The best approach: Create raving fans!

In 1978, I had just completed two years of college and was well on my way to achieving a degree in chemistry. It had occurred to me in a philosophy class, where we were pondering the meaning of life, that if I got a four-year degree in chemistry, I could end up in Buffalo monitoring ground water at Love Canal or reading gauges in a nuclear power plant where my only course of action, should the needle go into the red zone, would be to kiss myself good-bye!

Scott Wahlin

So I took a semester off to determine what it was I wanted to do for a living. I had worked on golf courses since I was 15 years old and decided to look into golf course management for my future. A friend helped me get a job on the greens crew working for Dan Jones, CGCS, at Turnberry Isle in Miami. I felt this would give me exposure to a top professional at a premier operation. During this period, I interviewed a number of superintendents to discuss their careers. I liked the people I spoke with and decided my future was here.

Six months ago, after 12 years in golf course management, I decided to accept the sales manager position at Pifer, Inc. This was a difficult decision because I truly like the people and family who make the Graham Companies, my employer at the time, such a thriving success. I spoke at length with the management at Pifer, Inc., and representatives of our manufacturers. I was very much impressed with their level of commitment and the opportunities available. I knew exactly what we needed to do: create raving fans. (I owe this to Kenneth Blanchard, author of *The One-Minute Manager.*)

'. . . we have worked hard for this sale, but the sale of one unit is not going to make or break us — whether or not we create raving fans will.'

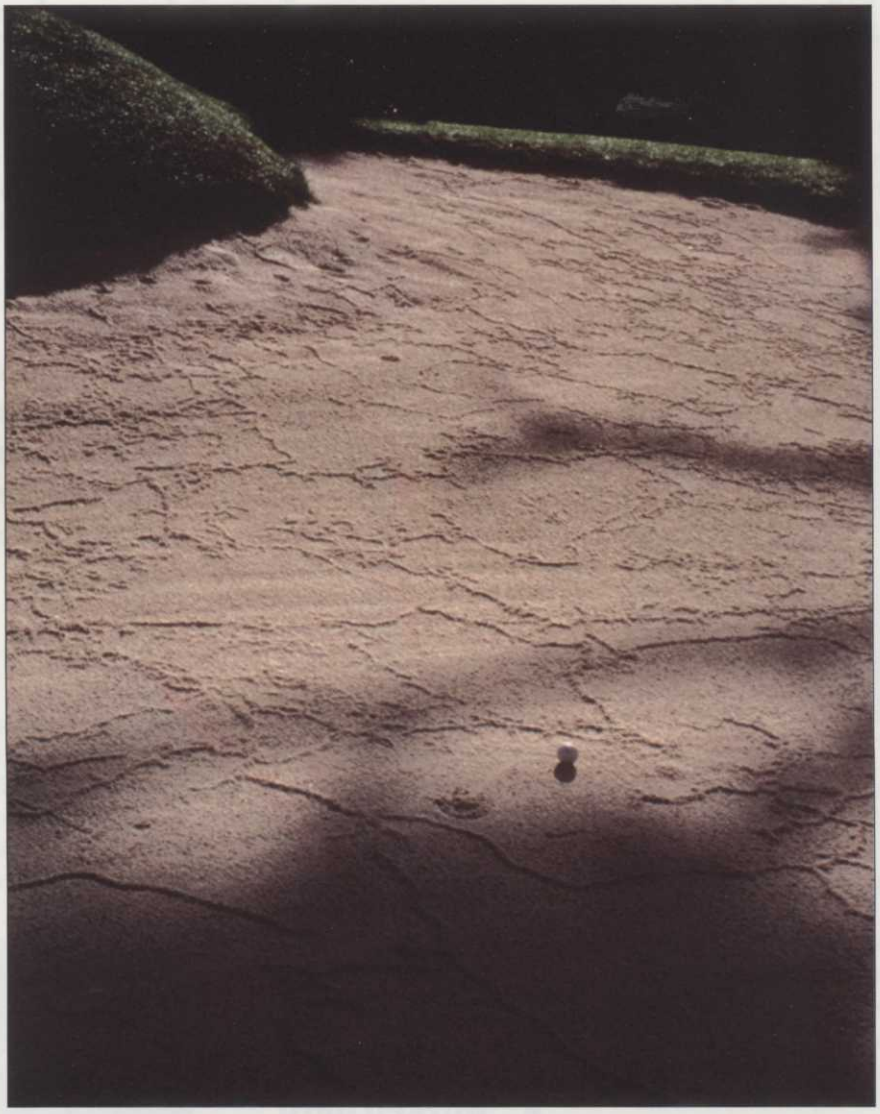
How do we do this? By aligning our goals with the goals of those who choose to do business with us. I know from personal experience that it is a hell of a lot easier for a superintendent to do whatever he has to do to get the job done than to explain why the job was not done. No excuse is going to make a failure disappear, so there is no sense wasting time and energy on them. Solutions, new ideas and heroic efforts make failures fade and sometimes turn to victory.

