising the level of environmental consciousness is truly cost effective in the long term."

Mr. Yarrington is generous in his willingness to share information and help other courses get involved with this program. He stays in regular contact with several other ACSP member courses in the Naples area. He serves as ACSP Resource Committee Chairman and has put together an enviable committee who have worked together to make Hole-in-the-Wall an even better place for golfers and wildlife. Other members of the Resource Committee are listed in the accompanying sidebar.

The property is surrounded by Royal Poinciana Golf Club to the north and east, and Wilderness Country Club to the south. One quarter of the total property is unused and the majority of this is maintained in a natural state. The large acreage of cypress swamps, woods, water and open space on the property provide a great diversity of wildlife, as evidenced by the wildlife inventory seen at Hole-in-the-Wall. This in addition to the open space provided by the surrounding golf

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Perhaps objectives is a better term than goals, since as long as we continue participation in the program, the goals will never be reached because there is always a new idea or project which would have a positive effect on each of the three stated goals."

courses, creates a large corridor for wildlife.

What stands out most about Hole-in-the-Wall is their continued support and commitment to the ACSP. Even after becoming a fully certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary, they continue to research and implement projects to provide the membership with a first class golf facility that is in harmony with nature.

In 1992, the Hole-in-the-Wall Golf Club ACSP Resource Committee had three goals:

1) To insure that activities on the club

property have a positive environmental impact.

2) To improve the wildlife habitat on the club property

3) To educate and inform the membership regarding the program.

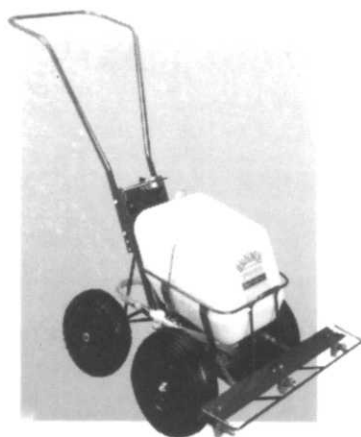
Have they accomplished these goals? "We are pleased with the progress we've made since joining the program. Perhaps objectives is a better term than goals, since as long as we continue participation in the program, the goals will never be reached because there is always a new idea or project which would have a positive effect on each of the three stated

goals."

The accompanying chart looks back at the past five years and identifies the focus of the Resource Committee.

"I have enjoyed the educational experience and personal contacts developed from our participation in the program, and the opportunity I have had to share this information with our members. I am very pleased to be part of a proactive program which is providing a positive response to allegations of environmental harm due to golf courses, allegations based purely on speculation rather than fact," said Mr. Yarrington.

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Since 1992, aquatic plantings have been an important part of improving Hole-in-the-Wall's waterways.



In 1994, the project continues as another lake bank is being planted. The goal is 100% lake and canal bank plantings.

	1992 Establishing A Plan (Environmental Planning)	1993 Implementation	1994 Certification	1995 Continuation	1996 Staying on Track
Environmental Planning	* Joined the ACSP * Formed Resource Committee	*Continual update of plan and regular meetings with committee members	* Writing certification requests	*Site visit by Jean McKay, Audubon Society of New York	* Master landscape plan developed
Wildlife and Habitat Management	*Surveyed out of play areas, made recommendations on native plantings and nestbox sites, * Reviewed initial aquatic plantings * Surveyed existing wildlife food sources and ideas for increasing them	* Installed several wood duck boxes * Installed Osprey platform * Started converting out of play areas using native plants * Started program of removing exotic plant material and replacing with natives	* Ecological Restoration is goal for year, * Removed more than 30 Melaleuca trees and replaced with native material, *Addition of more nestboxes	* One acre naturalization project in small cabbage palm hammock, * Removed more exotics (haveremoved 100 in three years, 50 more to go), Replacing with sable palms, red maples and pines	* On-going exotic removal and replacement, * Planting Cord Grass and aquatics, * Trimmed dead pine tree to create snag for habitat
Water Quality Management	* Evaluated enlargement of buffers	*Continued aquatic plantings, Lakes are cleaner than ever before and membership is favorable to more,* Increased number of wading birds due to aquatic plantings	*Continued aquatic plantings, Entire perimeter of largest lake planted, Goal: Continue aquatic plantings till all lakes and canals are planted	* Soil and water testing conducted twice a year	*Buffers, as recommended by USGA, around all water bodies, * Adhere to spray and fertilizer guidelines published for proximity of water
IPM	*Documented previous two years chemical usage and set reduction goals, * Established details of current IPM program, * Met with Dr. Kim Erusha, USGA, to discuss IPM practices	* Ongoing review of organics and biological controls	* Regular turf scouting and mapping of problem areas, * Increasing aerifications including deep drilling greens and tees, * Changing mowing heights for the different seasons, * Tissue and soil tests twice a year for fertilizer program	*Renovation/Reconstruction of maintenance facility, including closed loop wash stand forcleaning equipment and building proper storage areas for chemicals and fertilizers,* Have reduced pesticide and herbicide usage, spot spraying only of herbicides and no broadcast spray applications for mole crickets, * 40% fertilizer used on greens is organic	* Using parasitic nematodes for mole crickets, * Bio-insecticides (Bacillus Thuringiensis) used for webworms, cutworms, etc., * Thinning canopies and root pruning trees to help turf, * Increasing staff involvement in IPM by encouraging them to become certified pesticide applicators (currently have 4)
Water Conservation	*Evaluated current water usage and set goals for future reductions, * Full irrigation system review,checking for ways to modify system to reduce consumption	*Monitor progress of negotiations with City of Naples for re-use water, * Installing new control and heads for the irrigation system	*Pumps and controls related to effluent usage refurbished, *Remainder of irrigation system upgrading, *60% irrigation is reuse water, 25% deep well, and 15% storm water retention	*Increased use of effluent, * Installed automatic rain sensor to shut down irrigation in case of unexpected storm, *Modifications to bunkers will improve turf quality, *Sodded several tees with zoysiagrass, which requires less water and fertilization	* Re-design and installation of irrigation system (piping and heads), * Increased effluent usage to 90%, *Sodding another shady tee with zoysia
Member/ Public Involvement	*Established plan to educate membership about ACSP, * Started wildlife inventory, planto have members help identify and record species	*Plan to familiarize memberswith some of the more common birds and wildlife on property	* Participate annually in bird count	* On going member involvement/input through committee meetings	*Book on Florida birds placed on coffee table in clubhouse, * Sheet on Golf Bulletin Board in clubhouse where members can list special sightings of wildlife, ex. River otter spotted fishing in pond on #18 or bobcat and kitten playing on 4th hole

