



Red Rocks Country Club Strategy For Sustainability Is Solid as a Rock

RED ROCKS COUNTRY CLUB PRESIDENT GLEN ZOBJECK, WINE GLASS IN HAND, TOASTS THE NEW CULINARY GARDEN ALONG WITH WIFE GLENDA AND THEIR FAMILY; THEY ARE JOINED BY GENERAL MANAGER MARK CONDON, LEFT OF GLENDA, AND EXECUTIVE CHEF ROBERT MEITZER. THE DISPLAY IS SET ON THE ORIGINAL FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT CLUBHOUSE DOOR THAT WILL BECOME THE DINING TABLE FOR THE NEW GARDEN.

Red Rocks Country Club leadership is leveraging its magnificent location in the foothills of the Rockies, along with its passion for the great outdoors to strategically create a new “family-friendly green lifestyle” model for progressive-thinking private clubs.

The club and its challenging 7,000-yard-plus championship golf course are enticingly remote while still a part of the sophisticated Denver urban area.

Situated just two miles west of metro Denver’s western beltway, Red Rocks Country Club is tucked in a spectacular valley 6,000 feet above sea level behind the jagged rocky cliffs of the Dakota and Dinosaur Ridges that locals call “the Hogback.”

Just north of the club is world-famous Red Rocks Park and amphitheatre, whose dramatic stone formations can be seen from the clubhouse and patio. From the 17th tee box, golfers can see Denver’s downtown skyline 30 miles below and the peaked tent roof of Denver International Airport 50 miles away. Deer, elk, hawks and eagles linger as part of the scene.

NATURE AND CULTURE

Club leaders believe that the natural environment, welcoming culture and a strong strategic plan provide a solid stage for sustainable growth for generations to come.

Incorporated in 1993, Red Rocks Country Club’s is a young culture connected to the earth and inclusive of

BY CAROL GREEN

women and families. While other clubs struggle to change their culture and develop programs for families or new women golfers, a warm and welcoming approach has always been central to the Red Rocks heritage.

“We are a new type of club that truly respects our land and natural resources,” explained Red Rocks Country Club General Manager Mark Condon. Trained at Disney University and Ritz Carlton, Condon has a distinguished career in metro Denver private club management.

“Our members value activities that connect us to the heritage of our location,” said Condon who champions water conservation, club gardening and the inclusive culture of the club.

In such a stunning natural setting, it’s no wonder that Red Rocks Country Club already is on the “green” pathway. Among Denver area clubs, it has emerged as a leader in the sustainability movement.

The first plants are popping up this summer in the Culinary Garden, a two-acre produce patch replacing a waste area visible to golfers on the ninth fairway near the clubhouse. Outdoor feasts in the field, dinners of hand-selected favorite produce are the vision of Executive Chef Robert Meitzer, who became passionate about the green movement while teaching sustainability curriculum at Denver’s Johnston & Wales University College of Culinary Arts.

The new garden is his top professional passion.

Last season, Chef Robert planted his own organic herb garden behind the clubhouse kitchen. The Book Club discussed “Animal, Vegetable or Miracle,” by Barbara Kingsolver; Chef Robert created a fresh menu mostly from local farmers’ markets and his own garden.

“Producing our own food and living off the earth is very fundamental to our roots,” explains board president Glen Zobjeck. “I’m sure Culinary Garden reservations will be prized.”

The Culinary Garden dining tables are re-purposed Frank Lloyd Wright doors that graced the clubhouse entrance for many years. Throughout the growing season, the table will be set with varietal hand-harvested chilies, beets, onions, lettuces, squashes, cucumbers, leeks, radishes, carrots and eggplant. The garden dining area will include low walls and trellises and stone pavers to add warmth on cool Colorado evenings.

lises and stone pavers to add warmth on cool Colorado evenings.

“I love great fresh food and wine and visiting with friends,” sums up Zobjeck in explaining why he enjoys Red Rocks Country Club. “The garden is an example of the vision and excitement we have come to expect from our professional staff. Yet, you will see chef Robert at the local farmer’s market shopping for the freshest and the best. He’s a very down-to-earth guy.”

