Distinguishing the levels of the Signature Program

By RON DODSON

Nothing in life stays the same. In fact, change is good, especially if it's based on reflection and review and helps us to move forward. At Audubon International, we are dedicated to reviewing our programs to ensure they are meeting the environmental education needs of our members and our environmental standards. In light of that, we thought we would take this opportunity to clarify the various levels of Audubon International's Signature Program.

We created the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP) in 1991 with support from the U.S. Golf Association. The ACSP was designed to educate golf course superintendents about environmental aspects of managing existing courses. As more people learned about the program, landowners and others wanted to know how we could help them during the planning stages of developing new courses. So in 1993 Audubon International launched a program called the Audubon Signature Cooperative Sanctuary Program.

The Audubon Signature Program provides environmental planning assistance to landowners with projects in the design and development stages. Audubon International staff works with owners, architects, consultants, project managers and superintendents from the design stages through construction and helps them develop strategies to address environmental issues of a proposed development.

The Signature Program focuses on wildlife habitat management, waste reduction and management, energy efficiency, water conservation and water-quality management, as well as environmental issues relative to building and maintaining the maintenance facility. The goal of the Signature Program is to develop an environmental approach for planning and maintaining proposed developments that cause them to be environmentally and economically sustainable.

THE BRONZE SIGNATURE DESIGNATION

In the basic Signature Program, the landowner or developer, with the assistance of project consultants, conducts a comprehensive site assessment and develops a Natural Resource Management Plan that serves as a guidance document for everyone who is involved in developing and constructing the project and for those who will manage the property after it is developed. Although we have refined the process and requirements of the Signature Program over the years, the Natural Resource Management Plan still forms its foundation, and members who successfully complete and implement the plan and all of the requirements of the program are eligible to receive the Bronze Signature designation.

The Natural Resource Management Plan includes strategies for the planning, construction and management of a project consistent with Audubon International’s environmental standards. Audubon International's education needs of our members and forward. At Audubon International, we are changing is good, especially if it's based on inflection and review and helps us to move forward.

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continued on page 10
is not merely a means to receive an award, but rather a lifestyle of the project, periodic reports and site visits are a requirement to retain the Signature designation. **AUDUBON INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE**

As interest in the Signature Program increased, rather than depend on consultants to write their Natural Resource Management Plans, members began to ask if we would write the plan for them and if we could help them prepare other technical planning documents that would be consistent with our program and environmental goals. At the time, this type of assistance was beyond the scope of the Signature Program. As a result, it became obvious that additional staff and expertise was needed to fulfill these requests.

So we created the Audubon International Institute. The institute established two major departments to address the need for technical assistance: Research and Environmental Planning. The institute is comprised of individuals, academic institutions and organizations who have formed relationships with Audubon International and have specific expertise in environmental areas. Through these relationships, we have assembled a sizable team of staff and adjunct faculty who provide a variety of services for members and others.

**GOLD SIGNATURE DESIGNATION**

As we expanded our ability to provide additional assistance to landowners and developers through the Audubon Institute, we believed that through the institute, we could more effectively communicate and provide guidance for the environmental expectations and requirements of the Signature Program. Consequently, the institute’s Environmental Planning Department began to offer its services to compile the necessary documents, perform site visits, and write the Natural Resource Management Plan for our members. In addition, the institute created an educational component to ensure successful implementation of the plan and long-term commitment to its strategies. Members who demonstrate a higher level of commitment by choosing to take advantage of these institute services are eligible to receive the Silver Signature designation.

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GCSAA survey
Continued from page 13
marks as the most common breach of
golfer protocol, while 65 percent of su-
perintendents cite the failure to fix divots
as the second most common breach of
etiquette. Superintendents also blame the
failure to fix divots or marks as the most
common causes of dissatisfaction.

FUN FINDINGS
The survey also revealed a number of
other interesting facts:
• Superintendents rate Jack Nicklaus as
the greatest golfer of all-time. Thirty
three percent rank "The Golden Bear"
tops in the game. Arnold Palmer (11 percent)
and Tiger Woods (8 percent) came in
second and third, respectively.
• Superintendents were asked, if they
could play one round of golf in North
America, where would it be? Augusta Na-
tional Golf Club garnered the most votes
(36 percent), while two Monterey, Calif.
area courses — Pebble Beach Golf Links
(23 percent) and Cypress Point Club (18
percent) rounded out the top three.

On a question of leadership and execu-
tive privilege, superintendents rated Presi-
dent Kennedy (16 percent) their top choice
among 20th century U.S. presidents to play
a round of golf with. Presidents Eisenhower
(13 percent) and Reagan (12 percent) were
the second and third choices.

Dodson commentary
Continued from page 10
Brown, Silver and Gold Signature repre-
sent the landowner's environmental and
economic investment in sustainable de-
velopment, the complexity of the project,
and the extent to which the institute is involved.

To make this determination, the Audubon Signature Program provides the
opportunity for a landowner to describe the
project, to apply to become a Signature member, and through com-
unication with Signature staff, deter-
ine the most appropriate level of in-
volvement.

For more information about the Signature
Program, please contact Signature Program Director Nancy Richardson at 207-
899-9419.