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announced a strategy to strengthen it by becoming more inclusive. Rafael Barajas, CGCS and a member of GCSAA's Diversity Task Group, said organizations that do not embrace a diversity of people and ideas will not grow and will lose stature. GCSAA's efforts to become more inclusive will be long term, Barajas said, and the first step is to increase awareness of the importance of the issue and to evaluate the organization's current situation. He said that such a strategy also will support growth of the game by offering access to those who may have been ignored in the past.

FUTURE OF THE PROFESSION

Discussion of trends affecting the game, facilities and the profession over the next 15 years took place in small groups. Feedback from the delegates and six GCSAA committees and task groups will help the board challenge its vision for the future.

UPDATES

Additional topics included the chapter-affiliation agreement, the association's environmental programming efforts and a data-collection effort for member courses to commence in 2006.

We can only prevail on the environmental issues if we have accurate data to compare and refine the computer models used by EPA and others to regulate our industry. Be prepared to participate in this survey if called upon. It is important.

ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE SURVEY

Why initiate a survey?

The golf industry needs specific baseline information about the environmental state of golf courses. We need to understand current environmental management practices on golf courses to help document progress made by the industry and to help determine the direction of our

efforts in the future. The data will also help us respond to questions about environmental issues. Existing "environmental" data is very limited, incomplete, and not uniform or centralized. Often information in the news media is inaccurate or misleading.

What kind of information will we be requesting?

The task groups identified categories such as water use, water quality, habitat and wildlife, energy consumption and inputs of nutrients and pesticides be included in the survey.

Essential data are profiles of the physical features of each golf course surveyed, including information about the acreage and grass species on greens, tees, fairways, rough and natural areas. Additional key information includes area devoted to the clubhouse, parking lots, maintenance facility and recreational amenities besides the golf course.

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The content was based on input from the Environmental Programs Committee and associated task groups with input from staff.

How will the survey be performed?

The GCSAA will use a professional research firm to refine the questions and format, conduct the survey, and summarize the results.

We are considering an online survey, paper survey and other methods to ensure a high return rate.

The survey will be conducted in five short annual installments. Over a five-year period we will collect the entire data set needed.

Once the five-year survey cycle and analysis has been completed, GCSAA will begin the process for a second five-year survey cycle to document environmental change and determine progress on golf courses.

The data collected will be presented only as aggregate data, summarized by state, region or other geo-

graphic area. Responses from individual golf courses will not be published or released.

How will this information be used?

It will be used to document environmental progress and determine the future direction of GCSAA environmental efforts.

Key issues will be identified

for potential research projects.

The data will provide a basis for comments on proposed regulatory issues that may impact the golf industry.

GCSAA will have the ability to respond to the government's inquiries, answer the public's questions about environmental issues, and promote the great efforts our superintendents are making on their golf courses.



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Silver Signature Sanctuaries

Mediterra Courses Earn Recertification from Audubon International

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Here is yet another example of how responsible development can allow man to co-exist with nature. Congratulations to Bonita Bay Properties.*

By Cheryl Garn

The golf courses at Mediterra, championship courses designed by Tom Fazio, have received recertification as Audubon International Silver Signature Sanctuaries. The Club at Mediterra is the world's only 36-hole facility to carry Audubon International Silver Signature Sanctuary program status.

"Audubon International is proud to recognize Mediterra as a leader in environmental stewardship and resource conservation," said Bud Smart, director of environmental. "The recertification of The North and South courses as Audubon International Silver Signature Sanctuaries is another example of The Bonita Bay Group's philosophy of environmentally sensitive development."

The Bonita Bay Group, the developer of the 1,697-acre master-planned community, is an international leader in the Audubon International program, with more golf holes certified through the Audubon Signature Program than any company in the world.

Recertification signifies that a site and its management are committed to environmental quality and sustainability, the main components of the Audubon program. To achieve recertification, work begun the previous year continued in six key areas: site assessment, wildlife habitat enhancement and management; waste management; energy efficiency; water quality and conservation; and inte-



Win – win – win! Homes, golf course and wildlife co-existing lakeside at Mediterra. Photo courtesy of Bonita Bay Properties.

grated pest management. Silver designation includes two additional steps: the preparation of a natural resource management plan by environmental planning experts from the Audubon International Institute and the submission of periodic status reports plus participation in on-site audits by Audubon International.

