Touche' Another Superintendent Rebuttal

Dear Edtior,
North Oaks News
May 2002

There is nothing I would rather be than a Golf Course Superintendent. My work environment is primarily outside and full of natural wonders. During any given season I will see more rainbows than most see in their lifetime. The skills I learned at college and on the job provide pleasure to the patrons who use the course. And my professional agronomic abilities actually improve the neighborhood.

Golf courses are very beneficial to both communities and the environment. Besides merely preventing erosion from both wind and water, turfgrass actually improves the ground water. Turf cleans up our water system by capturing the runoff created by a rain event , then filtering particulates from the water as it passes through the soil and then into the ground water. Along shorelands, turf acts as a surface filter and slows rapidly moving water further preventing the sedimentation of wetlands.

In fact, turf is such a good filter, many communities in the southern regions of the United States are developed using golf courses as a tool for the recycling of their effluent water. Rather than processing wastewater through a purification plant, communities are applying it upon the golf course in the form of irrigation. This recycles the water naturally and also sets up several other important benefits of turf; noise, glare and visual pollution abatement.

Compare the environments of airport macadam and a golf course. The former is bright, loud and not as appealing as the later. A turfed area, such as a golf course, absorb sounds, reflects light multi-directionally and is nice to look at, especially if trees are added to the landscape. Grasses also provide elements necessary for human existence.

With the ever-growing concerns of reduced air quality, especially near metropolitan areas, turf can be considered a critical component of life. Turfgrass, shrubs and trees all use carbon dioxide, sunlight and water to produce the nutrients necessary for their growth. A by-product of this process is oxygen, an element we need to survive. Not only do humans need oxygen but also so do other creatures. Golf courses provide many elements necessary for the survival of wildlife.

Besides oxygen, golf courses enhance the habitat necessary for the existence of many native species, both animal and herbaceous. Over 50 percent of the property upon which the North Oaks Golf Club sits is either rough or non-play areas. These miniature sanctuaries provide the necessary environments for the proliferation of many songbirds, deer, raccoons, water fowl, native wildflowers and beneficial insects as well. With the exception of a few insects, the natural aspect of a golf course is a lure for golfers and the wildlife alike.

As a professional turf manager, I embrace the idea that golf courses are good for the wildlife, for recreation and for the neighborhood.

As a professional turf manager, I embrace the idea that golf courses are good for the wildlife, for recreation and for the neighborhood. In an effort to take this concept one step further, North Oaks Golf Club is pursuing certification with Audubon International to create an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System. Audubon International is a non-profit environmental organization dedicated to improving the quality of life and the environment through research, education and cooperative assistance. *--Jack MacKenzie, CGCS*