

What does it take to become a **CERTIFIED** Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary?

*A journey through the process
in four installments*



BY SHELLY FOY
AND GREG PLOTNER

A question that is often asked is "How do I become a fully certified golf course in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program?"

In an effort to encourage others to participate and offer help along the way, we will be writing a 4-part series on a golf course becoming a fully certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary. We will document the progress made, as well as offer any tips we can to smooth the way for others.

The golf course we will be following through certification is the Medalist Golf Club in Hobe Sound. They joined the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP) in May 1993.

In June of 1995, Greg Plotner, CGCS became the golf course superintendent and set a goal of becoming a fully certified cooperative sanctuary in one year. Greg has experience with the ACSP, as his previous club, Tampa Palms Golf & Country Club was the first golf course in Florida to become fully certified.

The Resource Inventory for the Medalist Club was completed in November

1995. The ACSP staff estimates that it takes 30 minutes to 1 hour to complete this form, however we found that it took a little longer.

The purpose of the Resource Inventory is to help you describe your property and management practices, thus making it easier for you to decide on the types of projects you would like to undertake. The Resource Inventory is eight pages and filled with check off boxes which makes it easier to complete.

Some suggestions to keep in mind when working on your Resource Inventory:

- Start with the information you already know
- Estimate your acreage, don't go crazy trying to get specific
- Don't hesitate to write "I don't know."
- Don't forget that pictures are indeed worth a thousand words
- Including a property map or course diagram is helpful

Remember, this is general informa

Audubon Society (NY) goes International

For the last several years, the Audubon Society of New York State (ASNY) has been working to establish proactive conservation programs that are aimed at involving people in programs and projects that will benefit the environment. ASNY has gone a considerable distance toward reaching its goals.

In order to expand and build upon our endeavors, it is necessary that a new broader and stronger foundation be established. To unify our national and international programs into a cohesive unit, we are pleased to announce the creation of Audubon International Center For Sustainable Resource Management

Audubon International has become the umbrella organization under which will fall all of the programs formerly managed by ASNY including the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System and associated wildlife and environmental education programs. In addition, several new and exciting programs are being created which will focus on:

- Research
- Education
- Conservation Assistance

Ron Dodson, President of New York Audubon says that "The move was made because of the rapid growth we've seen, and the interest in our program well beyond the borders of New York State."

For more information, call (518) 767-9051

tion which is meant to help ACSF staff become familiar with your course. Once they have this, they will send you a report written specifically for your golf course which will make recommendations on projects they feel you will be able to undertake.

Always remember, you are the one that makes decisions on what you do or not do. The ACSF staff only makes recommendations.

After receiving your report, the next step is the Environmental Planning Worksheet.

As part of this worksheet, you will need to identify people who will serve on your Resource Committee. Why do you need a Resource Advisory Committee? They can help reduce some of the work by undertaking projects, assisting with the resource inventory or even helping to list wildlife species.

Your resource committee should contain golf course staff, green committee members, golfers, and people in your community. Educating the public on the value of golf courses is an opportunity which cannot be passed up.

Having individuals on the resource committee who are not involved with your golf course is a great way to be proactive in your community.

Having individuals on the committee outside of your golf course is a good way to be proactive in your community. This will allow you the opportunity to educate the public about the value of a golf course.

Your Resource Committee can also help you with:

- Planning
- Technical Knowledge
- Volunteer Work
- Publicity
- Continuity

Here is a copy of the Environmental Plan for the Medalist Club, which includes the Resource Committee. We may add to this group as we go along.

ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN

Request for Certification

Course Name: Medalist Golf Club

Address: 9650 SE Federal Highway, Hobe Sound, Florida 33455

Phone: 407-546-0647

Contact Person: Greg A. Plotner, CGCS

INSTRUCTIONS: The purpose of the Environmental Plan is to help you define your goals and plan strategies to fully develop your Cooperative Sanctuary. The plan does not have to be elaborate — a simple outline will help you get started. However, the plan should address what you plan to do in each certification category, who will be responsible for each area, and what your time frame is for completion. This form is designed to help make this process both simple and comprehensive. We encourage you to make a plan that will not only be useful for certification, but will be valuable when managing various aspects of your cooperative sanctuary. Over time, you can review your plan to see if you're on track, check off goals that you've achieved, and periodically update it to respond to new ideas, needs or concerns. If you have any questions when filling out this form, please call us at (518) 767-9051. When you've completed your Environmental Plan, please make a copy for your records and send this form to us at the above address. We'll review it, send you a "Certificate of Recognition" in Environmental Planning, and forward guidelines for completing certification in the remaining categories.

STEP 1: Define Overall Objectives.

- What does your course want to achieve as a Cooperative Sanctuary participant?

