Sometimes you may think you are doing all the right things for the environment, but are you sure? Audubon International has a tool that can help you evaluate your stewardship score. Photo by Joel Jackson.

Editor's note: We welcome Shelly Foy back to the pages of The Florida Green after a too long absence and look forward to hearing the good news about what our members are doing to showcase the positive aspects of golf and the environment. Shelly, you're on!

BY SHELLY FOY
Florida ACSP Coordinator
USGA Green Section

A fter the longest maternity leave in history (or so I have been told), I'm back and ready to work on environmental stewardship in Florida. Perhaps it was the guilt I felt every time I saw Joel and had to say, "I'll write something for the next issue." Or maybe it was my husband constantly saying, "It's time to get back into your Audubon stuff." Or maybe it was superintendents telling me they were just waiting on me to help them.

Just between you and me, I think it was a little bit of all of those things, and more than a little of Thomas reaching the "terrible twos" and me needing a little break before I lost my mind. Regardless, I am ready to start preaching again, as my friend Greg Plotner calls my urging people to get off their duffs and work on their Audubon programs.

As an avid believer in the Audubon program as a means to strengthen environmental programs on golf courses and promote stewardship efforts of superintendents, I'm once again available for site visits, writing articles, or generally harassing you on a regular basis to get you started. I can be reached at 561-546-2620 or sfoy@usga.org.

This column will be about superintendents and the environmental programs they are working on, as well as environmental topics of interest from around the country. So let me know...
what you have been doing since my dis-
appearance into mommy land. I'll be
sure to brag on your efforts, and I prom-
ise to be around for a long time nudging,
preaching, using guilt, and generally arm-
twisting you all into doing your best to
promote and protect environmental
quality on golf courses.

There are currently a total of 2,177
golf courses across the country in the
program. So, Florida makes up 9.2 per-
cent of membership in ACSP for golf
courses. We lead the country in fully
certified golf courses with 33. Illinois is
the next with 18, with New York and
New Jersey behind them with 12 each. So
we have a lot to be proud of... and a long
way to go my friends.

Congratulations to Quail Ridge
Country Club in Boynton Beach, which
became our newest certified Audubon
Cooperative Sanctuary Aug. 24. Check
out the ACSP sidebar in this article for
the names of the newest members of the
program.

Managed Lands Survey

Next follows the results of Audubon
International's Managed Lands Survey
for Golf Courses Participating in the
Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Pro-
gram

Background and Methodology

In 1991, Audubon International and
the United States Golf Association
launched the Audubon Cooperative
Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses
(ACSP), an environmental education
program designed to help golf courses
play a significant role in enhancing and
protecting wildlife habitat and natural
resources.

The ACSP provides an advisory in-
formation service to help golf courses
conduct environmental projects and
achieve positive recognition for their ef-
forts.

Today, 2,177 courses throughout the
United States are enrolled in the pro-
gram and 256 have achieved designation
as Certified Audubon Cooperative San-
tuaries by implementing and document-
ing a full compliment of conservation
activities.

What is the result of participation in
the ACSP! Do courses that participate
achieve the program's desired goal of
enhancing and protecting the environ-
ment?

To answer these questions, Audubon
International conducted an environmen-
tal survey to assess the impact of pro-
gram participation on a number of key
environmental priority areas. These in-
cluded wildlife habitat conservation,
water quality, and chemical use and re-
duction.

In addition, the survey included a
brief assessment of participant attitudes
related the impact of ACSP participation
on golf playing quality, job satisfaction,
and golfer satisfaction.

The survey was mailed in April to
2,035 ACSP golf course members. By the
closing date of July 10, 284 returns had
been received, yielding a 14 percent re-
ponse rate.

Environmental Outcomes

Wildlife & Habitat Management
Results

The ACSP provides significant edu-
cational information and resources to
help land managers enhance and pro-
tect habitat for native wildlife species.
Results of the Managed Lands Survey
show that the majority of participants
are implementing a variety of mea-
sures to enhance and protect wildlife
habitats.

Since joining the ACSP...

73% added gardens for birds/wildlife
79% decreased the amount of managed
turfgrass
49% removed exotic invasive plants
44% currently involved in an ecological
restoration project

Wildlife Habitat Results since joining
the ACSP...

30 acres/course average increase in acres
devoted to providing wildlife habi-
tat. From an average of 40 acres per
course before joining to 70 acres
after — a 75 percent increase

1,624 feet/course average increase in
naturalized shorelines around wa-
ter features. From an average of 2,197
feet per course before joining to 3,820
feet after — a 74 percent increase

15 acres/course average increase in for-
est understory allowed to grow.
From an average 28 acres per course
before joining to 42 acres after — a
54 percent increase
64% maintain an inventory list of plants and wildlife on the property: Before joining, 16%.
90% conscientiously choose native plants when landscaping: Before joining, 45%.

Water Quality

Results
The ACSP aims to help land managers protect water quality for irrigation, drinking water supplies, and aquatic habitats and wildlife species. Responses to the Managed Lands Survey suggest that managers are taking increasing steps to protect water resources from potential pollutants.

Since joining the ACSP...

51% increased the amount of emergent vegetation in ponds.
56% increased the width of "no-spray zones" around water features.

21% increased the number of drains that are daylitved or emptied into vegetative swales.
12% conduct macro invertebrate testing of water quality. Before joining, 2%.
45% have a contained equipment wash-off area. Before joining, 23%.

Chemical Use Reduction and Safety

Helping members to reduce the use of pesticides and fertilizers as well as safely use, store, and handle chemicals is a key environmental priority of the ACSP. Results of the Managed Lands Survey show that people have been able to achieve that goal without sacrificing golf course playing quality or member satisfaction.

Since joining the ACSP...

86% reduced pesticide use.
92% using pesticides with a lower toxicity level.
90% decreased chemical use by improving cultural control methods.
66% reduced fertilizer use.
84% increased the percentage of slow-release fertilizers used.
Increased the percentage of natural-organic fertilizers used 78%.
62% have spill containment for pesticide mixing and loading area. Before joining, 30%.

Opinion Results

How has playing quality changed since joining the ACSP? Playing quality improved or remained the same for 99 percent of ACSP participants.

How has your overall job satisfaction been affected by joining the ACSP? Job satisfaction improved for 64 percent of ACSP participants.

How has golfer satisfaction changed? Golfer satisfaction remained the same or improved for 99 percent of ACSP golf courses.

Results

weeding out the amateurs.

It can be pretty comical. Until it comes to your course's turf needs. Then it's no laughing matter. So get serious with professional solutions from the turf pros at Southern States. Solutions like proven turf blends adapted to your specific climate and growing conditions. Solutions like special fertilizers and crop protectants to keep your course in top shape. Professional solutions that deliver professional results.

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