

A RESPONSIBLE CHOICE!

Environmental Stewardship on Minnesota Golf Courses

By **MICHAEL BROWER**

Golf Course Superintendent, Minnesota Valley Country Club

With hundreds of golf courses spread throughout the great state of Minnesota, collectively these courses represent a large amount of valuable acreage. Within this acreage lies a great deal of natural resources. Golf courses are very unique in this respect, a great sport traditionally played in the great outdoors, in and around nature itself.

As golf course Superintendents, we've primarily been employed to manage these acres to provide a recreational playing field for golfers. But in addition to this, we have a basic responsibility to manage and care for the land in a responsible manner. It's called being an "environmental steward." To meet this description, one must commit to environmental quality by protecting the environment, conserving natural resources and sustaining and improving wildlife habitat. When we do all of this, golf courses become one of the best types of land development. I ask you all, are we at a place in time where this is commonplace, or is it still just a fad? Have you adopted this total commitment to the environment? If not, now is a perfect time!

A good number of golf course Superintendents have documented their adoption of an environmental ethic by becoming Certified Cooperative Sanctuaries through Audubon International. Audubon International provides a wonderful source of education and assistance for Superintendents in their environmental stewardship practices. Visit

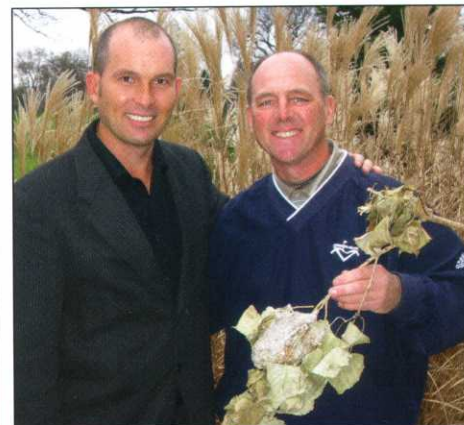
their website at www.auduboninternational.org. The following 24 Minnesota golf courses are fully certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuaries. There are also 23 additional courses in the state that are members in the process of becoming certified. Please contact me, Audubon International, or one of the following certified courses near you to find out more!

Baker National Golf Course
Birnamwood Golf Course
Braemer Golf Course
Crystal Lake Golf Course
Dakotah Ridge Golf Club
Hastings Country Club
Izaty's Golf and Yacht Club
Keller Golf Course
Legacy Courses at Cragun's (*Bronze Signature*)
Meadowbrook Golf Course
Minnesota Valley Country Club
Somerset Golf Club
Somerset Country Club
Spring Hill Golf Club
Superior National at Lutsen
Tartan Park Golf Course
The Minikahda Club
Theodore Wirth Golf Course
Town and Country Club
TPC Twin Cities
Wayzata Country Club
White Bear Yacht Club
Wilderness Golf Course at Fortune Bay
Woodhill Country Club

In our effort to educate and inform our members, their guests, and patrons of Minnesota Valley Country Club, we recently put together a tri-fold brochure which highlights our environmental stewardship practices. In an effort to provide useful ideas for other golf courses, we have printed the entire brochure here. I encourage you all to adopt an environmental ethic, join Audubon International and become certified sanctuaries. It adds a lot of enjoyment to the work we perform, and assures that the golf course environment is responsibly managed, improved and sustained for future generations of golfers. Now is the perfect time!

The Course

Designed by Mr. Seth Raynor in 1924, the golf course sits on 147 acres of gently rolling terrain above the great Minnesota River Valley. The course environment, including micro-climate, wildlife and landscape, is heavily influenced by its close proximity to the river valley and the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge just 400 yards to the south.



Minnesota Valley Country Club Superintendent Mike Brower, right, recipient of the 2008 MGCSA Environmental Leader Award, shows MVCC General Manager, Steve Gilles, a northern oriole nest that recently blew down from a tree on the course.

Once a nearly treeless acreage of farmland and pasture, the golf course is now a good integration of open space and mature trees. Over 1,000 mature trees grace the property, including over 40 majestic elm trees and over 150 magnificent oak trees. Many naturalized areas of fescue and wildflowers adorn the course, which add to the natural beauty of the property.

A highly motivated and educated staff is dedicated to providing an outstanding golf course for its members, guests and patrons. This dedication to course maintenance and environmental stewardship gives great pleasure to playing or visiting this magnificent property.

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Pond, milkweed and No. 12 tee



No-mow, pines and bluebird houses

Minnesota Valley—

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Key Environmental Management Categories

Environmental Planning: MVCC evaluates the natural resources of the property and acts responsibly to balance the natural environment with golf.

