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SustainAbility

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Sustainable Forestry —by Steven Jones Ph.D.

Forty years ago (ancient times when I undertook my undergraduate forestry degree), I understood *forestry* to be the study of forests, leading to a bachelors degree that would enable me to work in the woods, where I found peace, fulfillment, and satisfaction. The formal textbook definition then would not have differed much from how Webster's online Science Dictionary defines *forestry* today, "The scientific study of the cultivation, maintenance, and management of forests." We didn't use the term *sustainable forestry* then. However, all of my courses made clear that *forestry* explicitly encompassed the notion that whatever we did, we must practice the craft (the art and science of forestry) in a way that both met the needs of today and assured that we could meet the demands of tomorrow and beyond, providing from the forest an undiminished flow of goods and services.

Studying forestry did enable my dream of working in the woods, at least for the first decade or so of my career. Positions advancing me in the forest products industry and then in higher education have taken me further from the field, but have allowed me to occasionally live my passion for the craft. I've watched forestry shift and adapt, accommodating and encompassing emerging global interest in the broad arena of sustainability consciousness, philosophy, and practice, a movement that continues to gain traction among individuals, business and industry, communities, and nations. When I first began to hear *sustainable forestry*, probably in the 90s, I questioned the need for a redundant term. I even wrote an editorial for my profession's scientific journal, challenging the need for stating what to me was unnecessary and somehow suggested that there was a brand of forestry that is not *sustainable*. I have since come to accept the addition, recognizing that *sustainability* is such an absolutely required concept and condition for our future that prefacing *forestry* with the adjective is a mark of progress and affirmation, even if for me it has always been implied.

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Inside this issue

Migratory Bird Conservation

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar announced recently that the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission approved spending more than $3 million from the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund to protect an estimated 1,600 acres of waterfowl habitat on 3 units of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The Commission also approved $23.5 million in federal funding for grants to conserve more than 139,000 acres of wetlands and associated habitats in Canada through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act.

"Protecting North America's wetlands – which provide so many ecological, economic, and social benefits – is crucial," said Salazar, who chairs the Commission. "Besides providing habitat for fish, wildlife, and a variety of plants, wetlands are nurseries for many saltwater and freshwater fish and shellfish of commercial and recreational importance, and they provide hunting, fishing and other wildlife viewing opportunities for millions of Americans."

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Sustainable Forestry *(continued)*

Is there such a thing as *forestry* that is not *sustainable*? For me the answer is an emphatic 'no.' Quite simply, if it's not sustainable, it isn't forestry. For example, during my tenure at Penn State's School of Forest Resources in the late 80s through the mid-90s, I worked tirelessly to educate private forest landowners, urging them to seek the assistance of a professional forester before conducting a sale of timber. Far too often, landowners sold timber to a buyer who convinced them that their precious forest "needed" to be "selectively" harvested, a euphemism for "high-grading," a logging practice that creamed the better trees, leaving the landowner with a degraded forest with little ability to meet future desired objectives, including income generation. Was that *unsustainable forestry*? No, it was poorly advised *timber harvesting* persuasively and unscrupulously passed along under the false banner of *forestry*.

Is all timber harvesting *unsustainable*? Absolutely not, cutting/harvesting is one of the principal tools of forestry, enabling landowners to generate income and manipulate the forest stand to maximize a particular benefit (like timber yield, water conservation, game production) or optimize a mix of attributes produced by the forest. Timber cutting reallocates the forest site's productivity to preferred species, designed habitat, or other desired condition. Properly prescribed, science-based cutting is *sustainable*, in part because forestry depends upon stand management (e.g., prescribed cutting) as a tool for achieving the long term, undiminished flow of goods and services the landowner and society require and demand.

Sustainable forestry has a nice ring to it, even if die-hard, old-school foresters like me view the term as redundant. The forest is an ever-changing, dynamic system. Trees die, species composition shifts, and otherwise undisturbed forests change and develop in a predictable manner over time. Applied forestry modifies and to some extent controls these natural shifts to achieve landowner objectives. Although a still relatively new term, *sustainable forestry* relies upon several centuries of applied forest science. *Sustainable forestry* is not a feel-good, emergent version of a kindler and gentler forestry. It's simply the deliberate and systematic application of what we know and have known, for the purpose of assuring that we can meet the needs of today and provide for tomorrow in a *sustainable*, undiminished flow.

Read this Story online at: www.audubonlifestyles.org/SustainAbility

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For more information on Sustainable Forestry visit the Sustainable forestry Initiative website at: www.sfiprogram.org

Golf Cars and Sustainability - By Brian Kington

Let's first take a few seconds to discuss proper terminology. They're actually called golf ***cars*** not golf ***carts***. Golf carts are something players use who prefer pulling or pushing their clubs to riding or schlepping them around the course. Of the many factors influencing the future of the golf industry, the use of golf cars is a unique topic for discussion because, in my opinion, they have both positive and negative effects on the sustainability of the game.

The traditional round of golf 100 years ago saw a player carrying his own bag, or hiring a caddie, but with either choice walking 5 miles across undulating terrain was a regular aspect of the game. At private clubs today, it appears that the majority of members still walk the course, however at public facilities walking is much more rare. Encouraging this puzzling trend for players to choose riding over walking is the common business strategy for daily fee courses to pad their greens fees by including a golf car with the round.

