



## Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf **Dispelling Common Myths**

There are a number of “myths” and misconceptions that we hear from time to time about the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP) for Golf. The following information dispels these myths and answers questions you may have about the program.



ACSP for Golf members are often pleased to find that many of their current practices count toward certification.

“I like that the program is realistic in its approach and sets achievable goals. Golf courses are not required to make significant and expensive changes to their infrastructure in order to become certified. Any course can do it simply by altering their approach to property management.”

Darin Hull, Environmental Management Coordinator  
The Glencoe Golf & Country Club | Calgary, AB

### **Myth #1: Being in the ACSP for Golf is too difficult.**

Although our program possesses the necessary rigor to make an environmental impact, the process is not difficult. In fact, you may already be taking actions that can lead to certification. The key is to take each step one at a time rather than letting yourself becoming overwhelmed by the entire task. Start by focusing on the Site Assessment and Environmental Plan and tackle the other program elements at your own pace.

### **Myth #2: We don't have the staff, money, or time.**

Any existing golf course can join ACSP for Golf and work toward earning the Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary designation. A course does not need to cover a large amount of acreage or contain a lot of habitat area to get certified—it just needs to practice good environmental management, and we are here to help! Certified golf courses range from small nine-hole facilities and lower budget public courses to country clubs, high end resorts, and PGA facilities.

### **Myth #3: An environmentally-friendly golf course is a brown golf course.**

We understand that in order to have a playable course, chemicals will need to be used. Instead of requiring you to stop these practices outright, we look to help you manage a playable course with as little chemical input as possible. Working on certification in the ACSP for Golf can help you reduce the amount of chemicals needed and reduce the adverse environmental impact from their use and application (i.e. runoff and water quality). Fifty-two members of the ACSP for Golf and Audubon International Signature Program were ranked among America's 100 Greatest Golf Courses by Golf Digest in 2009. The list's top ten included six ACSP for Golf participants, two of which were certified.

“The absolute beauty of the ACSP is that everybody wins. First and foremost, the environment and land are protected and enhanced to maximize wildlife and to provide a sanctuary for not only for wildlife, but also for people.”

Eric Niemur, Director of Grounds  
Fox Hills Golf and Banquet Center | Plymouth, MI

## Myth #4: Certification materials must be perfect and sent in all at once.

The ACSP for Golf is not a test, nor will you be graded. Instead, we work with you to find ways to meet certification guidelines based on the unique strengths and weaknesses of your site. We're here to help you, not create roadblocks.

"This is not just some philanthropic activity. It's good business. We conserve fuel, we conserve electricity, and we have made this a part of our risk management system."

Ken Giedd, Former Director of Golf  
Kingsmill Resort | Williamsburg, VA

## Myth #5: Our golf course policies will prevent us from being certified.

We know that some of the practices we would like to see on a golf course may not be applicable or feasible in every situation, especially in the Outreach and Education category. This is why the ACSP for Golf is a flexible program. If you have any concerns about suggested or required projects, please call us to discuss your limitations.



Pine Valley Golf Club, named the number one golf course in the world by Golf Digest in 2014, is a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary.

## Myth #6: We will never be able to afford the new equipment needed to get certified.

As mentioned earlier, you are likely already doing many of the things required to be certified. It is unlikely you will need to make large investments in new equipment or technology to meet our standards. Again, please call us if you have any concerns about suggested or required projects.

## Myth #7: My golfers will never accept the changes I would need to make.

We have heard many success stories of superintendents and assistants who have educated their golfers and membership about ACSP for Golf and have gained widespread buy in and support. Once golfers understand why certain

steps are being taken (i.e. grass is kept higher around ponds and streams to buffer chemical runoff), they are likely to embrace these changes. This is why Outreach and Education is an important part of the certification process. An Audubon International survey found that golfer satisfaction had either improved (66%) or been maintained (34%) since their course joined the ACSP for Golf.

"The entire process of pursuing certification helped unite our membership behind a worthwhile endeavor. It seemed to uplift our spirit of community, which was beneficial in countless ways."

Robert Haley, Audubon Committee Chair  
Creek Course at Hammock Dunes | Palm Coast, FL

If you have any additional questions, please let us know. Our staff is available to provide information and guidance to help you implement environmental projects and achieve certification.

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