# ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF GOLF COURSES

## Well-managed golf courses provide substantial ecological and community benefits.

**Golf courses are:**

- Community greenspaces that provide recreational opportunities and also offer and enhance wildlife habitats.
- Air conditioners that produce vast amounts of oxygen while cleansing the air of pollution and cooling the atmosphere.
- Water treatment systems. Healthy turfgrass is a filter that traps and holds pollutants in place; courses actually serve as catch basins for residential and industrial runoff; many courses are effective disposal sites for effluent wastewater.
- Among the best ways to reclaim and restore environmentally damaged sites, such as landfills.
- Businesses that contribute substantially to communities through employment, taxes, property value improvement and enormous charitable support.

**Science is on our side.**

- Independent university research supports the fact that well-managed golf courses do not pose significant risks to environmental quality, wildlife or human health.
- The modern pesticides and fertilizers used to maintain healthy golf course turf have been thoroughly tested and are considered safe when used according to label directions.
- A pesticide product today has typically undergone more than 120 studies at a cost of $50 million before it is registered by the Environmental Protection Agency.

**Today's golf course superintendents are educated professionals who care about environmental quality.**

- Most of today's superintendents have college degrees and substantial continuing education. Superintendents are the nation's leading practitioners of integrated pest management, a philosophy that reduces the potential environmental risks of pesticide usage.
- Virtually all golf courses employ at least one state licensed pesticide applicator who is trained in environmentally sound pesticide use.

**Evaluate potential risks.**

- There is no scientific evidence that golfers face any chronic health risks from the pesticides used to maintain courses.
- Once a liquid pesticide product is applied and the turf is dry or the product has been watered in, there is very little chance of exposure to golfers or others who enter the area.
- Golfers with possible chemical allergies are always encouraged to contact superintendents to find out what products might be in use.

**The entire golf community is committed to being a model environmental industry for the 21st century.**

- The United States Golf Association is pouring millions of dollars into independent research to study issues such as water quality and wildlife habitat.
- GCSAA has made environmental education a major focus of all of its education and information programs. The nation's golf course architects now design courses that reduce the need for pesticides, water and costly maintenance practices while preserving habitat and environmental quality.
- The Allied Associations in Golf have developed a set of Environmental Principles that offer guidance for responsible development, design, maintenance and facility operation for the future.

**We are working to correct misconceptions about golf.**

- Much of the environmental criticism of golf courses seems to be linked to local opposition to community growth.
- Local "anti-growth" sentiment has often led to unscientific claims about pesticide usage and other highly charged issues such as wetlands and wildlife habitat.
- These isolated development disputes have led to public misperceptions about golf.

**Connect**