



STEWARDSHIP NEWS

Summer 2023

LODGING GOES GREEN

How Resorts Are Getting It Done

Troon's Environmental Expert

Integrated Pest
Management

Tee Box Water Savings

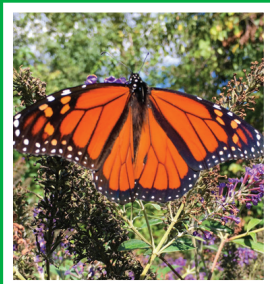
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Aquatrols established The FairWays Foundation with the purpose of funding local and global projects that advance the conservation of our natural resources. These projects will help to preserve the environment we live and work in while encouraging education and stewardship not only within our own industry but also within wider communities.

THE GRANT SUBMISSION WINDOW OPENS FEBRUARY 1, 2024

If you are considering environmentally conscious projects visit TheFairWaysFoundation.com for more details.



CEO CORNER

Sustainability School is Always in Session

HAPPY NORTHERN HEMISPHERE SUMMER, EVERYONE!

At Audubon International, summer — and every season, wherever our partners are around the world — is high time for continued education when it comes to welcoming newly certified courses and other properties. While many educational institutions continue to enjoy their summer breaks, we are hard at work making sure that education and outreach remain the powerful pillar of every certification program we offer.

We strongly believe that the outreach and education component of our certifications is as important as any of the other components. And we feel that our emphasis on education sets Audubon International apart from many other types of certification programs, because we want you to be talking about, and building support for, the environmental work you're doing for your communities.

You can define communities in many ways. It can be your direct customers, like the actual golfers on a course, or it can be the people who live in the community surrounding your certified park or resort. It could also be something more on a geographic or a natural approach — like your area's watershed. There's a lot of different ways you can look at a club or course or park's sphere of influence and how it fits into a community as a business, partner and neighbor.

Likewise, education efforts can take many forms. From lobby display and property signage to newsletter articles and events like Bioblitz (a popular wildlife tracking event that took place at clubs and courses across the nation in June), we want all of our partners out there talking about what you're doing — getting the word out about the environmental measures you're taking to benefit the community at large and encouraging other people to realize that they can do it too, whether it's in a business or residential situation.

As the golf and hospitality industries continue to evolve as sustainability standard bearers, the messages you bring to the public must evolve, too. For instance, many non-golfers still think courses still use fertilizer and pesticides indiscriminately, which is, of course, not the case. They're now employed far less than ever before. It's the same with wildlife habitat management — your properties are vital to creating and protecting those habitats, especially in urban settings where vital green spaces are disappearing all too quickly. Many members provide habitat for endangered species or species of special concern.

All these elements and more can figure into every partner's plan for education and outreach success, as you'll discover in some of the stories in this issue of Stewardship News. And there are many more stories to tell over the summer and beyond. To our thousands of loyal and dedicated current partners, we applaud your stories and hold them up as examples of what we're doing to build a more sustainable world together. For partners yet to come, we welcome the opportunity to help bring your story to fruition for all to see, experience, and appreciate.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine Kane". The script is fluid and cursive.

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*On the Cover: Marriott's Grande Vista, Orlando, Florida.
Photo courtesy of Marriott Vacations Worldwide*



CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Meeting Our Mission, Every Day

Audubon International is an organization where sustainability is an everyday topic. The purpose of the organization is to create environmentally sustainable places where people live, work, and play. There are three parts to answer the question, “How do you do it?”

PART ONE – STRATEGIC PLAN AND PLANNING

Most people recognize the importance of golf-related properties for the preservation of open space and enjoyable recreation. Golf properties are beneficial to the ecological, economic, and social health of the communities which they serve. The AI Board and management team never lose sight of the purpose of Audubon International and the millions of people who benefit from our efforts.

To drive its focus, the AI leadership team of Board and management professionals adheres to a six-part structure of goals, which are:

- 1. STRATEGIC GROWTH** – One of the top priorities for AI leadership is increasing golf-related property membership through the recruitment and retention of Audubon International members. The metric that is tracked to measure the organization's success is membership enrollment.
- 2. IMPACT** – Golf-related properties and organizational members are certified and actively engaged in sustainable programs and thinking. To measure its effectiveness, AI tracks the number of acres or naturalized areas on golf properties that are being certified and engaged.
- 3. PROMOTION** – AI relies upon members to actively promote certification having been recognized by members, neighbors, and their communities.
- 4. BRAND** – The conservation sector recognizes AI as a science-based and environmentally significant organization. AI tracks its performance on this point by measuring the sustainable practices being incorporated into property management by its members.

5. FINANCES – The significance of funding is to ensure diverse and sustainable revenue sources to support operations and investments that ensure mission achievement. AI leaders monitor the revenue trends of the organization to see that Audubon International is economically sustainable.

6. ORGANIZATION – Attracting and retaining subject-matter experts who are dedicated to the mission of the organization is essential to continued success. The management team watches for accessible experts and Board members are alert to those who could be active members of the AI Board of Directors. Staff retention and satisfaction are the primary markers being monitored to ensure that this important strategic component is in focus.

To perform tasks well and ensure continued success, one must clearly understand the organization's strategy. The six points above describe the strategic aims of Audubon International.

PART TWO - LEADERSHIP

Leadership at Audubon International is a team approach driven by a board of eight to twelve directors drawn from successful careers in businesses which engage with the golf community, academicians of the highest level, and experienced environmental leaders and subject-matter experts.

The management team benefits from the steady leadership of Christine Kane, who is the Chief Executive Officer. Christine joined Audubon International as the organization's Executive Director in October 2016 and assumed the title of Chief Executive Officer in 2018. She is responsible for managing all aspects of the nonprofit organization's operations, including its core certifications, member services, and human and financial resources.

Kane has served at the senior management level in the nonprofit sector for over 25 years and is skilled in program development, strategic planning, fundraising and communications. Her experience in the environmental sector includes work on a wide range of environmental issues including hazardous waste site identification, BMPs for non-point source water pollution, land conservation and trail management.

She holds a Master of Science in Nonprofit Management and Philanthropy from Bay Path University, a Bachelor of Science in Forestry from the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and the CFRE credential (Certified Fundraising Executive), the only internationally recognized, professional credential for fundraising professionals.

The staff is made up of eight additional experts and thought leaders dedicated to the mission and purpose of Audubon International. AI would not be all that it is without these incredibly capable and dedicated souls.

PART THREE – MEASURABLE RESULTS

Currently, Audubon International is a \$3 million per year enterprise supported by almost 2,200 members driving six environmental certifications and three conservation initiatives.

The work of a mission-driven organization which is committed to a member-centric approach is measured in the number of program members and the volume of revenues arising from membership and certification fees supported by generous gifts of like-minded individuals and business enterprises which see sustainability as an important investment for the future.

The AI Board of Directors monitors these markers regularly.

SUMMARY

Audubon International is a proven environmental organization dedicated to environmental sustainability and education. It operates in a business-like manner while benefitting from clearly defined goals and objectives sustained by experienced leaders and environmental experts.



Henry Delozier, Chairman of the Board



Why I Joined the Audubon International Board

By Rich Katz, BOARD VICE CHAIRMAN

I have richly participated in the golf industry for decades. That is why, with unabashed curiosity, it is inherent for me to frequently ask golfers the top five reasons they play. Without exception, “it’s a walk in the park” is among the top two or three answers.

Humans and nature go hand in hand. They provide each other enjoyment and serenity that’s especially relished in our post-COVID-19 era. There is no greater feeling than getting lost with nature traversing 18, nine or even fewer holes. And there is no better sanctuary for wildlife and flora to call home than the beauty of golf courses.

That’s where Audubon International fits. Guiding golf industry professionals to protect the environment and preserve the natural heritage of the game is the organization’s Job. No. 1.

Audubon International prides itself on certifying golf courses, country clubs and resorts for successfully maintaining sound practices in six key areas: environmental planning, wildlife and habitat management, outreach and education, chemical use reduction and safety, water conservation, and water quality management.

Close to 3,000 golf courses worldwide have committed to “The Audubon International

Way” – in short, upholding strict environmental requirements which create sustainable places to live, work and play.

