

# Distinguishing the levels of the Signature Program

By RON DODSON

Nothing in life stays the same. In fact, change is good, especially if it's based on reflection and review and helps us to move forward. At Audubon International, we are dedicated to reviewing our programs to ensure they are meeting the environmental education needs of our members and our environmental standards. In light of that, we thought we would take this opportunity to clarify the various levels of Audubon International's Signature Program.

We created the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP) in 1991 with support from the U.S. Golf Association. The ACSP was designed to educate golf course superintendents about environmental aspects of managing existing courses. As more people learned about the program, landowners and others wanted to know how we could help them during the planning stages of developing new courses. So in 1993 Audubon International launched a program called the Audubon Signature Cooperative Sanctu-

ary Program.

## THE SIGNATURE PROGRAM

The Audubon Signature Program provides environmental planning assistance to landowners with projects in the design and development stages. Audubon International staff works with owners, architects, consultants, project managers and superintendents from the design stages through construction and helps them develop strategies to address environmental issues of a proposed development.

The Signature Program focuses on wildlife habitat management, waste reduction and management, energy efficiency, water conservation and water-quality management, as well as environmental issues relative to building and maintaining the maintenance facility. The goal of the Signature Program is to develop an environmental approach for planning and maintaining proposed developments that cause them to be environmentally and economically sustainable.

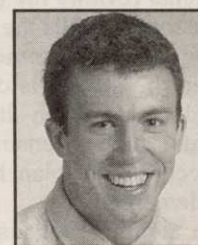
## THE BRONZE SIGNATURE DESIGNATION

In the basic Signature Program, the landowner or developer, with the assistance of project consultants, conducts a comprehensive site assessment and de-

Ron Dodson is president of Audubon International headquartered in Selkirk, N.Y.

# Overbeck moves up to managing editor

YARMOUTH, Maine — Along with other changes in the editorial offices of *Golf Course News*, associate editor Andrew Overbeck has been promoted to managing editor, succeeding Peter Blais, who is leaving to pursue a career in public relations.



Andrew Overbeck

Overbeck joined *GCN* as an international correspondent shortly after graduating from Earlham College in Richmond, Ind. in 1997. He covered the collapse of the Asian economy and golf course industry while on a yearlong Thomas J. Watson Fellowship studying the economic, social and environmental impact of golf course development in Southeast Asia.

"Spending time in China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and Japan was not only a great learning experience and introduction to the golf course industry," said Overbeck. "But it also gave me the opportunity to compare Asian and American development strategies. I also got to play a lot of golf."

Overbeck returned stateside in August 1998 and continued to contribute to *GCN* while working for two of United Publication's other business newspapers. He became associate editor of *GCN* in June 1999.

As managing editor, Overbeck will continue to cover international business and golf course development as well as the supplier business and new product beats.

velops a Natural Resource Management Plan that serves as a guidance document for everyone who is involved in developing and constructing the project and for those who will manage the property after it is developed. Although we have refined the process and requirements of the Signature Program over the years, the Natural Resource Management Plan still forms its foundation, and members who suc-

cessfully complete and implement the plan and all of the requirements of the program are eligible to receive the Bronze Signature designation.

The Natural Resource Management Plan includes strategies for the planning, construction and management of a project consistent with Audubon International's environmental standards. Audubon Inter-

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## Dodson

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national reviews the plan to ensure that it fulfills the Signature Program requirements, and when the project is completed, conducts a final on-site environmental audit to ensure that all aspects of the plan have been implemented.

In addition, because involvement in the Signature Program

is not merely a means to receive an award, but rather a lifestyle of the project, periodic reports and site visits are a requirement to retain the Signature designation.

### AUDUBON INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE

As interest in the Signature Program increased, rather than depend on consultants to write their Natural Resource Management Plans, members began to

ask if we would write the plan for them and if we could help them prepare other technical planning documents that would be consistent with our program and environmental goals. At the time, this type of assistance was beyond the scope of the Signature Program. As a result, it became obvious that additional staff and expertise was needed to fulfill these requests.

So we created the Audubon International Institute.

