

Enviromation

What is the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program?

The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses is an environmental program designed specifically for golf courses. Through the program, golf course personnel receive information, support, guidance and recognition for undertaking proactive environmental projects to enhance wildlife habitat, conserve natural resources and protect environmental quality on the golf course. The program is administered by the Audubon Society of New York and is sponsored in part by the United States Golf Association. The Audubon Society of New York is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of the environment through education, research and public involvement.

Why is habitat enhancement important for golf courses?

The "open space" of your golf course not only provides challenging opportunities for golfers, it can also provide valuable wildlife habitat. This is especially pertinent in urban and suburban areas where population expansion and development have significantly diminished existing wildlife habitats. By undertaking projects to enhance habitat in non-play areas, your course can attract and sustain a diversity of wildlife species.

Why is environmental quality important for golf courses?

Over the years, golf courses have been criticized for their use of pesticides, fertilizers and water. Concerns have also been raised regarding the displacement of natural plant communities and the introduction of exotic plant species to the manicured golf course landscape. To reduce potentially adverse impacts to the local environment, golf courses need to protect and conserve natural resources and preserve the character and integrity of the land.

How does the program work?

When your course joins the program, course personnel receive a Resource Inventory Handbook to fill out. The handbook asks for information on course layout, natural features, management strategies and goals, and current conservation practices. Once this information is returned to New York Audubon, they prepare a report for your course which suggests habitat enhancement and environmental conservation projects that are suited for your site. The course then determines which projects to pursue and forms a team to implement Audubon suggestions. Over time, New York Audubon staff and course personnel communicate about projects taking place to ensure the success of your golf course sanctuary.

How will the program effect the game of golf?

Through participation in the program, your course may choose to naturalize non-play areas to create better wildlife habitat. In some cases, naturalized areas may present a challenge should your ball go astray. However, diversity

of vegetation and wildlife will add uniqueness and distinction to your course, and will offer you a chance to enjoy the variety, complexity and beauty of the natural world while playing golf.

Will Audubon be checking up on us or making demands on the course?

There are **no restrictions** placed on the golf course as a condition in the program. All decisions concerning the implementation of Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary suggestions remain with the golf course superintendent and course officials. However, New York Audubon is interested in keeping in touch to see how projects are proceeding. If your course needs assistance or special information, New York Audubon staff available to help. By working cooperatively together, your golf course sanctuary will be a success.

What do we have to gain by participating in the program?

As a member of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program, your course will be recognized for its commitment to wildlife and environmental quality. Certificates of Recognition and press releases are issued to highlight the outstanding efforts of golf courses involved in the program. The projects you undertake to provide wildlife habitat will also add beauty and distinction to your course and enhance enjoyment of the golfing experience. In addition, conservation measures adopted by the course may result in financial savings from reduced maintenance costs. Finally, your course's care for the environment will set a positive example for others to follow and preserve a healthy, diverse and beautiful landscape for future generations.

How can I get involved in sanctuary projects on my course?

Call or write to the Audubon Society of New York or the United States Golf Association for further information.

Audubon Society of New York State
46 Rarick Road
Selkirk, NY 12158
(518) 767-9051

USGA - Green Section
Golf House, P.O. Box 708
Far Hills, NJ 07931
(908) 234-2300

What a great and easy way to become proactive about the many environmental assets that your golf course has for the positive influence in your community. Try it you'll be glad you did!

GOLF COURSES = ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS

—James D. Gardner