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THE ECOGOLFER PLEDGE

For the entire time that I have been working in the golf industry I have been told that golf courses are designed and managed for golfers. I've also been told that it is golfers who can either support more environmentally oriented golf course design and management, or demand that courses be managed in ways that cause environmental problems.

I have always thought and advocated that properly sited, designed and managed golf courses can be great forms of land use. In addition I know that environmentally oriented course management can actually save money and resources. But, I have heard over and over again, "We can't do this or that, because our members won't stand for it."

I believe much of this is just opinion that isn't based in fact. I also believe that it is a small minority of golfers who tend to loudly express themselves and make superintendents miserable.

The problem is that the vast majority **don't actually say much** of anything one way or another, so the "noisy golfers" get all the attention and that leads to the belief that "most" golfers prefer the manicured look that often leads to a **bad reputation** for the golf industry.

The vast majority of golfers simply are looking to enjoy themselves, play the game, have a good meal and a few drinks and be on their way. The problem is the vast majority don't actually say much of anything one way or another, so the "noisy golfers" get all the attention and that leads to the belief that "most" golfers prefer the manicured look that often leads to a bad reputation for the golf industry.

As you may know, I am now the

volunteer chairman of the International Sustainability Council and Audubon Lifestyles (isc-audubon.org). Recently, ISC-Audubon launched the EcoGolfer League, which is a basic membership opportunity for golfers to show they actually do care about golf and the environment and are willing to take some simple actions while they are playing the game to demonstrate that commitment. This is called the EcoGolf Pledge, which is comprised of 10 easy-to-practice items that every golfer should be doing anyway.

To become an ISC-Audubon EcoGolfer all one has to do is visit isc-audubon.org and join up. It is a \$25 annual membership, which will include a number of benefits, including golf related items and discounts on ISC-Audubon products and ISC-Audubon golf events. The EcoGolfer League was just recently launched in conjunction with the announcement of the ISC-Audubon EcoGolf Celebrity Golf Tournament Series. This Tournament series will kick off in early April

this year and over 30 film, television and sports celebrities have registered to play in the April event, which will be held at the Westin Diplomat Golf Club in Hollywood, Florida.

The EcoGolfer League and overall effort to get more direct involvement by golfers has already picked up some good speed and has been written about around the globe in just the first few weeks of its existence.

Every golf course superintendent

should want every golfer to become involved in the EcoGolfer League. This is a great way for all environmentally oriented golf course superintendents and managers to build a network of golfers who are not only supportive of their conservation management actions, but to actually see golfers become more active in doing their own part to help courses become more engaged in conservation on the course. **GCI**

The EcoGolfer Pledge

- Walk rather than ride in carts when practical.
- Avoid walking in and disturbing natural vegetation, wildlife habitat, and out of play areas.
- Avoid water's edge areas on the golf course, especially where the chance of shoreline erosion is high.
- Be respectful of the local wildlife on the golf course, and don't molest, stress or disturb them.
- Use reusable water bottles when I'm on the golf course.
- Dispose of recyclable items in recycle bins when available.
- Pick up and properly dispose of trash found on the golf course whenever I see it.
- Pick up and dispose of broken tees found on the course.
- Repair and replace divots in the fairway, and ball marks on the greens.
- Seek out and play golf courses who have adopted sustainable management policies, management practices and environmental.