When I first heard about Audubon International, I was wowed by its super low annual membership fee. Talk about a no-brainer. Upon deeper learnings, my surface-level perception became real because the organization’s team does not leave members at the altar. I have not seen better servicing toward achieving certification this side of Ritz-Carlton and Disney. And Audubon International’s self-guided resources give golf course superintendents, owners and directors of golf tremendous ecological aplomb.

For many of my nearly 30 years with Billy Casper Golf, we enrolled every owned, leased and third-party managed course in the Audubon International program. Again, a no-brainer:

- Daily-fee golfers and members are energized by courses’ and clubs’ pledges to conservation—talk about a marketing advantage.
- Employees react favorably to the “green” approach, increasing job satisfaction and retention.

- Bottom lines benefit through reduced pesticide, fertilizer and water usage without compromise to quality golf course condition.

Upon getting to intimately know my fellow Audubon International Board members, I gained even deeper appreciation for the science for which the organization stands. There are experts in wildlife, water mitigation and restoration, and all things “friendly” in chemicals and fertilizers. Their pedigrees span the most famous golf courses and environmental research labs known to mankind.

But it is the programming that ultimately hooked me in, line and sinker:

- ***Monarchs in the Rough (MITR)*** is the golf industry’s largest monarch butterfly habitat program. In just over two years, 750 clubs from 47 states, Puerto Rico, six Canadian provinces and Mexico committed to create roughly 1,100 acres of new habitat in out-of-play areas to support monarch butterflies as they migrate to appropriate climates each year. The monarch butterfly is a North American icon, but its population has declined by more than 90% the past two decades. In addition to MITR habitats, the program is increasing awareness of golf’s contributions to the monarch conservation challenge.
- ***Raptor Relocation Network (RRN)*** is a partnership between Audubon International and United Airlines’ eco-skies program. It connects the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program and Signature Sanctuary member golf courses with airport wildlife managers who trap and relocate raptors for safety purposes, including reduction of bird strikes. RRN is designed to protect raptors – including hawks, kestrels and owls – by relocating these birds-of-prey to safer, more suitable habitats on golf courses within Audubon International’s network of certified sanctuary properties. Courses are ideal and under-recognized habitats for raptors due to their abundance of high-vantage perches and long, clear views along and across fairways, excellent nesting opportunities, wide variety of habitats and limited interaction with humans. Audubon International mem-

ber courses are managed with wildlife habitats in mind and hold potential to be designated as Official Release Sites for the Raptor Relocation Network.

- ***BioBlitz*** is an annual, free and fun way to showcase the environmental value of natural habitats on golf courses worldwide. During a specified timeframe, participants such as club members and their families, youth groups, community members and local environmental experts gather to enjoy nature while counting plant and animal species located on each property.

Courses often provide the highest quality of greenspace and wildlife habitat in urban areas. Audubon International hosts an annual BioBlitz campaign for its members to highlight the breadth of species diversity on their courses. BioBlitz is designed to be an intense surveying period, lasting no more than a week, where clubs host volunteer groups to inventory the living matter – plants, fungi, insects and animals – on their properties.

In 2019, more than 1,000 people visited golf courses across America to participate in Audubon International’s 5th annual BioBlitz (it was not held during the pandemic). Participating clubs went above and beyond in outreach and environmental stewardship, recording more than 5,400 different species and conducting beekeeping exhibits, scavenger hunts, meets-and-greets with live birds and other activities. Clubs competed for awards in community engagement, biodiversity and best photograph.

Time is limited and I am invited to join several boards. But I prioritized the do-good mission and program execution of Audubon International over my commercial interests.

Now is the time to put your environmental foot forward and join me at Audubon International.

Rich Katz is Founder and CEO of Katz Strategy, rkatz@katzstrategy.com, 703.283.4852.

Golf Industry Leaders Join Board of Directors



HENRY WALLMEYER
PRESIDENT AND COO OF CLUBWORKS

Audubon International is proud to welcome two leading executives in the hospitality and golf industries to its Board of Directors: Henry Wallmeyer, President and COO of ClubWorks, and Bryan Stromme, Vice President of Agronomy at Century Golf Partners.

As at-large board members, Wallmeyer and Stromme will lend their expertise and respected standing in the golf and business communities to further Audubon International's core mission and execute its strategic plan. Both joined at the invitations of Board Chair Henry DeLozier and Board Vice Chair Rich Katz.

"Henry and Bryan bring a wealth of business expertise, environmental knowledge, and important industry relationships to our board," said Audubon International CEO Christine Kane. "We're looking forward to working with them as we work hard to further our important, vital mission and serve membership in all certification categories."



BRYAN STROMME
VICE PRESIDENT OF AGRONOMY AT
CENTURY GOLF PARTNERS

Wallmeyer joined ClubWorks in July 2022 as its President & COO. ClubWorks is a newly formed platform of wholly owned and preeminent professional services companies that serve successful private clubs and other elite golf and hospitality organizations locally and globally.

Prior to joining ClubWorks, Wallmeyer served as president and CEO of the National Club Association, the lead advocate for private clubs and their leaders on legislative and regulatory issues and the primary resource on club governance and trends. He has a Business Administration degree with a concentration in marketing from Villanova University.

Stromme is a Vice President of Agronomy at Century Golf Partners based in Dallas, Texas with over 20 years of experience in the golf industry. Prior to joining Century, he was a Regional Director of Agronomy for Troon, and held previous positions as Corporate Account Manager and Regional Sales Director for Rain Bird, Regional

Director of Agronomy for Billy Casper Golf, and a golf superintendent at Pulte Homes' Del Webb, Sun City. He holds an MBA from the Keller Graduate School of Management at DeVry University and a Bachelor of Science from the University of Minnesota in Environmental Horticulture – Turfgrass Emphasis.

Both men join an Audubon International board of familiar faces and respected colleagues.

"I've known Rich Katz through my role at the National Club Association and his at Billy Casper Golf and Buffalo Communications," Wallmeyer said. "I've known Henry DeLozier since working with him and his company, GGA Partners, at the Association." He also worked with fellow board member Jim Singerling at CMAA. "It's like coming home to be on this board with people I've known for a long time, for an entity for which I've always had respect, affection and admiration. Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Certification provides great benefit to private clubs and their members on both the environmental and financial

sides. I look forward to bringing my experience and standing in the private club arena to create more awareness of the benefits of the program, especially in Green Lodging and Green Hospitality — and to help the organization keep growing into as solid an entity as possible."

Stromme shares the same strong connections. "I'm looking forward to working on the board and doing the right thing for our clients," Stromme added. "When I worked with Rich Katz at Billy Casper Golf, we had almost 100 percent [Audubon International] membership and certification numbers were high. Both Rich and Henry have contributed so much to my career. They are two of the best in the business. Audubon is an important organization and I want to help it continue to grow and help our golf course clients get certified. I want to bring the voice of our partners to the board — that's where my input will help."

UAE Course Retains ACP for Golf Certification

Saadiyat Beach Golf Club, Abu Dhabi, has retained its designation as a 'Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary' through the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program of Golf Courses.

It is one of 900 golf courses in the world to hold such a certification from Audubon International and the only one in the UAE.

"Saadiyat Beach has shown a strong commitment to its environment program. They are to be commended for preserving the natural heritage of Saadiyat Island by protecting the local watershed and providing a sanctuary for wildlife on the golf course property," said Christine Kane, CEO of Audubon International. "To reach certification, a course must demonstrate that they are maintaining a high degree of environmental quality in a number of areas."

Corey Finn, Golf Course Superintendent, VIYA Golf, said, "We are delighted to have achieved this recertification of Saadiyat Beach Golf Club and this

prestigious industry recognition. We have enjoyed working with Audubon and our stakeholders over the last few years and will continue to work on this project to preserve and enhance the natural habitat of Saadiyat Beach with their consultation. Thanks to all the team in Abu Dhabi for supporting this important initiative."

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Leisure World Golf Course Recognized for Environmental Excellence

Leisure World Golf Course has achieved designation as a “Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary” through the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses. Frank McLaughlin Golf Superintendent, and Alan Nelson, Golf and Greens Committee Certification Project Manager, led the effort to obtain sanctuary designation on the property. The course is now one of 19 of the 160 courses in Maryland and 900 courses in the world to hold certification from Audubon International.

“Leisure World Golf Course has shown a strong commitment to its environmental program. They are to be commended for their efforts to provide a sanctuary for wildlife on the golf course property,” said Christine Kane, CEO at Audubon International.