Water is essential for garden and golf course survival in the West. Red Rocks Country Club was originally part of a ranch. Early club members used their private golf carts to carry buckets of water along with their golf clubs to nurture perennials planted near tee boxes.

Now, the board is completing a multiple-year project to replace the pipeline that brings critical water from nearby South Turkey Creek to the club’s two reservoirs. Not long ago, the club lined one of its two storage reservoirs to prevent seepage and conserve water. Also, a few years ago, the club removed thirsty fairway grass around the tees and along the fairways and replaced it with native grasses requiring only rainwater during the hot summer months.

Board Treasurer Louis Raskasky, a veteran finance executive, believes the board is making good choices in saving water. For example, he points out that golf course water consumption has dropped by 30 percent while 600 yards of play have been added, allowing the course to top 7,000 yards.

In addition to 18 holes of challenging mountain golf, members have access to a network of hiking trails through nearly 2,000 private acres of mountainous open space and two private lakes that they share with wildlife.

Families may fish in one of the lakes and with spring comes a special fishing derby for children.

SUSTAINABLE ORGANIC PLAN

Leaders of Red Rocks Country Club realized that to sustain their culture and protect its environment, they need a strategic plan with clear objectives and goals. A professional strategic planner and facilitator, director Linda Irwin led

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Leaders of Red Rocks Country Club realized that to sustain their culture and protect its environment, they need a strategic plan with clear objectives and goals. A professional strategic planner and facilitator, director Linda Irwin led teams through a year-long dynamic process: “You might say it’s an organic strategy,” she says of the living document and action plans that have resulted.



Mirimichi A 'Green' Place of Happy Retreat

By Heather Arias de Cordoba

"Environmental sustainability at Mirimichi is about more than what we can do at our course," says Justin Timberlake, entertainer and co-owner of Mirimichi, an eco-friendly public course near Memphis, Tennessee.

"It's about taking a leadership role and encouraging other golf courses and organizations of all kinds around the world to emulate our commitment towards making a positive impact on the world that we live in.

"This is where I grew up, this is home...and it always will be for me," maintains Timberlake. So, when the formerly named Big Creek Golf Course came up for auction in 2007, Timberlake and his family bought the property.

"Any time you can give back to that and get 18 holes in, it's a win-win," Timberlake continued.

Bringing It To The Green

By Benjamin Warren

Sowing the Seeds of Sustainable Growth (my last article for the *Boardroom Green Edition, May/June 2010*) argued that securing social and environmental recognition is not a revolution for the golf industry. An efficiently managed golf club can present the highest quality product while minimizing resource use, maximizing outcomes for people and the environment, and communicating this in a way that is understood by local communities and trusted by government.

With the help of the Golf Environment Organization (GEO - www.golfenvironment.org) many golf clubs around the world - private, daily fee, resort and municipal - are achieving these outcomes today.

The solution is GEO OnCourse™, a suite of tools and step-by-step guidance that support golf management teams in achieving the prestigious GEO Certified™ award. The five clubs profiled in this article are *bringing*

When Timberlake purchased the property with his mother and stepfather, Lynn and Paul Harless, the course was struggling financially and in need of extensive ground restructuring in order to meet championship requirements.

Resolute from the get go to improve the course, keep the course public and make it as eco-friendly as possible, Timberlake posed the question, “Is it possible for a golf course to actually be green?”

A little over two years later, the answer is a resounding yes! Mirimichi is the first course in the U.S. to receive classic certification by Audubon International and one of just 14 clubs in the world to be certified by the Golf Environment Organisation (GEO), an international non-profit organization dedicated to helping golf achieve its potential as a social, environmental and economic asset.

“What we see (Mirimichi) is a model example of sustainability in golf,” says Jonathan Smith, CEO of the GEO. “Mirimichi is well integrated into the community, and has focused on maximizing the site’s ecological value while minimizing resource consumption.

“Mirimichi highlights that with the engagement of motivated staff members who are actively encouraged to

explore common sense opportunities to enhance the facility’s environmental and social value. Golf really can deliver a diverse range of benefits to local people and ecosystems.”

