NORTH OF THE BORDER

Royal Canadian Golf Association, N.Y. Audubon create program

By MARK LESLIE

OAKVILLE, Canada — The Audubon Society of New York State and Royal Canadian Golf Association (RCGA) have teamed to create the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System of Canada, Inc. (ACSSC).

The system will encompass golf facilities, corporate business complexes, schools, farms and backyards, according to New York Audubon President Ron Dodson. It will draw on the expertise and financial support of the RCGA Green Section and the experience of the Audubon, which has pioneered wildlife and ecological preservation efforts at golf course facilities in the United States and abroad.

"People are more comfortable working with a national group of their own country," said RCGA Green Section National Director Teri Yamada, who is also national coordinator of the new system. "We have 88 Canadian golf courses cooperating with the New York Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program. They will automatically switch to our system. It will be very parallel to the New York program but operate separately."

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USGA will dispense between 1995-97 as part of the Nature Links program, Snow added. "Wildlife research isn't the same as putting out turf test plots and measuring the results," the Green Section executive said. "It's more complicated than that. But it is around us, and it's up to us that round of research funding, we realized agronomists are not in the best position to determine what should be done in terms of wildlife research."

Green Section staff met with environmental and wildlife groups last November in Washington. The issue of how to allocate wildlife research funds came up near the end of the meeting. Snow said one of the major contributors to the discussion was Peter Stangel, director of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

Congress established Stangel's group in 1984. The foundation receives federal money that can be used as matching funds to aid in conservation programs and research to enhance wildlife habitats. The foundation has excellent contacts within the environmental community and is well- respected by those groups, Snow said.

"National Fish and Wildlife doesn't have an agenda. It isn't out to prevent development, for instance. Its goal is to promote wildlife, period," Snow said.

Snow sent Stangel a final draft of a proposed agreement with the foundation in early March. If all goes as planned, the agreement will first help the Green Section develop a panel of wildlife experts who can determine areas needing research and set priorities.

Ron Dodson, national director of the Audubon Society of New York and developer of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program, will be on the panel, Snow said. So, too, will Snow or USGA Director of Research Mike Kenna. Joining them, Snow predicted, will likely be representatives from such traditional golf industry antagonists as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and various environmental groups.

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Nature Links seeks National Fish & Wildlife Foundation input

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