

N.Y. governor honors Colonial Acres Golf Club for environmental practices

By JOEL JOYNER

ALBANY, N.Y. — Colonial Acres Golf Club, located in Glenmont, has received the Governor's Award for Pollution Prevention, the first golf course ever to win the highest environmental honor given by

New York State.

"I have an outstanding board of directors that lets me do what's necessary to maintain the course in an environmentally positive direction," said superintendent Pat Blum, who accepted the award.

Opened in 1964, the nine-hole

Colonial Acres course sits on 33 acres of property with only 13 acres of maintained turf. "We have 20 acres of woodland, naturalized area, and water," said Blum. "Our water source is 100 percent runoff—we don't use wells or creeks."

As a 1998 certified member in

the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program, the golf course also has the distinction of being the smallest one in the world certified by Audubon International, according to head staff ecologist Joellen Zeh. "Pat was very motivated in environmental stewardship," she said. "He held the record for certification time — 10 months — until just recently. The Mesquite Grove

Golf Club, at the Dyess Air Force Base in Texas, now holds that distinction with a six-month certification period.

"Colonial Acres is a small course that needs wide fairways for the golfers, and Pat has an extremely low budget," Zeh added. "Despite those factors he has managed to create a wonderful sanctuary on the property."

TURKEY POOP SOLUTION

Blum said his goal is to continue increasing biological and compost use while gradually reducing the use of chemicals. "I had to show [with documentation and sales receipts] that I only used category three products, like Chipco 26019 for fungicide control and Touché, which carry only cautionary labels," he said. "Category one and two products have danger and warning labels, respectively, and they persist longer in the environment."

Blum has built up soil strength with compost fertilizers and microbial inoculates. "With a combination of a bone meal fertilizer and a product called Stain, which is essentially turkey poop, we've created a soil more resistant to pests," he explained. "We have been relying heavily on this process for five years now, each year reducing our Chipco and Touché use and increasing our biological and compost use. Ideally, we're striving toward the goal of total pollution prevention."

The superintendent joked that "you could spit from one end of this course to the other. But to have so much wildlife on only 33 acres like we have at Colonial Acres, it really says a lot about the habitat and environmental conditions. The main thing is to get the message out to other superintendents, so that maybe they'll push themselves a little bit further in their environmental awareness and maintenance practices."



Stanford's save

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supports the new proposal. "This would be a happy outcome for all parties," he said. "We would still have the same amount of space available for faculty housing, and we would preserve a valued part of the Stanford golf course."

The proposal also precludes the need to reroute the first seven holes of the 18-hole design.

"This is clearly a victory for all," said Stanford director of athletics Ted Leland. "We're thrilled that we can now accommodate the university's housing needs while maintaining the integrity and architecture of the Stanford Golf Course." The course, developed in 1930, is one of the country's most challenging college layouts. ■

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