

Golf Courses Improve Water Quality

Submitted by Kyle Sweet, CGCS
Superintendent Sanctuary Golf Club

Kyle Sweet, superintendent at the Sanctuary Golf Club on Sanibel Island, shared this article by Jim Linette from the Aug. 10 issue of the *Sanibel-Captiva Islander* paper.

Sanibel Natural Resources director James Evans told City Council Tuesday that Sanibel's golf courses have made tremendous improvements in the past year toward complying with the city's Golf Course Nutrient and Lake Management program.

"Two of the three courses now score high enough to be considered in full compliance," said Evans. "All three have made progress in implementing the city's recommendations. Although more work can still be done to reduce nutrient loading to the lakes, the Sanctuary and the Dunes are meeting the intent of the best management practices checklist."

While Beachview Golf Club also made progress, its report card score remains in

the non-compliance range.

The city adopted its nutrient and lake management practices for golf courses in October 2008 and initiated the annual report card analysis in July 2011.

The courses voluntarily have worked with the city natural resources staff on implementing 13 practices through training personnel, lake management, fertilizer management and irrigation.

The 13 practices include no-mow zones at the edge of lakes, raking algae out of lakes and installing filter drains, among other things.

"The Sanctuary did a great job last year," said Evans. "They have gone above and beyond our recommendations. There have been no fish kills at the Dunes and the water clarity in the lakes is visibly improved."

The Sanctuary scored 63 out of 65 points from the list of 13 practices, putting it in

the 97 percent compliance range. That's an improvement of six percent over last year's report card.

The Dunes Golf & Tennis Club scored 59 out of 65 points to reach 91 percent compliance - an improvement of 28 percent over last year.

While showing 12 percent improvement, Beachview scored 45 points, resulting in its 69 percent compliance score.

"They still need to do some work on improving buffer zones," said Evans. "They have done a good job (of buffering) along the Sanibel River, but there is still some low-hanging fruit. Some low-cost or no-cost practices they can do."

The water quality improvements are being noticed by residents, too. Some are putting pressure on homeowners associations to follow the same practices on common lakes.

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Gary Cotton 941-737-0722 gwcotton@landolakes.com
Mike Bailey 772-216-7917 mjbailey@landolakes.com
Chad Burkett 772-260-8660 bcburkett@landolakes.com
Doug Raynor 239-707-9261 jdraynor@landolakes.com
Ken Gagne 407-256-6710 kwgagne@landolakes.com
Ron Leathers 813-917-1849 rmleathers@landolakes.com
Tim Wheatley 321-508-1169 thwheatley@landolakes.com