I was recently at a closing for a Ransomes 300 Fairway Unit. The superintendent liked the machine very much but asked how I could prove my level of commitment was what I said it was. His comment: "Talk is cheap!" I agreed and added, " . . . we have worked hard for this sale, but the sale of one unit is not going to make or break us — whether or not we create raving fans will. If you choose not to do business with us this time, I would very much appreciate if you would talk to your colleagues who do." He bought the unit.

How do we do this? By aligning our goals with the goals of those who choose to do business with us.

In the past three months I have been with Pifer, Inc., I have visited more than 200 golf courses and met with nearly as many superintendents. I have come to the conclusion that what I like most about my present position is what attracted me to the golf industry in the first place. I get to spend my time with devoted turf industry professionals who I admire and respect. See you soon.

After this initial slaying, we follow up in trouble areas with applications of good old Orthene tank-mixed with a wetting agent and sometimes a feeding stimulant. We apply this at the label rates as late in the day as possible, on a night that we do not plan to irrigate. We spray only in those areas with current adult activity.



After treating the turf area, we find an explosion in the population of crickets in the bunkers, says Mike Bailey.

nymphs hatch, we treat all the areas with any nymphs.

Unfortunately, depending on the severity of the problem, this can mean treating the entire golf course. The up side to this is, if you do a thorough job with this initial nymph spraying, your adult activity will be less later on. This will then eliminate some of the need to spray at a later date.

As far as what chemical to use, I think there is a multitude of chemicals that will work well, especially at this nymph stage. I have had great success using Pageant for the first blanket application as well as Mocap.

After this initial slaying, we follow up in trouble areas with applications of good old Orthene tank-mixed with a wetting agent and sometimes a feeding stimulant. We apply this at the label rates as late in the day as possible, on a night that we do not plan to irrigate. We spray only in those areas with current adult activity.

I have also had great results with syringing (one head rotation) the area to be sprayed with wetting agent pumped through the fertigation system prior to spraying with Orthene.

On top of all this, we inspect the tees, greens and aprons daily and treat any adult activity with a solution of Triumph at 1 oz/gallon. We spray the solution directly in to the burrow hole.

We also spray the fairways in this same manner, but we use a chemical that has a label for fairway use. We spray this using a 15-gallon electric sprayer transported around the golf course in the back of a utility vehicle. This method of injecting the spray solution directly into the active burrow has yielded great results.

My last bit of advice would be don't let the activity get out of hand. Eliminate as many nymphs as possible after hatching and then stay on top of the adult activity later in the year.

Darren Davis
Olde Florida Club,
Everglades Chapter

Grubs affect cricket program

Besides mole crickets, grubs have become a growing concern at Atlantis. After studying the options I changed my program from past years.

First we decided to go with an Oftanol application after dethatching all fairways the first two weeks of May. I have not used Oftanol for three years. We had decent

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Responding to the mole cricket threat and to rising concerns over the environment, researchers are currently developing new techniques to control the pest. These include injecting pesticides into the soil under high pressure and even inoculating soil with insect-killing nematodes. The most promising control method, however, appears to be slit application.

results in the past with Oftanol and fewer grubs. So hopefully we killed two birds with one stone.

At the time of application we were soap flushing and noticed some mole cricket nymphs. As of June 1 we have very, very little activity. My plans call for another application in late June on nymph with either Crusade or Telstar, if labeled at the time.

