• The WMD's governing boards can designate uses as enhancing certain water bodies and can prefer those uses over other uses in the event of competing permit applications for that water body. Translation: First step in establishing minimum flows and levels (MFL).

• Requires the WMDs to consider the public recreation requirements and the protection and procreation of fish and wildlife in determining an applicant's request of water and allows the governing boards to restrict or stop those future uses if they are inconsistent with these objectives. Translation: Second step or effect of MFL and Pinellas County probably won't be able to suck Weeki Wachee Springs dry for its water source.

• By Nov. 15 of each year, requires the WMDs to submit to DEP their priority list and schedule for establishing MFLs. The list has to state which water bodies the districts plan on doing independent scientific peer review with. Translation: MFLs are a new player to water allocation. Their priority and quantity of allocation even subjected to independent scientific peer review will change forever the way water is permitted.

• Provides detailed criteria to be used in establishing MFLs. In the event the existing flow or level is below or projected to fall below an established MFL, the WMD is required to implement a recovery or prevention strategy that will provide sufficient water supplies for all existing and projected users. Translation: WMDs will become water supply developers, to create water where there is none available, a daunting task which most certainly will lead to a tripling of the ad valorum tax rate.

These are just a few of the items discussed in House Bill 715. All of the above information is true and factual except possibly for the translations which may be true and certainly are worth considering. I will examine other parts of this bill in future issues. I would like to thank the staff of our water consultants, McVicar, Federico and Lamb for their help in this process. They have worked tirelessly on our industry's behalf, and we are proud to be associated with them.

Now for a look at the issue near and

It is at best an attempt to reign in so-called rogue water management districts and set standards to protect our water supply, and at worst a lost opportunity to curtail the unmanageable development of the state

dear to my heart – "potty" water. There are new rules on the books relating to reclaimed water usage, permitting, allocation and cost. So let's review highlights of FS 373.250.

The encouragement and promotion of water conservation and reuse of reclaimed water as defined by the DEP are state objectives and considered to be in the public interest. The Legislature finds that the use of reclaimed water provided by domestic wastewater treatment plants permitted and operated under a reuse program approved by the DEP is environmentally acceptable and not a threat to public health and safety.

Reclaimed water may be presumed to be available to a consumptive use permit applicant when a utility which provides reclaimed water, which has uncommitted reclaim water capacity and which has distribution facilities which are initially provided by the utility at its cost, to the site of the affected applicant's proposed use.

The WMDs in conjunction with the DEP will adopt rules to implement increased reclaim water usage. Such rules may include but be limited to the following.

1. Provisions to permit use of water from other sources in emergency situations or if reclaimed water becomes unavailable for the duration of the emergency or if reclaimed water becomes unavailable for the future.

2. These provisions shall also specify the method for establishing the quantity

of water to be set aside for use in emergencies or when it becomes unavailable.

3. The methodology shall take into account: the risk that reclaimed water may not be available in the future; the risk that other sources may be fully allocated to other uses in the future; the nature of uses served by reclaimed water; the extent to which the applicant relies on reclaimed water; and the extent of economic harm which may result if other sources are not available to replace reclaimed water use.

4. It is the intent of this chapter to ensure that users of reclaimed water have the same access to ground or surface water and will otherwise be treated in the same manner as other users of the same class not relying on reclaimed water.

It is clear that the state wishes to promote reuse of reclaimed water. In so doing they have kept an eye on the future to that time when reclaimed water may need to serve other purposes than those at present. They have therefore authorized by law the WMDs to set aside allocations of groundwater for permit holders who convert or have converted to using reclaimed water.

Allocations for the full allotment, not just temporary emergencies. You would do well to protect your facility and investigate this subject through consumptive use permitting. The methods used, the mechanics to implement and gain access to abandoned resources must be explored at this time to ensure your rights.

