

ACSP — What Your Peers Think

Word from the field is that the ACSP is the way to go.

BY SHELLY FOY

For a long time, I have been urging golf course superintendents to join Audubon International's Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses (ACSP). With the recent distribution of various golf course Best Management Practices (BMP) manuals around the country, there are now even more reasons to join this program.

First, many of those BMPs are based on guidelines suggested by Audubon International. Second, several cities and counties have stated that golf courses would be exempt from local fertilizer ordinances if they followed the new BMPs. In order to follow BMPs, you need to have a plan. The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program is a customized plan to help your course achieve BMP compliance.

If you read through Audubon International's Web sites (www.audubon-international.org or www.golfand-environment.org), chances are you will run across the list "Top Ten Reasons to Get Certified":

1. Do the right thing for the environment.
2. Enjoy a new and rewarding aspect of your job and be able to share it with others.
3. Gain positive publicity for your golf course.
4. Better organize and coordinate your environmental management efforts.
5. Track environmental improvements.

6. Save money through reduced resource use.
7. Build your skill set and your resume.
8. Promote your stewardship efforts.
9. Be recognized as a community and golf industry environmental leader.
10. Gain valuable feedback from Audubon International.

Environmental issues in general, and concerning golf courses specifically, aren't going away. Here are some reviews from your peers about what the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program has meant to them and their golf courses.

"Water quality has greatly improved over the past year. Visually, the lakes are no longer full of algae and weeds, and the aquatic plants and wildlife are thriving. Since my arrival we have changed the way fertilizers and chemicals are used, especially around the lakes. Fertilizer is no longer thrown into the lakes and chemicals are used as needed. We also have started a bank naturalization plan, which catches and filters runoff going into the lakes. Also, golfers are happy because this catches their golf balls. We will continue to use BMPs to reduce costs and improve the environment." — Ryan J. Costello, CGCS, Audubon Country Club, Naples, Fla.

"I don't think it's an option [to join the ACSP]. What better way is there to showcase your environmental efforts and prove that golf and nature can be

harmonious? Our efforts clearly show that golf cares about the environment." — Scott Welder, golf course superintendent, Walt Disney World, Orlando, Fla.

"Achieving certification as an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary was a goal that brought immense satisfaction. I always believed I was a good steward of the environment, but the program enabled me to quantify my achievements as well as provide me tools to demonstrate the value of the golf course and the programs that we have in place. In a nutshell, it is the right thing to do and it feels good!" — Darren J. Davis, director of golf course operations, Olde Florida Golf Club, Naples, Fla.

"The certification process, from beginning to end, was an education for my staff, our membership, and me. The ACSP sets goals and procedures that can put your course on the leading edge of environmental awareness and promote your efforts throughout the industry as well as your local community. Golf course maintenance operations are scrutinized by employers and the public alike. Involvement in the ACSP proves that your operation is committed to a higher environmental standard. Set certification as a career goal. Your knowledge of your property and understanding of your complete operation will increase as you go through the process. It's a win-win!" — Kyle D. Sweet, CGCS, The Sanctuary Golf Club, Sanibel Island, Fla.



Stone Creek Golf Club, Oregon — certified member of ACSP.

As the program succeeds, course officials, members of the management team, and influential golfers are affected by the positive results. Read on:

“As an Audubon Certified Golf Course, we are often used as a model club for responsible stewardship. The ACSP was the first step in propelling our club into a leadership role in Sarasota County. The county commissioners look at this club in a very positive light and often solicit our

input as it relates to environmental issues. The club continues to be recognized for our environmental leadership.” — Jim Schell, CCM, general manager, Venice Golf & Country Club, Sarasota, Fla.

“Programs such as this represent the types of positive partnerships that need to be created across the country. This type of effort is the only way that we can positively deal with the many serious environmental issues that we

face as a nation.” — EPA Administrator Christine Todd Whitman, presenting Audubon International with the EPA Region 2 2001 Environmental Quality Award.

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