



Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program

Florida Leads the Nation! ... and we have a long way to go

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.

Florida makes up 9.2 percent 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

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 SHELLEY FOY

*Florida ACSP Coordinator
USGA Green Section*

After 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 disappearance into mommy land. I'll be sure to brag on your efforts, and I promise 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 2177 golf courses across the country in the program. So, Florida makes up 9.2 percent 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 Program

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 information service to help golf courses conduct environmental projects and achieve positive recognition for their efforts.

Today, 2,177 courses throughout the United States are enrolled in the program and 256 have achieved designation as Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuaries by implementing and documenting 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 environment?

To answer these questions, Audubon International conducted an environmental survey to assess the impact of program participation on a number of key environmental priority areas. These included wildlife habitat conservation, water quality, and chemical use and reduction.

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 response rate.

Environmental Outcomes

Wildlife & Habitat Management

Results

The ACSP provides significant educational information and resources to help land managers enhance and protect habitat for native wildlife species. Results of the Managed Lands Survey show that the majority of participants are implementing a variety of measures 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 habitat. From an average of 40 acres per course before joining to 70 acres after — a 75 percent increase

Florida ACSP Status

as of 8/24/00

- 236 Total number of Florida courses in the program.
- 33 Total number of Florida courses fully certified.
- 94 Total number of Florida courses in some stage of certification.

New Members

Grenelefe G&T Resort, Haines City
 Lely Resort G&CC, Naples
 Naples Lakes CC, Naples
 The Strand GC, Naples
 MGGI—Hidden Creek, Navarre
 Presidential CC, North Miami Beach
 IGM—The Major's GC, Palm Bay
 Camp Creek, Panama City Beach
 Patrick AFB, Cocoa Beach
 MGGI—Walden Lakes G&CC, Plant City
 Burnt Store Marina, Punta Gorda
 MGGI—Shalimar Point G&C, Shalimar
 Eagle Ridge, Summerfield
 Old Memorial GC, Tampa
 Vero Beach CC, Vero Beach

Newly Certified

Quail Ridge CC, Boynton Beach

Recertified

Bonita Bay Creekside Course, Bonita Springs
 Bonita Bay Island Course, Bonita Springs
 Bonita Bay Marsh Course, Bonita Springs
 Panama CC, Lynnhaven
 River Hills CC, Valrico
 Tampa Palms CC, Tampa
 TPC at Heron Bay, Coral Springs
 TPC at Tampa Bay, Lutz

- 1,624 feet/course average increase in naturalized shorelines around water features. From an average of 2197 feet per course before joining to 3820 feet after — a 74 percent increase
- 15 acres/course average increase in forest 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 daylighted 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%

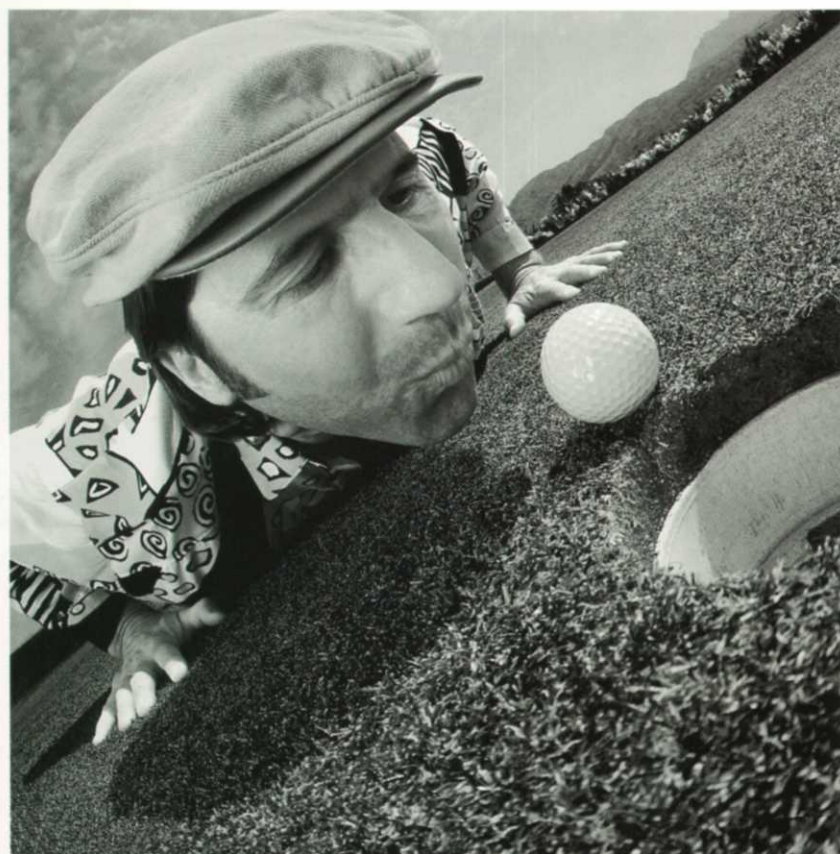
62% have spill containment for pesticide mixing and loading area: Before joining, 30%.

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 have a way of 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.

Call the Turf Division of Southern States today at 1-877-383-3199. We'll connect you to a no nonsense local turf pro, because your turf is serious business.

SOUTHERN STATES

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