朋友们不友善

Sand Creek Country Club attracted and sustains a wide variety of birds and other wildlife.

Superintendents devise innovative new ways to push wildlife envelope

By MARK LESLIE

Casting aside the "chemical revolution" of the past, golf course superintendents have taken a long trek toward heightened environmental awareness, adding innovative twists of their own to the standard Audubon face.

Witness Director of Grounds Don Ewoldt of Sand Creek Country Club in Chesterton, Ind., who started a Junior Conservation Society among his club members' children.

Or, John Netwal of Glynns Creek Golf Club in a county park in Long Grove, Iowa, who takes interested campers on a tour of his course, then gives them bird boxes to place in their own backyards.

Or, Hank Kerfoot of Carmel Country Club in Charlotte, N.C., who with his wife this fall will instruct K-12 teachers about the outdoors and wildlife in a new program called Project Learning Tree.

"I farmed for 35 years and have been in this business for 15," said Ewoldt, "and I'll tell you: Golf courses are the least of our problems. I look back and cringe at what I did [on the farm]. So many homeowners are causing much more problems than golf course managers. Granted, we manage a lot more property, but we're doing it right."

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Norman stakes claim in Bermudagrass market

By HAL PHILLIPS

SOUTH LAKELAND, Fla. — With more than 400 golf course openings projected for 1996, September's opening of The Club at Eaglebrook here shouldn't cause too much of a stir... Right?

Wrong. The Club at Eaglebrook, designed by Ron Garl, is the first course in the United States to have 18 holes of GN-1, a new fairway Bermudagrass strain marketed by Greg Norman Turf Co.

Several other GN-1 projects are in various stages of development. Sugarloaf, the Norman-designed course outside Atlanta and future home of the Bell South Classic, will feature GN-1, as will Real Mar, another Norman design under construction in Puerto Rico. Also, The Medalist Club — a Norman/Pete Dye collaboration in Hobe Sound, Fla. — has two holes grasped with the new Bermuda.

However, Eaglebrook will be the first fully operational golf course featuring the hybrid Bermuda on all 18 fairways. Consequently, warm-climate superintendents, architects and sod growers across the country are eager to see how the new grass fares.

"It looks fantastic," reported Eaglebrook superintendent Bob Wagner in mid-July. "I've had three superintendent jobs...and they've all been grow-ins. And this stuff [GN-1] grows like wildfire. It's green as can be and it's very aggressive. We started springing April 16 and by the end of May it was completely covered.

"Time will tell and it's hard to predict what extra things I might have to do. But everything I've seen so far has been real encouraging."

GN-1 is the first commercial release.
IGM honors Whaley, Poinciana with TQM award

LAKELAND, Fla. — Steve Whaley, superintendent at Poinciana Golf & Racquet Resort near Kissimmee, has earned a Total Quality Management (TQM) award from International Golf Management (IGM) for the overall quality of Poinciana's golf course.

"Steve Whaley and his staff earned this award for their dedication to excellence," said Jim Sartain, president of IGM, in announcing the TQM award. "The overall quality, conditions, appearance and customer satisfaction at Poinciana is outstanding. We are proud of what Steve and his staff have achieved." A team comprised of Scott Zakany, vice president and general manager of IGM, and the IGM regional manager visited all IGM-managed courses, evaluating them on a wide range of criteria, including first impression, irrigation, neatness, environmental compliance, record keeping and overall condition. Poinciana achieved the highest score, Zakany said. "The TQM award is designed to give our superintendents an extra incentive to constantly improve their courses," he said. "We want them to strive to perform above and beyond what is expected of them."

Owned by Avatar Corp., Poinciana Golf & Racquet Resort boasts a heavily wooded, 18-hole course, in addition to a clubhouse, pro shop, tennis operation and pool. IGM maintains the golf course and clubhouse grounds.

Whaley joined IGM and was designated as Poinciana's superintendent in March 1995 after serving one year as an assistant superintendent at Avila Country Club in Tampa. Prior to that, he was assistant superintendent at Gainesville (Fla.) Golf & Country Club.

A native of St. Augustine, Whaley resides in the Kissimmee area. He earned his degree in golf and landscape operations from Lake City Community College in 1992.

DuPont solution

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• A large meeting and training area complete with a slide projector, video machines, cabinetry to hold a library of safety and training tapes, a screen and hanging dry chalk boards. This room is used daily, either by the maintenance staff, or people in the food-and-beverage operation when the clubhouse is full.

• Locker rooms for men and (up to five) women. "Because, particularly with the men, it's difficult to keep sinks clean, we went to four," Shafer said. "The lockers are large enough to keep coveralls and winter coats, etc., and not have clothes all over the place. And it has a nice shower area."

• A computer room that houses irrigation controllers, the weather computer and an in-house network computer.

• The maintenance coordinator's office adjacent to the repair area. A second desk for the mechanic, who reports to him, also sits here as do controllers and data-recording equipment for the fuel system and underground storage tanks.

• Two "mechanical rooms" containing controls for the heat and air conditioning, alarm and energy-management systems, sprinkler-system controls and other utilities. The air compressor for the building is housed in this room "so there is not a lot of noise in working areas," Shafer said.

The building is protected by a pyrotronics smoke-detector system as well as sprinklers.

Would anything make the facility more complete?

"Not really," Shafer said. "Ironically, as it turned out, we had one large room on the second floor for 'soft storage' — tee-to-greens supplies, etc. We ran out of money equipping it and didn't get shelves in, so it quickly became an office area for others from the club."

Shafer sees the crew's headquarters as crucial to its effectiveness.

"It's a mind set," he said. "It's about how you feel when you come to work. The building does a lot in that respect. We want to foster a whole attitude: professionalism."

Mission accomplished.