

AUDUBON SANCTUARY NEWS

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AUDUBON
INTERNATIONAL



Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary

AUDUBON RECERTIFICATION

Lake Tahoe Golf Course (LTGC) has been a certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary since 2003, through the non-profit Audubon International. Certification required implementation of best management practices in five key areas. Periodic recertification, as took place again this spring, requires LTGC to show continued improvements as outlined below with some of our recertification projects.

1. Wildlife and Habitat Management

To increase bird and butterfly habitat, LTGC planted several gardens specifically designed to feed local bird and butterfly species, use only native plants on the developed portion of the course, left tree snags when safe, built bird and duck boxes and installed tall nesting platforms for raptors • Planted aspen trees along the fairways to provide more wildlife habitat and better delineate wildlife corridors • To increase food for raptors, LTGC stocked ponds with rainbow trout and left brush piles for small rodents in out-of-bounds areas • Retired and restored over 3,000 ft. of paved cart paths.

2. Water and Energy Conservation

Use a weather station to monitor current conditions and evapotranspiration rates and a soil moisture probe to better determine the moisture needs of the course • Installed energy-saving, low wattage bulbs and occupancy lighting switches in buildings • Added two solar-powered pond aerators.

3. Water Quality and Management

Perform regular water quality testing on course ground wells to monitor possible nutrient and pesticide leaching • Maintain plant buffer zones around all water features to aid in nutrient absorption • Accept urban runoff from surrounding residential areas to aid in sediment and nutrient removal, purifying the urban runoff before it flows into Lake Tahoe • Use incoming urban runoff to maintain a pond that provides excellent bird habitat for migrating birds along the Pacific Flyway • Purify wash water from the mowing and maintenance machinery using an all-natural wastewater treatment system.

4. Chemical Use Reduction and Safety

Employ an Integrated Pest Management Plan • Increased naturalized areas of low to no maintenance on course • Eliminated the use of rodenticides and insecticides

• Established buffer and no-spray zones around all ponds and along river corridors • Built swallow nesting perches and bat boxes, as both feed on insects • Employ mulching mowers to naturally fertilize with recycled cut grass on fairways • Use no phosphorus, ultra-low nitrogen fertilizer on greens

5. Outreach and Education

Write Audubon newsletters to educate golfers on local environmental issues • Provide outreach and educational materials to locals and guests via social media • Maintain an Audubon educational display at the course clubhouse • Supported local Girl Scout troops with merit badge activities by supplying bird box kits for building and installing on the course • Host many educational and charitable events at the course • Employ local college student interns on the course.



Bobby Jaeger, Superintendent and Kevin Sommerfeld, GM with Audubon Signage and Clubhouse Audubon Display

AWARDS FOR LAKE TAHOE GOLF COURSE

Audubon improvement projects at LTGC have led to:

- **(2) Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards (ELGAs):** For current and past LTGC Superintendents, Bobby Jaeger and John Stanowski, in recognition of their outstanding environmental stewardship efforts.
- **Groundwater Guardian Green Site:** Recognition for LTGC Superintendent, Bobby Jaeger, for excellence in water quality management.
- **Published article in Golf Course Management Magazine:** Titled *A Crystal-clear Partnership*, highlighting the partnership between CA State Parks and LTGC staff, culminating in the successful restoration of Angora Creek, as it runs through LTGC.

LTGC IS IN NEED OF UPGRADES

Lake Tahoe Golf Course was constructed between 1958 and 1962. CA State Parks acquired the property in 1984 and divided it into Washoe Meadow State Park and Lake Valley State Recreation Area. CA State Parks manages the properties and leases LTGC to American Golf as its concessionaire. Both properties fit well into the mission of CA State Parks "... *to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.*"

LTGC is about 60 years old and its infrastructure is inefficient, deteriorating and long overdue for replacement and modernization. The table below lists the lifespan of various golf course infrastructure for optimal efficiency.

ITEM	YEARS
Greens (1)	15 – 30 years
Bunker Sand	5 – 7 years
Irrigation System	10 – 30 years
Irrigation Control System	10 – 15 years
Pump Station	15 – 20 years
Cart Paths – asphalt (2)	5 – 10 years (or longer)
Cart Paths – concrete	15 – 30 years (or longer)
Practice Range Tees	5 – 10 years
Tees	15 – 20 years
Corrugated Metal Pipes	15 – 30 years
Bunker Drainage Pipes (3)	5 – 10 years
Mulch	1 – 3 years
Grass (4)	Varies

"Most golf courses have a life-cycle of 15 years and because ours is 60-years old, it is in dire need of repairs."
Kevin Sommerfeld, General Manager of LTGC



Broken Course Irrigation Pipes and Repairs Are Common

PROPOSED COURSE RECONFIGURATION PROVIDES UPGRADE OPPORTUNITIES

The Upper Truckee River Restoration and Golf Course Reconfiguration Project will restore the 1.5-mile section of the Upper Truckee River (UTR) that runs through LTGC. It requires several golf holes be relocated away from the river and a redesign of the course layout to stay within the Lake Valley State Recreation Area footprint. It also provides a unique and welcomed opportunity to upgrade and modernize LTGC, while bolstering local recreational amenities that will directly impact the regional economy.

Golf Course Architect Forrest Richardson

<https://www.golfgroupltd.com/about/forrest-richardson-avgca/>

Forrest Richardson, Golf Architect, has designed over 50 courses, authored five books on golf course design, was listed in "Most Innovative People in Golf" by Golf Magazine and is Past President of the American Society of Golf. He is renowned for designing courses for playability and sustainability and has won numerous awards for excellence and innovative designs. His draft conceptual layout for LTGC, designed for fun and to grow the sport for future generations, is shown below and is also on display in the clubhouse and on the project website listed in the box below.



IMPORTANT FEATURES OF THE NEW COURSE

- LTGC stays within Lake Valley State Recreation Area, reconfiguring holes out of the floodplain, to increase season playability and aid restoration
- Preserves Audubon-certified, 18-hole championship course with similar slope, par and yardage to the existing course, with returning nines
- Retains competitively-priced public course for locals and tourists, preserves economic vitality from millions of dollars in visitor spending comprising 2/3 of golf play, dozens of local jobs, home course for South Tahoe High School's golf teams and community events hub
- Retains putting green and practice range
- Replaces and upgrades dilapidated irrigation system and outdated weather station for improved reliability, precise targeted watering and increased water efficiency
- Replaces course turf and greens with modern drought and disease-resistant varieties
- Replaces sand to improve drainage and bunker playability
- Will install plumbed restrooms to replace Port-O-Pottys
- Maintains revenue of \$650,000 annually to CA State Parks that helps keep other State Parks open
- Reduces turf area by incorporating more naturalized areas in a links course design, preserves main tree corridors, and enhances on-course wetlands and drainage

www.restoreuppertruckeeriver.net

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