The Medalist Golf Club recognizes the natural scenic and habitat value of the native upland and wetland habitats on site. As such, the Master Plan of the course was designed to effectively integrate the golf course in a way which enhances golf course play while protecting the value of the wetland and upland preserve areas. We as a participant wish to demonstrate to others our abilities to continue with our master plan and share our experiences with others.

- What unique features or constraints of your site have to be accounted for when developing your golf course sanctuary (eg. public play, member privacy, tournament play, neighboring land owners, unique habitats, lack of space, environmental regulations, etc.)?

- 1) Member Privacy
- 2) Unique & Protected Habitats
- 3) Environmental Regulations
- 4) Prohibitive Activities

STEP 2: Review Each Certification Category and Outline Plan-Of-Action.

Use the project checklists on the following pages to decide which projects you will implement. The checklists are provided for guidance; feel free to come up with additional projects that suit your course. As you outline your plan in each category, try to



Public/Member Involvement and Education

The intent of this category is to help you gain recognition and support for your environmental programs, increase golfer understanding of wildlife and environmental quality on the golf course, and let the public know that golf courses can be valuable community assets.

Member and public awareness and involvement in environmental projects is often the key to their success.

Choose projects to help you focus your efforts, increase participation, build support, and generate positive publicity for the work you do.

Audubon Resource Committee - List possible contact people (members or regular golfers, local resource people/organizations, staff, etc.) that can provide special information or assistance to help you carry out your plan.

define the following:

- What are your priority projects?
- Who will be responsible for implementing projects in each certification area?
- What is your time-line for when projects will be initiated and completed?

If you have already completed projects, simply write "complete" in the space provided for "Projected Completion Date." Feel free to attach additional pages as needed for comments or details.

PUBLIC/MEMBER INVOLVEMENT AND EDUCATION

Audubon Resource Committee

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title/Relation to Course</u>	<u>Area of Focus/Expertise</u>
Greg Plotner	Golf Course Superintendent	
Shelly Foy	USGA Green Section	Audubon Program
Jane Krebs	Tom Lucido & Associates	Land Planner for Medalist
Dave Coogan	Blue Flag Aquatics	Wetland/Upland Mitigation
Tom Aiello	Aiello Landscape	Landscaping Contractor
Steve Beeman	EcoShores, Inc.	Aquatic Plant Management

Once you have contacted Resource People or formed a committee, share your environmental plan with them and solicit suggestions for additional projects.

Public Involvement Project Checklist

Please check projects that you plan to do.

**Projected
Start Date**

**Projected
Completion
Date**

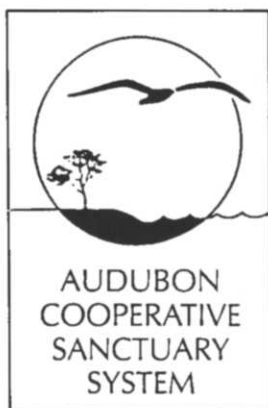
Education/Public Information Projects (may include):

- | | | |
|---|-----------|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Display of ACSP registration, wildlife list, project info., etc. | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Posters | Oct. 1995 | Ongoing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter articles | Nov. 1995 | Ongoing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brochure of ACSP/Environmental Activities | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Presentations at workshops or seminars | 1993 | Ongoing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Press releases | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tournament publicity | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | | |

Involvement Projects(may include):

- | | | |
|--|-----------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Member, scout, or school involvement in nest box building or monitoring | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Member/Public involvement in wildlife inventory | Dec. 1995 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Member/Public help with planning or publicity | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Member/Public help with planting projects | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nature trail, wildlife walks, or tours of course | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nature guide to the course for member/public use | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kids projects: | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "Adopt a School" - sponsor a school in ACSP for Schools | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | | |

Person(s) responsible for Public Involvement projects: Shelly Foy
Comments:



Wildlife and habitat management

This category encompasses the management of non-play areas to provide habitat for wildlife on the golf course. The size of the property and diversity of existing habitats will impact what you are able to do. The intent of "Wildlife & Habitat Management" is to maximize the space you have to provide the best possible habitat given your location, size, layout, and type of property.

Water quality management

Water quality is a crucial issue for government agencies, environmental groups, and the public. Concerns are often raised about the impact of golf course chemical use on the water quality of lakes, streams, and ground water. In order to feel confident that your course is maintaining good water quality, it is important to have a strategy in place to monitor water quality, improve conditions if warranted, and deal with any problems should they arise.

