

KIDS, ENVIRONMENT MEET AT LOS LAGOS GOLF COURSE

BY KELLI ANDERSON, COURSECO

SAN JOSE, CA – More than 140 Stonegate Elementary School fourth graders learned environmental lessons in their own backyard at the adjacent Los Lagos Golf Course on May 25, 2005.

Local environmental specialists and golf course personnel led students through a wildlife walk, explaining how the golf course was constructed and how it is being maintained in ways that protect and enhance wildlife and native plants.

Trudi Burney & Mika Snowbarger, Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley, Kathy Lyons, M.A., Biotic Resources Group, Pat Gross, United States Golf Association, Ray Davies, CGCS, CourseCo, Inc, and Alan Andreasen, CGCS, Los Lagos, lent their individual expertise to the field trip.

Burney, Snowbarger, and Lyons pointed out interesting wildlife and native plants. They explained how Coyote Creek and the environmental conditions along this riparian corridor create special habitat that is rich in both plants and wildlife. Poison oak was one specimen that all were taught to avoid.

Davies and Gross, along with finding a discarded gopher snake skin with the kids, gave a short presentation on storm water run-off and the impacts that homeowner behavior can have on water quality. Don Paul, assistant superintendent, gave a brief view of how the golf course was built, capturing run-off water into the lakes, filtering sediment before entering Coyote Creek and creating buffer setback areas for the wildlife mitigation planting areas.

“We saw lots of animals on the nature walk,” said Sherry Dees, fourth grade teacher. “We saw an egret, a camouflaged

lizard . . . learned about eucalyptus leaves, what the hummingbird nest is made of . . . how to plant California live oak trees. We did not know these were in our neighborhood!”

The finale of the field trip was a hotdog lunch, prepared by John Zamora Jr., Food and Beverage Manager, and a putting contest hosted by Scot Hathaway, PGA General Manager, and Janet Davis, PGA Head Pro. Long Nguyen, Golf Operations Manager of nearby Rancho Del Pueblo GC, introduced The First Tee program that develops golf and life skills in youth.

“I hope the students took away the knowledge that golf and the environment can coexist and even create a beneficial synergism,” said Andreasen. “I feel it was a great day and the students had a lot of fun. It exceeded my expectations.”

Los Lagos has been recognized both nationally and locally for its environmental programs. “Alan Andreasen and Don Paul have an outstanding record of environmental accomplishments at Los Lagos,” said Davies, who is CourseCo’s director of golf course maintenance and construction. “The preservation and enhancement of this unique riparian habitat in metropolitan San Jose is valuable work. The habitat supports about 10 different species of raptors, or birds of prey. The fact that this golf course is operated in a manner that contributes in many important ways to both protecting and enhancing the environment is an important message to share with students.”



Assistant Superintendent Don Paul of Los Lagos GC provides insight to Stonegate Elementary School students on how golf courses are constructed and why they are environmentally beneficial to the surrounding community.



Principal with CourseCo, Inc., Ray Davies, CGCS, welcomes students to a wildlife walk on a regional trail that neighbors Los Lagos Golf Course. Davies also provided insightful information on storm water run-off and the impacts that homeowner habits can have on water quality.