

Minnesota Valley C.C. Recognized For Environmental Excellence

Minnesota Valley Country Club has been dedicated as a "Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary" by the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System, a program of the Audubon Society of New York State, and endorsed by the United States Golf Association. Minnesota Valley Country Club joined the program in 1992 and is the first golf course in Minnesota to achieve the "Certified" designation.

"Minnesota Valley C.C. has shown a strong commitment to its environmental program. They are to be commended for their efforts to provide a sanctuary for wildlife on the golf course property," said Jean Mackay, staff ecologist for the Audubon Society of New York.

"To reach certification, a course must demonstrate that it is maintaining a high degree of environmental quality in a number of areas," explained Mackay. These categories include Environmental Planning, Public Involvement, Integrated Pest Management, Wildlife Food Enhancement, Wildlife Cover Enhancement, Water Conservation and Water Enhancement.

To attract and sustain a diversity of wildlife species, Minnesota Valley maintains two native wildflower areas, 10 acres of tall grassland, a variety of fruit bearing trees for birds and 31 songbird nest boxes. Their efforts are proving to be quite a success. Thus far, they've recorded 50 species of birds on the property including meadowlarks, myrtle warblers, egrets and wood ducks. In addition, 25 bluebirds were fledged in 1993 from the nest boxes that have been placed throughout the course."

According to superintendent Larry Mueller, "Enhancing wildlife and nature in general makes jobs even more rewarding and it certainly enriches everyone's round of golf. The membership at Minnesota Valley is quite excited about becoming a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary and is extremely pleased and proud of this accomplishment."

To demonstrate their commitment to conservation, the club recently became the first corporate member of the Friends of the Minnesota Valley Heritage Registry. This non-profit citizens group works to preserve the Minnesota River Valley and deserves much of the credit for the establishment of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and recreation area. By pledging to protect wildlife habitat on the course, the Club will contribute to the long-term viability of plant and animal species in the Minnesota Valley.

"Through working with the Audubon Society of New York, we have been able to provide a quality golf course for our members as well as an attractive wildlife habitat for numerous species of birds and animals," Mueller said. "We will continue to keep environmental concerns in the forefront of all our management decisions."

In addition to golf courses, the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System also includes programs for schools, individuals and businesses. For more information, contact The Audubon Society of New York State, 46 Rarick Rd., Selkirk, NY 12158, (518) 767-9051.

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