Smart conducted an audit of the courses in June. The audit report confirmed the benefits of the golf course as wildlife habitat with the number and diversity of several species increasing substantially. One example of the wildlife diversity, noted in the audit, was the presence of small, medium and large gopher tortoises thriving within the gopher-tortoise preserve.

Another benefit of the site enhancements completed on The North and South courses was the increase in the community's native and migratory bird populations. The enhancements, which included reforestation, preservation of Mediterra's 400 acres of wetlands and the installation of 73 bird boxes, have proven to be successful in attracting native species. During a Christmastime bird

survey, more than 612 birds were counted in 40 different species.

"We are extremely proud to receive the Silver Signature Sanctuary designation a fifth year in a row," said Joey Garon, vice president of operations for The Bonita Bay Group. "This is a true barometer of our commitment to the environment and doing the right thing at Mediterra, and we look forward to a strong, continuing relationship with Audubon International to ensure continued preservation, enhancement and management of both The South and North courses."

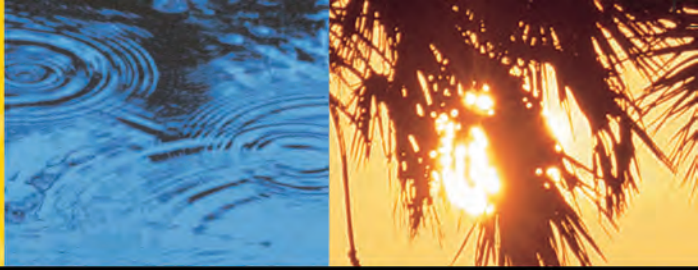
The Bonita Bay Group is developing Mediterra with the same commitment to meticulous planning, environmental stewardship, integrity and attention to detail that is evident at its flagship community, Bonita Bay. Bonita Bay received the development industry's highest international honor when it was named the Outstanding Large-Scale Community of the Year by the Urban Land Institute.

Mediterra recently has been named Community of the Year by the Collier Building Industry Association for the fourth consecutive year and

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Lake shorelines buffered with native plants protect the water quality of the golf course lakes. Photo courtesy of Bonita Bay Properties.

received the Award of Excellence for Open Spaces from the Florida Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects. The community is being created with the intimacy, charm and classical style of the Mediterranean region of Europe. The overall master plan for the 1,697-acre community may include up to 950 residences and more than 1,000 acres of open space. Residents are eligible for membership in The Club at Mediterra, which offers a 25,000-square-foot clubhouse, named best clubhouse in 2004 by the CBIA, and a tennis, swim and fitness center in addition to the two Fazio golf courses,

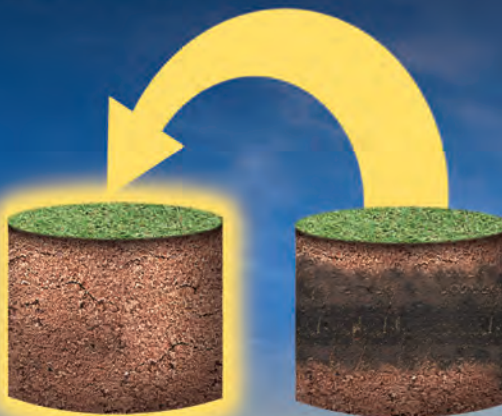
The private Mediterra Beach Club on the Gulf of Mexico features an elevated swimming pool, expansive sundeck, and indoor and al fresco dining overlooking 200 feet of shoreline. All residents enjoy miles of bicycle paths and nature trails leading to a series of themed neighborhood parks.

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Parque Celestial, featuring an array of astrological references, was awarded the American Society of Landscape Architects' Florida Chapter Award of Excellence. The community's second park, Calusa Play Park, offers children and adults an opportunity to learn more about the Calusa Indians, the earliest inhabitants of Southwest Florida.

The Club at Mediterra has been honored with the 2002 Environmental Leaders in Golf Award from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America and Golf Digest magazine in the private course category.

Scott Whorral, CGCS director of golf operations at the Club at Mediterra takes the lead in all aspects of the Audubon certification program. He is also the past recipient of the 2002 Environmental Leaders in Golf Award in the private sector from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America and Golf Digest magazine.