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## Starting in Our Own Backyards

### BY SHELLY FOY

USGA Green Section, Florida Region

few years ago when John and I first started becoming involved in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses, we felt it was important to "practice what we preached." So we started in our own back yard.

The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System has programs for golf courses, schools, corporate and business properties, as well as a program for back yards. We felt that if we were going to be encouraging people to go through the certification process, we needed to better understand what was involved.

We joined the backyard program in 1994 as a family project. In 1995, we became the first fully certified Audubon Backyard Sanctuary in the program. Going through the certification process in our own backyard gave us a better understanding of Audubon and the certification process.

In the backyard program, there are four categories: Wildlife and Habitat Management, Water Enhancement and Conservation, Energy Conservation, and Waste Management.

The certification process is similar to the golf program. You fill out a Resource Inventory for your property, and then you work toward certification in the categories.

John, Hunter, Elizabeth and I found the entire process to be educational and fun. I know that John and I learned a lot, and the effect on our children does not go unnoticed.

Our 11-year-old son, Hunter, will not



The neighborhood gopher tortoise visits our backyard. Photo by Shelly Foy.

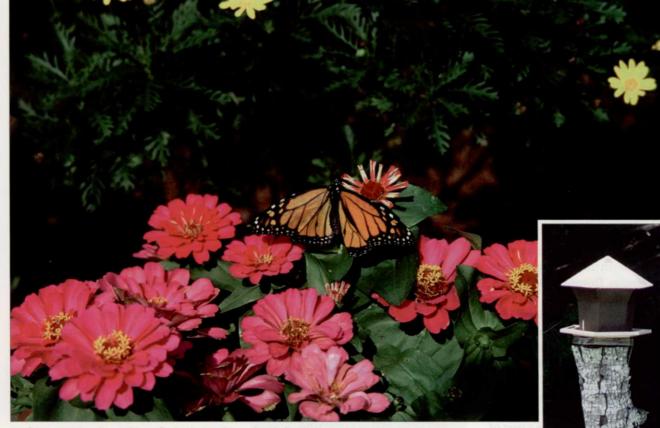


You can't live with them and you can't live without them–when you have bird feeders in your backyard. Photo by Shelly Foy.

In the backyard program, there are four categories: Wildlife and Habitat Management, Water Enhancement and Conservation, Energy Conservation, and Waste Management.



One of four nest boxes we have in our 1/4 acre backyard. Photo by Shelly Foy.



My biggest stress reliever-butterfly gardening. Photo by Shelly Foy.

tell you to look at the bird in the tree. He tells you to look at the red-bellied woodpecker in the slash pine tree. Elizabeth, who just turned 10, becomes upset because she thinks her brother knows more about birds than she does.

However, this is the same child that could name more Florida birds than the majority of us. They know about recycling and composting and the importance of saving water. They could probably write their own book about butterfly gardening and using native plants.

Yes, we hear them complain occasionally about working in the yard and yes, Hunter tells me to forget about him joining the "Weed Whacker" club at middle school next year.

However, we also see them turning the water off instead of letting it run when they brush their teeth. We note that they are the first ones to tell us that the painted buntings are at one of the bird feeders. We feel good when Elizabeth notices that the bird feeders are empty and refills them on her own.

John and I like that our family cares about nature and the environment and that we do our part to protect it. We do it, not because someone tells us to or reminds us to, but because we want to.

As golf course superintendents, becoming involved with the backyard program is a way to involve your families in something that you do every day — work with nature. You could also use the backyard program as an educational tool with your golfers or course officials.

Call Audubon at (518) 767-9051 and ask them to send you some backyard brochures. Share these with people at your golf course. Make it a friendly competition among friends to see who becomes certified first. The cost is \$35, \$25 for seniors.

Our family encourages yours to become involved in the backyard program. Make it a family project and spend some time bonding with each other and with nature.

> This oak tree snag in the Jackson backyard in Orlando became a home for a pair of red bellied woodpeckers this spring. Photo by Joel Jackson.