Wildlife & Habitat Management Project Checklist		Projected Start Date	Projected Completion Date
<i>Please check projects that you plan to do.</i>			
Wildlife Cover Enhancement Projects (may include):			
<input type="checkbox"/> Leave woodland understory when possible		1994	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Leave dead trees standing when not a safety hazard		July 1995	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Create brush piles for small mammals			
<input type="checkbox"/> Naturalize non-play areas			
<input type="checkbox"/> Mount and monitor nest boxes			
<input type="checkbox"/> Protect or enhance special habitats:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Protect threatened or endangered species:		1993	Ongoing
Wildlife Food Enhancement Projects (may include):			
<input type="checkbox"/> Choose food sources for hummingbirds, butterflies or songbirds in landscaped and garden areas			
<input type="checkbox"/> Emphasize native plants in landscaping		June 1995	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Maintain bird feeders			
Water Enhancement Projects (may include):			
<input type="checkbox"/> Buffer shorelines around ponds and other water sources with aquatic vegetation		August 1995	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Mount an osprey nesting structure (if applicable)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Protect or enhance wetland areas		July 1995	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Projects:			
Also required when applying for certification in Wildlife & Habitat Management:			
<input type="checkbox"/> A map of the course with natural areas			
Person(s) responsible for Wildlife & Habitat projects: Jane Krebbs			
Comments:			

Water Quality Management Project Checklist		Projected Start Date	Projected Completion Date
<i>Please check projects that you plan to do.</i>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Establish baseline data for water quality.		1994	1994
<input type="checkbox"/> Test key water sources on a regular basis.		1995	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Protect streams from erosion and pollution inputs.		1994	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Enhance (if needed) or protect wetlands.		1995	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Establish vegetative buffers and "no spray zones" around water features to filter runoff, reduce erosion, and minimize chemical input.		1994	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Minimize or eliminate chemical additives in water sources.		1994	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Maintain equipment wash down and maintenance area to protect water sources.		1995	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:			
Person(s) responsible for Water Quality Management: Greg Plotner			
Comments:			

Integrated pest management

A comprehensive IPM program will help to ensure a healthy environment for both people and wildlife. Your IPM program includes efforts to manage turf areas with environmental sensitivity, educate workers and members about responsible plant management, and provide a clean and efficient maintenance area.

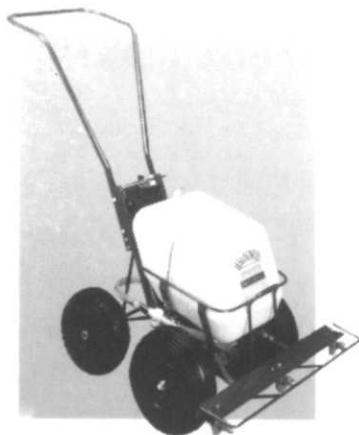
Integrated Pest Management Project Checklist

Please check projects that you plan to do.

	Projected Start Date	Projected Completion Date
<input type="checkbox"/> Regular turf scouting and monitoring.	June 1995	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Identifying problem "hot spots" and indicator areas.	June 1995	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Setting threshold levels for problems.	June 1995	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Written record keeping of monitoring activities control measures used, and results to detect trends from year to year.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Proper cultural practices with emphasis on dealing with underlying problems or conditions.	June 1995	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Reduction of turf stress due to carts, traffic, or low mowing heights.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Use of appropriate plant materials for climate and soils.	1994	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Use of slow-release or natural-organic fertilizers	1994	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Least toxic pest controls chosen.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Pesticide applications on a curative basis when possible.	1994	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Education and training for employees.	Sept. 1995	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Proper care and storage of equipment.	June 1995	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> General appearance of environmentally-responsible maintenance facility.	June 1995	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:		

Person(s) responsible for IPM: Greg Plotner
Comments:

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Water Conservation

Water conservation is a key environmental concern for golf courses across the country. Having a comprehensive water conservation program in place helps to show your course's commitment to judicious water use and environmental stewardship.

Conclusion:

So, we're off and running at the Medalist Golf Club. In the next issue we will let you know what the course report suggests and how our environmental planning worksheet was received. We will also be applying for certification in other categories. Stay tuned!

P.S. If you have not joined the program, now is a good time to fill out your application and mail it in. If you need an application, call NYA at (518) 767-9051.

Water Conservation Project Checklist *Please check projects that you plan to do.*

	Projected Start Date	Projected Completion Date
<input type="checkbox"/> Operate irrigation system for maximum irrigation efficiency.	1994	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Planning to install new irrigation system to increase efficiency.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Check irrigation system for proper distribution.	1994	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Note leaks quickly and make repairs in a timely manner.	1994	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Incorporate evapotranspiration rates or weather data.	Aug. 1995	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Avoid watering at peak evaporation times.		Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Set watering priorities.	Aug. 1995	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Reduce irrigated turf areas where possible.		1994
<input type="checkbox"/> Incorporate water conservation landscaping and/or drought-tolerant plants.	1994	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Choose turf species well suited to climate and soils.	1994	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Use mulches in gardens to reduce water loss.	1994	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Select water sources for least impact on local supplies.	1994	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Other water conservation measures in place:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Water reduction documented if possible.		

Person(s) responsible for Water Conservation: Greg Plotner
Comments:



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