

# GOLF COURSE NEWS

THE BUSINESS NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

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## COUNTERPOINT

## Audubon Int'l thinking big

By ANDREW OVERBECK

HARTWELL, Ga. — On the heels of announcing its "Fifty in Five" initiative, Audubon International revealed yet another ambitious plan to expand its programs during its first-ever industry summit here at Catechee Golf Club Feb. 12. The initiative, titled the Sustainable Communities Campaign, will build on the group's environmental certification of golf courses.

The new plan will dramatically increase Audubon International's profile and will require more participation from the golf industry if it is to be successful.

"We have become known as 'that golf environmental group,'" said Audubon president Ron Dodson. "We want to think really big and promote the principles of sustainability."

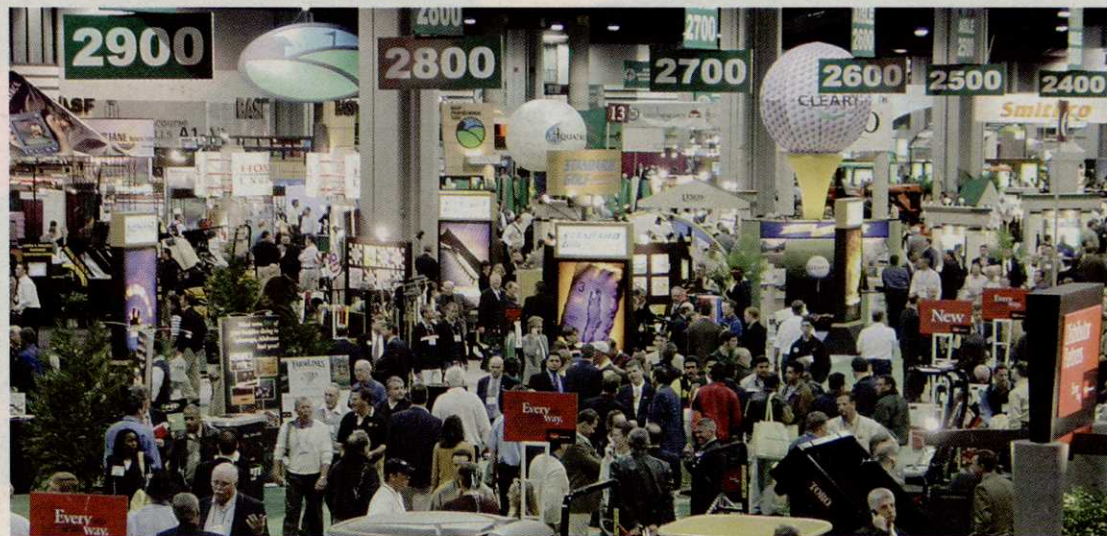
The goals of the sustainability-focused initiative will be to provide adequate supplies of clean water, to maintain and increase biological diversity and to create livable and equitable communities.

Audubon has divided the country into 18 level-one watersheds and will be launching programs in New York, North Carolina,

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## GCSAA: Bring on the buying team

Combined show to shorten chain between superintendent and ultimate decision-maker



By merging their shows, the GCSAA and NGCOA hope to attract a larger percentage of qualified buyers beginning in 2005.

By DEREK RICE

ATLANTA — Recognizing the importance of the buying team in purchasing decisions, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) and the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) have joined forces to put on the first Golf Industry Show, scheduled for Feb. 11-13, 2005 in Orlando, Fla.

The merger comes at a critical time for the GCSAA show, which has seen a decline in overall attendance. This year, 18,164

people attended the show, approximately 2,500 less than last year in Orlando (20,613), 2,700 less than in Dallas (20,927) and 3,500 less than 2000 in New Orleans (21,686). The 1999 show in Orlando set the high-water mark at 22,623.

GCSAA CEO Steve Mona said the number of qualified buyers (6,045) essentially equaled last year's mark in Orlando. Education seminar attendance reached 6,295, down from the 6,921 chairs filled in Orlando.

One of the main drivers behind

the merger, which the two organizations have talked about for three or four years, was the need to deliver more of those qualified buyers to the show floor, said

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## VGM Club signs Yamaha

By DEREK RICE

WATERLOO, Iowa — Golf buying alliance VGM Club has signed an agreement with Yamaha Golf Car to give its members access to discounts on Yamaha cars.

D. Jay Ellis, president of VGM Club, said the agreement came about mostly because of the efficiencies Yamaha has built into its new manufacturing facility in Newnan, Ga.

"We're excited about our relationship with Yamaha and the warranty schedule they use on their golf cars. They're doing some exciting things with their cars, and their plant is phenomenal," Ellis said.

The agreement is non-exclusive, Ellis said, meaning VGM could conceivably

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## Debate over Roundup Ready bent rages on

By ANDREW OVERBECK

ATLANTA — Scotts and Monsanto are moving ahead with the development of Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass despite several recent challenges.