Chart 1

Strategic plan at Hole-in-the-Wall

"I have enjoyed the educational experience and personal contacts developed from our participation in the program, and the opportunity I have had to share this information with our members. I am very pleased to be part of a proactive program which is providing a positive response to allegations of environmental harm due to golf courses, allegations based purely on speculation rather than fact."

- Fred Yarrington

ACSP Resource Committee Chairman

Conclusion: A Golf Course and Only A Golf Course? No, Hole-in-the-Wall Golf Club is much more than just a golf course. It is a place

where the members care about the land and practice good stewardship everyday. It is a place where wildlife can thrive and flourish. It is a place

where people and nature meet and co-exist. It is a peaceful place, where, yes, you will definitely want to take the time to stop and smell the flowers.



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RESOURCE COMMITTEE

Robert W. Fischer, Green Chairman

Ronald W. Sanborn Jr., Golf Course Superintendent. Has major responsibilities in areas of IPM and water conservation.

James Ware, Member of Tree Committee. Has been active in Audubon Society activities in the Chicago area and Naples. Conducts numerous bird walks and plays a major role in the annual bird count conducted in the area.

Mary Dearholt, Former Chairman

of the Board of the Conservancy in Naples, Florida. Mrs. Dearholt has an active interest in the trees and plants on the golf course.

Bruce Durkee, Former member of the Board of the Conservancy and Secretary of the Hole-in-the-Wall Golf Club. Mr. Durkee has particular interest in restoring several out of play areas to a natural setting to provide cover and food for wildlife.

Dyanne Singler, Director of the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center at the Conservancy. Serves as

outside resource member and advises on all phases of the program.

Hubert Howard, Tree Committee Co-Chairman. Active in many local civic committees and projects. General interest in the entire program.

William Harvey, First Vice-President of the club with a special interest in the tree program.

W. Newton Burdick, Jr., Member of the Board and Golf Committee.

WILDLIFE INVENTORY

Mammals: bobcats, possums, river otters, fox squirrels, gray squirrels, raccoons, black bear, armadillos and red fox.

Butterflies: Sulphur, Florida White, Zebra, Orange-barred, Milkweed, Red Admirer and several different swallowtails.

Reptiles/Amphibians: Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnakes, Southern Black Racers, Florida Water Snakes, Water moccasins and a variety of Florida turtles and numerous alligators

Birds: Great Blue Heron, Moorhen, Anhinga, Morning Dove, Tri-colored Heron, Red bellied woodpecker, Northern Mockingbird, American Kestrel, European Starling, Northern

Cardinal, Blue Jay, Red Shouldered Hawk, Kildeer, Northern Flicker, Yellow Rumped Warbler, Ruby Throated, Hummingbird, Pileated Woodpecker, Pervla,

Blue Gray Gnat Catcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, Black & White Warbler, Solitary Vireo, White Ibis, Great Egret, Fish Crow, Red Start, Palm Warbler, Carolina Wren, Turkey Vulture, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Black whiskered vireo, Yellow throated Warbler, Boat-tailed Grackle, Common Grackle, American Goldfinch,

House Sparrow, Brown Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Gray

Phase Screech Owl, Great Blue Heron, Little Blue Heron, Cattle Egret, Green-backed Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Wood Stork, Wood Duck, Hooded Merganser, Osprey, American Swallow-tailed Kite,

Bald Eagle, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Merlin, Wild Turkey, Ring-billed Gull, Morning Doves, Common Ground-Dove, Eastern Screech Owl, Barred Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Purple Martin, Brown Creeper.