Mirimichi reopened in September 2010 with a finished course, a 10,000 sq. ft. Mirimichi Performance and Learning Center and a Little Mirimichi 9-hole, par-35 course for beginners.

GOING GREEN

In the beginning, sustainability consultants from Audubon Environmental were called in to guide Mirimichi.

“With your average golf course, more than half of the property is not even used to play golf on,” says Audubon Environmental’s chief technical officer Russ Bodie.

“A big part of making a course environmentally sustainable is looking at those out-of-play areas. At Mirimichi, we were able to eliminate more than 100 acres of turf grass on the out-of-play areas and replace it with native grasses that require much less maintenance, fertilizer and water.

“These areas have been planted with wildflowers and thousands of trees and shrubs native to west Tennessee and are now managed as natural habitats. These areas can be used a habitats for resident animals



PAGE 22: THE WOODS BEHIND HOLE 15 AT MIRIMICHI

PAGE 23: JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE PLAYING THE COURSE

PAGE 24: FAIRWAY ON HOLE 17

and as safe corridors for animals to move across the course,” Bodie adds.

In addition to addressing the out-of-play areas, the Mirimichi team also replaced the entire fleet of golf carts with new electric carts. They installed a new irrigation system that reduces water consumption by using software links that measure on-site rainfall. And they are taking a more proactive,

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it to the green for different reasons, but all are achieving their desired outcomes by working through a simple and user-friendly process.

Broken Sound Club, Boca Raton, Florida GEO Certified™ February 2011

A 5-Star Platinum Club of America and host of the Champions Tour Allianz Championship since 2007, the expansive Broken Sound Club is a social and recreational hub at the urban heart of Boca Raton. For general manager John Crean, CCM, it was a logical step - if not an easy one - for his team to take environmental protection and enhancement to the core of the club’s business model.

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THE BOARD AND MANAGEMENT TEAM OF BROKEN SOUND RECEIVE THE GEO CERTIFIED™ AWARD FROM GEO CHIEF EXECUTIVE JONATHAN SMITH (PICTURED HOLDING CERTIFICATE).

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"To be the first club in Florida to achieve the GEO Certified™ award is a huge honor for Broken Sound," Crean enthused. "The program requirements are extensive but align perfectly with our management philosophy of driving continual environmental performance."

"GEO Certified™ is golf's premier sustainability award and achieving this recognition is a genuine point of distinction for our members." (see page 26 for a more detailed story on Broken Sound)

The Jockey Club Kau Sai Chau, New Territories, Hong Kong GEO Certified™ December 2010



Halfway around the world in Hong Kong, the GEO Certified™ award has brought wide recognition to a 15-year effort by the Jockey Club Kau Sai Chau (JCKSC) public golf course to transform a disused military range into a living landscape.

Now the busiest public golf course in Asia, JCKSC is a shining light of environmental innovation featuring a solar hybrid ferry, solar powered electric golf cars and a

restored landscape and thriving ecology. Its 54 holes of world-class golf include two 18-hole courses designed by nine-time major champion Gary Player.

General manager Cameron Halliday understands that ecological and environmental quality builds golfer loyalty to the JCKSC product:

"Our courses average in excess of 180,000 rounds every year, making our facility one of the busiest in Asia – and the sustainable golf experience sits at the very heart of what we offer. Achieving this prestigious award enables the Jockey Club to showcase its commitment to providing environmentally friendly golf facilities on the world stage," Halliday explained.

"Hopefully our GEO Certified™ distinction is an inspiration for others, as the need for sustainable golf leadership in the booming Asian golf economy is more important now than ever."

Machrihanish Dunes, Kintyre, Scotland GEO Certified™ November 2010

Machrihanish Dunes, a unique project driven by the Scottish Government, Southworth Development and David McKay Kidd, was the first golf course ever developed in a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) protected landscape, and the first golf course in Scotland to achieve the GEO Certified™ award.

Through careful planning, design and construction, in partnership with Scottish Natural Heritage, Machrihanish Dunes has established an ecological legacy that will be continually improved through sensitive long-term management. This GEO Certified™ award ensures that golfers, government and general public can understand and appreciate the ways in which this golf business is making an economic and environmental contribution to Scotland.

