

Golf and the Environment Around the World

Concern for the environment is becoming an industry standard everywhere.

BY JEAN MACKAY

Among the challenges of managing golf courses well is that the job affects so much more than the game. Because the sport is intimately tied to our natural environment, what superintendents and club managers do — or fail to do — affects the quality

of our air, water, wildlife, and land. Taking care of the environment adds a level of heightened responsibility for those who manage golf courses.

As sound environmental management becomes an industry standard, there are a growing number of organizations

offering excellent resources and industry-wide support for improving golf's environmental game. From golf's birthplace in Scotland to its new frontier in Asia, environmental principles, guidelines, and practices are gaining ground around the world.

Leading the way are industry and environmental organizations, universities, and forward-thinking superintendents and club managers who put environmental principles into practice every day. The former provide support, information, and guidance, while the latter show us just how great a contribution golf courses can make when managed with careful attention to the environment.

GOLF'S ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERBOARD

Listed below are a number of organizations leading the charge with educational programs, resources, and on-the-ground assistance. This is not an exhaustive list, but includes primarily national or international non-profit organizations.

UNITED STATES

- **American Society of Golf Course Architects**, www.asgca.org. *An Environmental Approach to Golf Course Development* by Bill Love is an excellent resource for architects.
- **Audubon International**, www.auduboninternational.org, has



Sound environmental management is becoming a golf industry standard worldwide, thanks to the collaborative efforts of those who maintain golf courses and a number of environmental and industry organizations. Pictured: Capilano Golf and Country Club in British Columbia, a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary.

championed environmental stewardship on golf courses since 1991. It offers education and certification programs, books, videos, and other resources to help established golf courses and new developments protect the environment and preserve the natural heritage of the game of golf.

- **Center for Resource Management**, www.crm.org, spearheaded collaborative efforts between the golf industry, the environmental community, and government organizations to enhance golf course environmental responsibility and performance. The group produced *Environmental Principles for the United States* (1996), *Environmental Siting Guide for Golf Course Development* (2002), as well as additional resources and demonstration projects.

- **Club Managers Association of America**, www.cmaa.org, offers an Environmental Performance Audit to help club managers evaluate current management practices. It can also be used as a set of guidelines to help plan and establish appropriate environmental strategies.

- **Environmental Institute for Golf**, www.eifg.org, the philanthropic division of GCSAA, aims to strengthen the compatibility of the game of golf with the natural environment. GCSAA's educational seminars train thousands of superintendents each year, and several chapters have developed environmental guidelines. GCSAA also manages the EDGE, a comprehensive database for those who seek information on environmental issues related to golf facilities.

- **Golf and Environment Initiative**, www.golfandenvironment.org. The United States Golf Association, The PGA of America, and Audubon International have joined together to foster environmental awareness and action throughout the game. The Web site provides a clearinghouse of golf and environment information and resources for golfers, architects, PGA professionals, managers, and others.

- **Golf Fore SA**, www.saws.org/-conservation/golfforesa/, is a program offered by the San Antonio Water System to help golf courses in Texas develop conservation and community-oriented practices and provide certification for their achievement.

- **Michigan Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Program**, www.mtesp.org, is intended to organize efforts of the turfgrass industry, state agencies, Michigan State University (MSU), and environmental advocacy groups to advance the environmental stewardship of the turfgrass industry and to recognize environmental achievements in Michigan.

- **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**, www.epa.gov. Collaboration with the golf industry and programs, such as the Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program and National Environmental Performance Track, provide information and incentives to help golf courses improve environmental performance.

- **USGA**, www.usga.org/turf, offers a wide range of environmental programs and research grants. The Turfgrass and Environmental Research Program and Wildlife Links provide grants to land-grant universities to support golf course turf research. The Turf Advisory Service (TAS) works one-on-one with superintendents on day-to-day golf course management. The *Green Section Record* magazine communicates to golf course officials around the world.

AUSTRALIA

- **The Society of Australian Golf Course Architects**, www.sagca.org.-au/environment.asp, calls upon designers to take responsibility for the protection of the environment and promotes what it calls a "total environment" approach to golf design and the inherent benefits commonly found within a golf course.

CANADA

- **Canadian Golf Superintendents Association**, www.golfsupers.com, has

created a very comprehensive *Environmental Management Resource Manual* for superintendents. CGSA's Environmental Management Best Practices Survey collects information related to the management practices of golf course superintendents across Canada.

- **Royal Canadian Golf Association Green Section**, www.rcga.org, offers environmental guidelines for golfers, designers, and directors, managers, and superintendents to ensure that products and techniques used in the development and maintenance of golf courses present the lowest possible risk to their golfers, employees, the public, and the environment.

EUROPE

- **Golf Environment Europe**, www.golfenvironmenteurope.org, is a new European initiative addressing environmental issues relating to golf. Formed by the Trustees of the European Foundation for Golf and Environment (formerly the Committed to Green Foundation), GEE's activities will be led by the European Forum for Golf and Environment — a partnership of golf and environmental organizations.
- **Sports Turf Research Institute, Ecological and Environmental Department**, www.stri.co.uk, offers training, ecological assessment, management planning, and consulting services to golf courses throughout Europe.

SCOTLAND

- **Scottish Golf and the Environment**, www.scottishgolf.com/environment/, aims to encourage environmental awareness for Scotland's 500 courses. It is led by the Scottish Golf Union, The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, Scottish Natural Heritage, and the Scottish Greenbelt Foundation.

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