In October of 1993 I experimented with the Proact nematodes and had excellent results with reduced populations in these areas. We also sprayed historical bad areas in March with Proact. These were all adult activity areas.

This too showed excellent results by lowering populations during egg laying time.

Things look more promising than in past years!

Mark Henderson
Atlantis GC, Palm Beach Chapter

Rhone Poulenc

As golf course superintendents across the South and Southeast know, controlling mole crickets is a never-ending battle.

It's an expensive battle, too. According to some estimates, the bill for controlling mole crickets and repairing the damage they cause runs as high as $60 million per year in the states of Georgia, Florida and Alabama alone.

Mole crickets range from the coastal areas of the Carolinas well into Texas.

Responding to the mole cricket threat and to rising concerns over the environment, researchers are currently developing new techniques to control the pest. These include injecting pesticides into the soil under high pressure and even inoculating soil with insect-killing nematodes. The most promising control method, however, appears to be slit application.

Developed in Florida four years ago, slit application of granular products like Chipco Mocap brand ethoprop pesticide has proved a popular and effective way of controlling mole crickets.

Slit application uses a modified slit overseeder to place the insecticide beneath the surface of the turf, reducing the risk of exposing applicators, golfers, pets and wildlife. The process also reduces dust and odor problems.

Coulters or disks spaced 1.5 to 1.75 inches apart cut narrow slits in the sod. Calibrated doses of Chipco Mocap are simultaneously deposited into the slits. Mole crickets encounter the bands of material as they burrow through the root zone.

The slits heal quickly. In fact, the treatment aerates turf, giving it most of the benefits derived from verticutting. Slit application is not recommended for use on greens or tees because the slits might disrupt play. However, the equipment can operate directly over sprinkler heads without causing damage.

As effective as slit application is, you can further maximize the treatment's value by being thoroughly prepared before you treat. Primarily this means regular scouting — both visually and with soap flushes to keep track of mole crickets as they develop.

The optimum time to treat is just after nymphs hatch because it is at this stage that they are most vulnerable to the pesticide. Hatch dates vary according to locale, so treating by the calendar is a bit risky.

Remember, however, that custom applicators usually require that reservations be made in advance. Although locking in a date beforehand may throw your timing off slightly, with regular scouting you will be able to more accurately estimate when peak hatch will occur and be able to plan accordingly.

More and more golf course superintendents throughout the South and Southeast are discovering the benefits of slit applying Chipco Mocap to control mole crickets. However, for maximum return on investment, superintendents should take the time to properly scout for the pest before reserving the services of a custom applicator.

Chipco and Mocap are registered trademarks of Rhone-Poulenc. Always read and follow label directions.

Ken Lewis, Ph.D.
Rhone-Poulenc Ag Company

The optimum time to treat is just after nymphs hatch because it is at this stage that they are most vulnerable to the pesticide. Hatch dates vary according to locale, so treating by the calendar is a bit risky.

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Environmental planning

Audubon plan for becoming a guardian of nature

BY SHELLY FOY
USGA Green Section
AND TOM BENEFIELD, CGCS

EDITOR'S NOTE: This continuing series of articles is designed to provide ideas which we hope will stimulate interest and creativity in this very positive environmental program. We have asked for help and ideas from superintendents around the state who are either seeking certification or have already received it.

The following segment is made possible by the generous supply of information from three outstanding Florida golf course superintendents. What we have provided are suggestions and ideas. Specific programs should be geared for your particular property and interests. So enjoy the information you are about to receive, for it comes from the best source in the world — you. TJB

In part two of our series on the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses, we are going to offer tips on the "Environmental Planning" category.

First however, I would like to back track just a little.