Bill Rose, president of HybriGene, Turf-Seed and Tee-2-Green, announced at the GCSAA Conference and Show in Atlanta that his researchers had officially produced a male-sterile bentgrass plant. Rose contends that this method reduces the risk of gene flow and contamination of tra-

ditional bentgrass varieties during the production process and that using any other method



Bill Rose said that pollen from the Roundup Ready production field could contaminate bentgrass grown nearby. The above photo shows pollen from a Tee-2-Green field.

also took a hit in mid-January when the New York Times reported that certain weeds in row crops were becoming resistant to the widely-used herbicide.

Also in January, the International Center for Technology Assessment (ICTA) filed a lawsuit against the United States Department of Agriculture to force them to include genetic grasses on its list of noxious weeds. If successful, the group could

would result in gene escape. Roundup Ready technology

block the approval of any biotech

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## John Deere extends PGA Tour deals

MOLINE, Ill. — Deere & Co. announced Feb. 10 that it reached an agreement with the PGA Tour to extend its title sponsorship of the John Deere Classic by an additional four years. It will now be involved with the tournament, which is held each year at Tournament Players Club (TPC) Deere Run in Silvis, Ill., through 2010.

Additionally, Deere has expanded its licensing agreement with the PGA Tour, extending its designation as the official golf course equipment supplier through 2014. The PGA Tour also added John Deere Credit as the official

golf course equipment leasing company and John Deere Landscapes as the official landscape product supplier.

Since 1998, Deere's designation as official golf course equipment supplier of the PGA Tour has placed John Deere equipment on all



Tour-owned TPC courses.

## Audubon: 'Golf industry can be a leader'

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Alabama and Florida. The organization has set up the Earth Fund to help finance the new program and has partnered with North Carolina State University to extend the reach of the campaign.

The idea for the program stems from the organization's experiences in certifying Eufaula, Ala.,

as the first-ever Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Community. The superintendent at the city's course jump-started the program and got Audubon involved. The organization is now working with the city to create a master plan to take social and environmental issues into account when considering new development.

While Audubon is counting on the golf industry to support its new initiative, Dodson realizes that the organization is going to have to enroll more than two percent of the courses in the U.S. as Audubon Certified Sanctuaries. This is where the organization's plan to enroll 50 percent of U.S. courses in its environmental programs within the next five years comes into play.

"The golf course industry can play a pivotal leadership role as a catalyst for a whole new way of thinking about sustainable community development. We need the golf industry's participation," said Dodson.

During the industry summit at Catechee, Dodson and director of programs Kevin Fletcher asked for help in identifying things that would help grow golf's participation.

Feedback ranged from simple fixes to more broad-scale efforts. Attendees suggested that Audubon work more with general managers and owners to drum up support for the program. Another suggested getting golfers to care about the environment would be the key to driving the program forward. Another asked, why not try and get a PGA Tour event on an Audubon-certified course? Others said the multiple levels of Audubon certification needed to be clarified and simplified.

Audubon's Fletcher said the group is working on increasing financial incentives for courses to join the program. "We are working with an insurance company to give discounts and with companies like, say, Toro to give a two percent discount to Audubon courses," he said.

Mike Young, who designed Catechee, said Audubon offers more than environmental or financial benefits. "I see value beyond the environment," he said. "I see more benefits politically. As a new developer, Audubon takes you a long way with planning commissions."

As the summit wrapped up, it was clear to everyone that more work needed to be done, but that the discussion had been a good starting point.

"We have a long way to go," said Dodson, "but we have also come a long way." ■

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### 1 My primary title is: (check one only)

- ☐ A. Golf Course Superintendent
- ☐ F. Course Owner
- ☐ L. Golf Course Management Company Executive
- ☐ B. Green Chairman/Grounds Director
- ☐ C. Director of Golf/Head Pro
- ☐ D. Club President
- ☐ E. General Manager
- ☐ K. Assistant Superintendent
- ☐ G. Builder/Developer
- ☐ H. Architect/Engineer
- ☐ I. Research Professional
- ☐ Z. Others allied to field: (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### 2 My primary business is: (check one only)

- ☐ 21. Public Golf Course
- ☐ 22. Private Golf Course
- ☐ 23. Semi-Private Golf Course
- ☐ 24. Municipal/County/State/Military Golf Course
- ☐ 25. Hotel/Resort Course
- ☐ 26. Par 3/Executive Course
- ☐ 27. Practice Facility
- ☐ 29. Other Golf Course (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ 30. Golf Course Management Company
- ☐ 31. Golf Course Architect
- ☐ 32. Golf Course Developer
- ☐ 33. Golf Course Builder
- ☐ 39. Supplier/Sales Rep
- ☐ 99. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### 3 Number of holes:

- ☐ A. 9 holes
- ☐ B. 18 holes
- ☐ C. 27 holes
- ☐ D. 36 holes
- ☐ F. More than 36 holes
- ☐ Z. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### 4 Purchasing involvement: (check all that apply)

- ☐ 1. Recommend equipment for purchase
- ☐ 2. Specify equipment for purchase
- ☐ 3. Approve equipment for purchase

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