



SUSTAINABLE COURSE MAKEOVER

The not-for-profit, Audubon Lifestyles is coordinating the project at the Scotland Yards Golf Club which is aimed at implementing a sustainable golf management demonstration project.

With the economy still in the doldrums, a group of business and non-profit organizations have come together with an 18-hole course in Florida to demonstrate that embracing and embedding the tenets of sustainability, regardless of the size and budget of the golf course, will provide economic viability and serve as the foundation upon which to deliver environmental and social benefits.

Audubon Lifestyles is coordinating the project at the Scotland Yards Golf Club, which is located between the small citrus towns of Zephyrhills and Dade City, and within easy driving distance of both Orlando and Tampa. Florida has been one of the states most impacted by the economic downturn, so it made perfect sense to their team to prove the potential to doubters of sustainability by implementing sustainable management practices on a golf facility in a location that has been hardest hit with tough times.

David Rinaldo, general manager of Scotland Yards, says, "The past several years has been a real challenge to the entire golf industry, and our course certainly hasn't been any exception."

The Rinaldo family built and opened the course in the 1970's and sold the course several years ago. But, as is often the case, that business transaction didn't work out and the Rinaldo's now found themselves reacquiring their old family course again.

"While we certainly care about the environment, if we can't maintain a financially viable business, we simply would not be able to continue to function," Rinaldo says. "We were very excited to learn about the benefits of operating more sustainably, and couldn't be happier to become involved as a demonstration project that showcases sustainability on golf courses."

Eric Dodson, executive director of Audubon Lifestyles, has pulled together a small, but growing group of businesses that have agreed to contribute their time, expertise, products and services to the project. "We hope that we can prove to other golf facility owners who may be struggling in this economy that it doesn't matter what how big or small your golf facility operating budget is – it just makes financial sense to embrace the sustainability opportunities that are available in the market right now," Dodson says.

Rinaldo has agreed to implement the recommended

actions developed through the project, and to document the results over time.

Bill Love and I have agreed to volunteer our time and services to the project. We are doing so as long as the main focus of the project is economically viable. To us this means "make more, spend less."

We believe adjustments can be made regarding the overall management of the golf course, which will not only reduce expenditures, but improve the quality of the golf course. With reduced expenditures and improved quality, we believe the course will see increased play. And of course, increased play means more income.

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— Eric Dodson, Audubon Lifestyles

At present the organizations that have agreed to participate in the Sustainable Golf Management Demonstration Project at Scotland Yards Golf Club are: Audubon Lifestyles, serves as lead project coordinator; Love & Dodson, based in College Park, Md., will take the lead in the sustainable planning, design and development for the project; Turf Feeding Systems as a producer of fertigation systems based in Houston, Texas has agreed to donate a fertigation system, which was recently installed; The Dodson Group LLC will offer sustainability and environmental consulting, including mapping the entire course, and Trusty & Associates based in Council Bluffs, Iowa, will provide help with public relations. **GCI**

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

If you, your business or organization is interested in joining the effort and become an active participant in the project at Scotland Yards please contact: Eric Dodson at: edodson@audubonlifestyles.org or 727-733-0762