“To reach certification, a course must demonstrate that they are maintaining a high degree of environmental quality in a number of areas,” explained Kane. These categories include: Environmental Planning, Wildlife & Habitat Management, Outreach and Education, Chemical Use Reduction and Safety, Water Conservation, and Water Quality Management. The Course’s accomplishments include:

- Expanding Native Vegetation
- Removing Invasive Plant species
- Providing quality wildlife habitat
- Conducting water quality testing

Leisure World of Maryland with its more than 8,500 residents is committed to maintaining its environmental programs.

The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses, endorsed by the United States Golf Association, provides information and guidance to help golf courses preserve and enhance wildlife habitat and protect natural resources. Golf courses from the United States, Africa, Australia, Canada, Central America, Europe, New Zealand, and Southeast Asia have achieved certification in the program.

Leisure World of Maryland has a beautiful, heavily wooded 18-hole, Par 70 championship golf course with Bermuda grass fairways and well-maintained greens. Planned renovations by McDonald & Sons are expected to be completed this summer which will further the course’s beauty and efficiency.

Kansas' Ironhorse Retains ACSP Certification

Ironhorse Golf Club in Leawood, Kansas, has retained its designation as a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary through the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses. Ironhorse was first designated as a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary in 2014. After designation, courses go through a recertification process every three years.

Ironhorse Golf Club is one of only nine golf courses in Kansas to hold certification from Audubon International. Golf courses from the United States, Africa, Australia, Central America, Europe, South America and Southeast Asia have also achieved certification in the program.

"Ironhorse has shown a strong commitment to its environmental program," Audubon International CEO Christine Kane said. "What they've done to give Kansas' wide variety of wildlife a place to thrive is the perfect example of how certification is a huge benefit to a course's natural setting, no matter where it is."



Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program participation is designed to help course personnel plan, organize, implement and document a comprehensive environmental management program and receive recognition for their efforts.

"Ironhorse Golf Club is very proud to retain our designation as a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary through the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses," Ironhorse Golf Club general manager Ryan Eckroat said. "Special thank you to Ironhorse superintendent James Kennedy who has spearheaded our certifications."

Opened in 1995, the Michael Hurdzan-designed course is the only Troon-managed facility in the Kansas City metro area.

Sheep Ranch Adds To Bandon Dunes Certification Streak

The Sheep Ranch at Bandon Dunes Golf Resort is now a certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary for Golf course.

Opened in the summer of 2020, Sheep Ranch — a Ben Crenshaw-Bill Coore design with nine green sites hovering on rugged cliffs above the Pacific Ocean — keeps the popular southern Oregon resort's ACSP for Golf certification streak intact. Beginning with Bandon Trails and the par-3 Preserve course in February 2011, continuing with Bandon Dunes and Pacific Dunes in June of that same year, then Old Macdonald in July 2016 and now Sheep Ranch, these six courses account for nearly a third of the 19 ACSP for Golf certified

venues across the entire state.

"The certification in our minds brings more awareness around the topic of being environmental stewards and how golf courses can actually work in harmony with the natural environment," says Ken Nice, Bandon Dunes Golf Resort's Senior Director of Agronomy. "It's a great program and we've loved working with Audubon International. They have a love and appreciation for nature, something that we feel golf agronomy teams also resonate with."



Australia's Top 6 Clubs Join Audubon International, epar Program

This spring, [Audubon International](#) announced that following its recent partnership with Australian software and sustainability company epar, six Australian golf clubs have committed to pilot a new cloud-based approach that will provide richer and faster sustainability insights into their golf course operations.

The clubs are:

- Keperra Country Golf Club in Brisbane, Queensland
- Maleny Golf Club in Maleny, Queensland
- Margaret River Golf Club in Margaret River, Western Australia
- Peninsula Kingswood Country Golf Club in Melbourne, Victoria
- Royal Hobart Golf Club in Seven Mile Beach, Tasmania
- The Lakes Golf Club in Sydney, New South Wales

These clubs will be the first in the world to utilize the epar Connect 2.0 Audubon Certification program and create a positive social and environ-

mental impact across their golf course operations.

Based in Broadmeadow NSW Australia, epar works with like-minded sport sustainability allies to explore and develop innovative net-zero approaches, technologies, and nature-based climate change solutions that address the fundamental sustainability challenges facing golf. Along with parent company Environmental Business Solutions, epar works with clients to build capabilities – from identifying and measuring impacts, to scenario planning, to reporting on sustainable achievements, and maintaining a safe environment that will thrive in a low carbon future.

“When we partnered with epar, we knew it would revolutionize how our member clubs in Australia reach their sustainability goals,” says Christine Kane, Audubon International CEO. “Having these six prestigious clubs put the partnership into action in this new way is truly gratifying and exciting for all parties involved.”

Connect 2.0, epar's innovative RegTech technology, has completely digitized the pathway of the award-winning Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program's six certification modules — Site Assessment / Environmental Planning; Wildlife and Habitat Management; Chemical Use Reduction and Safety; Water Conservation; Water Quality

Management; and Outreach and Education. The cloud-based approach provides richer and faster sustainability insights into every golf course while recognizing and rewarding their efforts.

“These six clubs form a strong foundation for sharing golf’s leading environmental certifica-

tion recognition program with clubs throughout Australia in a new, cutting-edge way,” says epar Founder and CEO Terry Muir. “We are excited to partner with them as they showcase their nature-based and urban-based climate solutions and build their compelling climate credentials.”

Apes Hill Barbados Earns ACSP for Golf Certification

Apes Hill Barbados, the luxuriant 475-acre property on the Island’s west coast, has achieved Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary for Golf certification for its 18-hole championship course from Audubon International.

The 18-hole championship golf course at Apes Hill Barbados was designed by the legendary Ron Kirby and opened for play in November 2022, and the state-of-the-art Golf Performance Centre debuted earlier this year.

While this certification is for golf, that is just one of many environmental best practices at the amenity-rich luxury resort residential community that is setting an inspiring, elevated standard in the Caribbean.

“Achieving Audubon International certification illuminates our sustainability commitment which is foundational to everything we do here,” said Sunil Chatrani, Executive Chairman, Apes Hill Barbados. “We didn’t just build another green sustainable golf course; we’re building an eco-system rooted in responsible behaviour that puts our people, our wildlife and our planet first.”

Following are some environmental initiatives that Audubon International commended Apes Hill Barbados for implementing:

- Irrigating exclusively with captured rainwater
- Reducing irrigation use
- Expanding acreage that requires less irrigation (mulch beds, drought tolerant vegetation, low maintenance vegetation)



- Planting drought tolerant turf and vegetation
- Upgrading irrigation system to improve efficiency and distribution
- Analyzing weather data prior to irrigating
- Monitoring irrigation system to ensure efficiency and distribution patterns
- Installing part-circle heads to help eliminate water from going on cart paths and/or native areas
- Improving soil and turf health by using proper cultural practices including mowing, irrigation, fertilization, and compaction management
- Reducing overall chemical inputs by expanding acreage not requiring chemical treatment
- Introducing a new variety of turf that is less susceptible to disease
- Applying slow-release and organic fertilizers

Sustainability is a way of life at Apes Hill Barbados. With 60 acres dedicated to farming livestock, 30 beehives, vegetable gardens, and 17 acres for fruit trees, it is dedicated to preserving biodiversity. Planting passion fruit, lime trees, and other local trees helps reinforce a vibrant ecosystem. For more information visit www.apeshill.com.



Connecticut's Sacred Heart Greenwich Attains Elite Sanctuary Certification Status

Sacred Heart Greenwich has put the Environment first after becoming a certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary, only one of three schools in the country with the designation.

The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program “helps organizations and businesses protect our environment while enhancing their bottom line,” according to a fact sheet made by Audubon International, an environmental organization aimed at creating sustainable surroundings.

Audubon International officially certified Sacred Heart Greenwich on Jan. 25, classifying it — along with American University and the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown — as one of the three United States schools to be named a sanctuary.

“This shows our school’s strong commitment to sustainability and stewardship in five different categories: environmental planning, wildlife, water, resources and education,” a statement from

the school reads. “These categories are the five key environmental components that the program uses to provide information to assist the participating organization or business.”