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sustainable approach to pest management, "using chemicals is the last resort," says Bodie.

"Organic and natural materials are used wherever possible," Bodie adds. "Walnut extract is used to control pests in some areas of the course, and the chemicals and fertilizers used at Mirimichi come from a select list that has gone through a risk assessment process."

"It's important to put out the right amount and type of fertilizer so that it stays on the playing surface and doesn't wash into ponds or nearby streams. We looked at it from the perspective that every





**Moon Palace Resort, Cancun, Mexico
GEO Certified™ October 2010**

When the world's environmental leaders convened at Moon Palace Resort for the United Nations COP16 Climate Conference in November 2010, they tackled

pond is a frog's home, and it's not just an area that you drain all the bad water into."

Native aquatic vegetation was planted around the edges of the ponds and streams, which helps protect the water quality and provides safe access to the water for wildlife.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The management at Mirimichi has promised the future clubhouse will be designed and built to LEED standards using sustainable, recycled and local building materials.

"We will continue to audit our energy use and set annual goals for energy reduction. We are looking at solar power and geothermal energy to supplement our other energy use."

the global challenge of climate change at a point of interface between biodiversity rich Mexican jungle and two of the world's greenest golf courses - Moon Palace Resort and Riviera Cancun, both from Nicklaus Design.

As owner Jose Chapur explains, environmental leadership goes to the heart of the Palace Resorts business:

"In developing golf on the Riviera Maya we embraced the environmental richness of our jungle landscape and took every possible opportunity to conserve and enhance Mexico's natural and cultural assets. The experience offered to our guests is both luxurious and also sensitive to the immeasurable value of the ecosystems that host it.



"The GEO Certified™ award is becoming established as a global seal of approval for environmentally sensitive golf. That we are among the first golf resorts to achieve this award is a source of great pride and a mark of distinction for our committed team of superintendents, groundsmen and ecologists."

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The future use of solar power-assisted golf carts is also up for discussion.

"You can never reach a stage where you can say 'we've arrived'. It's such a growing industry, with new product and improvements constantly evolving to help create an efficiently managed facility," says Bodie.

"It's about continuing to push boundaries. Sustainability is a journey." **BR**

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Green With Envy

Sustainable Design – Is it really worth the effort?



THE ANSWER IS AN EMPHATIC, ‘YES!’

After all of the construction dust subsides and the “green” theories settle back into the reality of what used to be called “best practices”, John Crean, general manager, Broken Sound Club, and Jon Olson, LEED certified architect with Peacock + Lewis Architects and Planners, testify to the worthiness of sustainable design.

Broken Sound Club is located in Boca Raton, an area of southeastern Florida heavily populated with golf clubs. Over the past 10 years the leadership at Broken Sound has enthusiastically pursued campus wide upgrades and expansion for its more than 1400 members that defies the recent lackluster economic environment.

“We have been making efforts to become more environmentally sensitive, and reduce energy costs and consumption,” Crean explained. “But

implementing a program of energy savings and recycling is not necessarily easy as member satisfaction and service plus cost efficiency may be at odds with your green program.”

What began as a small step in the introduction of biodegradable cups and recycling and the skepticism of many of the members has now led to composting and Golf Environmental Organisation’s (GEO) certification under the leadership of a “green” general manager and board of governors. It also led to other developments.

“In this changing economic environment when many clubs are looking for cost-cutting measures, Broken Sound leaders recognized this as an opportunity and embarked on an aggressive facilities improvement plan,” explained P+L’s Jon Olson.

In 2008 the board of Broken Sound Club exhibited confidence in

the practicality and long-term benefits of the sustainability movement. Broken Sound chose Peacock + Lewis as the architect and Weitz Company, Inc. as the contractor to bring its vision to life.

“At the base of this movement,” Crean muses, “is the underlying impact of saving money for each member but more importantly saving in a way that makes members proud of their club.”

