



How To Achieve Audubon Classic Sanctuary Classification

[December 2005]

Introduction



Hammock Bay Golf &
Country Club
Marco, Florida

Background. Audubon International created the Audubon Signature Programs (Signature Programs) in 1992 to help encourage, educate, and assist developers and landowners and managers to follow sustainable resource management principles in a comprehensive manner when developing and then managing properties. The programs strive to add and integrate wildlife conservation, habitat restoration and enhancement, water conservation and water quality protection, and other areas of environmental protection and improvement with the other objectives for the development. The Signature Programs' long-term goal is to foster a stewardship ethic that leads landowners and managers, consultants, and the community to internalize environmental, rather than just economic, costs and benefits in their decision making and to apply those environmental values routinely in land management.

The Signature Programs now benefit from well more than a decade of Audubon International work in design, construction, and maintenance of properties with landowners, planners, architects and landscape architects, other consultants, and land managers. Over these years Audubon International has accumulated greater and greater experience and expertise in environmental education, assistance, and oversight for property development and operation, for a variety of different land uses. Many owners and managers of properties with existing land uses, however, have expressed interest in joining a program of similar rigor to the Signature Programs. These properties include ones that are being redeveloped or going through restoration for improvement, while maintaining the same use, as well as ones that simply want recognition for environmental stewardship that they believe will meet standards of operation and maintenance similar to those of the Signature Programs. In response, Audubon International has now created the Audubon Classic Sanctuary Program ("Classic Program").



Indian River Club
Vero Beach, Florida

The Classic Program is based upon Audubon International's experience with the Signature Programs, taking into account that properties in it will already have been developed for certain uses and might to some extent be constrained by the prior development. Like the Signature Programs, the Classic Program takes an approach that is flexible and adaptable to almost any type of property, including redevelopment or restoration projects, in any country. The Classic Program is administered by Audubon International's Signature Programs Office, headed by the Signature Program Director.

Guidance on “Minimum Requirements.” Audubon International has previously developed guidance on “minimum requirements” for certification for properties registered in the Signature Programs. Those guidelines help provide greater certainty on how to achieve and maintain that status. This document will provide similar guidance on the minimum requirements for achieving certification in the Audubon Classic Program. It contains a list of general minimum requirements to become a certified Audubon Classic Sanctuary, accompanied by a specific list of details on what to do to meet each general requirement.

Context. People using this guidance should note that compliance with “minimum requirements” is only one element within the overall Classic Program, however.

Education. First and foremost, the program involves education in environmental stewardship. The educational component of the program includes Audubon International staff visits to the site to see it and discuss its potential and its practices with the property manager and other representatives. For purposes of environmental stewardship education, the manager in charge of the property must maintain frequent contact with the Signature Program Director, who is also responsible for the Classic Program. The property manager will be the key contact with the Signature Program Director, throughout any redevelopment or restoration phase as well during operation and maintenance. Proper construction and subsequent operation of the property in a sustainable manner depends on a property manager well versed in environmental stewardship and well informed about the governing “Classic Property Management Plan” (“CPMP”) and the reasons for the requirements, procedures, and practices it contains. Audubon International also recognizes, however, that property managers change from time to time. When that occurs, the Signature Program Office may take steps to ensure that a new property manager is properly educated in environmental stewardship and the provisions of the CPMP for the property.

More Than The “Minimum.” Second, the “minimum requirements” embodied in the guidance here are **only** that – the minimum. Meeting the general minimum requirements applicable to all members is **necessary** to become a certified Audubon Classic Sanctuary, **but does not guarantee** that designation. The Classic Program seeks more than the minimum. A member that will not do more than meet the minimum requirements lacks the commitment to environmental stewardship that certification as a Classic Sanctuary implies. To become certified as an Audubon Classic Sanctuary, a property must meet whatever additional, site-specific conditions and requirements are reasonable in light of its particular resources, features, facilities, and other circumstances. These additional requirements are identified and negotiated with the property owner and manager during development of the CPMP and other environmental stewardship planning documents for the property. To become certified as an Audubon Classic Sanctuary, a member must comply with all the generally applicable minimum requirements, plus all the site-specific requirements for the particular property.

On-Site Audits. (a) **For certification.** Finally, no property can become a certified Audubon Classic Sanctuary without passing a final on-site audit. The audit by Audubon International staff provides an independent validation by this not-for-profit environmental organization that the property has been developed and is being maintained in compliance with the generally applicable minimum requirements described below and the site-specific requirements for that property. (b) **For re-certification.** A property that has already been certified as a Classic Sanctuary also must pass a biennial audit to ensure that it is continuing to comply with all generally applicable minimum requirements and additional, site-specific requirements. A property that does not correct deficiencies identified in the periodic audit in a timely manner will be dropped from the program and no longer certified as an Audubon Classic Sanctuary.

In reviewing the “minimum requirements” that follow, please keep in mind the preceding discussion of the overall context of the Classic Program, in which they fit as just one element.¹

General Minimum Requirements To Achieve Audubon Classic Sanctuary Certification

1. Maintain a qualified property manager in charge of Classic Program compliance *throughout any reconstruction or restoration, as well as during operation and maintenance*, of the property.
2. Follow the provisions of the Classic Property Management Plan (“CPMP”) throughout any reconstruction or restoration of the property, as well as operation and maintenance of the property.
3. Identify and protect wildlife and habitats, during and after any reconstruction or restoration, as well as during operation and maintenance of the property.
4. Protect water quality, which includes installing or maintaining a proper drainage system, during and after any reconstruction or restoration, as well as during operation and maintenance, of the property.
5. Design, in the case of reconstruction or restoration, and manage the property in a manner that minimizes intensive maintenance and non-renewable resource use in its management.
6. Use turfgrass suitable for the ecological region in which the property is located.
7. Prepare and use a proper Integrated Pest Management Plan.
8. Install or maintain a proper irrigation system.
9. For a property that conducts its own property maintenance services with vehicles and equipment stored or maintained on site, provide and maintain a proper Natural Resource Management Center (*i.e.*, maintenance facility.)
10. Once certified, provide signage or other Audubon International-approved means of notifying the public – or if a private membership development, the membership – of the status of the property development as a certified Audubon Classic Sanctuary.
11. Pay the Audubon Classic Program registration fee and annual membership fee on a timely basis.

For additional information contact::

Nancy E. Richardson, Director

Audubon International
Signature Program Office
230 Second Street, Suite 311
Henderson, KY 42420

(270) 869-9419 phone
(270) 869-9956 fax

nrichardson@auduboninternational.org