The program helps organizations and businesses assess their environmental resources, along with any practices that can cause harm. Then, through the program, the organization or business can develop a plan that fits its “setting, staff, budget and time.”

Organizations and businesses of all types can implement the program. Other types of establishments that can be certified or have already been certified include resorts, parks, cemeteries and more.

Recertification needs to be completed every three years.

Audubon International created the certification process to allow a hands-on process, ensuring that the program is tailored to the establishment’s

“unique property,” while also encouraging the participating organizations and businesses to take action on the program’s five key environmental components, the organization said.

“Achieving certification demonstrates an organization’s leadership, commitment, and high stan-

dards of environmental management,” according to the fact sheet. “To be designated, personnel develop and implement an environmental management plan and document the results.”

Turf Area Reduction Key to Saving Water

Golf courses across America continue to make water use efficiency central to their sustainability practices, and no factor is more important in saving water than reducing maintained turfgrass acreage.

According to a recent survey by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) as part of its Golf Course Environmental Profile program, the median total of maintained turfgrass acres on 18-hole U.S. golf courses declined 3 percent between 2005 and 2021, even as courses overall haven’t gotten longer by 18 yards on average over that same time span.

Frank LaVardera, Audubon International’s Director of Environmental Programs for Golf, confirms this trend as he works with courses applying for Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary for Golf certification or recertification.

“The industry as a whole is starting to embrace the concept of managed turf reduction,” he says. “We are seeing many courses reduce managed turf by upwards of 10 percent to help reduce the need for irrigation and other inputs. From our certification standpoint in both ACSP and Signature, the reduction in managed turf is a key element in the overall implementation of sustainable practices on the golf course.”

With water costs increasing across the nation, reducing turf is also crucial to a course’s bottom line. “Many of our members in California, across the southwest, and even parts of Florida are struggling with reductions in water supply and the overall high cost of water for irrigation,” LaVardera adds. “Even the cost of treated effluent water has risen considerably over the past several years.”

The GCSAA survey found that maintained turfgrass acres on U.S. golf courses declined by

14% in 2021 compared to the acreage in 2005, primarily due to course closures. However, existing maintained acres are being managed more efficiently. Recent GCSAA studies show 29% in water savings through operation efficiencies alone — two-thirds of the result — with course closures accounting for the other third.

Where does most of that managed turf saving come from? The rough. “Many areas on courses are regularly maintained, but nobody ever hits there ball there,” LaVardera says, noting that superintendents use several methods to track where golfers go on the course, identify areas that get no play — and act accordingly.

“The industry as a whole is starting to embrace the concept of managed turf reduction ... we are seeing upwards of 10 percent at many courses. It’s a key element in sustainable practices.”

— Frank LaVardera, Director of Environmental Programs for Golf

COVER FEATURE



▲ Marriott's Legends Edge at Bay Point.

Time To Join The Sustainability Revolution

By Fred Realbuto, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, AUDUBON INTERNATIONAL

Audubon International's goal is simple and powerful: "To create environmentally sustainable environments where people live, work, and play." We can add one more word to that list: "Stay."

While our organization's 35-year history has its deepest roots in the golf industry, we have worked hard to become a respected leader in the lodging and hospitality space as well. Over the past 15 years, our Green Lodging and Green Hospitality Certification programs have helped hotels and hotel-branded vacation ownership properties attain a level of environmental sustainability in every area of operation that they couldn't imagine even two decades ago. With sustainability foremost in a majority of travelers and vacationers' minds, lessening each property's footprint on the Earth makes sense

in every way, from every business angle. The question is, how to get there and stay there?

Science-based, extensive, and comprehensive in plan and execution, Audubon International's Green Lodging and Green Hospitality programs encompass every segment of a successful stewardship plan — from initial needs-assessment survey through step-by-step goal fulfillment to employee and public education — to equip hotels and other lodging facilities with the tools to reduce operating costs by saving energy, conserving water, and reducing waste. Properties that are eco-rated have a distinct marketing advantage and public recognition as an environmental leader, and Audubon International's independent, third-party, non-for-profit status assures an added layer of credibility.

As director of the Green Lodging program

since 2010, I've visited, assessed, and rated properties around the world. Some 130 are currently certified, and all undergo a recertification process every three years. Most of them complete their initial process within a year. Marriott International, our largest partner to date, saw two of its earliest adopters, Shadow Ridge in California and Grande Vista in Florida, complete their eco-rating process in ten months.

To date Audubon International has established its Green Lodging niche with vacation clubs — a demographic of guests with significant disposable income and, from a socioeconomic standpoint, a tendency to be more conscious of the environment. They expect their favorite vacation places to show their stewardship efforts at every touch point, with every experiential element — large and small, noticeable and back-of-the-house. And they're willing to pay for that sustainable experience.

By partnering with Audubon International and leading their properties through the certification journey, traditional hotel owner-operators are finding that being green can actually help, rather than hurt, the bottom line.

Our certification and recertification process is stringent and straightforward.

It starts with a survey summary of what a property has in place, to establish a baseline of environmental practices. Once reviewed, we schedule a site visit to interview, assess, and inspect the property and its processes.

We visit guest rooms, fitness centers, lobbies, office areas, pools, collection areas, and back of the house. We're looking at everything from energy use to recycling/composting programs, HVAC systems, lighting, and more.

Afterwards, we sit down, review our draft findings and establish priority items and areas for improvement. This also gives us the opportunity to discuss what else the property can be doing to increase their green stewardship. We make it clear that the sustainability journey doesn't have an end. You keep working on becoming more sustainable. When you reach one plateau, you start climbing toward the next one.

First and foremost, Audubon International is an environmental education organization. All our environmental certifications include a requirement for Outreach & Education. We have a duty



▲ Water-saving landscaping is now the norm at most desert-based Marriott resorts.

and a commitment to not only be educators, but to help our members be educators to their staff and guests. With each case, we look for opportunities for properties to share their vision and mission with everyone.

On the employee front, one option is to schedule morning standups, perhaps biweekly, for engineering and housekeeping staffs — take two minutes and explain the importance of the “why” behind their environmental actions, not just the “what.” Why are they setting the thermostat back to 72 degrees? Why are they closing the shades to prevent solar gain? Why are they looking for leaks? Such practices reinforce their important role in saving our planet, can also contribute to team-building goals, and may even help with employee retention in this tight labor market.

One example of American hotel chains coming on board with demonstrably positive practices: the use of bulk amenities in the shower — shampoo, conditioner, body wash. From the beginning of our program, we asked about bulk amenities in the showers. Canadian hotels had instituted it early, but United States properties were simply not on board. That meant millions of those little plastic containers that had to be tossed. It took about 13 years for American companies to come around, and now most properties are switching over to them. It's now a current and ongoing directive for Marriott.

Finally, with our desert properties we see another shift. Instead of bucking nature and having so much water-intensive green grass to maintain, they now landscape with rocks and native plants like cactus. The property looks fantastic — and it's what guests expect to see when they're in the desert. I

also stress preventative solar gain through window treatments — a new film, for instance, that's clear but still blocks the UV and solar gain. Some places already have triple pane glass to do what they can to keep cooling in and heat out.

Over the years, as we've adjusted our Green Lodging and Hospitality Certifications to keep up with new technologies and shifting needs, we still meet adoption resistance — and constantly work to overcome it.

We can show owners and operators they can have a beautiful luxury resort while taking sustainable measures their guests can also implement in their own homes. We help them strike a balance between luxury and pampering and still being environmentally conscious. In that way properties become disciples for environmentalism by their actions.

Again, it's the educational component that makes Audubon International different from other industry-connected certification programs. We go deeper. We take the details seriously and make sure our partners do, too. Our joined quest:

to take care of the planet while building a strong, sustainable business.

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This version has been edited for space. Please [click here](#) to read the full version.

Science-based, extensive, and comprehensive in plan and execution, Audubon International's Green Lodging and Green Hospitality programs encompass every segment of a successful stewardship plan.

▼ Pool areas are a focal point of big water savings thanks to towel exchange programs.





▲ Audubon International COO Fred Realbuto (fourth from left) with Amelia Island hotel representatives receiving their Green Lodging Certification plaques.