### STEWARDSHIP

## Audubon Case Study

#### **Bonita Bay**

### Fully Certified 11/17/95

Bonita Bay consists of 538 acres of lakes and 550 acres designated for golf course that provide a diverse habitat for a variety of wildlife and birds.

Currently 108 nesting boxes have been strategically placed throughout the three courses resulting in the fledging of a variety of bird species. Downy woodpeckers, piliated woodpeckers, screech owls and flycatchers are but a few. The Bonita Bay wildlife inventory includes bald eagles, osprey, roseate spoonbills, tricolored herons, otters, bobcats, rabbits, bats, deer, squirrels and gopher tortoises.

Writes J. Mark Black, CGCS, assistant vice president of club operations:

"We are very fortunate to be a part of a large development whose objective from the beginning was a total commitment to environmental sensitivity. The Audubon Certification was a natural progression for us, and we are proud to support and be a part of it's promotion in our industry."

#### **Resource Conservation**

Habitat enhancement projects have reduced irrigation, fertilizer, and pesticide use. Biological controls, such as parasitic nematodes, incorporated to control mole crickets around lake banks have reduced the risk of runoff to water sources. In addition, pine straw is used to promote favorable plant growth around surrounding landscape trees and plants.

Further, Bonita Bay's water conservation and water quality management programs include regular water monitoring to check the spread of noxious exotic vegetation and xeriscaping to preserve native plants and conserve water. They participate in the Key Pine Tree Save Program to preserve fish, waterfowl, and human life.

"The community was the first xeriscape demonstration site, and continues to incorporate water conservation techniques and encourage residents to

### Bonita Bay Bonita Springs

Bonita Bay is a 2400-acre residential community consisting of three Arthur Hills-designed championship golf courses. The land was purchased in 1979 by David B. Shakarin to create a place where people, plants and animals would co-exist in a beautiful natural environment.

Bonita Bay is situated in Southwest Florida, bordered by the Estero Bay Aquatic Preserve, the Imperial River, and Spring Creek. Slough and mangrove preserves that are federally protected, salt flats and wetlands comprise the majority of Bonita Bay. The remainder of the community is comprised of three championship golf courses and resident neighborhoods. Bonita Bay management is committed and dedicated to preserving wildlife, enhancing habitat, and preserving the environment.

follow their lead," says Kurt Harclerode, senior public communications officer of the South Florida Water Management District.

Scouting, sampling, monitoring and recording pest activity are key components of Bonita Bay's integrated pest management program. Now in its third year of practice, these IPM measures have resulted in accurate mapping of insect, weed, and nematode areas to allow for spot treatments that significantly reduce pesticide use.

#### **Outreach & Education**

The Bonita Bay Community Association schedules educational meetings to teach and inform residents and local special interest groups about the unique vegetation, xeriscaping, birds and plants common to Southwest Florida and protected by Bonita Bay. Their community newsletters report and incorporate photographs of wildlife and nature preservation at Bonita Bay.

> Compiled by Dianne Rabkin Bonita Bay

## Threatened squirrels can call golf course home

### BY CINDY SPENCE IFAS Educational Media and Services

Editor's note: Over a year ago we ran a story about a fox squirrel study being considered on golf courses in the Naples area. Since the theme for this Stewardship section is backyard habitat and a lot of backyards adjoin golf courses, we thought you might enjoy the most recent update on the project.

A threatened species of wildlife has turned to a decidedly civilized habitat in its quest for survival, says a University of Florida researcher. Now wildlife ecologist Rebecca Ditgen is trying to determine how to make southwest Florida golf courses even more hospitable for Big Cypress fox squirrels.

