

# Architects promise to adhere to Audubon's program

Members of the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) have pledged to design projects in accordance with the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for golf courses, according to Art Hills, president of the society.

"Golf courses are already a good thing for wildlife and for the environment," Hills said. "But the Cooperative Sanctuary Program helps courses further promote sound land management and the conservation of our natural resources by encouraging the development of wildlife habitats."

The ASGCA agreed at its annual meeting to try to follow Audubon guidelines when designing new courses or remodeling existing ones, according to Hills, who believes that architects and the Audubon Society have much in common.

The Audubon program works to enhance wildlife habitats on golf courses by working with members of the golf industry. It further provides advice for ecologically sound course management and encourages active participation in the program by golfers, superintendents, architects and the general public.

In addition, the Audubon program helps educate the public and golfing community about the many benefits of golf courses and the role they play in relation to the environment and wildlife.

"ASGCA architects share these same goals, as is evidenced by the fact that many of our members have already designed courses that are wildlife sanctuaries," Hills said. "This agreement helps illustrate that groups can work together to achieve results that benefit the entire golf community."

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The technological boom in golf equipment may soon make many of today's golf courses obsolete, according to Paul Fullmer, executive secretary of the ASGCA.

Fullmer added that the society was surveying its members to obtain their suggestions as to how to best cope with the impact of technology on the game of golf.

"The next generation of John Daly-wanna-be's could render many courses too short to challenge skilled players," Fullmer said. "The increased carry from high-tech balls and clubs makes it impossible for great old courses to host tournaments. In fact, every recent U.S. Open course has undergone extensive lengthening prior to hosting the event."

Equipment improvements can help many players hit farther and post lower scores. The downside is that these advancements are increasing the land needed for golf courses and making them more difficult for the average player, according to Fullmer.

"Land for developing new golf courses and expanding existing

ones is already at a premium," Fullmer said. "In many cases, if a golf course has to be lengthened from 6,200 to 7,200 yards, the space is simply not going to be available."

Fullmer warned that if the length of golf courses continues to increase... developers, architects and superintendents will have a difficult time squeezing 18-hole courses into available sites.

"In 1900, the average tournament course length was 5,000 yard. Today it's more than 7,000

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yards," he said.

Many existing courses have to move tees back to continue to provide a challenge to highly skilled golfers who have combined their talents with advanced equipment, according to Fullmer.

Bunkering also is a concern for architects and superintendents.

"The bunkering at landing areas

often has to be revised so that it comes into play as the architect originally intended," Fullmer stated.

He also suggested that industry professionals consider using a limited-distance ball

A uniform ball with distance restrictions would help keep traditional courses playable, he said.

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**Golf course real-estate developments can continue to be viable in the 1990s, especially if they target a different segment of**

the home-buying market, according to ASGCA President Art Hills.

"Developers must attract more mainstream buyers rather than simply the elite market," Hills said. "Product and price ranges need to appeal to more than the million-dollar marketplace that's nearly saturated in many areas of the country."

"During these difficult economic times, people want stability and greater value in their home investment," he said.



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