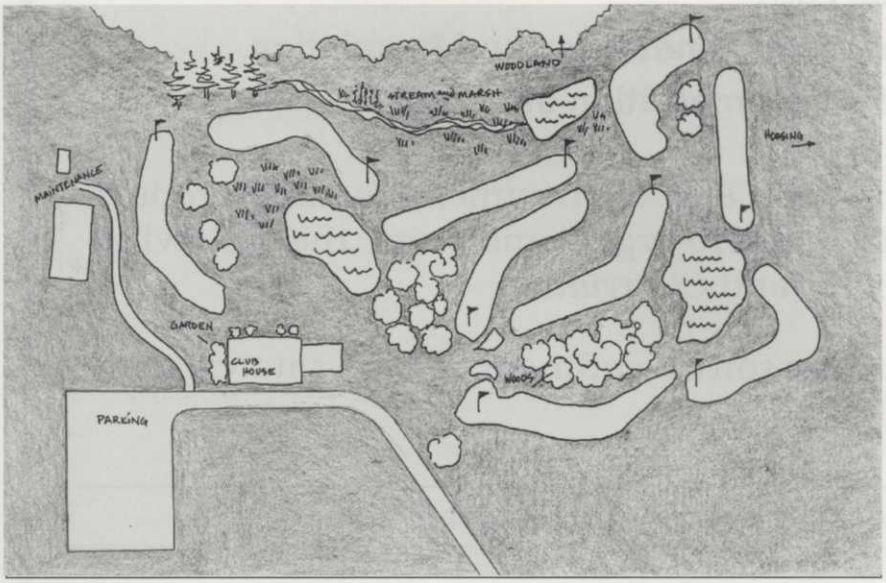
STEP 1: Your course has made the decision to join the ACSP and you have sent in your registration form and $100.00 registration fee. (Forms can be obtained by calling the Audubon Society of New York State, Inc. at (518) 767-9051 or by calling the USGA Green Section Florida office at (407) 546-2620.

STEP 2: Your golf course then becomes a registered member of the ACSP. You will receive a resource inventory handbook asking specific questions about your golf course property (size, existing habitat, etc. Once completed, the ACSP staff will use your resource inventory to provide you with a written report specifically for your golf course. This report will contain suggestions and recommendations on conservation and habitat enhancement.

Keep in mind, the ACSP staff only makes recommendations to your course. The final decisions concerning implementation of projects remains with the golf course superintendent and course officials.

STEP 3: You will need to form a Cooperative Sanctuary Committee, or "resource committee." This committee

First, map it out



To get a good picture of what you're starting with and plan appropriate habitat projects, make a simple map of your property. First, draw in property boundaries, roads, buildings and parking areas. Then add golf play areas and existing vegetation, such as trees, shrubs, woods or grass. Label these the best you can, and be as specific as possible about the types of vegetation present. Next, draw in any special features or distinct environments on your site. These may include water features, wetlands, gardens, steep slopes, or special maintenance areas. Outline surrounding land use that borders the property. Finally, label existing areas of high wildlife activity. Sketches courtesy of the Audubon Society of New York State, Inc.

could include staff of the golf course, board or greens committee members, golfers, and at least one person from the local community with expertise in the types of projects you wish to undertake.

Choose people willing to volunteer their time and energies to develop and implement habitat enhancement projects. Your committee will serve many purposes, including becoming technical advisers, volunteer laborers, public relations persons, but mostly, their commitment to the land and wildlife of the golf course should remain constant.

Choose people you feel comfortable working with. The Audubon Society of New York State does not specify who needs to be on your committee, nor are there any meeting requirements for this group.

STEP 4: Now you are ready to start documenting your efforts and receiving certificates of achievement for each of the six categories listed below:

1) Environmental Planning
2) Public Involvement
3) Wildlife Habitat Management (Formerly Wildlife Cover and Food Enhancement)
4) Integrated Pest Management
5) Water Conservation
6) Water Quality Management (Formerly Water Enhancement)

*The categories have recently been updated to help clarify and simplify the process.

To achieve status as a Certified Cooperative Sanctuary, all six categories must be reported to the Audubon Society of New York State and the criteria met.

Now, on to Environmental Planning.

The Environmental Planning category is like your blueprint or map. Your plan should include goals and how you plan to achieve them. Check each of the categories and see what you are doing now and what you can do to improve them. Do you have a time frame or deadline you want to set?

You are writing this plan to achieve certification in this category, but by being specific in defining goals, you will be making the process easier for yourself and your committee.

Protecting nature is guiding rule at Tampa Palms

Since its conception in 1985, the guiding principal of the golf course design at Tampa Palms has been to preserve and protect the delicate beauty of the natural environment.