Amelia Island Hotels Gain Green Lodging Status

Photo and reporting by Holly Dorman,
FERNANDINA BEACH NEWS LEADER

Five hotels on northeast Florida's Amelia Island earned their certification for the Audubon International Green Lodging Program this spring.

After the annual Keep Nassau Beautiful Downtown to Dunes Cleanup in early May, Audubon International Chief Operating Officer Fred Realbuto presented the awards to Comfort Inn, Amelia Hotel at the Beach, Ocean Coast Hotel at the Beach, Sea Cottages of Amelia and The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island. The venue for the ceremony, SpringHill Suites by Marriott, was awarded its certification last year in the first such award ceremony on Amelia Island.

"This takes quite a bit of effort," Realbuto said. "And when you get your certification, you've earned it."

Audubon International works hand-in-hand with the Amelia Island Convention and Visitors Bureau to bring this program to the island's hospitality industry.

"I would like to please have a round of applause for the community, the folks who live in Amelia Island?" Realbuto said at the ceremony. "You guys are really amazing. Amelia Island gets it ... The CVB has been tremendously supportive.

They enrolled in the Sustainable Communities Program in the last couple years to do major projects, and they've also been the sponsors of the Green Lodging Program ... We are thrilled and honored to be a part of this."

Green Lodging Certification from Audubon International ranks among the most respected stewardship achievements in the hospitality industry.

"The Green Lodging Program provides third-party verification that lodging facilities meet environmental best practice standards and demonstrate a strong commitment to water quality, water conservation, waste minimization, resource conservation and energy efficiency," reads the organization's website. "Through a comprehensive and credible method for assessing the extent of the environmental measures undertaken, participating facilities can reduce environment-related costs and gain a marketing advantage."

To become certified, hotels must complete an initial self-evaluation when applying. Afterwards, Audubon International staff conduct an onsite visit to verify the measures being taken.



ASK THE EXPERT

IPM: Time to up your game

By Jennifer Grant, Ph.D.

The concept of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) originated over 50 years ago and has gained widespread acceptance in the past few decades. Golf course superintendents and farmers alike have come to embrace cultural and biological methods of pest management, scouting for pests and diseases, and optimizing the choice and timing of pesticide applications. Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP) members are well attuned to these IPM principles and practices. IPM is integral to all Best Management Practices guidelines (BMPs) and is embedded in ACSP's environmental components of Chemical Use Reduction, Wildlife and Habitat Management, as well as Water Quality Management. Because IPM has entered the mainstream, it's interesting to look at the level of IPM practice on golf courses, and whether adoption is increasing.

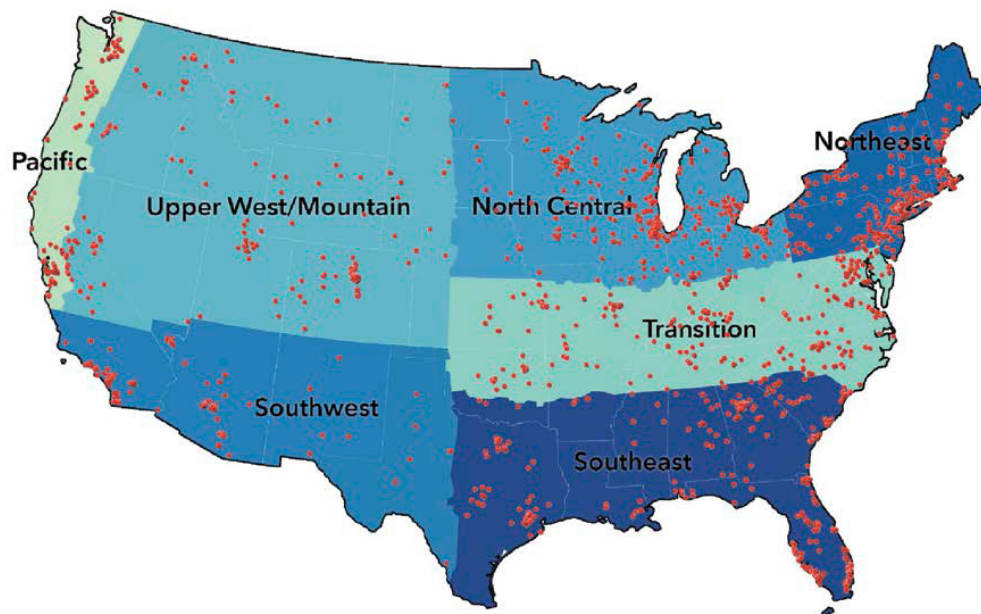
Part of the answer can be found in GCSAA's most recent survey on pest management practices at U.S. golf facilities, included in their [Golf Course Environmental Profile](#) series. Results from 2021 were published in March and follow GCSAA's previous surveys from 2007 and 2015, thereby enabling tracking of changes over 15 years. Here are some of the findings.

Overall pest management practices seem to

have changed little over a decade and a half. On the plus side, over 90% responded that they monitor weather patterns conducive to outbreaks, scout for pests, employ pesticide resistance strategies, improve turfgrass health, and use cultural practices for pest management. These are all core practices of IPM and BMPs and have been at a high level in every survey year, though they have changed little or even decreased slightly. Use of traps, and use of remote sensors, both increased—but are at low levels of adoption.

Technological advancements in pest management would be expected to aid superintendents. As a simple example, using photographic documentation jumped from 14% in 2007 to 37% in 2015, but then stayed steady in 2021. I would expect that predictive models, which have become better and more widely available, would be implemented at more facilities—yet adoption wavered between 52% and 60% over the past 15 years. The survey also showed that golf facilities have increased their reliance on pesticides within each pesticide class, while the use of biological controls has dropped. And only 44% of courses have a written IPM plan.

In reporting results, the GCSAA acknowledges that we don't know why the adoption of IPM practices has plateaued or decreased. However,



the data can be instructive on where we need to improve both as educators and practitioners. Being an ACSP member means you already are accustomed to keeping records and setting environmental goals and striving to achieve them. Where does your facility fall in the categories assessed by the GCSAA survey? If there are areas where you fall short, specialists at Audubon International can offer guidance on methods and tools for improvement. The GCSAA has [extensive IPM resources](#) and your state's BMPs include [helpful guidance](#).

On the flip side, you likely excel in several pest management areas. Have you minimized anthracnose on your course by adjusting your fertility and mowing practices, or learned to track insect stages and abundance? If yes, share your knowledge. You can mentor staff at your own course as well as at other courses. Can you help your local association to educate and encourage members to do better? How about writing case studies for Audubon International or for your state BMPs?

One way to assess the success of IPM adoption on your own course is the Environmental Impact Quotient (EIQ). This tool was discussed in the [spring issue](#) of Stewardship News. The EIQ focuses on the potential impact of pesticide applications including water quality implications, effects on wildlife, and likelihood of pesticides getting into drinking water. You can learn more about

water quality management on your golf course and surrounding property on Audubon International's website, and EIQ by visiting [HERE](#). One of the qualities I admire about ACSP members is that you lead by example. I hope you will continue to strive to be the best IPM practitioners you can be, and that you bring others along with you.

Jennifer Grant, Ph.D. is an entomologist who recently retired from the Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences where she led the New York State Integrated Pest Management Program in Geneva, NY. Her research focuses on low-impact pest management practices for turfgrass, and how IPM systems work on golf courses, school grounds and home lawns. A member of the Audubon International Board of Directors, she is also a recognized expert in the field of IPM who lectures extensively across the country.

Being an ACSP member means you already are accustomed to keeping records and setting environmental goals and striving to achieve them.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

At Las Campanas, We've Taken Tee Irrigation Underground

By Tom Egelhoff,

DIRECTOR OF AGRONOMY, LAS CAMPAÑAS CLUB,
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

Wind is a big factor in the golf course maintenance game no matter where we tee it up, but in the desert Southwest, it often takes control in interesting ways that lead to challenges for superintendents, especially when it comes to saving water — and making sure it stays where they need it to do its nourishing best.

At Las Campanas, my crew maintains two Jack Nicklaus courses where constant and consistent breezes can play havoc with traditional irrigation methods. This is especially true on the tee boxes, which, as with so many water-conscious desert designs, often reside on “islands” surrounded by native vegetation that would grow into a downright invasive headache when the spray blew its way.

