

Stewardship Notes

Why You Should Join the ACSP Now!

By Joel Jackson

Can we agree that golf courses often get a bad rap in most news stories whenever pollution or water quality are mentioned? Can we also agree that we know golf courses really are positive environmental assets to a community? Would you or your club ever want the positives to be praised and the negatives debunked? If you answered “yes” to these questions, then I hope you already are a member of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program.

If not, why not?

We are good for the environment and it's way past time we tooted our own horn. The ACSP is best way we've got to demonstrate our environmental stewardship.

Reputation and Results

For \$150 per year dues, you receive the services of an environmental consultant with a stellar reputation. The Audubon International (AI) has received numerous awards and recognition from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the GCSAA for its proactive work, not only with golf courses, but also schools, commercial properties, residences and whole communities. They will help and guide you and encourage you, but they will never dictate what projects you must do at your club. Their suggestions and recommendations are just that and they are based on the information you supply about your particular site. Here are some examples of the high regard officials have of the ACSP program:

Programs such as Audubon

International's represent the types of positive partnerships that need to be created across the country. This type of an effort is the only way that we can positively deal with the many, serious environmental issues we face as a nation. - Christine Todd Whitman, former EPA Administrator

My observation has been that Audubon International provides a real service to, and sets up a real challenge to be met by, real environmental professionals, and in doing so, is responsible for signifi-

cant voluntary environmental progress... I can attest that AI's strategy is not just words, but represents genuine accomplishments. - Michael C. Farrar, Office of Pesticide Planning and Toxicity, EPA

Audubon International has stepped up and created a very practical and effective program that now serves as a model for other industries. It is one of the few programs that can demonstrate clear, on-the-ground accomplishments that benefit the environment and that is also successfully changing people's attitudes - Peter W. Stangel, Director, SE Partnership Office, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation

Why wouldn't you want to be part of that effort for the good of your own property and the community? Not only is it the right thing to do, it makes

good business sense.

Courses involved in the ACSP, and especially those who get certified, have realized genuine cost savings. In the time of tight budgets who doesn't want to save money and direct efforts to maximizing customer satisfaction? I don't know what dollar amount you can put on the public-relations value of holding school or environmental tours, annual bird counts or other community outreach, but it certainly can't hurt. Here are just some of the benefits to clubs in the program tabulated from a recent survey:

- 82% reduced pesticide use
- 75% reduced pesticide costs
- 80% decreased managed turfgrass to increase wildlife habitat (less turf, less cost) Average increase of 22 acres per course for habitat
- 69% decreased water usage or 1.9 million gallons per year per course
- 99% report playing quality has been improved or remained the same
- 99% found golfer satisfaction improved or remained the same
- 99% of superintendents report job satisfaction improved or remained the same
- 85% did not track costs or benefits of ACSP.
- 100% of the certified courses that tracked costs noted a reduction in costs due to ACSP

So we've got a respected environmental association (Audubon International), with a highly regarded program (Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System) that protects the environment, saves money and enhances your reputation as a good neighbor. Then I have to ask, “Why are only 13 percent of the nation's courses participating in the plan?”

We know the annual dues are only \$150, so it can't be the money. Is it apathy or the assumption that it will take a lot of time? I can't address your apathy. You have to look in the mirror each day. I know from personal experience that the “time excuse” is baloney. You have to invest a certain amount to get started, but help is available to do that from AI and the FGCSA.

Numerous articles have been written (see



Your club should have one of these to announce your commitment to good environmental stewardship.

ACSP Update

New Members

Boca Rio GC, Boca Raton, Bob Ranquist, CGCS
 Coral Creek Club, Placida, Robert Wagner (A)
 Countryside CC, Clearwater, Dale Reash, CGCS
 Naples National GC, Terry Wood (A)
 Queens Harbour CC, Jacksonville, Jason Wilson (A)

Newly Certified

Camp Creek GC, Panama City, Larry Livingston,
 CGCS
 Hammock Dunes, Creek Course, Palm Coast, Matt
 Howes (SM)
 (A) = Class A Supt behind names; and
 (SM) = Supt Member [the old Class B] to recognize
 those who are participating in continuing education
 and maintaining Class A status

the ideas in the Lemon Bay cover story in this issue) and case studies published how superintendents have recruited help from the club members and others to do the legwork on the projects. There are lots of people who want to help the environment and they can be harnessed to do the work. It is a *cooperative*, sanctuary, not just yours.

50-in-5 Campaign

Currently the Audubon International is entering year three of its 50-in-5 campaign to get 50 percent of all golf courses into the ACSP. With a flat membership growth the last couple of years, frankly we're all a little disappointed.

Each FGCSA local chapter was given a chart that showed the total number of FGCSA members and the number enrolled in the ACSP program. The chart also showed that if each chapter made a positive effort to enroll just a few courses each year that we could achieve that 50-percent goal easily. Now we only have three years to go until 2007.

As I said before, this is a *cooperative*

effort and superintendents shouldn't carry the burden alone. I call on the Florida State Golf Association, the Florida Golf Course Owners Association and the Florida Club Managers Association to step up and get their member courses enrolled in the ACSP. The United States Golf Association already supports the program. More people in the golf industry need to

show their commitment to the environment by supporting this program.

We are already called to task for the misconceptions about golf. Won't you join now to promote the game, your club and the industry to give golf its proper respect and place in the environment?

Juvenile Owl Survives Eagle Attack



Superintendent Mark Shoemake to find out what steps should be taken next. Joanna Fitzgerald of the Conservancy informed us that she would be right out to the course to identify the bird and take it for monitoring for any injuries that may need to be treated at the conservancy. In the meantime, we were instructed to find a lift that could get us to the nest, which the mother great horned owl was watching over closely.

We contacted NationsRent and representative Steve Acquafresca graciously donated the use of a 60-foot boom lift for replacing the owl in its nest. At 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, the owl was strategically placed in the nest by Naples Conservancy employee Amy Heller. She was accompanied in lift by Shoemake and myself.

During the course of the day we anxiously awaited the mother great horned to return the nest, which did not happen. Thanks to everyone's efforts and much to our relief, the mother-and-child reunion occurred on the following day when we found the mother huddled next to the juvenile on a branch near the nest.

This was quite a rewarding experience for all and a token moment in the day-to-day routine of golf course and landscape maintenance. It will be added with pride and merit to our membership experiences in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System for Golf Courses.

Walk on the Wild Side

By Brian Beckner

It was Monday, Feb. 16, at the LaPlaya Golf Club in Naples and our Landscape Superintendent Doug Fuller was making his routine, early-morning tour of the golf course. As he approached to the 13th green he noticed a bald eagle swooping close to the treetops of the nearby stand of slash pines. Next thing he saw was a juvenile great horned owl that could not yet fly, falling to the ground. The young owl scurried to safety in a nearby landscape bed hiding among the Mexican petunias. He was not attacked again.

The Conservancy of Southwest Florida was then called by Assistant Golf Course

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