

# EVALUATING PERFORMANCE

*A new tool to help superintendents rate their environmental performance.*

by JEAN T. MACKAY



*The Environmental Performance Audit will help golf courses conduct a thorough self-assessment to measure overall environmental performance. After conducting the Audit, the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program is a great way to put results from the Audit into practice on the golf course. (Kapalua Golf Club, Kapalua, Hawaii)*

**I**F YOU'RE LIKE MOST superintendents, you consider yourself to be a steward of the environment. One of the things you likely enjoy most about your job is working outdoors amidst the natural beauty of water, grass, trees, and wildlife on your golf course. But can you be sure you're not just touting environmental stewardship, while in actual practice you're hitting a double bogey? How do you *know* whether your management practices are really on par with widely accepted standards for environmental performance?

Now, an effective new tool is available to help you do just that. Audubon International, a non-profit environmental organization known for its work on stewardship and sustainability, has developed an *Environmental Performance Audit* to help superintendents, club managers, and others rate their environmental performance.

The Environmental Performance Audit is a self-assessment or evaluation that uses environmental performance indicators, or best management practices, to measure overall environmental performance. The Audit is a simple, inexpensive means to help superintendents and club managers evaluate current management practices that safeguard and enhance the quality of the environment. It can further be used as a set of guidelines to help superintendents plan and establish appropriate environmental strategies in areas that are not currently addressed by management.

"We wanted superintendents and club managers to be able to evaluate themselves instead of having a regula-

tory agency look over their shoulders," says Dr. Miles (Bud) Smart, Director of Environmental Planning for Audubon International. "The Audit will give people a useful snapshot of their performance and help them identify their strengths as well as any areas that need improvement."

To develop a fair and comprehensive audit with key environmental performance indicators, Audubon International collaborated with environmental and turf researchers; experts in environmental planning, water quality, and wildlife; superintendents and club managers; as well as organizations such as the USGA, CMAA, and GCSAA. In addition, Audubon International's nearly ten years of experience working directly with golf course superintendents has resulted in an audit that is user friendly and easy to complete.

The Environmental Performance Audit is currently available in a variety of forums. Club managers may obtain a copy of the Environmental Performance Audit for *full facilities* through CMAA. Audubon International staff offered seminars for club managers during the CMAA World Conference in Atlanta in February, and will follow up with additional seminars throughout the year. The Environmental Performance Audit for *golf courses* is available to members of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program. In addition, GCSAA members will have the opportunity to take the Audit during a new seminar, "Integrated Environmental Management," offered by GCSAA's Continuing Education program.

## On Par with the Environment

The Environmental Performance Audit is not a test. The Audit presents a full range of environmental management practices and serves as a way to identify current strengths, as well as future priorities and areas for improvement.

Key components of the Environmental Performance Audit for golf courses include:

- Environmental Planning, Training, and Communication
- Wildlife and Habitat Management
- Water Conservation and Water Quality Management
- Chemical Use Reduction and Safety

"We hope people will follow up on taking the Audit by participating in one of the available educational forums or joining the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program to learn more about taking action based on the results of the Audit," stated Smart. "In the future, we hope also to secure funding to make the Audit available via CD-ROM so that participants can enter information into the Audit on their computer. The program would then calculate your score and provide interpretation for the meaning of the score."

Regardless of how you take advantage of the Audit, one thing is certain: the Environmental Performance Audit defines the standard for golf course environmental practice. By taking it and taking action, you'll ensure that you *are* the steward you want to be.

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