

Going the Extra Mile

WCI's Hammock Bay Golf & Country Club Meets Audubon's Highest Standards

BY NANCY RICHARDSON

A trip to Florida is not complete without traveling to the Ten Thousand Islands area south of Marco Island and Naples along the Gulf Coast. Here, the land gradually merges into the sea and fresh and salt waters mingle in hundreds of small bays and estuaries, dominated by mangrove swamps. Here, you'll find Florida's latest Certified Gold Audubon Signature Sanctuary: WCI's Hammock Bay Golf & Country Club.

Located southwest of the last exit from I-75 before entering the Big Cypress National Preserve, Hammock Bay Golf & Country Club now occupies the site of the former Marco Shores Golf Club. The 237-acre project lies on a filled and developed island, bordered by mangrove preserves and McIlvane Bay, and proximate to the Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.

With so much salt water surrounding the property, it's no surprise that conserving and protecting fresh water are chief priorities for Hammock Bay. The Peter Jacobsen/Jim Hardy-designed 18-hole golf course is the first in Florida to use SeaDwarf Seashore Paspalum on greens, tees, and fairways. The new variety of turfgrass performs well with fresh or

brackish irrigation water. The course uses both effluent wastewater and salt water for irrigation. The salt-tolerant SeaDwarf also requires 50 percent less water and 75 percent less nitrogen than traditional Bermuda grasses.

An additional priority for the development team at Hammock Bay was to design the project's landscaping to fit the ecology of the region. Golf course plantings are 100 percent native vegetation and include seagrape, beach sunflower, railroad vine, sea oats, and *Spartina* grasses. The design added 23 acres of new lakes and wetlands, the majority of which are



Sensitive habitats are protected throughout Hammock Bay Golf & Country Club.

designed to treat storm water runoff from the golf course, as well as from a portion of the new residential areas. WCI also transplanted approximately 800 sabal palms from its Venetian community in Venice, Florida, to enhance the landscaping.

Hammock Bay is the fifth WCI project to be certified through the Audubon Gold Signature Program. We salute their continued commitment to championing green building in Florida. ●

RECERTIFICATION CORNER

Shark's Tooth Golf Club, Panama City, FL

Certified 2002, Recertified 2004

Shark's Tooth Golf Club is a Greg Norman-designed 18 hole private golf course located within a 734-acre gated community called Wild Heron, located west of Panama City Beach. The southern boundary of the property is Lake Powell, a 737-acre *Outstanding Florida Water* recognized as the largest coastal dune lake in the state. Since achieving certification, Shark's Tooth has continued to augment native plantings and naturalized areas that help to preserve natural beauty and wildlife habitats along the lake.

Maintenance staff harvest seeds from mature native plants, and transplant both seeds and seedlings into naturalized areas. To facilitate this effort, the crew created a 10,000 square foot nursery to store and care for native plants for future use. The results are apparent in the lush natives at nearly every golf hole and the long list of birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians that have been observed on-site. ●

An abundance of wetlands, naturalized areas, and corridors on the Shark's Tooth golf course help to protect water quality and provide wildlife habitat along Lake Powell.



Eel grass, salt marsh cordgrass, and black needle rush are among the few salt-tolerant plant species that were appropriate for use along the edge of Hammock Bay's brackish lakes, where salinity levels are relatively high.