Orchid Island G&BC Florida's 71st to be Certified by ACSS

Orchid Island Golf & Beach Club has achieved designation as a "Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary" by the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System, the educational division of Audubon International. Matt Turner, superintendent, and Peggy Ogden, Audubon coordinator, have led the effort to obtain sanctuary status on this course and are being recognized for Environmental Stewardship by Audubon International. Orchid Island Golf & Beach Club is the 71st course in Florida and the 570th in the world to receive the honor.

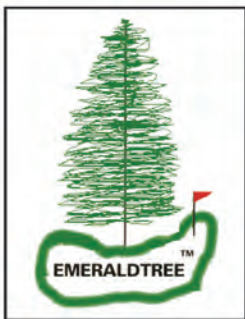
"The Orchid Island Golf & Beach Club has shown a strong commitment to its environmental program. They are to be commended for their

efforts to provide a sanctuary for wildlife on the golf course property," said Shawn Williams, staff ecologist for the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Programs,

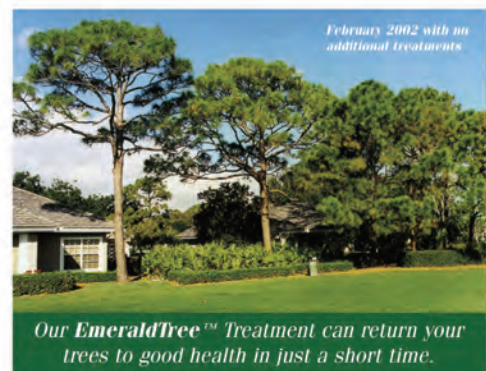
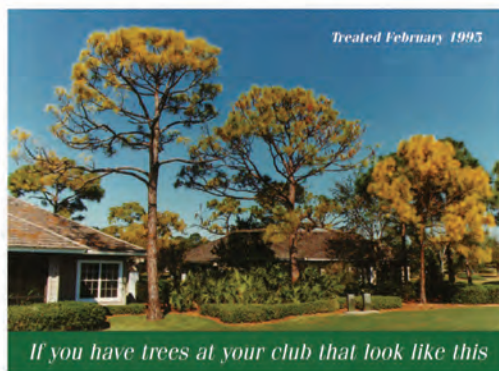
"To reach certification, a course must demonstrate that they are maintaining a high degree of environmental quality in a number of areas," explained Williams. These categories include environmental planning, wildlife & habitat management, outreach and education, chemical-use reduction and safety, water conservation, and water quality management.

"The members of Orchid Island are very proud to receive this certification," states Rob Tench, general manager. "Our members are all very concerned about our environment and enjoy the beautiful wildlife throughout our wonderful community. We are especially proud of our diverse bird population. For many years we have been fortunate to have scores of white

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An iguana is a rare addition to the wildlife inventory. This one visits the Hobe Sound Club regularly. Photo by Roy MacDonald.

pelicans return seasonally. They compliment the many other species that make Orchid Island their home. These include snowy egrets, spoonbills, wood storks, cormorants, ibis, several different species of ducks, and many other of our feathered friends. We even occasionally have a bald eagle visit us! “

“It is with great pride that we enter into a long-term commitment with Audubon International and the continued care of our environment.”

The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses, endorsed by the United States Golf Association, provides information and guidance to help golf courses preserve and enhance wildlife habitat, and protect natural resources. Golf courses from the United States, Australia, Canada, and Central America. Europe

and Southeast Asia have also achieved certification in the program.

Audubon certified courses in the Treasure Coast GCSA in Florida also include Loblolly Pines in Hobe Sound, Hawk’s Nest Golf Club in Vero Beach, Grand Harbor in Vero Beach, The Floridian in Stuart, IGM - Aquarina Golf Club in Melbourne, IGM – The Habitat in Malabar, IGM – Spessard Holland G.C. in Melbourne Beach, IGM – Savannahs at Sykes Creek in Merritt Island, IGM – Sandridge GC in Vero Beach, Harbour Ridge Y & CC in Palm City and John’s Island Club, West Course in Vero Beach.

In addition to golf courses, the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System also provides programs for schools, individual homeowners, and businesses. ■

ACSS Update

Congratulations to the following new Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System member courses and current members that have become fully certified, renewed their certification or are working on certification this year.

