

Do You Care About the Future?

Chuck Anfield

This is the first in a series of articles by members of the MAGCS Environmental Committee.

If you care about the future and want to share your love of the outdoors, the GCSAA and Audubon International (AI) encourage you to participate in a program they are cosponsoring called Adopt-A-School.

This program is an opportunity to use the unique talents we possess as golf course superintendents and to share our creativity, ingenuity, stewardship and teaching skills to make a positive impact on a community, school or individual. The level of personal satisfaction that comes from being a leader in a "hands-on" environmental program and watching children grow and

mature is absolutely incredible. To be an environmentalist, you must be an activist.

Audubon International will provide all of the materials, support and guidance you require. Here is how you can become involved.

1. Contact a school or schools in your area that you think might be interested in this type of program; I recommend either junior high or elementary schools. AI has a form letter you can send to the principal of each school you contact. Schools want to be involved in programs of this nature, since this can add a new dimension to environmental education. Some schools have existing environmental clubs or integrate environmental issues throughout the curriculum. Perhaps the

school has faculty members who might be interested in participating. The key here is to find a person within the school you can work with; all it takes is one.

2. After sending the letter, follow up with a phone call. Send out the information packet and introductory video from AI. This packet explains in detail what the program is all about.

3. Arrange a visit with the principal to discuss the program. Offer to pay the \$100 fee or offer to split the cost. Once a school invests money in a program, it is more likely to be involved.

4. Once you have "adopted" your school, the sky is the limit as far as what you can do. Some examples include: introducing

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recycling in the school, naturalizing school grounds, building a butterfly garden, taking nature walks around the school, constructing nature trails and mounting bird feeders. You can donate leadership for the projects and materials from your golf course if you so desire. A field trip to the golf course ties it all together.

The time to introduce this program is now, when it is early enough for schools to integrate the program into their curricula for the 1999-2000 school year. Your involvement in this program will substantially promote you and our profession. It can help you satisfy the requirement for outreach and education certification of your golf course. Consider too that many of the activities take place in the fall and winter, which is our slower season. What a good reason to get out of the shop!

I think the most important consideration is that your involvement and effort are investments in the future. Not only the future of the great game of golf, but also the future of our ability to continue to enhance and protect the valuable natural resources of the planet—indeed, the very things that compelled us to be involved in golf course maintenance. If you need help getting started, just call me at 815-467-1665. Information is also available through the GCSAA Web site (www.gcsaa.org). 

A New Editor "Tees Off"

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and an engaging, exuberant, adventuresome little guy who will undoubtedly get his first golf lessons from Grandpa next summer!

In closing, I have a couple announcements to make. One is the initiation of a Letters to the Editor column, so please—send me your comments and observations, whether related to articles appearing in *On Course* or hot industry issues. Remember, this is your magazine, and it is one of my goals as editor that the magazine include as many of your voices as possible. To that end, on to announcement number two. Fred Opperman took tremendous pride in the quality, and quantity, of superintendent-written articles appearing in *On Course*. Another of my goals is to uphold and build upon that fine tradition. So write that article you've been contemplating, and send it in.

I would also encourage you to give me a call at 847-537-7883 for a brief chat. Call it an informal survey, but I would love to hear your thoughts for the future of *On Course* and any suggestions you might have. Since I myself am not a superintendent, such conversations will be especially valuable to me in terms of shedding light on the challenges you face and the information you require.

Again, thanks for the opportunity to serve as editor of your magazine. I look forward to your feedback and support.

Sincerely,

Cathy Miles Ralston



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