

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