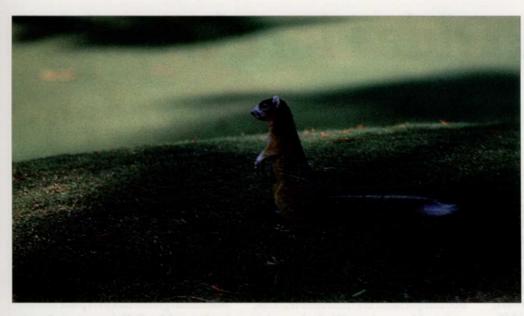
"Our goal is to learn which courses have fox squirrel populations and what habitat features on those courses encourage the squirrels to live there," said Ditgen. With their own forested habitat vanishing as southwest Florida urbanizes, the fox squirrels, like many people, have turned to homes with a golf course view.

Very little is known about the Big Cypress fox squirrel, said Stephen Humphrey, acting dean of the College of Natural Resources and Environment.

"In the wild, they are very shy, difficult to see, difficult to find and almost impossible to study. In fact we've tried to study them in the wild and failed," Humphrey said. "But we found they're abundant on golf courses on the urban fringe of the coast of southwest Florida."

Ditgen said fox squirrels appear from field observations to be declining in the wild but it is unclear why. In the city, however, the reason is plain to see.

"Development is happening so rapidly here and the prime land for develop-



Fox squirrels are native to pine forests with open understories and spend a lot of time on the ground so golf courses with open pine and cypress stands are good habitat for them. Photo by Rebecca Ditgen.

ment, the upland pines, is also their prime habitat," Ditgen said. "They disappear shortly after intense development because they just don't do well with cars and cats and dogs."

Why the squirrels turned to golf courses for safe haven is a question Ditgen hopes to answer.

While her research requires her to spend enough time on the course to make avid golfers jealous, she says she is most likely to be found in the rough, scouring the trees and underbrush for squirrels fitted with radio collars. As she visits 60 courses in Lee and Collier counties, she records data on the squirrel numbers and landscape design. By tracking 30 squirrels with radio collars on two courses she can see how they are using their adopted habitat.

"Fox squirrels are native to pine forests with open understories and spend a lot of time on the ground so golf courses with open pine and cypress stands are good habitat for them. They seem to do well there and can move around easily," Ditgen said. "They do particularly well on courses with large stands of native palms and pines."

The Big Cypress fox squirrels have been on the threatened species list for 20 years. They differ from a common gray squirrel because they are larger and their fur can be black, blond or red.

"They're a very graceful squirrel. They leap and move around a lot and people In a four-year research project funded by the Non-game Bureau of the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, Ditgen will come up with management recommendations golf course superintendents can use to improve habitat for fox squirrels.

find them beautiful to watch," Ditgen said. "Certainly the native Floridians I talk to and the people who've been here a long time take real pride in having fox squirrels around. They like them a lot."

In a four-year research project funded by the Non-game Bureau of the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, Ditgen will come up with management recommendations golf course superintendents can use to improve habitat for fox squirrels.

Ditgen has already learned that the squirrels have large home ranges, often more than 100 acres, and that young adults often travel more than a mile in search of an adult home range. She is also studying their feeding and nesting habits.

Part of her research also includes a comparison of highly developed courses to those in more natural environments with no adjacent homes. In one area of Naples, she has found 50 to 70 squirrels sharing three 18-hole courses lush with cypress, pines, figs and maples – all prime habitat. With national golfing organizations and some wildlife groups encouraging golf courses to design in a fashion that is friendly to regional wildlife, many course superintendents are eager to hear Ditgen's recommendations.

Already, she said, she would recommend that courses plant more native vegetation to provide more year-round food sources for the squirrels. The exotic plants many courses use sometimes are more showy but frequently do not provide the best food for the animals.

Many golfers, curious to find out about the remarkably bad golfer whose cart seems to stay in the rough, are pleased when they find out Ditgen is a researcher and interested in learning more about sharing their green space with the squirrels.

"The idea of looking at how wildlife can use golf courses has arrived," Ditgen said.

