



Building a Consensus on Golf, Environment

The Environmental Principles grew out of the Golf and the Environment conference, held in Pebble Beach in 1995. Attended by influential members of the golf industry and environmental advocacy groups, the attendees waded through tense and tentative exchanges of views, but ended up with an overwhelming consensus that the shared interests and values could be a basis for future collaborative work.

At that meeting, it was determined that an important priority of the collaboration must be the development of a set of national principles to provide guidance on matters relating to environmental considerations in golf course planning and siting, construction, operation and maintenance.

A committee of 25 golf, environmental and government representatives worked together over the next year to prepare a set of principles acceptable to all concerned.

At the next meeting of the Golf and the Environment consortium in 1996 at Pinehurst, the principles were introduced and official endorsements were sought from the organizations that worked on the document and other interested groups.

The environmental principles devel-



Golf courses are part of our environment. By following the Environmental Principles for Golf Courses, you can make sure they remain a positive influence in communities. Photo by Tom Stone.

***You may also contact
The Center for Resource
Management, 1104 East
Ashton Avenue, Suite
210, Salt Lake City, UT
84106 or call (801) 466-
3600 or fax (801) 466-
6800 for a copy of the
Environmental
Principles booklet from
which this information
was excerpted.***

oped and approved by the endorsing organizations above will be presented here in a two- or three-part series of articles.

You may also contact The Center for Resource Management, 1104 East Ashton Avenue, Suite 210, Salt Lake City, UT 84106 for call (801) 466-3600 or fax (801) 466-6800 for a copy of the Environmental Principles booklet from which the following information was excerpted.

What are the Principles?

Part I. The Preamble

The principles are envisioned as a tool of universal value, for national use under a variety of circumstances. However, it should be up to the local communities, based on local values, and others involved in the regulatory process, to assess the environmental compatibility of golf courses.

These principles are meant to provide a framework for environmental responsibility in developing goals for existing

courses and for considering issues associated with new courses. They are designed to educate and inform the public and relevant decision makers about environmental responsibility, and to help set goals for environmental performance.

These principles are voluntary. They are not intended for use in making judgments about socio-economic issues. These principles assume regulatory compliance and are designed to provide opportunities to go beyond that which is required by law.

These principles were designed through a collaborative research and dialogue process, but do not resolve all environmental issues related to golf. The dialogue and process is on-going as is the implementation of these principles.

How Should They Be Used?

Good environmental practice and design is the result of a multitude of factors and a thorough understanding of how these factors interrelate on a specific site in a specific locale. The principles are

meant to be used as a guide to making good decisions relative to the planning and siting, design, construction, maintenance and operation of a golf course. They are voluntary and should be interpreted as representing a whole philosophy of good environmental design and management rather than specific dictates, each of which must be met in all cases. It is hoped that the principles will be widely adopted and used to improve the level of environmental awareness, practice, dialogue, and quality achieved within the game of golf.

Part II. The Precepts

The participating organizations are committed to the following basic precepts which provide a foundation for the environmental principles:

- To enhance local communities ecologically and economically.
- To develop environmentally responsible golf courses that are economically viable.

Endorsing the Principles

Organizations endorsing the environmental principles include:

- American Society of Golf Course Architects
- Arizona Golf Association
- Audubon International
- Club Managers Association of America
- Friends of the Earth
- Golf Course Builders Association of America
- Golf Course Superintendents Association of America
- Ladies Professional Golf Association
- National Association of Counties
- National Club Association
- National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides
- National Golf Course Owners Association
- National Golf Foundation
- National Wildlife Federation
- North Carolina Coastal Federation
- Pamlico-Tar River Foundation
- Physicians for Social Responsibility
- Save the Bay
- Shivas Irons Society
- Southern Environmental Law Center
- United States Environmental Protection Agency
- United States Golf Association

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- To offer and protect habitat for wild-life and plant species.
- To recognize that every golf course must be developed and managed with consideration for the unique conditions and ecosystem of which it is a part.
- To provide important greenspace benefits.
- To use natural resources efficiently.
- To respect all adjacent land use when planning, constructing, maintaining and operating golf courses.
- To create desirable playing condi-

tions through practices that preserve environmental quality.

- To support ongoing research to scientifically establish new and better ways to develop and manage golf courses in harmony with the environment.
- To document outstanding development and management practices to promote more widespread implementation of environmentally sound golf.
- To educate golfers and potential developers about the principles of environmental responsibility and to promote

the understanding that environmentally sound golf courses are quality golf courses.

In the next issue we will begin coverage of Part III, Voluntary Principles which will give some practical considerations in the planning and siting, design, construction, maintenance, facility operations and what golfers can do to help.

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