Green Certification: Broken Sound not only has received Audubon Sanctuary certification but also recently became only the second golf facility in the U.S. to be GEO Certified – the sustainability assurance of the international non-profit Golf Environment Organisation (see GEO story on page 22)

“Jonathan Smith, the Scotland-based CEO, was at the club for the Allianz Seniors Championship to make the presentation in person, and to become only the second club in the United States to receive GEO certification is a huge honor,” Crean exclaimed.

“GEO’s stringent certification requirements reflect our own philosophy in maintaining environmental responsibility. GEO sets the international ‘gold standard’ in the field of golf course sustainability, and to be recognized by them is an incredible distinction.”

In the team effort required to achieve certification, Broken Sound Golf maintenance director Joseph Hubbard, CGCS, a GCSAA member, coordinat-

ed a vast amount of data from the club's operations to complete the GEO application.

"I have been involved in getting over a dozen courses Audubon Co-Operative Sanctuary certified in my years as a superintendent," said Hubbard, "but this was by far a more advanced look at accountability and sustainability within the environmental preservation world."

The GEO certification is recent example of Broken Sound's leadership in resource efficiency and environmental stewardship. And in April 2011, National Geographic selected Broken Sound as one of 10 environmentally green golf courses, (one of six Geo Certified). Information about Broken Sound's selection appears on National Geographic's website. www.nationalgeographic.com.

Among other sustainable efforts Broken Sound has undertaken are:

Recycling - Broken Sound's first steps began small with the use of environmentally friendly products such as biodegradable ecotainer cups, elimination of Styrofoam products and

plastic water bottles, recycling program for cans and plastic and separate dumpster for cardboard. However, the new cups being used in the golf carts "sweated" too much and members complained. Rather than do away with the cups and return to the old ones, Crean had a new cup cozy designed, which enabled the members to use them without any problems.

Organic composting facility – Last year Broken Sound Club invested in a central composting facility that combines organic materials from landscaping activities with food from the kitchen. The end product is used to fertilize the golf course. Projected annual savings to the club: \$300,000.

Solar-assisted hot water – After the recycling was in place, the club began using more energy efficient light bulbs and then progressed to the installation of solar panels. The solar panels were installed to heat the pool and hot water heaters which are heated by natural gas 24/7 on a recirculating basis for hot water for showers and sinks.

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**BRIAN D. IDLE, SR. VICE PRESIDENT, PEACOCK +LEWIS,
JOHN CREAN CCM, BROKEN SOUND CLUB
JON OLSON, LEED AP, PEACOCK + LEWIS**

Environmental Stewardship Beyond Water and Wildlife

By Joellen Lampman

TWENTY YEARS AGO AUDUBON INTERNATIONAL LAUNCHED AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM - THE AUDUBON COOPERATIVE SANCTUARY PROGRAM FOR GOLF COURSES (ACSP)—DESIGNED TO HELP GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS AND MANAGERS SERVE AS GOOD STEWARDS OF THE ENVIRONMENT.

With the help of the golf industry, most especially the USGA, education and certification components of the program were developed, comprised of six categories: Environmental planning; wildlife and habitat management;

chemical use reduction and safety; water conservation; water quality management, and outreach and education.

Through the years we have seen significant environmental performance and improvement on golf courses in these areas (*see BoardRoom Jan/Feb 2011*).

As we approached our 20th anniversary, we wondered how other aspects of environmental management have advanced on golf courses. While developing the 2010 managed lands survey for golf to track the impact of the ACSP, we decided to include questions about topics that we have traditionally not focused in the golf program. This

left us with a number of new and useful results, including:

- A recognition that environmental action leads to business value leads many businesses to invest not only in new technologies and practices, but also in their employees. Offering incentives or rewards to boost employee involvement in environmental activities can lead to a number of ideas for increased efficiency by the staff that knows the property best. Seventy-eight percent of respondents offer incentives to their employees, compared to only six percent before joining.

- Sixty-one percent of respondents removed turfgrass from the golf course property at an average of 18 acres of turfgrass. While 53 percent are transitioning to fuel efficient vehicles, only 13 percent were looking at this before joining the program. Even more dramatically, 78 percent are transitioning to renewable energy sources, compared to three percent before joining the program. In today's economic climate, with soaring fuel costs, these projects are going to positively influence the bottom line. Over 46 percent have reduced electricity costs and 44 percent have reduced fuel costs since joining. Interestingly, 23 percent were unsure as to whether there were cost savings or not, indicating a need for better environmental accounting.

