

**FOR** those corporations and individuals who want to align their newly committed green guidelines when running an incentive program that almost always includes a golf outing, they no longer need to do extensive searches. There are now thousands of US and International golf courses that have become Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuaries.

Audubon International sponsors the certification. The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses is an award winning education and certification program that helps golf courses protect our environment and preserve the natural heritage of the game of golf.

For a golf facility to receive Audubon Certification, Audubon International provides a Site Assessment and Environmental Planning Form that provides guidance and lets the specific golf course develop a plan that works for that particular course as well as educational information to help the course with: environmental planning, wildlife and habitat management, chemical use reduction and safety, water conservation, water quality management and outreach and education. By implementing and documenting environmental management practices in the above areas, a golf course is then eligible for designation as a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary, improving its stature and reputation.

Recently Marriott International, which boasts 62 golf courses worldwide, has certified 34 courses.

Robert Waller, senior director of grounds, Marriott Golf said “Our goal is to engage our guests and associates from round the world in this unique process (Audubon Certification) and to further our commitment to promoting the game of golf in an eco-friendly way.” Visit [www.Marriottgolf.com](http://www.Marriottgolf.com) for more information.

In addition to the Audubon Certification program a host of hotels that operate golf courses and independent golf courses have adopted a number of “green” measures that go beyond preserving the land.

For example, another well-known resort Amelia Island Plantation, Florida was named to Golf Digest’s top 10 Green Golf Resorts in 2008 for its four courses. Here are some of the green initiatives: resort-wide recycling in all of its food and beverage, lodging and office facilities, use of biodegradable chemicals for pest extermination and plant fertilization, use of only green-friendly lighting and printing and

# Golf Goes Green!

disposable corn and potato based containers for carry-out products.

Another well know Florida resort, The Naples Beach Hotel & Golf Club has earned the prestigious "One Palm" rating by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. To earn this certification the resort had to adopt practices for staff and guests that reduce waste and conserve natural resources including: water-efficient shower heads, an extensive recycling program, installing high efficiency air filters and high energy lighting, use of "green sealed" cleaning products that reduce toxicity and utilization of organically-based fertilizers, nutrients and pesticides on its golf courses.


Green Links Golf Resort & Conference Center also located in Naples, Florida is making improvements to its facilities so it may receive the Florida Green Lodging Certification. These improvements include: a trash recycling program to decrease solid wastes, using energy efficient bulbs to conserve energy, using reclaimed water for irrigation,

business cards and all resort collateral are printed on recycled paper, they use refillable, non aerosol pump sprays for laundry and cleaning supplies and they have recently purchased Energy Star washers and dryers.

As far away as Hawaii, the greening goes beyond what is expected. For instance the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently awarded the Jack Nicklaus designed course on the big island, the Hualalai Resort Golf Course, a citation for its 2.5 acre Punawai Pond which to most golfers is just a beautiful pond. However there's much more than meets the eye. Punawai Pond, which means "source of spring water" in Hawaiian is a 3-million gallon ecosystem with thriving wetland vegetation, native birds and bountiful sea life. The 10 foot deep pond is lined with a foot of gravel and has two floating island plants. Bacteria and microorganisms introduced to the root systems and gravel remove impurities. But more important the pond is a working aquaculture farm, producing approximately 30 Moi and between 15 and 20 pounds of Pacific shrimp every week that are served in the resort's

restaurants. Officials from the EPA noted that Punawai Pond is a worthy example of how a business can interact with the environment, benefiting both operations and natural resources.

But the greening of golf does not stop on the golf course. For instance Wilson Sporting Goods, of Chicago has come out with an "Eco Carry golf bag made of recycled plastic bottles that is not available at retail and only offered to the special markets. And how about the Arizona based Dixon Earth Golf Ball. The Dixon Earth golf ball is "green" to the core. The Earth core is made from a proprietary polymer that maintains the playable properties of the ball, but ensures that it is 100% renewable. The entire ball is manufactured with materials that can be recycled Even the packaging is made from 100% recycled material. And of course there are the clothes, most notable is Ashworth's Organic Golf Apparel and Dixon also makes an organic golf hat.

So if it's green golfing you are after there are lots of ways you can participate. Go green! 

Have a Rewarding Day!

