



include watching weather patterns, which may affect the overall golf course, as well as all ensuring all equipment are up to date.”

Passenti and LVCC aren't alone when it comes to some local community members misunderstanding how Audubon Certified courses actively and intentionally help the environment, not harm it. It's long been a source of frustration for many committed, hard-working, nature-loving superintendents. So welcoming Turner to this special place that's only two hours from New York City and Philadelphia, including a mix of retired residential members as well as newer commuter culture members, was a big deal.

“Scott's visit to the course was another way to highlight the areas in which Lords Valley Country Club was working within the surrounding environment,” he says. “No shortcuts were taken. Big rewards are achieved even with a small budget.”

The list of sustainable practices throughout LVCC's 145-acre golf course –approximately 80 of which are maintained and “in play”–is long and impressive, starting with careful

attention to keeping its ponds and lakes as pristine as possible. “We have some of the cleanest water in the area,” Passenti says. “We have a 30-foot no-spray, no-fertilize border around our lakes, and take pride in that, and we monitor irrigation cycles to make sure we're getting the most out of our watering.”

Passenti also mentions the intense weather swings he's seen in the region recently, particularly in rainfall amounts—a familiar refrain from Maine to Florida. “For example, we are seeing more torrential downpours that yield one inch of rain, and rapid temperature changes which affect the overall health of the turf (bentgrass greens and fairways, with *Poa annua*). We try to stay well ahead of play by starting our applications at 4 a.m. to ensure all chemicals are dry.”

Beyond the fertilized areas, native plants are treated with a careful hand, as well, to allow a wealth of wildlife to flourish including fox, bear, deer, and turkey. Passenti had some significant square footage set aside for Monarch butterfly habitat, letting crucial milkweed take hold well away from in-play corridors. “It also attracts bees,” he adds, “and it's

well out of the way so it doesn't get trampled. We have some members who were really excited about it.”

Audubon International's Turner echoes that excitement and appreciates LVCC's longtime commitment to stewardship. “My site visit to the property really brought into focus the special dedication Chris and his crew give their jobs every day, every year. Their turf management, irrigation and chemical application management practices are second to none in terms of caring for flora and fauna and achieving that delicate balance with nature at every step, with intense planning, in sometimes challenging climate conditions. Nothing is left to chance.”

Passenti agrees. “People forget that. They just think we do whatever we want to do. That's not the case. I was taught to think about what you are doing, and how it may impact your environment, before you do it.

“I take pride in not only my work, but also mentor my employees instilling the importance of their environmental impact, as well as taking pride in the work that they do on a daily basis. This is a great place to live and work.” 🌱