There are some obvious environmental benefits that come with encouraging the non-use of golf cars, such as conservation of fossil fuels and energy. But consider the social benefits of walking, such as additional exercise, which is important and much needed for all of us, not to mention an enhanced interaction with nature for walkers. I would also argue the use of golf cars actually worsens pace of play, an already serious issue in the game at present, especially in wet conditions when golf cars are not permitted on the fairways and players are constantly going back and forth to retrieve clubs.

A counter argument supporting use of golf cars could be the loss in revenue for a course already struggling to meet their bottom line in today's down economy. However, with the increased cost savings for the maintenance staff resulting from less wear and tear to the roughs and fairway, and reduced energy requirements, it may be close to a wash economically.

The conversation gets more interesting when you consider a much larger resort community because golf cars can be used for more than carrying clubs. Expansive interconnected areas of open space, plant and wildlife habitat, and recreation are generously incorporated into the communities to provide basic needs such as improved air and water quality, enhancement of biodiversity and green space. This integrated planning approach of blending human uses and nature also offers a unique design opportunity to consider alternative strategies for vehicular circulation. Often times elaborate trail systems are incorporated throughout the property which not only provide recreational opportunities for hiking, biking, bird watching, but that also accommodates and encourages using golf cars for everyday movement within the community instead of using automobiles.

Certainly some senior players and others with physical limitations may require a golf car simply to participate in the sport. This should be highly encouraged, as it is very important for golf to be accessible for everyone for the sustainability of the game. Designers should recognize the increased value in promoting the use of golf cars as an alternative means of transportation and incorporate the concept into the planning process. As far as a typical 18 hole outing is concerned, most players might reconsider throwing the strap of their bag over their shoulder instead of strapping the bag into a golf car—and if not for their own health and well-being, then for the well-being of golf.

Read this story online at: www.audubonlifestyles.org/SustainAbility

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Read more about Sustainable Golf at: www.sustainablegolfdevelopment.com

Golf's Drive Toward Sustainability

Stewardship of natural resources, engagement in the communities where golf facilities are located, and maintaining prosperous businesses are vital to the long-term health of the golf industry.

The Environmental Institute for Golf, the philanthropic organization of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, is leading a collaborative industry-wide effort toward a sustainable approach to golf facility management.

Sustainability is about ensuring profitable businesses while making decisions that are in the long-term interest of the environment and communities. The focus is on continual improvement by professionally managing and conserving resources and inputs, and reducing waste while providing playing conditions that satisfy golfers of today and tomorrow.

Environmental Institute for Golf

Learn More About The Environmental Institute for Golf and Golf's Drive Towards Sustainability at: www.eifg.org/sustainability

Critter of the Season Contest

Try and guess what the critter of the season is based upon the clues provided via the Audubon Lifestyles website over the summer, and win your choice of an Audubon Lifestyles Eco-fiber polo shirt, and Audubon Lifestyles organic cotton hat OR an autographed copy of Sustainable Golf Courses written and signed by author Ronald G Dodson.

The first clues provided are:

- **They tunnel deeply in the soil and bring subsoil closer to the surface mixing it with the topsoil. Slime, a secretion, contains nitrogen. Nitrogen is an important nutrient for plants. The sticky slime helps to hold clusters of soil particles together in formations called aggregates.**
- **Charles Darwin spent 39 years studying them more than 100 years ago.**

To find out more about the critter of the Season Contest and learn more clues visit: www.audubonlifestyles.org

All correct entries will have their name placed into a drawing held on August 31, 2011. The winner will be announced in the Fall Issue of the SustainAbility Newsletter.

Fish Farming Policy

On June 9, the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) released a marine aquaculture policy in an effort to develop an offshore fish -farming industry.

Most U.S. fish farming now occurs in near-shore coastal waters or inland farms. Offshore aquaculture occurs only outside of U.S. waters. According to NOAA, the United States imports about 84 percent of the seafood Americans consume, half of which is grown in foreign fish farms.

The Obama administration hopes to encourage development of a marine aquaculture industry will create jobs in coastal communities as well as address the nation's $9 billion seafood trade deficit. However, concerned environmentalists cite concerns about the potential ill-effects of genetically altered fish escaping farms and breeding with wild populations, diseases that farmed fish could spread into wild fisheries, and the strain that offshore farms could put on the base of the oceanic food web.

Environmentalists have stated the new NOAA policy is a step in the right direction, but cautioned against moving forward without action from Congress to address environmental concerns.

Continue this story on the web at: www.audubonlifestlyes.org

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Additional Resources & Sources

Audubon Lifestyles	www.audubonlifestyles.org
The International Sustainability Council	www.thesustainabilitycouncil.org
The United States Golf Association	www.usga.org
The Golf Course Superintendents Association	www.gcsaa.org
Golf's Drive Toward Sustainability	www.eifg.org/sustainability
Sustainable Golf and Development	www.sustainablegolfdevelopment.com
International Migratory Bird Day 2011	www.birdday.org
eNature.com	www.enature.com
National Geographic	www.nationalgeographic.org
World Migratory Bird Day	www.worldmigratorybirdday.org
Sustainable Forest Initiative	www.sfiprogram.org