- Another line item on most budgets is tipping fees for waste. The amount of composting on golf courses has doubled for those involved in the program, with 60 percent composting grass clip-



Broken Sound Golf & Country Club in Boca Raton, FL was spending \$130,000 per year to haul away trimmed landscape materials. \$425,000 was invested in creating a compost area within the maintenance yard. This project reduces odor and methane gas release, creates compost that can be used to fertilize fairways and roughs, and saves \$90,000 in savings from disposal fees and labor savings of up to \$60,000 per year.

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corner, and force computer equipment to compete for capital dollars with other, sexier projects like golf course improvements and clubhouse renovations.

This pitfall is easily avoided. Simply put together a meaningful budget that incrementally improves the club's computer inventory over time. Start by first calculating the replacement value of the club's computer equipment, then divide by 5 (the average life expectancy for computer equipment is 5 years), and put that result in the budget as an annual expense

line item called "Computer Equipment Replacement." That will provide you with the annual budget amount the club needs to stay current – and will help you squeeze the most productivity out of your technology investment. **BR**

Bill Boothe and Brian Warren are partners in Private Club Technology Solutions, an independent consulting and services firm that specializes in technology for private clubs. Their combined work has been with more than 350 private clubs, addressing all facets of their technology challenges. Bill and Brian can be reached at www.PCTSGroup.com or (561) 275-1515.

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pings, and 70 percent composting landscape materials. Half of respondents reduced waste management costs since joining, with 22 percent being unsure as to whether there were saving or not.

Kevin Fletcher, Ph.D., executive director at Audubon International, reflects on these results, "Through all of our programs, we provide a stringent, voluntary standard of environmental protection based on sound science and best management practices.

"What's sometimes lost when people talk about our programs, however, is education. We're working to provide people with tools, ideas, and information to make change happen," he explained.

"This only could happen through effective environmental education, which is the core of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program and all of our programs. As individuals are educated about the natural environment and sustainability, then they begin to take steps beyond even what we require in our programs.

"That's why this survey shows us that our members are taking positive action beyond even the program requirements."

Throughout the golf course, the maintenance facility, the clubhouse, and other amenities, there are environmental opportunities that are also business opportunities.

In many cases, your return on investment will be short. Whether participating in Audubon International programs, or other environmental initiatives, the bottom line is to keep the bottom line in an open mind. **BR**

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After realizing that they had used 85,000 individual water bottles in one year, The Roaring Fork Club in Basalt, CO decided to eliminate the sale and consumption of bottles to help reduce their global impact. They eliminated all water bottle cooler stations and reinstated tap water cooler stations with cone paper cups or bio-degradable (corn) plastic cups. It costs \$22,000 per year to maintain the water coolers, which is substantially lower than the \$34,000 per year purchase price of bottled water, saving \$12,000 per year.

Reusing landscape materials can also be done on a more modest scale. Stone Mountain Golf Club in Stone Mountain, GA piles trimmed brush, branches, and small trees and grinds down the material every other year for use as mulch throughout the property.





SOLAR PIX COURTESY OF KONARKA

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The board was initially skeptical about the expense and rate of return, however the tax credits received combined with the long-term energy savings convinced them that the solar panels would pay for themselves. These photovoltaic panels have saved the club thousands of dollars over the five-year period.

Reclaimed Water - With water being an issue in South Florida and implementation of water restrictions, the club looked to obtain reclaimed water from Boca Raton. The Environmental Protection Agency is looking at cities and water utilities to stop the ocean outflow of reclaimed water since it destroys the coral reefs because of the nitrogen content.

Environmental groups and the state are also mandating that we use less of our natural resources by taking reclaimed water. Broken Sound was instrumental in working with the City of Boca to obtain reclaimed water for its two golf courses to supplement its regular water supply.

Card Room Addition with Energy Upgrades - Peacock + Lewis Architects created a master plan for

the renovation for the clubhouse featuring a new card room suite. This area boasts a super-insulated roof and wall system, LED lighting, energy management and cooling controls.