Before gaining Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary for Golf certification in 2015 — the first and still the only facility in New Mexico to do so —

Las Campanas underwent extensive turf reduction in 2011, resulting in only 60 irrigated acres per course. It was a big step toward our membership's ongoing environmental stewardship goals; we sit at 7,900 feet above sea level in a high desert, so water is precious. Still, the tee box water waste problem remained, so I went on the lookout for a solution.

It came via a grant from and partnership with New Mexico State University, as well as the USGA's Green Section, to install and test a new subsurface drip system on tee boxes established with creeping bentgrass. The project began in 2016 with three initial objectives:

Objective 1: monitor turfgrass quality in comparison to sprinkler irrigated tee boxes

Objective 2: record irrigation water use and compare to sprinkler irrigation

Objective 3: monitor impact on surrounding vegetation

During the investigative period, irrigation was scheduled manually and not standardized across tees or products from Rainbird, Netafim, Hunter and Toro.





▲ A Las Campañas crew lays subsurface irrigation lines

By the time Frank LaVardera, Audubon International's Director of Environmental Programs for Golf, arrived to consult on our recertification progress in the fall of 2020, we had retrofitted championship (black) tee boxes on a dozen holes with SDI to a depth of about six inches of sandy rootzone soil. Each tee box's existing sprinkler system was left in place and functional to enhance establishment and to water in pesticides, wetting agents, or fertilizer if needed. Two tee boxes with sprinkler irrigation served as controls.

Driplines on all but two of the tee boxes were spaced 12 inches apart; the other two were spaced 9 inches apart. Each box had a water meter installed to record use, and general maintenance was similar to other tee boxes, with thatch control via topdressing and verticutting.

Our study period produced valuable observations.

- The six-inch-deep, 12-inch-apart configuration was sufficient for balanced and efficient irrigation even in a sandy rootzone

- Combination of sod removal, trenching, and re-sodding resulted in fastest establishment after installation. Trenching into existing turf had drip lines visible until the end of the growing season.

- Tee boxes close to trees had tree roots competing with grass for water which resulted in drought stressed areas

- Systems not properly flushed after installation resulted in emitter clogging and insufficient water delivery

- Manual scheduling resulted in over irrigation.

After winding up our study period and performing our first aerification in the fall of 2020 —to a depth of no more than five inches — we



▲ Desert breezes make surface tee box irrigation a challenge

observed promising results.

- Turf quality of subsurface-drip irrigated tee boxes was similar to sprinkler irrigated tees with the exception of a couple holes

- Poor turf quality was related to installation errors or tree roots

- Summer water use of subsurface-drip irrigation systems was consistently lower than the sprinkler irrigated control tees but also higher than ET replacement

- Variability in water use between products and within replicates were due to manual scheduling of the systems. We then connected each valve to the central irrigation computer for accurately setting run time of each tee box

- Less weeds and disease pressure on sub-surface-drip irrigated tees

- Reduced vegetation surrounding the tee boxes, consequently tee box maintenance significantly reduced.

As expected, our tests concluded that subsurface-drip irrigation on tee boxes resulted in significant water savings compared to sprinkler irrigation with no reduction in turf quality. We found additional water savings by switching to electronic timers.

After additional monitoring, we've gone on to install subsurface-drip on all Las Campañas tee boxes, taking our sustainability efforts to new heights. Golf course superintendents across the nation, and in particular the desert West, would be well-served to explore similar irrigation efforts at their properties. The water savings are significant.



▲ The Pinnacle Course at Troon North, Scottsdale, Arizona

Audubon International Right in Tune With Troon

Scottsdale-Based Golf Operator Is a Potent ACSP Partner

By Vic Williams



BRI KENNY

TROON GOLF MANAGER OF
ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

By any measure, Audubon International and Troon Golf have a marriage made in sustainability heaven, and it's only getting stronger with every year, through every endless golf season and across several certification classes including ACSP for Golf and Signature Sanctuary. The relationship goes back three decades. The two famed courses at Kapalua Resort on Maui were Troon's first ACSP for Golf Certified members 1993 — the Bay course in January and the Plantation course in March of that year. On the Signature side, Tetherow Golf Club in Bend, Oregon, opened with Bronze Certification status in 2008. As of the end of 2022, nearly 100 of more than 750 Troon-operated courses have partnered with Audubon International. More than 70 are currently certified or members in good standing. Clearly there's room to grow. Long a leader in the golf course maintenance and management realms, Troon is poised to lead in the sustainability realm, too, as one of Audubon International's biggest partners in Certification.

In fact, with executives like Brianne Kenny



Photo by Brian Orr

▲ Black Desert in Ivins, Utah, is Kenny's newest Troon project

leading the way, they're building toward that goal, literally from the ground up. As Troon's Manager of Environmental Science, the Ohio native helps set policy and standards for company owned and/or operated properties across the country and beyond — from flagship courses Troon Country Club and Troon North near its Scottsdale headquarters, to Florida, the Northeast, Hawaii, Mexico ... everywhere this respected company flies its flag.

Not that she ever saw herself working in golf a decade ago. She knew next to nothing about the sport when she applied for a waitressing gig at Troon Country Club working remotely toward a Master's degree in biology from Miami University in Ohio.

"I was also working as a zookeeper, trying to do two jobs at the same time. It was started taking a toll," she said in a January interview. "I decided maybe I could drop down to one job. When I went to Troon for the interview, they had said they offered a scholarship to their employees that cover all needs I had for the master's program and

any materials that I needed to buy. I could drop down to one job focus on school."

Kenny saw the job as temporary to help her finish school, but her first orientation tour got her thinking. "They took us out on a tour of the golf course, the the first time that I'd ever been on a golf course. I got lucky because Troon Country Club is very small acreage. I think it's 64 acres of turf for 18 holes. It's a lot of desert habitat. I was like, 'Oh my goodness, this is what they look like.' And that's when my opinion of golf started to change a little bit. I would walk outside, talk to the superintendent or the horticulturist, and ask them questions about what they did. Seth [Miller], the superintendent, really cared —he had actually a background in forestry. Their horticulturist had done some field work. So I was fortunate to start learning from these people who had similar backgrounds. Troon Country Club is Audubon certified, so they asked if I wanted to help with some of the projects."

It was quite a leap in sensibility and focus for a self-professed big city kid.



“I grew up in Cleveland, Ohio, so I’ve always been tied to cities and more urban environments,” she said. “When golf came around, it was a perfect opportunity for me to take my perspective of someone who has lived in cities their whole life and see this new green space that I didn’t even know existed. And think about how this green space work within the urban landscape.”

“The focus of my Masters changed to ecological economics so I could explore those concepts on golf courses. How do golf courses run a business and support the surrounding environment as well. I was missing that social aspect that completes the three traditional pillars of sustainability — not only business and the environment, but also the people in the community, the people working in these spaces. I started thinking on a broader scale, how can golf courses serve this role in urban environments and how I see them as labs. There are lessons we can learn from golf to apply to public parks. So that’s kind of where my mind shifted — this urban landscape.”

Kenny finished her Master’s in December 2018, well versed in what goes into sustainable golf course management — not just from her time at Troon Country Club, but during off-season (summer) forays to Troon properties in Oregon and Wyoming.

“When I was in Wyoming, the [Troon] Vice President of Agronomy, Brian Hampson, stopped by for a site visit. He wanted me to come to the

corporate office to talk about creating a position. When I got back that winter, I met Brian, Dave Nicholls and Jeff Spangler, the top guys in agronomy. It wasn’t even an interview — they were discussing what they had been working on, their vision for the future, and asked my opinion and plans. Talking to them told me they cared from the corporate level. That’s when I transferred full-time into golf course maintenance to have some sort of idea of their day-to-day life. I did maintenance full-time for about nine months. I kept having conversations with them about creating a position.”

After helping Miller achieve ACSP Recertification for a couple seasons, Kenny was quite familiar with Audubon International and its multi-pronged approach to environmental stewardship. She met Frank LaVadera, Director of Environmental Programs for Golf, back in 2016.