The property on which the course is built lies within the flood plains of the Hillsborough River and great care was taken during the construction of the course to ensure that the "natural areas" on and around the course were not disturbed. The associated residential community has been laid out in such a manner to preserve 50 percent of its original acreage for the development of parks, green spaces, nature preserves and other important components such as wildlife corridors and buffers.

Our commitment here at Tampa Palms, in the community and on the golf course, to preserve and protect the flora and fauna communities found in this area is not an imposed restriction, it is basic to the original design ideal.

Our plan for the future is to learn more about the techniques and practices available that will allow us to maximize the potential for this property as a sanctuary for the increasingly stressed populations of Florida wildlife.

As development of the Interstate 75 corridor proceeds, we are seeing wildlife populations such as deer and turkey increase as they seek supporting habitat and relief from the stress of sharing space with commercial and residential development.

All this planning has helped make the golf experience at Tampa Palms a very enjoyable one.

All this planning has helped make the golf experience at Tampa Palms a very enjoyable one. Not only can one play a championship course designed by Arthur Hills, but one experiences a journey through an ancient Florida wetland, complete with encounters of wildlife such as osprey, hawks, alligators and numerous other species of birds and animals. Having blended golf and nature together in harmony at Tampa Palms is something we are proud to have and are working hard to ensure it remains that way.

Suggestions I have for anyone who wants to write their certification program for environmental planning are:

1. Talk with the architect of the golf course and find out what his design concepts were for your course.

2. Talk with the developers of the community associated with your course (if applicable) and find out their intentions for creation of preserves and green spaces within the boundaries of the community.

3. Develop and implement a long-rang plan (2-5 years) for golf course projects such as the building and location of nest boxes.

4. Develop and implement a comprehensive IPM program for your golf course.

5. Establish good working relationships with local authorities such as the county extension agencies, local parks departments, County EPC and your respective water management district. Get to know people within these agencies on a first name basis.

6. Conduct your daily operations in a professional manner. Work within the limits that have been established for pesticide and water use. Be responsible for your management practices.

7. Educate your staff and your golfing membership as to the benefits of the Audubon program. Stress to them the importance of managing environmentally sensitive areas in a safe and effective manner.

8. Do a thorough job of documenting your efforts that you put forth when working on projects that you have selected for your course. Remember that a photo will tell a story within itself. Notes and photographs will come in handy when writing your certification program.

Above all, don't get discouraged with the program and think that it is going to take up too much of your precious time that as we already know, all superintendents are short on. You must set some time aside for the start-up program, but hopefully some of your staff can help once the program gets under way.

I would be happy to answer questions that anyone might have about Tampa Palms involvement with the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program. Feel free to give me a call at (813) 972-3375.

Greg Plotner
Tampa Palms Golf & Country Club

Why should my course join the ACSP?

As we all know, there is a growing negative perception about the golf course environment and the management programs practiced. As a member of of the ACSP, your course will:

- Receive advice to improve current project efforts and suggestions for new conservation projects.
- Be recognized for its commitment to wildlife and environmental quality.
- Provide wildlife habitat and also add beauty and distinction to the golf course while enhancing the enjoyment of a game of golf.
- Provide financial savings from reduced maintenance costs and conservation measures.
- Help preserve a healthy, diverse and beautiful landscape for future generations.
- Set a positive example for others to follow.

Wetland planting area during construction at Olde Florida Golf Club, Naples

Olde Florida: Environmental concerns are a daily effort

At Olde Florida Golf Club, we are fortunate to have had the time, ability and foresight to give great consideration to the surrounding environment in planning and construction of the golf course.

Now, after the turfgrass is established and the golf course is in full operation, consideration of the surrounding environment remains a daily effort for the maintenance staff and the membership. This effort has transpired into a written plan that details the steps that have been taken, as well as ongoing and future plans.

This written plan is what composes our Environmental Planning section of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program. This written plan is also one of the six steps that must be completed to become a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary.

The Environmental Planning category must include information detailing the efforts being made in the following five categories: Public Involvement, Integrated Pest Management, Wildlife Habitat Management, Water Conservation and Water Quality Management.

Below are steps that we have taken in an attempt to comply with each category.

Public Involvement

Involving the public at our club began with forming a Resource Committee of club members and other interested individuals.