Operating costs are projected to be 25 percent lower than the costs of the same square footage in the existing building. The Weitz Company has successfully managed the construction activities to bring the project in on budget and ahead of schedule.

Solar Array - On the drawing board is an aggressive energy production plan for Broken Sound that could create an acre of solar collectors to generate power from carport structures.

Flexible film collectors from Konarka will be used to create a unique and signature design for the solar array. Preliminary estimates forecast an energy creation with payback of the initial investment in 3 1/2 years. Initial discussions with planning and zoning representatives have begun and the groundwork for the projects development.

“The direct benefit of these energy-saving initiatives is reduced member dues and fees over the medium to long term in a time of strong eco-

nomic pressures and focus on member retention,” added Crean.

“We’ve already seen savings as a result of our solar panels and LED lighting. Also, as another example, our budget for pesticides and fungicides is \$350,000 per year. Our compost will take 2 1/2 years to get 1/8” to 1/4” of compost on the fairways.

“During this period it works its way into the soil and binds to the root of the plant along with the fertilizer. This allows the plant to take nutrients for a longer period of time and is not washed away into the ground, thereby using less.

“Further, less water is required, which is an important consideration in a water-restricted state. We estimate our budget to be reduced by \$100,000 per year in fertilizer use and another reduction of \$70,000 in having fewer pickups for landscape and food waste and this is an immediate savings to the membership,” he added.

“In a program such as this, it is not only of benefit to our own membership but also to the greater community in the health of lakes and canals which would be even more widespread if hundreds of clubs implemented such programs.

“We, as managers, need an entrepreneurial spirit in order to ensure the strategic sustainability of our membership over the long term for these members to be able to afford and enjoy their club, and I am fortunate that Broken Sound members have embraced the “green” philosophy.”

“The success at Broken Sound Club is demonstrated in the phenomenal increase in utilization at the club. The leadership, the staff and carefully selected consultants are committed to making the experience at Broken Sound Club memorable while coming through the process with a better understanding of what sustainability means to our business.” he concluded. **BR**



SOLAR PIX COURTESY OF KONARKA

Mirimichi, Millington, Tennessee
GEO Certified™ April 2010



JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE

"Receiving the GEO Certified™ award, especially on the 40th anniversary of Earth Day, was a very proud moment for all of us associated with Mirimichi," said entertainer Justin Timberlake, owner of Mirimichi.

"Sustainability is about more than what we can do at our own golf course. It's about taking a leadership role and encouraging other golf courses, and organizations of all kinds around the country and around the globe to emulate our commitment toward making a positive impact on the world we live in." (For more details on Justin Timberlake's Mirimichi, read the story on page 22).

This sentiment is echoed by GEO Chief Executive Jonathan Smith: "What sets Mirimichi apart is their top-down commitment to tell people about what they are doing; to share their experience in delivering sustainable golf not only within their own community but also with the rest of the industry.

"That desire to share knowledge and partner is the spirit of true environmentalism, and Mirimichi has it in abundance," Smith added.

So what is the common denominator for these five golf businesses and their use of GEO programming to achieve sustainability goals? Working through the GEO OnCourse™ program enables golf management teams everywhere to make improvements appropriate for their site and member expectations. At the end of the process, an independent, GEO accredited sustainable golf expert visits and verifies the work undertaken, creating a three-year continual improvement plan with targets to be achieved before re-certification three years later.

This very simple yet highly credible process culminates in the GEO Certified™ award - the most comprehensive sustainability assurance in golf, benefiting the environment, local communities, and your golf business. **BR**

Members of the CMAA and their global affiliates can find a Club Management guide to GEO OnCourse™ and GEO Certified™ - The CMAA Sustainability Manual - freely available at the Premier Club Services portal.

