

OZAUKEE COUNTRY CLUB: *A True Steward of the Land*

By Phil Bailey

Golf course management, as with any business, now considers environmental concerns as one of its top issues. As wildlife habitat decreases in our growing communities, it's important that golf courses represent themselves as a necessary greenspace. In a detailed effort to protect this habitat and its community, Ozaukee Country Club has followed the guidance of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP).

In a seven step plan designed by the ACSP, Ozaukee has gained recognition as the first Certified Audubon Sanctuary in the State of Wisconsin. The seven steps to certification are: public involvement, environmental planning, wildlife food enhancement, wildlife cover enhancement, water conservation, water enhancement, and integrated pest management.

To develop public involvement, a resource committee was established at the club and allows both members and staff to sit on the committee. This committee contributes a wide range of concerns from health and safety issues to



Alex Wagner, a Homestead High School student, tests for dissolved oxygen in the biology lab.



A platform feeder and bird bath help to increase wildlife food enhancement.

sound environmental stewardship. To generate further public involvement within the club and community, the committee asked locally known authorities to present programs on strong stewardship topics. Some of the programs include:

1. A five member discussion from the Milwaukee Audubon Society. The panel included: Mark Fieder, a Milwaukee high school environmental science teacher; Lorrie Otto, an authority on native wild flowers; Fred Sweet, president of the Milwaukee Audubon; Dan Boelke, an experienced woodland native plant nursery operator; and Carol Bangs, a local landscape designer.

2. Jean Hack, a naturalist at the Ledge View Nature Center in Chilton, introduced the children of Ozaukee Country Club to Cinnamon, a live screech owl, during a talk on owls native to the area.

3. Dan Panetti, a local store operator of Wild Birds Unlimited, introduced correct feeding and housing practices for bird life.

4. Dave Savage, a Homestead High School teacher who designed a program for students to test the waterways at Ozaukee.

After receiving such large quantities of information from our speakers, the committee found it necessary to detail an environmental plan for the goals of the committee and club. This environmental plan, or statement of purpose, outlined the responsibilities of the club to its environment and community. The plan included the short and long term goals of the resource committee. It asked to be seen as an advisory committee to the Board of Directors and was so accepted.

Now seen as a true advisory committee to the club, the committee set out on some of its first tasks. This included



Naturalist Jean Hack introduces Ozaukee children to a screech owl during a session on native bird life.

the development of a wildlife food enhancement program. Simple projects were instituted first so the newly established resource committee could gain confidence. These simple projects included the installation of several bird feeding stations.

Now with the first true accomplishment completed, the committee chose a stronger challenge. This challenge was introduced by the club's golf course superintendent, Wayne Otto. Otto was interested in developing several native wild flower gardens around the course to attract a wider variety of wildlife. The committee saw this as a unique and beneficial challenge and gave their support.

With wildlife food enhancement established at the club, the committee decided it fitting to now provide wildlife cover enhancement. To provide this shelter the committee directed its attention to the bluebird houses already in place on the golf course. These houses were refurbished and are now monitored on a weekly basis. To further bird and animal diversity, several other nest boxes were established. These include flicker, purple martin, wood duck, screech owl, and bat houses. In addition to bird houses for wildlife cover, large areas of out of play rough were allowed to return to native vegetation.

With food and shelter in place at Ozaukee, it was time to move on to water. We met the goal of water conservation by successfully completing the installation of our Toro Network 8000. This system was already planned to update our old irrigation system prior to our involvement in the ACSP.

To assure the wildlife and community that water flowing through Ozaukee Country Club was safe, the resource committee gained the help of students from Homestead High School. These advanced science students, under the direction of their teacher Dave Savage, completed several water quality tests on the waterways at Ozaukee Country Club. The students performed tests that included: dissolved oxygen, biochemical oxygen demand, fecal and total coliform, pH, temperature, phosphates, nitrates, turbidity, and checked for benthic organisms. After completion of these tests the students returned a water quality report to the resource committee.

To date, the students found that Ozaukee Country Club is a buffer zone. The test results indicate that the course is truly releasing cleaner water than what enters it from the



This native wild flower bed was located in a prominent spot to generate interest in golfers and attract butterflies and hummingbirds to the course.

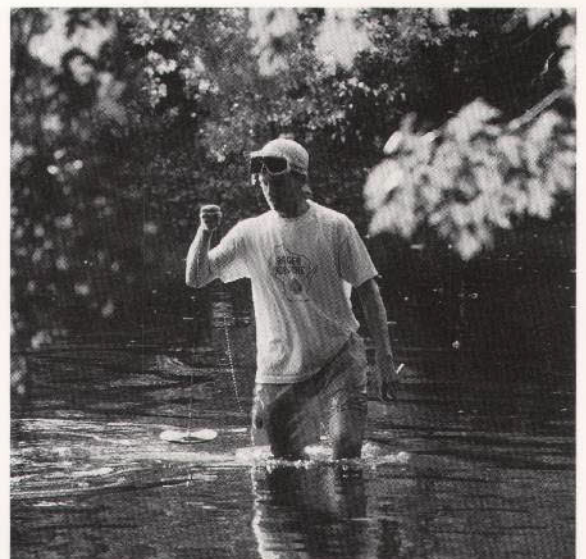
surrounding subdivisions and storm drains.

To fulfill the requirements of the ACSP, Ozaukee Country Club developed a detailed integrated pest management IPM program. Our IPM program is titled "A RATIONAL APPROACH TO IPM. This IPM program uses the acronym RATIONAL as a key word. It includes your **ROLE** in the program, the **APPROACH** to be used, a **THRESHOLD** limit to be determined, **INSPECTIONS** to determine proper thresholds, **OTHER** methods of approach, only **NECESSARY** pesticide applications, **ANALYZE** the results, and always **LOG** all pertinent information. This rational approach to IPM also includes the filing of a daily scouting report to determine threshold limits.

Ozaukee Country Club has accepted the challenge to enhance our environment and assure the community that this is a truly safe and beneficial greenspace. As Wayne Otto has stated "there is no better way to show our golfers and the whole community that by caring for the environment and providing needed greenspace, we are truly "Stewards of the Land"." ♣



Alex Wagner, a Homestead High School student samples Milwaukee River water for benthic organisms as a part of their "testing the waters" program.



Dan Johnson of Homestead High School uses a siki disc to check turbidity levels in Ozaukee waterways.