I began by writing an article for our club newsletter explaining the positive impact our golf course has on the environment. The article further explained the requirements for certification as a Cooperative Sanctuary System sponsored by the Audubon Society of New York State, Inc.

I received numerous calls of support and was able to sign up nine members for our Resource Committee. I also included a local fifth grade teacher on this committee who had no connection with the membership or the club. Through the help of the teacher, we arranged a field trip for the fifth grade class to our golf course.

The purpose is an effort to educate the students on the numerous positive impacts that Olde Florida and other golf courses have on the environment and the community. We took pictures of the students on the golf course, combined it with a written explanation and released this

information to the press in an effort to further educate and inform.

Another effort that takes very little work and can increase public awareness is displaying the certificate of participation in the program in a highly visible area.

Our certificate is on display in the reception area of our maintenance facility. Once we move into our permanent clubhouse, we will post a plaque in the lobby. In the meantime, I post interesting articles about golf courses and the environment on a bulletin board in our current clubhouse.

We also participate in a volunteer recycling program. Included in this program is the recycling of all aluminum from the clubhouse and maintenance building.

Integrated Pest Management

The definition of integrated pest management is the control of pests by establishing threshold levels of tolerable damage (physical & visual) and then using all methods of control available including cultural, mechanical and chemical. Our goal at Olde Florida is to provide a dense, vigorous, healthy turf with the funds we have to work with.

As most turf managers know, the best defense against pests (insects, weeds and disease) is a healthy stand of turf.

A key factor in an integrated pest management program is the ability to correctly identify host plants, key pests and their life cycles that can affect the turfgrass and ornamentals on the golf course.

Part of our integrated pest management program is being aware of individual plant sensitivity to stress (pesticides, mechanical and environmental). Stress could weaken the turf and increase its vulnerability to invasion by pests. A well-trained staff is critical to the success of a properly executed integrated pest management program.

In the original planning stages of the golf course, turfgrass and ornamentals were selected which are indigenous to our site. This practice will continue with any future plantings of ornamentals.

Our site is predominantly Pine, Cypress and Palms. There are also a few scattered Bay trees, Dahoon Holly and Wax Myrtle.

Species currently existing on site will be the only types of plants brought in if additional plant material is necessary. This will result in fewer problems with pests, stress, disease and will decrease pesticide use.

Unfortunately, regardless of how much we would like to not use any pesticides, it is impossible to completely eliminate them. Therefore, to be a successful integrated pest management manager, it is critical to correctly apply pesticides.

To define this, a written Pesticide Methodology was transcribed and posted at Olde Florida. This methodology includes good record keeping of chemical applications and mapping of troublesome areas on the golf course. By keeping written physical documentation of pest problem areas, chemicals can be applied by spot applications rather than wall to wall chemical applications.

When chemicals are applied at Olde Florida with a boom sprayer, raindrop nozzles (larger particle size) are used, which reduces the potential for drift.

A pre-emergent herbicide can be a valuable tool to reduce the need to apply a post-emergent herbicide. If the pre-emergent herbicide is used with just cause, it can also be a valuable integrated pest management method.

At Olde Florida we have four golf holes that have reached an unacceptable threshold level of goosegrass. After cleaning up these four holes with a selective, post-emergent herbicide, a pre-emergent herbicide is applied. This is done only to these four holes to prevent the germination of additional weed seeds that are inevitably in the soil.

Wildlife Habitat Management

Providing food and cover for wildlife is essential for attracting and sustaining healthy wildlife populations.

There are numerous ways in which we are accomplishing this, one of which is simple and very noticeable to the membership or guests. It is the addition of bird feeders around the maintenance facility and clubhouse. This can also prove to be a very noteworthy public relations move.

A second method that is less noticeable to the membership is the perpetuation of existing native trees that are a very good natural food source.

At Olde Florida, these trees include Cabbage Palms, Pines, Cypress, Dahoon Holly and native Lantana.

Cabbage Palms produce a black fruit that many birds eat and the palm thatch is used for nesting material.

The Cypress trees produce seed cones that squirrels and ducks eat.

Newly planted wetland plants along lake bank at Olde Florida Golf Club in Naples.