New Member Courses and Chapter

Lake Jovita G&CC North and South Courses, Ridge
River Wilderness G& CC, Suncoast
Six Lakes CC, Calusa

Fully Certified in 2005

Audubon CC, Everglades
Crown Colony G &CC, Calusa
John’s Island West Course, Treasure Coast
Orchid Island G & BC, Treasure Coast
Stonebridge CC, Naples

Recertified in 2005

Gainesville CC, Seven Rivers
Hammock Dunes Club Links Course, North Florida
Palencia GC, Everglades

Working on certification (Progress through 2005)

Crandon Golf and Key Biscayne, South Florida - EP
Lakewood Ranch, Suncoast - EP, IPM, RC and WHM
Ritz-Carlton Jupiter, Palm Beach – EP, IPM, RC and WQM
Southwood. Coastal Plains – EP

Six areas of certification

Key: **EP** – Environmental Plan; **IPM** – Integrated Pest Management; **OE** – Outreach and Education; **RC**- Resource Conservation; **WHM** – Wildlife Habitat Management and **WQM** – Water Quality Management.

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New Year's Pause

As I began putting together the files and photos that will make up the 2006 Winter Issue, I took a moment to consider where we've been, where we are and where we are going as the magazine enters its 32nd year.

Looking ahead is not all that easy. I'm sure we will be investigating an online version of the magazine before very long, but that is beyond my ken for now. I marvel at where we are with the magazine and how technology has changed how we put it together.

My job is to collect the editorial material and photographs that will appear in each issue. I write, proofread and edit the material initially for readability and accuracy and I format the photos to send to our publication manager. And that is where we begin our acknowledgments.

Larry Kieffer, president of Janlark Communications has been involved with the Florida Green since the Dan Jones era and has been guiding this superintendent turned journalist-writer for lo these 15 years. He takes the raw materials I assemble and turns them into the respectable publication that is the Florida Green. Larry, thank you for your expertise, guidance and friendship over the years.

And a big thanks to Rinaldi Printing in Tampa for working with us so well for over a decade. The conversion to the digital process has been a big time-saver for everyone.

None of the articles, tips or information would see the light of day if our advertisers didn't buy space in the magazine. Some have been with magazine forever, and thankfully new clients come on board every year. Marie Roberts rounds up materials and deals with the ad agencies. At the GCSAA and FTGA shows she visits booths and presents media kits with a low-key sales pitch. Of course Marie is the chief cook and bottle washer of our bimonthly Green Sheet newsletter. I send her some editorial copy and a few photos, but she puts it all together with her buddy over at Peacock Imaging in Stuart.

Our most senior "employee" is photographer Daniel Zelazek, who travels from his home and job in Connecticut to shoot the courses for our cover stories. An

industrial photographer for the Pratt-Whitney Company, Daniel's artistic eye has seen your handiwork through his custom-made camera that looks like a throwback to the civil war era. Thanks "Z" for capturing the beauty, contrast and unique settings of our Florida golf courses.

Should old acquaintance be forgot and never brought to mind...

Over the years several dedicated individuals have lent their talents to the magazine. Our venerable editor emeritus Dan Jones and his wife Irene shepherded the magazine for over 13 years back in the days of cut-and-paste layout. And today I send stories and photos with a click of a button; simply amazing.

Others who were instrumental in the growth and development of the content and quality of the magazine were regular writers and photographers like the Bailey brothers, David and Mike. Dean of all columnists is my friend, Mark Jarrell. Mark's soul-searching commentary made us all take a good look at our industry. Long ago in a galaxy far, far away he used to write a column about superintendents for Golfweek. He set the stage for us with his integrity and intensity.

We'll take a cup of kindness yet...

And as we start this New Year I salute my cohorts who like their predecessors devote their time and energy to fill our pagesy. Darren Davis with his wonderful Super Tips is the consummate "Hands On" contributor. Our resident curmudgeon, Jim Walker, takes often nostalgic and witty looks at various slices of superintendent life and the human condition. And last but not least, Shelly Foy has been the voice of hope and reason to give us access to success stories on the environmental front. Environmental and natural resources issues remain the most contentious and misunderstood facets of our business. Thanks to Shelly and our friends at Audubon International.

And days of auld lang syne...

And to those of you who have written articles and submitted photos, we thank you for your contributions as well. Keep them coming.

Belated Happy New Year everyone and whatever you do in 2006 - Keep the Green Side Up!