Wildlife and Habitat Management: MVCC implements practices which enhance habitats and promote wildlife and biodiversity conservation.

Chemical Use Reduction and Safety: MVCC staff employ techniques to safely store, handle and apply chemicals using best management practices.

Water Conservation: MVCC maximizes efficiency and minimizes waste by employing water conservation irrigation practices.

Water Quality Management: MVCC employs environmentally sensitive management to protect the health and integrity of all water resources.

Outreach and Education: MVCC utilizes a variety of education and outreach activities to communicate the importance of environmental stewardship to its members, guests, patrons and the community.

Environmental Stewardship Practices

Bluebird Trail: Bluebirds abound at Minnesota Valley! We average 80 fledged bluebirds from our 30 houses on the golf course!

Olson Elementary: MVCC has adopted nearby Olson Elementary as a sister sanctuary, assisting them with developing their Audubon program, utilizing the golf course as an outdoor classroom, developing outdoor education areas on their campus and donating plant material and labor to beautify and improve their learning environment.

Recycling: MVCC has developed a far reaching recycling program which includes glass, plastic, paper, aluminum, various metals, machinery and appliances.

Hazardous Waste Recycling: All hazardous waste such as waste oil, oil filters, batteries, fluorescent bulbs, and paint by-products is safely col-



Aeration of No. 18 green

lected and recycled.

Resource Advisory Committee: Quarterly meetings of staff, members and consultants dedicated to the various environmental projects at MVCC.

Safety Committee: Monthly meetings of staff dedicated to providing a safer and healthier workplace for members, guests, patrons, and employees.

Environmental Lake: 2.5 acre natural lake focusing on wildlife habitat.

Natural Areas: 13.5 acres of low maintenance fescue and wildflowers.

Bird Feeders: Nine birdfeeders provide essential food in winter months.

Waterfowl Nesting Structures: Mallards, Wood Ducks, Mergansers, and other waterfowl frequently utilize the nesting structures provided on the golf course.

Wildlife Habitat: On-going philosophy of preserving and enhancing wildlife habitat.

Cultural Practices: An excellent Integrated Pest Management program is practiced that guides decision-making and cultural maintenance practices such as water management, pesticide use, fertilizer use, plant selection and cultivation procedures.



Flowers at Minnesota Valley

Wildlife

known to nest or live at Minnesota Valley or are annual visitors to the property

Feathered Friends

American Bittern
Gray Catbird
Great Blue Heron
American Robin
Green Heron
Brown Thrasher
Night Heron
European Starling
Turkey Vulture
Cedar Waxwing
Canada Goose
Ovenbird
Wood Duck
Northern Waterthrush
Mallard
Wilson Warbler
Bufflehead
Chipping Sparrow
Common Golden Eye
Dark Eyed Junco
Hooded Merganser
Northern Cardinal
Common Merganser
Rose-Breasted Grosbeak
Bald Eagle
Indigo Bunting
Coopers Hawk
Red-Winged Blackbird
Red Tail Hawk
Common Grackle
Ring-Neck Pheasant
Brown-Headed Cowbird
Wild Turkey
American Coot
Virginia Rail
Mourning Dove
Ruby Throated Hummingbird
Belted Kingfisher
Red-Bellied Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Common Flicker
Pileated Woodpecker
Eastern Pee-Wee
Yellow Throated Vireo
Solitary Vireo
Blue Jay
American Crow
Tree Swallow
Barn Swallow
Black Capped Chickadee
White Breasted Nuthatch
Brown Creeper
House Wren
Golden Crowned Kinglet
Ruby Crowned Kinglet
Eastern Bluebird
Veery
Brewers Blackbird
American Goldfinch
House Finch
Pine Siskin
House Sparrow
Northern Oriole

Reptiles

Snapping Turtle
Painted Turtle
Common Garter Snake
Tiger Salamander

Mammals

Opposum
Eastern Mole
Eastern Cottontail Rabbit
Woodchuck
Eastern Chipmunk
Eastern Gray Squirrel
Red Squirrel
Plains Pocket Gopher
White Footed Mouse
Muskrat
Coyote
Red Fox
Raccoon
Striped Skunk
White Tail Deer

Amphibians

Spring Peeper Frog
Striped Chorus Frog
Green Frog
Northern Leopard Frog
American Toad

MVCC's Annual Calendar of Audubon Events

March

Prepare Waterfowl Nests

April

Environmental Awareness Day

Earth Day Celebration

Arbor Day Tree Planting

May

Migratory Bird Day

Olson Elementary Outdoor Classes

Bluebirds Birth-Days Week

July

Kid's Campout

Kid's Nature Hike

October

Birdfeeders Gala

December

Ski Trail Opens