# EGCSA, Olde Florida Golf Club to establish test green

### BY DARREN DAVIS, CGCS Olde Florida Golf Club

The Everglades golf course superintendents Association, in cooperation with Olde Florida Golf Club, is in the process of establishing a test green for four new varieties of "ultradwarfs." The four varieties to be planted on the 2500-squarefoot chipping green are FloraDwarf, Champion, TifEagle (TW-72), and MS-Supreme. Each of the four varieties will be planted in duplicate to insure the results can be validated.

Darren Davis, golf course superintendent at Olde Florida Golf Club, explained the driving force for the idea to do the project comes from golfers. He said, "As golfers have demanded faster, more uniform greens, the existing varieties of bermudagrass cultivars for greens — Tifdwarf and Tifgreen — are becoming unacceptable. These two varieties were developed in the 1950s and 60s when golfers accepted mowing heights that were somewhat higher than what we are seeing in the 90s."

In the last few years, researchers have been studying several new varieties of dwarf bermudagrass hybrids that spread vigorously with little vertical leaf growth.

Two of these, FloraDwarf and Champion, are both fine-textured mutations found on existing Tifdwarf greens. FloraDwarf was selected from a green in Hawaii, and Champion was discovered in Texas.

MS-Supreme was found as a finetextured mutation on a Tifgreen (328) green in Mississippi. Therefore, all three of these varieties originated from Tifgreen, since originally Tifdwarf was a mutation found on an existing Tifgreen (328) green.

TifEagle is unique in that it is a mutation that was induced by gamma radiation from Tifway II, a cultivar commonly used on fairways.

"These are certainly exciting times, with these new grass varieties becoming available. However, they are still unproven and we must exercise caution to determine which one, or ones, are best suited for which location. It is side-byside comparisons in a controlled test area, such as this test, that will help determine that," said USGA Regional Director John Foy.

Dr. Wayne Hanna, developer of TifEagle, explained, "TifEagle will require more thatch control (verticutting, topdressing and/or grooming) than Tifdwarf to produce quality turf. However, with proper management, it will produce better quality and more dense turf at 1/8 inch than Tifdwarf."

The project is being supervised by a committee consisting of Chairman Rick Tatum, golf course superintendent, The Forest Country Club; Vice Chairman Darren Davis, golf course superintendent, Olde Florida Golf Club; John Foy, director, USGA Florida Region; Dr. Wayne Hanna, research geneticist, USDA; Dr. John Cisar, University of Florida; Dr. Jeff Krans, Mississippi State University; Roy Bates, president Florida Turfgrass Association, golf course superintendent, Imperial Country Club; Mark Black golf course manager, Bonita Bay Club; Dale Walters, CGCS, Royal Palm Country Club; and Terry Wood, president EGCSA, golf course superintendent, Royal Wood Golf & Country Club.

Committee Chairman Rick Tatum, superintendent at the Forest Country Club in Fort Myers, said, "The test plots are going to be extremely valuable for our area. These new varieties are originating from areas all over the country, and by having them side by side in our climate we will be able to determine which ones are best for our conditions."

The existing green is currently being renovated. Basamid soil fumigant, donated by BASF, will be used to kill the existing bermudagrass.

Following this process, the top six inches of greens mix will be removed. Additional greens mix to replace this will be donated by Golf Agronomic Supply and Handling, a longtime supporter of the Florida golf course superintendents Association and their affiliated chapters.

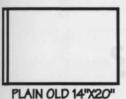
The new varieties will be planted later this summer. All four varieties will be planted in equal amounts on the same date and treated identically. The plots are vertical strips which will allow the individual varieties to be aerified and vertically mowed separately, reducing the risk of cross-contamination. The project will officially run three years from the date of grassing.

The green is used by the membership of Olde Florida and will be mowed daily at a height of cut around 1/8 inch, the preferred height for the new "ultradwarfs."

