

Disney Walks The Talk



Students help Karnes install a butterfly garden and a bird feeder in a protected area on campus. Photo by Joel Jackson.



Disney's Bonnet Creek Superintendent Bob Karnes and Assistant Superintendent Dale Dexter (back row left and right) work with the students and staff of Spring Lake Elementary to plant oak trees on the school grounds. Photo by Joel Jackson.

Audubon Environmental Education Unit Becomes PR Program for Disney

By Joel Jackson, CGCS

It's one thing to talk about helping the environment. It's another thing to do something about it. Bob Karnes, golf course superintendent at Disney's Bonnet Creek Golf Club, says that we often take the environment for granted and it's time we all did our part to correct that mindset.

Karnes did his part by making the Lake Buena Vista Club a fully certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary, and then helped the Osprey Ridge and Eagle Pines courses do the same. In fact last year, all of the Disney courses became certified sanctuaries.

One of the components of the ACSP certification program is called Public Education and Outreach.

ACSP bulletin boards are at all the Disney pro shops to educate golfers about the program, and last April Karnes hosted an Earth Day Walk at the Osprey Ridge GC for Disney employees. For many it was the first time they had set foot on a golf course and they were amazed at the amount of wildlife and the use of native plants on the course. The highlight of the tour was the sighting of nesting ospreys on the specially built nest poles.

Disney took its Audubon outreach off site in 2001 by adopting two schools, Bradenton High School and the Spring Lake Elementary School in Altamonte Springs, by acting as their official sponsor in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Schools.

Disney went a step further with Spring Lake Elementary because Karnes's wife, Rose, teaches gifted students there, so it was a logical

opportunity. Karnes and his assistant superintendent Dale Dexter loaded up a pickup truck with shovels and post-hole diggers, oak tree saplings, flowers, a bird feeder and a butterfly box and set out for the school last October.

Karnes and Dexter provided the plants, tools and some muscle to help Rose and fellow science teacher Amy Delachica, Assistant Principal Nancy Fraser and Dean of Discipline Marjorie Adamczyk supervise the kids. Under their guidance the students planted the trees on the playground, installed the bird feeder and a garden to attract butterflies and a butterfly box to shelter them.

This is the school's first year in the ACSP and Rose's class is kicking off the program, but all the grades will be involved by next year. The kindergarten and first grade classes will do aluminum can recycling and the second graders will oversee a composting program. The third graders will set up a bird identification and bird count program. The fourth and fifth grade assignments haven't been decided yet.

The school is planning a field trip to the Maitland Birds of Prey compound, and maybe a trip to Hobe Sound Elementary in Stuart, one of the first Florida schools to enter the Audubon school program with the help of the Treasure Coast GCSA.

Karnes says Disney's participation in the school program satisfies the ongoing requirement of public outreach and education of ACSP certification.

"We learn how to make changes and improvements on what we do on the golf course," he said. "What better use of that knowledge than to share it with others, especially with our children who will be responsible for the future of our planet.

"Teaching these kids about our environment and how we can do simple and effective things to help make it better has been one of the most personally exciting and rewarding aspects of my career at Disney."

Thanks to Bob Karnes and all the Disney golf course staff members for doing something positive for the environment instead of just talking about it. And thanks also to the 261 Florida golf courses that have joined the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program. We still have a long way to go.

STEWARDSHIP NOTES

Could Florida Match Delaware's Commitment To ACSP Program?

By Shelly Foy



This year's GCSAA Conference and Show in Orlando marked the first time I have actually "worked" a booth, and I must say I have never enjoyed myself more, and have never been so tired in my life at the end of the day. I had the pleasure of spending quite a bit of

time at Audubon International's booth.

Of course I enjoyed seeing all of my Florida friends who stopped by the booth, but I also had the opportunity to meet people who are participating in AI's programs all over the world. It gave me a much greater perspective of how far-reaching AI's programs are.

While in Orlando, I also had the opportunity to represent Audubon International at a check presentation by the Delaware State Golf Association. They are the first state to have 100 percent participation in the ACSP for golf courses.

Through a venture spearheaded by the Delaware State Golf Association's Green Section (formed two years ago to address environmental issues that affect golf courses), the DSGA has agreed to fund membership dues in the ACSP for all of Delaware's golf courses. Delaware is the first state to have statewide participation in the program.

"We have been working on getting statewide participation for the past six months," said Kevin Mayhew, golf course superintendent at Newark Country Club. All of the superintendents believed in the program and wanted to join but saw the yearly dues as a hurdle. The idea of having the Green Section fund the dues was presented to our golf association and was immediately endorsed.

"Delaware superintendents would like to send the message that they want to be the best possible stewards of the land, and by joining the ACSP as

a group, the entire state is sending the same message."

"We saw this has a natural progression. There is no better way for the golfers of the state to help keep the courses up with the latest programs to help protect and enhance wildlife and the environment," said J. Curtis Riley, the executive director of DSGA.

The DSGA recognizes the benefit that the ACSP provides its members and realizes that this is a continual education process for golf course superintendents. Riley also added, "We are willing to continue this funding each year and hope that other states realize the importance of environmental stewardship."

Ron Dodson, president of AI offered his congratulations to the DSGA for taking a leadership role in preserving our environmental future. Ron added, "For over 10 years, the ACSP for golf courses has benefited not only the natural environment, but also the people who are educated and forever changed through participation. It's my hope that this DSGA initiative will be replicated in states and regions throughout the country. One hundred percent participation in the program nationwide may occur someday, but at least today we are one state closer to that goal."

I spent some time talking to the DSGA representatives and they were very excited about the opportunity they have before them with their com-

mitment to the ACSP for Golf Courses. I expect we will be hearing great things from the state of Delaware in the years to come.

According to the USGA, Florida has more than 1340 golf courses, or 21,500 golf holes. We currently only have 251 (18.4 percent) courses that are members of the ACSP for Golf Courses. Only 54 (4 percent) of Florida golf courses are fully certified in the program. We are obviously a long way from 100 percent participation in the state. However, we could follow Delaware's lead and offer a challenge to each chapter in the state of Florida. So, who wants to step up to the plate and have the first chapter to have 100 percent participation in the ACSP for Golf Courses?

Here in Florida, we always like to take the lead in so many areas, so talk to members of your chapter and let's at least get started on working toward 100 percent participation, chapter by chapter.

ACSP UPDATE

New Members

Audubon C.C., Naples
 Lost Tree Club, North Palm Beach
 Laurel Oak C.C., Sarasota
 Caloosa Greens G.C., Sun City Center
 Victoria Hills G.C., DeLand

Fully Certified

Pelican Marsh G.C., Naples

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John Sanford Jr.,
 Member of ASGCA



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