

Audubon Int'l publishes case studies

By JEAN MACKAY

To provide positive, tangible examples of what can be achieved through participation in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses, Audubon International (AI) has published case studies from nine properties the program has certified. The case studies of public, private and tournament-style courses highlight major environmental achievements, including wildlife habitat management, resource conservation, and outreach and education initiatives.

AI has also produced a Case Study Master List of more than 60 environmental projects, including wetland and prairie restoration, naturalization, work with endangered species, pond revegetation,

pesticide reduction, composting, water conservation, water-quality management, and public outreach on golf courses.

The Master List provides contact names and phone numbers so that anyone interested in replicating or learning more about golf course environmental achievements has ready access to people who have already implemented outstanding projects.

More detailed case studies will be released later this year describing how environmental improvement projects were implemented on golf courses and provide cost and benefit analysis.

The case studies may be accessed on the AI web-site at www.audubonintl.org. Hard copies are available from Samantha Meagher at 518-767-9051, ext. 12.

Jean Mackay is the education director of AI, headquartered in Selkirk, N.Y.

Sugarloaf's steward

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Some of Truskowski's early successes included doubling Sugarloaf's recycling rate within 18 months and initiating environmental awareness as a component of Sugarloaf's employee training program.

"All new employees are required to attend a full-day training session with environmental awareness being part of that training," she said. "The minute you come on board at Sugarloaf you are made aware of the resort's commitment to the environment."

Sugarloaf has worked with colleges and universities to provide a setting where students can undertake environmental projects and internships. It has also become part of AI's Adopt-a-School program, taking students at nearby Kingfield and Stratton elementary schools under the resort's wing and helping the schools themselves become co-operative sanctuaries.

Truskowski became the naturalist speaker at Camp Lots' a Fun (a Carrabassett Valley-sponsored program) that merged with American Skiing Co.'s (Sugarloaf's parent firm) own summer camp. "On Monday mornings I introduce the theme for the week, say endangered species," she said. "The camp counselors reinforce the theme throughout the week through various activities."

Sugarloaf Golf Course's Integrated Pest Management, public outreach, overall environmental plan and water conservation programs are all fully certified with AI, Truskowski said.

"We've decreased our water usage 50 percent over the past five years," she explained, "through different irrigation patterns and really watching the weather. Many of the employees here are native Mainers and understand the weather patterns they may come up against."

All gardens at the golf course are grown and fertilized organically. Compost is incorporated into divot mix and top dressings. In fact, Sugarloaf recently received a resort-wide grant to begin diverting food waste from garbage bins into a recyclable material that can be used on the golf course.

Sugarloaf has also done a lot of work on erosion-control projects. "When we cut a new ski trail two summers ago," Truskowski recalled, "instead of going in with skidders and chain saws, we took a John Deere excavator and went from the top of the mountain down, chipping trees so the roots stayed in the ground to hold the soil. The chips created a wonderful mulch that basically kept the tree on the mountain, just in a different form. That area requires less snow to cover that trail. If we ever cut more ski trails, we'll use that technology again."

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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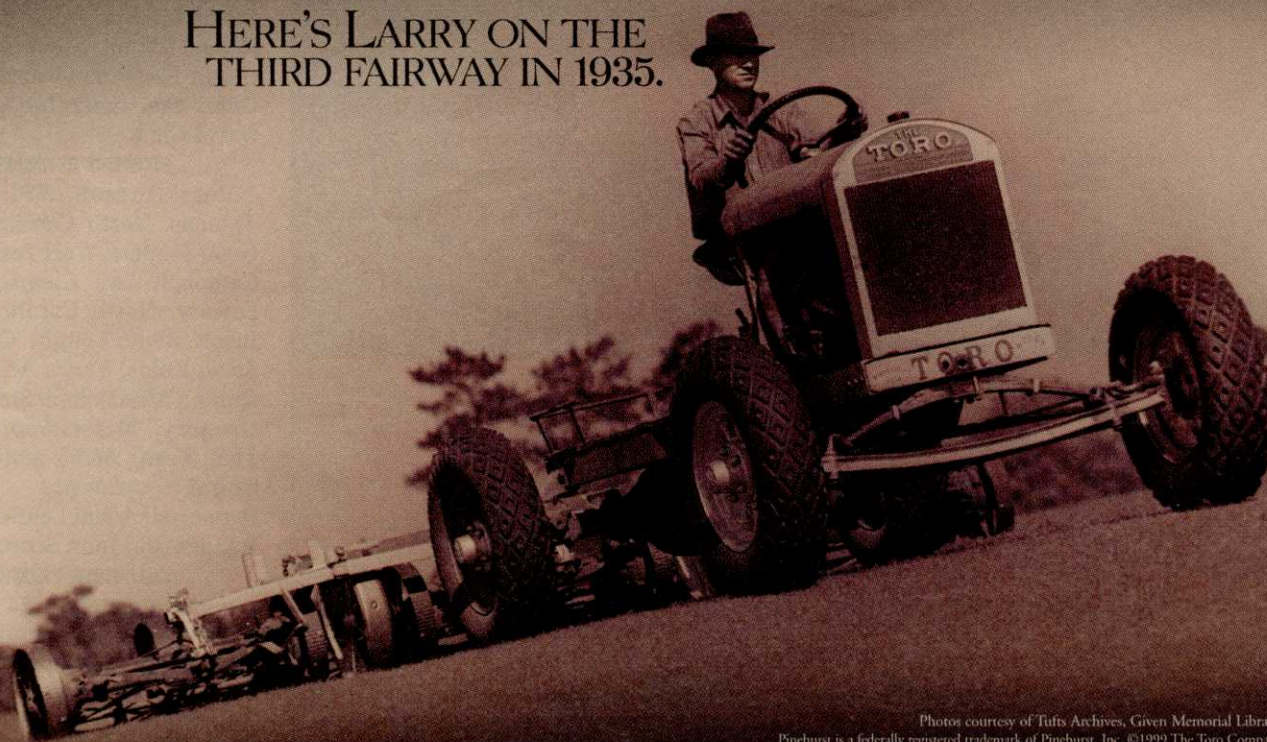
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