The nature of these new grass varieties will require the green to be lightly vertically mowed and lightly top-dressed frequently throughout the year to control thatch. The greens mower that will be used will be a Toro GR1000 that has been provided to the project through the generosity of the Toro Company and their distributor, Wesco Turf.

"The Toro company has been a longtime supporter of research and the advancement of turfgrass management. The greens mower is being made available through an educational program funded by Toro with support from Wesco Turf," according to Greg Wright, vice president of commercial sales, Wesco Turf.

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### AFTERWORDS

# Association Service... giving back or getting more?

### BY JOEL D. JACKSON, CGCS

When a superintendent either volunteers or is asked to serve on the board or on committees of his local or national associations, he/she has several things to consider. Am I willing to invest some of my time to help out? Can I take time away from my job if necessary? Will my employer support my decision?

The first thing a superintendent should do is talk to his/her superiors and tell them of his/her interest and desire to serve or help out. They should candidly assess and discuss how much time this service may require away from routine responsibilities. They should also discuss the potential benefits to the superintendent and the club.

When a superintendent steps up and decides to make a commitment to serve his profession beyond his daily routine, he/she is displaying qualities of leadership that should be encouraged and nurtured by his club. Involvement doesn't mean just missing work. It means that superintendent is being exposed to opportunities to grow and development in both personal and professional areas.

I know my volunteer service in local, state and national associations has helped me overcome the common fear of public speaking, which helps me when I have to make presentations at my club. By being a visible leader in my associations, I am on the leading edge for information sharing and gathering, which helps me learn new and potentially better methods for solving or avoiding problems at my club in all phases of our operation.

Those of us who have volunteered know internally how much we have personally benefited and grown from this

Volunteer Leaders' Qualities	Benefits to Employer
Visualize the future	Strong strategic and long-term planning abilities.
Inspire others	Motivate staff to do its very best work. Inspire teamwork. Earn respect.
Critical thinkers	Identify priorities, solve problems, and translate ideas into action. Define and explore alternative solutions.
Process oriented	Excel at planning, organizing, directing, controlling and monitoring —elements critical to golf course management.
Progressive •	Create opportunities. Keep up to date with technology and management practices to produce the highest quality playing conditions. Open to new ideas.
Effective personal skills	Capable of working with different constituencies such as green chair, green committee, board of directors, golfers, etc.
Competent •	Manage facility's resources skillfully and within budget.
Passionate •	Committed to achieve facility goals.
Strong character	Honest and ethical
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Source: Leadership Handbook, 1997, 1995 Compensation and Benefits Report, GCSAA; For the Common Good, http://ceres.esusda.gov/mission/plans/voldev/vol-5.htm.

service. In the May/June issue of GCSAA's Leader Board newsletter, there was a great little article that described the leadership qualities that a superintendent can develop in his volunteer service and how they can benefit his/her employer.

Pretty heady stuff, huh? It doesn't mean that everyone who volunteers and serves is going to turn into a clone of Old Tom Morris. We all have different strengths and weaknesses. It does mean that a club that supports its superintendent who gets involved is likely to have a more effective manager because of it.

The job always comes first. It always should. But superintendents and their clubs should realize that taking advantage of volunteer service can be a winwin situation for everyone.

### **RELEKMORDS**

### GCSAA Online News U.S. golf course development continues at nearrecord pace

New golf course construction continued at a near-record rate in 1996, according to the National Golf Foundation's (NGF) latest report on golf course development in the United States.

Titled "Golf Facilities in the U.S./1997 Edition," it reports that 442 courses came on line in 1996. Although slightly less than the recordhigh 468 two years ago, it was only the second year in which new U.S. course openings have eclipsed 400.

#### One more nine

Not all construction has been completely new facilities. A high percentage (40 percent) of the courses built in 1996 were additions to existing facilities. NGF's tracking data show that roughly one-third of the courses built over the past five years have been additions to existing facilities. Approximately 85 percent of these expansions have been nine-hole additions.