The institute established two major departments to address the need for technical assistance: Research and Environmental Planning. The institute is comprised of individuals, academic institutions and organizations who have formed relationships with Audubon International and have specific expertise in envi-

ronmental areas. Through these relationships, we have assembled a sizable team of staff and adjunct faculty who provide a variety of services for members and others.

### SILVER SIGNATURE DESIGNATION

As we expanded our ability to provide additional assistance to landowners and developers through the Audubon Institute, we believed that through the institute, we could more effectively communicate and provide guidance for the environmental expectations and requirements of the Signature Program. Consequently, the institute's Environmental Planning Department began to offer its services to compile the necessary documents, perform site visits, and write the Natural Resource Management Plan for our members. In addition, the institute created an educational component to ensure successful implementation of the plan and long-term commitment to its strategies. Members who demonstrate a higher level of commitment by choosing to take advantage of these institute services are eligible to receive the Silver Signature designation.

### GOLD SIGNATURE DESIGNATION

As the institute's reputation grew, we were asked to play an even greater role in the design and planning of more complex projects at an earlier stage. These projects might include development of a community with a residential complex as well as a golf course. For such projects, the institute provides a variety of services combined into the development of a comprehensive Environmental Master Plan. The master plan includes not only the Natural Resource Management Plan, but several additional documents including the Sustainable Resource Management Guidelines, an Audubon International Ecological Design, Sustainable Buildings Guidelines, and a Community Education and Information Plan.

The scope of the project, the involvement of the institute at its inception, and the broader range of expertise involved requires a major commitment to sustainability. Consequently, after implementing all of the phases of the Environmental Master Plan, projects would be eligible for the Gold Signature designation.

### DETERMINING THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL

Ultimately, at any level in the Signature Program, every project must create a Natural Resource Management Plan and meet the Signature Program requirements and the fundamental standards of the Signature Program. The designations of

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## GCSAA survey

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marks as the most common breach of golfer protocol, while 65 percent of superintendents cite the failure to fix divots as the second most common breach of etiquette. Superintendents also blame the failure to repair ball marks (81 percent) for causing the most damage to golf course conditions.

### FUN FINDINGS

The survey also revealed a number of other interesting facts:

- Superintendents rate Jack Nicklaus as the greatest golfer of all-time. Thirty three percent rank "The Golden Bear" tops in the game. Arnold Palmer (11 percent) and Tiger Woods (8 percent) came in second and third, respectively.

- Superintendents were asked, if they could play one round of golf in North America, where would it be? Augusta National Golf Club garnered the most votes (36 percent), while two Monterey, Calif. area courses — Pebble Beach Golf Links (23 percent) and Cypress Point Club (18 percent) rounded out the top three.

- On a question of leadership and executive privilege, superintendents rated President Kennedy (16 percent) their top choice among 20th century U.S. presidents to play a round of golf with. Presidents Eisenhower (13 percent) and Reagan (12 percent) were the second and third choices.

## Dodson commentary

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Bronze, Silver and Gold Signature represent the landowner's environmental and economic investment in sustainable development, the complexity of the project, and the extent to which the institute is involved.

To make this determination, the Audubon Signature Program provides the opportunity for a landowner to describe the proposed project, to apply to become a Signature member, and through communication with Signature staff, determine the most appropriate level of involvement.

For more information about the Signature Program, please contact Signature Program Director Nancy Richardson at 270-869-9419.

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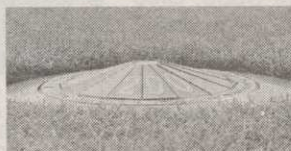
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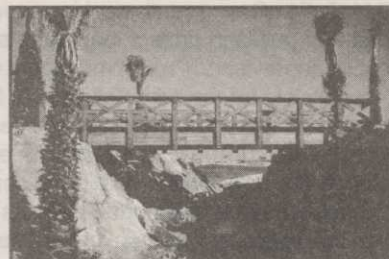


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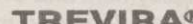
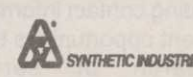
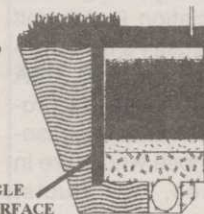
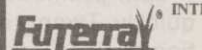
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