“The property in Wyoming was Audubon certified and did the Monarchs in the Rough program. In fall 2019, when I took the Environmental Science position, we wanted to do an environmental audit, and we also knew the properties that needed help with environmental certification. So that’s when the relationship really developed with Frank. I reach out to him constantly, especially the past couple years as I’ve been visiting properties. I’ll ask him about how to handle specs for a wash pad, or I’ll tell him, ‘Hey, this is something we’re constantly struggling with in the certification. Could you advise how to handle this or modify it in the future?’ I try to always have a meeting with them and cover how the year has gone and how we can help each other out. Kat Welch is also super helpful with our Signature Sanctuary courses because those are more involved. I’ll talk to her, and in Women in Turf I get to interact with Kat on a different level.”

Troon’s ownership and management footprint, and its environmental goals and needs, are large indeed. Kenny’s travel schedule — and the breadth of her duties when she’s out there — reflects that. She’ll hit the road for a week and “try to maximize my time out there. For instance, next week I’m going to Florida,” she said in mid-January. “BallenIsles [in Palm Beach Gardens] has a wildlife foundation in their community. They asked if I’d come out for a bird watching walk. I’m

gonna host that with their members. And while I'm there, we have some leased properties in Jacksonville. I'm gonna go do an environmental audit for environmental and regulatory compliance, so it kind of dips into OSHA as well. That's a big part of what I do right now – those audits so we can kind of figure out where properties are and have a guideline for how to improve."

After seven years learning about golf sustainability and three and a half years in what's clearly a linchpin position in Troon's sustainability plan, Kenny looks forward to even bigger and brighter stewardship strides down the road.

"I'd like to expand my position into a broader sustainability department. I've focused on agronomy because that's how I started in golf. And agronomy pushed for the position. But the more I've been here, the more clubhouse staff, GMs and pros are asking how they can do things within the clubhouse. So that's one of my goals – broadening the scope of our department so we can talk about the clubhouse level, the office level. We could have regional offices, corporate offices. That's the ideal future."

Education is also key. "One other big thing on my agenda is working on the social aspect, providing opportunities for growth within the company and education. We are doing our first assistant superintendent speaker series – inviting all the assistants in Arizona to come to the corporate office. We've got a series of topics. The guys have been geeking out over it, which is cool to see. They can't wait for their fertilization talk

or their finance for superintendents – teaching them things that they didn't learn in school that are crucial for the job. We want to do four of them this year, and record them, so people out of state can view them. Depending on how it goes, we can work with our regional agronomists and set up some regional speaker series as well. I get really excited about that.

"We're also working on formal internships at some of our properties, including housing, so we can provide more opportunities to students. We're also working with the GreenKeeper app so that some people who come into turf science without a college degree can still get a 'degree' of sorts or certificate. They can get turf education without having to go through four more years of school. We're just trying to provide opportunities for growth."

Through it all, Kenny is happy to have a valuable and respected partner in Audubon International. "They've got the Green Lodging program and they've got the office space efficiency side. What Troon is doing it aligns with their mission as well."





GOLF COURSE SPOTLIGHT

Florida's Old Corkscrew Is A True Natural Wonder

In a region that serves up more golf holes per capita than anywhere else in the nation, Old Corkscrew manages to stand out from the southwest Florida crowd.

Located in Estero, the daily-fee, public, Audubon International Silver Signature Sanctuary course and the area's only Jack Nicklaus Signature Design puts all the region's natural magic in play. A wide array of wildlife thrives among the big, multi-tiered Tif Eagle greens, Celebration Bermuda fairways and handsome bunkers studded with tufts of tall fescue. Barriers of native turf act as filters for ponds and streams that frame at least a dozen holes, backed by old growth stands of oak, pine and cypress. And because Old Corkscrew is situated a few miles inland from the Gulf of Mexico, its high-bar environmental efforts stay intact even when Mother Nature unleashes its fiercest forces.

Take last fall's Hurricane Ian, the third-costliest weather disaster on record and the deadliest storm to strike Florida since 1935. Though it unleashed a nearly direct hit on the Naples area

— Fort Myers Beach and Sanibel Island took the brunt — and put dozens of nearby courses under feet of water, Old Corkscrew was back in business quickly.

"We're inland enough that we were open within a week, week and a half," says Jim Vajen, Old Corkscrew's superintendent since 2019. "We got six inches of rain and lost some trees, but nothing to really obstruct the golf. Some of my buddies saw their courses get flooded completely and were closed for a couple months. Some couldn't even reopen, they'll have to redo their courses completely."

Vajen and his crew, meanwhile, will oversee planned "redos" on their own terms while keeping their Audubon International Signature Sanctuary methods in effect (of course). First up this summer is re-grassing all 18 greens. "We'll put temporary greens out in the approaches and fairways, then kill off all the Bermuda grass on the greens because some of it has been contaminated by Celebration. We'll get a near side cut around the greens, strip it all, dig down, get all the organic

material to six to eight inches. We'll bring in new greens mix, reshape and contour, then float them out and grass them."

He expects the entire process to take about 10 weeks. "We're looking to be back open a hundred percent by November 1."

Beyond that, five or six years down the road, Vajen says that Old Corkscrew's owners, the Hoffman family, are eyeing a "complete renovation." In the meantime, they'll continue to build their bona fides as a model of sustainability, with Audubon International's guidance across the board. As spring set in, Vajen toured the property with Kat Welch, Director of Signature Sanctuary Certification, and Sarah Honan, Environmental Program Specialist.

"We went through everything — the entire golf course from tee to green. We went through the maintenance facility and the chemical and fertilizer storage areas, just making sure everything's contained, that we have spill cleanup kits onsite and can dispose of anything properly. It's very in-depth."

This most recent Audubon International site visit — every Signature Sanctuary property must be recertified every three years — gave Vajen deeper insight of just how thorough the process is, from keeping close track of active ingredients in every turf application to monitoring water quality. These requirements only enhance what the course's developers did on their own in the name of stewardship. "On greens [that border water features], for example, we have a special built-in system, almost like a levee system. Drainage goes through one end of a levee that filters the water as it rises, then overflows out of the green."

"Jim and the Old Corkscrew staff demonstrated their commitment to environmental sustainability on our recent site visit," Welch said. "Old Corkscrew blends into the natural landscape and truly feels like a sanctuary on course. I'm looking forward to continuing our partnership to ensure high quality play, and high-quality sustainability initiatives."

Vajen adds that since Old Corkscrew is a public course, a lot of customers aren't familiar with what goes into the certification process, but there's change afoot on that front.

"Since part of the certification process is edu-

cation and outreach, we will start doing bird tours, where folks can sign up and head out with an expert to see what kinds of birds they can spot," Vajen says. "Bird boxes are also part of the plan." Wildlife clubs, like golfers, are also bound to see the occasional bear, panther, bobcat, wild hog, deer, turtle and gator.

It's all part of the pure "sanctuary" vibe that Old Corkscrew enjoys alongside its Bear-built golf challenge. "Being a Jack Nicklaus Signature design, the greens are difficult with lots of undulations. It's very testing," Vajen says. "But there are no homes around the course. It's all golf."

And all-in for environmental stewardship, as anyone who snags a tee time will discover.

To learn more about how your local golf course can gain recognition for your environmental efforts and learn how to expand your initiatives through Audubon International's numerous environmental certifications, visit www.auduboninternational.org.





MONARCHS IN THE ROUGH SPOTLIGHT

Seeding the Future At University of Georgia Golf Course

When the University of Georgia's popular and beloved golf course achieved Audubon International Cooperative Sanctuary Certification in March 2023, it was ahead of the game when it came to preparation, execution and documentation of what they'd long been up to on the sustainability front.

Director of Agronomy Scott Griffith and his crew had already installed buffers around their ponds and waterways. They'd created and maintained native areas to attract a wealth of wildlife, even taking part in a "BioBlitz." They'd developed and maintained a bentgrass turf that thrives in winter and stands up to sometimes brutal summer heat. And on and on.

Along the way, they'd also set aside space on one of the course's out-of-play zones to plant varieties of milkweed developed through the university's Georgia State Botanical Gardens. This investment allowed Griffith to include the popular, ever-growing Monarchs in the Rough

program as a key part of its ongoing stewardship effort, with valuable input from Audubon International experts including Frank LaVadera, Director of Environmental Programs for Golf. To be an "official" Monarchs in the Rough member, a club needs to commit to setting aside at least one acre for milkweed and wildflowers and gain access to seed provided for free by Audubon International and its partners.