#### **Other Findings**

Among the other findings emerging from this year's report:

• Affordability — NGF conducted an informal survey of owners/operators of all 135 new 18-hole public facilities that came on line last year to determine what percentage were high-end facilities.

This survey indicated that developers may be following a trend away from high-end projects. Only 25 percent of the 105 respondents to this year's survey said their weekend green fees were above the average for similar courses in their markets. The remaining 75 percent said they have fees that are at or below the average for their areas.

• Public vs. private — As it has for the past 20 years, public golf course development continued to dominate last year, with 382 (88 percent) of all courses coming on line as dailyfee or municipal courses.

• The average weekend green fee — including golf car fee — was \$56.

Geographically, the averages were higher

among West region courses. Here they ranged from \$70 to \$80, compared with the Midwest and South, where they ranged from \$30 to \$45.

• The real estate factor — Although not as much of a factor as it was in the 1980s, golf community development continues to drive a good share of today's golf course development activity. Last year, 144 (33 percent) of the new courses were part of a real estate development.

• Beginners' slopes — Industry observers have long believed that success in growing golf participation will depend to some degree on the increase in entry-level facilities. Last year, 21 executive courses and 20 par-3 layouts were among the 442 courses built.

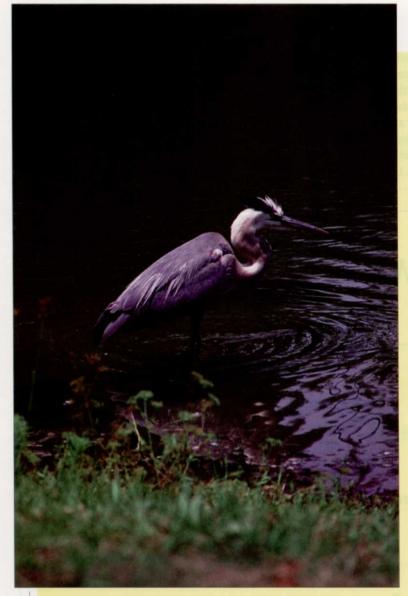
### Environmental Waterway Management Continues to Grow!

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1997 Photo contest - Wildlife on the Course. Great Blue Heron, Disney's Osprey Ridge GC. Photo by Joel Jackson

### **3rd Annual Florida Green Photo Contest under way**

- Category 1 Wildlife on the Course: includes mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians.
- **Category 2** Course Landscape: Formal Plantings: includes annuals, shrubs, trees, entrance and tee signs.
- **Category 3** Course Landscape: Native Plantings: includes aquatic vegetation, grasses, shrubs, trees and wildflowers.
- **Category 4** Scenic Hole Layout Shots: includes sunrises, sunsets, frosts, storms and any other golf hole view.

### Prizes

1st Place (\$100) and 2nd Place (\$50) in each category
Editor's Choice-Best Overall Photo - \$100.
All winning entries published in the Fall 1997 issue.

### **Easy Rules**

- 1. Color prints or slides. Only one entry per category.
- Photo must be taken on an FGCSA member's course. Photo must be taken by an FGCSA member or a member of his staff.
- **3.** Attach a label to the back of the print or slide which identifies the category, course and photographer. DO NOT WRITE DIRECTLY ON THE BACK OF THE PRINT. Each photo shall be attached to a sheet of 8.5 x 11 lined paper. Line up the photo with the vertical and horizontal lines to square the photo on the page. Attach the print to the paper using a loop of masking tape on the back of the photo. Slides must be easily removable for viewing.
- 4 A caption identifying the category, course and photographer should be typed or printed on the sheet of paper below the print or slide.
- 5. Judging will be done by a panel of FGCSA members not participating in the contest.
- 6. Mail entries in a bend proof package to: Joel D. Jackson, 6780 Tamarind Circle, Orlando 32819. No entries accepted postmarked after August 15, 1997.