



From left to right: The waste container, recycling dumpster, and receptacle for grease at Wildhorse Golf Club. The waste container is dumped only three days per week now, compared to six days prior to implementing the recycling program.



The amount of green waste generated from golf course maintenance operations is significantly reduced with the help of the wood chipper. Green waste is hauled off site, where it eventually is composted and sold as organic fertilizer.

Recycling Efforts Ring the Cash Register for Wildhorse Golf Club

Practicing environmental stewardship results in more money in the bank for this southern Nevada golf course.

BY BRIAN WHITLARK

Green is good! That is true, especially for the Wildhorse Golf Club, located in Henderson, Nev., where the grass is green, the course has embraced the green movement, and recycling efforts are saving the almighty green dollar. Wildhorse has been certified by the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP) since May 2008. "Because of our relationship with the ACSP and our commitment to set an example for environmental stewardship in the community, it just made good sense to implement a comprehensive recycling program," says Andy Wright, general manager.

The club began collecting cans and bottles and eventually expanded the program to include cardboard, paper products, and even green waste and food scraps. Green waste generated from golf maintenance operations was initially mulched and composted; however, the Southern Nevada Health Department shut the process down, citing that the club needed a permit to conduct such operations. No worry, the green waste is now disposed of in a 40-yard dumpster and hauled off by a local landscape and maintenance company. The material is sorted, separated, and hauled to an organic

composting facility, where it is mulched, composted, and later sold as fertilizer. Scott Sutton, golf course superintendent, noted that the green material used to amount to four or five loads per month at a price of \$480 per load. Once the club purchased a wood chipper, the load frequency decreased to only once or twice per month, saving the club about \$1,500 each month during the growing season.

The scope of the recycling program does not stop there. The club has stationed blue and green recycling containers outside the clubhouse and maintenance facility for disposal of plastic, cardboard, paper, and aluminum. One challenge the club faces is that people don't necessarily put the right bottle or can in the correct container. To overcome this challenge, Mr. Sutton allows his staff to sort and separate the material, which is then picked up and paid for by a local recycling company. The funds are distributed among the employees for their labors.

The maintenance staff is not alone in their recycling efforts. The kitchen staff recycles food waste and grease. Food waste is deposited in an appro-



General manager Andy Wright peers into the recycling bin containing food scraps and waste from food and beverage operations at the club. Not only is the recycling program reducing the impact on the environment, it is saving the club from \$100 to more than \$1,500 per month, depending on the season.

ropriate container located conveniently in the kitchen, while the grease is collected from traps and deposited in a receptacle stationed outside. Prior to going green, the waste dumpster was serviced six days per week, but now it is picked up only three days per week,

saving the club an extra \$100 per month.

Golfers visiting Wildhorse are urged to do their part to help recycle, too. Each year, the clubhouse offers golfers a chance to purchase signature drinking cups, which then can be reused when they return for another round. Mr. Wright reported that the club has since seen a reduction in waste from paper and styrofoam cups. Furthermore, golfers can fill up their cups at the water stations that Mr. Sutton and his staff constructed throughout the golf course. The water stations are located in such a way that they are protected from effluent irrigation water and are locked to ensure golfers receive clean water.

The recycling program at Wildhorse offers a win/win situation; not only is it good for the environment and popular with the public, it has proved to be a financially sound decision. Mr. Sutton and the entire staff at Wildhorse Golf Club are proud to be part of the program, stating that "it gives us a sense of doing our part to conserve and do the right thing."

BRIAN WHITLARK is an agronomist in the Green Section's Southwest Region.



Trash receptacles and recycling containers are strategically located near the bag stand outside the pro shop at Wildhorse.