"We started off a little slow," Griffith said in June. "We planted material we acquired from the UGA Bee lab, who I have a relationship with because I'm a beekeeper. They've been a huge help to me."

The spark that led to Griffith planning to join Monarchs in the Rough? A Bee Lab fundraiser. "They were selling perennial plants, pollinator plants to raise money for their programs," he said. "So we purchased our plants from them. We were trying different varieties of perennials to see what works, what doesn't work, what deer like.

Nothing's deer proof, but we wanted to find out, 'what do they like — this one versus that one?' We have a really healthy deer population on the golf course. So that makes it kind of challenging when it comes to flowers."

Griffith admits that the milkweed strain "sweet spot" in terms of deer damage remains a moving target.

"We're experiencing some deer right now, nipping off the tops of our plants. When I first put them in, I treated them with a deer repellent just to get them established and rooted in so they couldn't pull them out of the ground. Then I pulled off that because I wanted to see what they would go after. It didn't take long. They're definitely going after it. They're not eating it to the ground, but they're just nipping off the tops. We're not gonna get any flowers because they're just taking everything off. But we're about to jump back on some repellent to see if we can stop them."

So far this summer, Griffith hasn't observed any egg laying or other monarch activity. "We put [the milkweed] in with some other perennials and it's still kind of getting settled in. We anticipate it being a third-year deal. When we hit that third year, that's when we'll see [activity]."

When they hit that important deer diversion target, Griffith said the course's Monarchs in the Rough welcome mat will only get bigger. "We expect to expand our square footage over the coming years because we've got plenty of space. We will eventually get to at least one acre if not more. The current area we are working on has a dual purpose — we are evaluating different perennials to see which varieties work best for us."

That fits right into Griffith's five-year sustainability goal as he and his crew work hard to build on their newly minted ACSP for Golf Certified status.

"I think we've got a good base. Now we just need to expand on what we're doing — expanding pollinator plots, expanding monarch butterfly habitats, putting in more hives. Maybe we'll pull a little honey off it and share it with our food services and tout what we're doing."

To discover how to join UGA Golf Course and many others in this vital sustainability effort, visit www.monarchsinarough.org.

Photos courtesy of Scott Griffith/University of Georgia





NEW MEMBERS & CERTIFICATIONS

NEW MEMBERS JULY 2022-JUNE 2023

ACSP FOR GOLF

AUSTRALIA

Margaret River Golf Club (epar)

CANADA

Campbell River Golf Club at Naturally Pacific Resort

Club de Golf Knowlton

Edmonton Country Club

River Bend Golf and Recreation Area

CHINA

Shaoxing Jian Lake Golf Club

COLOMBIA

Club Campestre Guaymaral

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Al Zorah Golf Club

UNITED STATES

ALASKA

Anchorage Golf Course

ARIZONA

Yuma Golf Course

Oro Valley Country Club

Seville Golf and Country Club

CALIFORNIA

Ancil Hoffman Golf Course

Bennett Valley Golf Course

Don Knabe Golf Center

GolfLinks Consulting Inc

Mission Hills Country Club

Monterey Pines Golf Club

Newport Beach Country Club

Ojai Valley Inn & Spa

Griffith Park Golf Complex (Wilson & Harding Golf Courses)

Hansen Dam Golf Course

Harbor Park Golf Course

LA City Golf Division

Penmar Golf Course

Rancho Park Golf Complex

Roosevelt, Los Feliz, & Tregnan Golf Courses

Sepulveda Golf Complex (Encino & Balboa Golf Courses)

Woodley Lakes Golf Course

COLORADO

Boulder Country Club

Flying Horse North Golf Club

RainDance National Golf Club

FLORIDA

Boca Grove Property Owner Association

Esplanade Golf and Country Club

Esplanade Golf and Country Club at Lakewood Ranch

Highlands Ridge Operations (Highlands Ridge Golf Course /

The Preserve at Highlands Ridge

Monarch Country Club

Oceanside Golf and Country Club

Pensacola Country Club

Seminole Legacy Golf Club

Trump National Doral

University Park Country Club

HAWAII

Makena Golf & Beach Club

IDAHO

Osprey Meadows Golf Course

ILLINOIS

Elk Grove Park District

Boulder Ridge Country Club

LOUISIANA

Bayou DeSiard Country Club

MARYLAND

Montgomery County Golf

Sligo Creek Golf Course

Eagles Nest Country Club

Naval Academy Golf Club

Oak Creek Golf Club

MASSACHUSETTS

Hyannis Golf Course

Olde Barnstable Fairgrounds Golf Course

The Cape Club

The Haven Country Club

MICHIGAN

Kalamazoo Country Club

MINNESOTA

Medina Golf & Country Club

NORTH CAROLINA

Black Mountain Golf Course

NEW YORK

Sleepy Hollow Country Club

The Summit Club at Armonk

Whispering Pines Golf Club

PENNSYLVANIA

Skytop Lodge Golf Course

SOUTH CAROLINA

IGM at Rose Hill

Wedgefield Country Club

TENNESSEE

Temple Hills C.C.

TEXAS

Omni Hotels and Resorts

VIRGINIA

Dominion Valley Country Club

WISCONSIN

Geneva National Golf Club

SIGNATURE SANCTUARY

CANADA

Cabot Citrus Farms - Phase 1

UNITED STATES

FLORIDA

Homeowners Association of Eagle Creek

WYOMING

Snake River Sporting Club



NEW MEMBERS & CERTIFICATIONS

GREEN LODGING

ARIZONA

Hyatt Piñon Pointe

CALIFORNIA

Hyatt Highlands Inn Carmel

Marriott Vacation Club Pulse, San Francisco

Marriott's Grand Residence Club Tahoe

Marriott's Timber Lodge

Westin Desert Willow

COLORADO

Hyatt Residence Club Mountain Lodge

Sheraton Lakeside Terrace

Hyatt Residence Club Breckenridge, Main Street Station

Sheraton Mountain Vista

Sheraton Steamboat Resort Villas

FLORIDA

Hyatt Siesta Key

Marriott Vacation Club Pulse South Beach

Sheraton PGA Vacation Resort

Vistana Beach Club

HAWAII

Hyatt Residence Club Ka'anapali Maui

MISSOURI

Paradise Point Resort

The Cliffs at Long Creek

Big Cedar Wilderness Club Condo Association, Inc.

NEVADA

Hyatt High Sierra Lodge

Marriott's Grand Chateau

NEW YORK

Marriott Vacation Club Pulse, New York City

Sonesta White Plains Downtown

SOUTH CAROLINA

Sheraton Broadway Plantation Resort Villas

UTAH

Marriott's Mountainside

VIRGINIA

Marriott Frenchman Cove

Westin St. John Villa Resort Company, Inc.

VERMONT

Brass Lantern Inn

NEW CERTIFICATIONS

MARCH 15-JUNE 15 2023

ACSP FOR GOLF

FLORIDA

Duran Golf Club

ILLINOIS

Wood Oaks Green ParkHong Kong

MARYLAND

Leisure World Golf Course

Woodmont Country Club

OREGON

Sheep Ranch at Bandon Dunes Golf Resort

SIGNATURE SANCTUARY

FLORIDA

The TwinEagles Club Inc. Eagle and Talon Courses

RECERTIFICATIONS SINCE

MARCH 15-JUNE 15 2023

ACSP FOR GOLF

CHINA

Xili Golf & Country Club

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Saadiyat Beach Golf Club

UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA

Admiral Baker Golf Course

Cherry Island Golf Course

Tilden Park Golf Course

Whittier Narrows Golf Course

CONNECTICUT

Aspetuck Valley Country Club

Fairview Country Club

Wee Burn Country Club

FLORIDA

Copperleaf Golf Club

Estero Country Club

High Ridge Country Club

Okeeheelee Golf Course

The Vinoy Resort and Golf Club, Autograph Collection

GEORGIA

The Ford Field & River Club

KANSAS

Ironhorse Golf Club

NEW YORK

Piping Rock Club

PENNSYLVANIA

Diamond Run Golf Club

SOUTH DAKOTA

Elmwood Golf Course

SIGNATURE SANCTUARY

FLORIDA

Hoffman Old Corkscrew Golf Club LLC.

Pelican Preserve

NORTH CAROLINA

Brightleaf at the Park

Compass Pointe Realty LLC

The Hasentree Club

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