- <http://www.golfenvironment.org/clubs/brokensound>
- <http://www.golfenvironment.org/clubs/jockeyclubkausachau>
- <http://www.golfenvironment.org/clubs/machrihanishdunes>
- <http://www.golfenvironment.org/clubs/moonpalace>
- <http://www.golfenvironment.org/clubs/mirimichi>

Benjamin Warren is Communications Director, Golf Environment Organization. The Golf Environment Organization is an international non-profit dedicated to helping the global golf industry establish leadership in environmental enhancement and corporate responsibility. Bringing clear insight, cutting edge guidance and golf's most constructive, credible and comprehensive certifications, [golfenvironment.org](http://www.golfenvironment.org) is a one-stop-shop for sustainable golf solutions.

GEO partners with governments, international environmental NGOs, scientists and corporate and individual sponsors including The European Tour, The R&A, The European Golf Association, UNEP, WWF, and the Club Managers Associations of Europe, America and China.

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teams through a year-long dynamic process: “You might say it’s an organic strategy,” she says of the living document and action plans that have resulted.

Typical of the inclusive nature of the club, developing the grand strategy and four concise goals and objectives has meant participation by members, staff, board members and leaders of club organizations.

The board established specific action plans to accomplish those goals. General Manager Condon used the same process to align the activities of each operational department.

Condon and staff know that to strengthen one of the key assets of the club – its family-friendly culture – fun programs must be organized for all. Red Rocks offers a calendar of events packed with possibilities, such as seafood nights, pool parties, sweetheart dinners, live entertainment and dancing, along with creative child-care. There is a wine festival, ice sculpture and green chili festival and other events open to the community, including a monthly community leadership lunch that connects the club to the region.

Treasurer Raskasky points out that many new members are dual-income professional families with children. “They are looking for something to do that is enjoyable and family-ori-

ented in their community. They are looking for a total lifestyle, not just another organization to join.”

Condon and his sales team are aggressively marketing the sustainability initiatives at Red Rocks Country Club, including Chef Robert’s creative culinary and gardening initiatives.

It is another way to distinguish the vibrant, creative and friendly culture of the club from that of other, more traditional ones. When working with prospective members, GM Condon finds conversations about the Culinary Garden and other sustainable practices develops a fun curiosity. “That leads to increased site visits, which lead to higher membership sales,” he explained.

The more Red Rocks Country Club can demonstrate its cultural differences, the more advantage it will have in an uncertain market. There is a bond between friends, family and the land that nurtures members here.

The club’s vision statement declares, “Red Rocks Country Club is a sought-after, private club committed to our unique friendliness and natural landscape.”

In the opinion of the leaders of Red Rocks Country Club, that vision is clear, and at the same time, solid as a rock. **BR**

Carol Green is a Red Rocks’ director who spent her career as an editor with The Denver Post.

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use social media to the company’s advantage. Others have hired social media managers.

Whether your club creates a whole department or just tasks marketing managers with the job, focusing on social media makes sense. Plus, although focused on marketing, social media specialists are also in the best position to watch the club’s online back.

VENTING FRUSTRATIONS RISK FREE

Several companies have internal blogs, which provide a forum for staff to anonymously vent their frustrations, discuss ideas or ask questions. Some companies even require managers to review these blogs so that they can implement suggestions or benefit from the constructive (if not vitriolic) criticism.

Providing a relief valve for an employee’s complaints might go a long

way at preventing employees from blowing their stack and embarrassing the club or its members on their Facebook page.

RESIST THE URGE TO OVERREACT

People have been “twitching” about their workplaces since the first employee went to work for the first employer. Keeping this in mind, clubs should resist the temptation to address every unflattering post.

This is not to say that serious infractions shouldn’t be harshly dealt with, especially when an employee’s online chatter threatens business by criticizing customers or divulging secrets.

Clubs should be wary, though, of the paranoia that results from scouring the Internet for negative comments and firing every employee who makes a questionable online decision. Reacting to every negative byte will surely smash a manager’s nerves to bits.

In addition, managers should keep in mind that the public is naturally suspicious of what they find on the Internet. Although recognizing it as a stellar information source, most people acknowledge that the Internet is filled with misinformation and inaccuracies.

Certainly, the outrage and hurt feelings that come when an employee or member makes an unflattering remark is understandable. A club might serve its interests best, however, by keeping its powder dry and recognizing that sticks and stones can break your bones, but e-words can (only sometimes) hurt you. **BR**

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