

ON COURSE WITH THE PRESIDENT

Scott Witte, CGCS, Cantigny Golf Course



Speak Up

There is a lot of talk about "Green Golf" now days, and I'm sure there are differing opinions on the matter. Personally, I think that GREEN is GOOD for golf, and it is up to all of us to get the message out!

If you're like me, you've probably stumbled into an awkward conversation with a patron who was convinced that golf courses cannot be maintained in an enviro-friendly fashion. Many questions continue to circulate about golf's overall impact on the ecosystem. However, we are fortunate that the members of the MAGCS are extremely well educated and trained in modern green keeping. This should spur us to get the message out about golf's positive impact on the environment. Whenever the opportunity presents itself, we need to educate the skeptics and win them over one at a time.

A quick review of golf's environmental positives will provide you with plenty of talking points.

Golf Courses:

- Provide needed wildlife sanctuaries.
- Preserve natural areas within urban environments.
- Support plants and wildlife native to the area.
- Provide opportunities to protect water resources by filtering storm water runoff through golf course wetlands and turfgrass.
- Rehabilitate degraded landscapes.
- Promote physical and mental well being by reducing stress for more than 25 million U.S. golfers.
- Improve air quality and moderate temperature.

- Educate golfers and the general public about the "NATURE" of the game, and promote environmentally-sound management programs.

I am a firm believer in these core principles, laid out by Audubon International, and I think it is important for the golf industry to take ownership of them. We should be prepared to talk about these principles at our facilities and stress the importance of sound environmental programs. The most important aspect of any successful promotional campaign involves great communication. We can't afford to sit back on our heels and expect the world to just magically become aware of golf's environmental opportunities. We need to speak up! Any time you have a chance to get the message out, seize it. The MAGCS membership should be a collaborative group of ambassadors for golf, and our message is a good one. Let's keep telling our story. Golf can be great for wildlife and the environment. Golf is great for the economy, and golf is great for the physical and mental well being of all those who enjoy the game. Let's help get the word out. Join me in talking up your facility's finest attributes. Be an ambassador for golf at your facility and be a part of the educational process. You have a great story to tell, you just have to Speak Up! **-OC**

Scott teaching Geneva High School science class about sustainable golf.

