Audubon certifies Leatherstocking

COOPERSTOWN, N.Y. - Audubon International has officially designated the Leatherstocking Golf Course at the Otesaga Resort here a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary under its Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System (ACSS), a program endorsed by the U.S. Golf Association.

Designed by Devereux Emmet in 1909, the classic 18-hole championship Leatherstocking Golf Course, which sweeps along the western shore of Lake Otesaga, is considered one of the most scenic courses in the nation. It holds a four-diamond rating from Golf Digest and is considered one of the most scenic courses in New York overall commitment of the surrounding Cooperstown community to protecting its natural legacy.

Leatherstocking is one of only 11 courses in New York State to receive the Audubon International honor, along with other such courses as the Winged Foot Golf Club in Mamaroneck and the Westchester Country Club in Rye.

"Gaining certification is not a simple process. Course superintendent Bernard Banas and his staff were completely dedicated to this program for four years, and they deserve a lot of credit," said EricStraus, president of the Leatherstocking Corp., which owns the course.

"In addition to being one of the prettiest courses you'll ever play, Leatherstocking is home to a variety of indigenous wildlife, including foxes, deer and the Eastern bluebird," said Dan Spooner, director of golf. "We are proud that we can maintain a safe sanctuary for the animals while providing an enjoyable and challenging golf experience."

Southern Hills

Continued from page 1

of Southern Hills overcame unforeseen obstacles that might have led less committed individuals to tell the U.S. Golf Association (USGA) to look elsewhere for a site to stage its premier annual event.

VANDALS SPARKED RESTORATION

Already faced with considerable work in order to bring Southern Hills up to the USGA Open specifications, the workers at the course were dealt a blow when vandals seriously damaged nine greens in June of 1999. The vandalism was such that the putting surfaces had to be closed and regrased.

"The club's board of governors saw what happened as an opportunity to undertake extensive restoration work," said Szklinski, who came to Southern Hills in 1992 from Desert Highlands, in Scottsdale, Ariz.

"My initial reaction to the vandalism was one of anger and disappointment," he said. "I knew after a week of watching how the greens would react that we would have to go through the process of regrassing. But I said to myself that we were going to look at this as an opportunity."

In addition to regrassing all the course's greens, work was done to upgrade the club's irrigation system, bunkers were rebuilt, the tall oak and pecan trees that form canopies over the sides of many fairways were trimmed, and longer championship tees built. It was decided that to insure the consistency of the course's putting surfaces the nine greens not affected by the vandalism would also be regrased.

"The club was established in 1936," said Szklinski, "and we get some pretty heavy thunderstorms during the summer. Erosion over the years can change the face of bunkers and there can be encroachment toward the greens. It's minute, but on an annual basis it adds up. We took this opportunity to restore the course to its original layout."

Noted golf course architect Keith Foster was hired to assist with the renovations.

"Every time Keith came to the front gate of the club he checked his ego," Szklinski said. "This is a Maxwell course and we needed to continue to be a pure Maxwell design. Keith did a wonderful job."

10-MONTH COURSE SHUTDOWN

In addition to the course maintenance staff, Landscapes Unlimited, of Lincoln, Neb., was hired to help undertake the work. Szklinski maintains a staff of around 35, but as many as 80 to 90 people were working on the restoration project on a daily basis.

The course had to be closed for 10 months, a big sacrifice by the members. "They deserve enormous amounts of praise," Szklinski said. "It was a hard deal for them to give up their club for 10 months to allow the work to be done. They were the ones who endured the most inconvenience."

Szklinski and the Southern Hills staff was thrown another curve ball when the club's maintenance shed was destroyed by an electrical fire in January of this year. A new building had to be constructed. "Once again the club rose to the occasion after the fire, and now we have a new building, which serves all our needs," he said.

Tim Moraghan of the USGA's rules and competition committee, which oversees the preparing of a golf course for a major championship and issues a set of guidelines for clubs to follow to that end, said there was never a thought of moving the 2001 Open.

"We were out there for three or four days after the vandalism, reviewing repair options," said Moraghan. "We assurred them that the Open was going to be

Salmon

Continued from page 13

for the first time in 70 years," said Ed Hopper, owner of the resort. The Wee Burn has always had some coho and steelhead in it, but the best spawning portions, including pools, were inaccessible to fish. A significant amount of work has been done, including adding wetland and alcoves to slow the stream down, restoring some of the stream's natural meander, and building ladders to allow fish access to the upper ponds on the stream. While most of the work is complete, much is still needed by the resort and its partners to improve, maintain and monitor the changes.

"The Wee Burn's habitat has been improved fourfold, and we expect to see an increase in fish populations in the coming years," said Foreman. "This is a project for a site to stage its premier annual event."

Continued from page 9

tolerance," said Carrow.

For test samples, Duncan collected any tall fescue plants he could find growing within six inches of a paved highway. "That would bring a high heat load to the grass," Carrow said. "Any tall fescue that survived in conditions like that had to produce enough carbohydrates to do so. With that germ plasm base, plus the strains that survived intensive screening, we had enough to begin crossing.

The cross-strains went through another boot camp, which killed at least 95 percent of them. Then Duncan took the top one to five percent and started crossing those, subjecting them to even more rigorous conditions.

"To our great surprise, the new strain tolerates," said Carrow. "Once he got those initial crosses, he scaled them with a mower to remove all the green tissue, which put a further strain on the carbohydrates. Under these extreme conditions, the hurler plants will turn on their genetic capability to withstand the stresses."

Continued from page 1

"Any tall fescue that survived in conditions like that had to produce enough carbohydrates. Under these extreme conditions, the hurler plants will turn on their genetic capability to withstand the stresses."

Continued from page 9

"Any tall fescue that survived in conditions like that had to produce enough carbohydrates. Under these extreme conditions, the hurler plants will turn on their genetic capability to withstand the stresses."

Continued from page 1

Continued from page 9

Continued from page 9

Continued from page 9

Continued from page 9

Continued from page 1

Continued from page 1

Continued from page 1

Continued from page 1

Continued from page 9

Continued from page 9

Continued from page 1

Continued from page 1