



IT'S ONLY NATURAL

An icon of development in the United States—the golf course—might not appear harmful to the environment, but runoff from fertilizers and chemicals can damage lakes, streams, rivers, wetlands, and groundwater sources. What's a golf-course community to do?

Look to a golfing-with-nature development such as Collier's Reserve. On any course, a score of 62 might mean a pro had played 18 holes—and in top form. But here, this number signifies something else: It's also the number of bird species counted in a five-minute period at sites around the property—a number embodying the community's emphasis on environmental sensitivity.

At the Collier's Reserve development in Naples, Florida, native plants and wildlife get top billing.



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Located in northern Naples, Florida, Collier's Reserve is a gated country club community with 228 single-family lots on a site embracing 448 acres. A habitat preserve of more than 130 acres includes several lakes and the Cocohatchee River, which meanders through a subtropical forest. The 6,800-yard, 18-hole golf course designed by Art Hills was recognized by the Audubon Society of New York in 1994 as the first Audubon Cooperative Signature Sanctuary golf course.

With approximately 2,000 golf courses in the world now enrolled in the Audubon environmental program, Collier's Reserve stood out as a development planned from the



ground up to perform on a number of ecological points:

*Water Conservation—To use indigenous vegetation, careful design, and sophisticated irrigation to reduce overall consumption.

*Wildlife Conservation—To assure that all species have ample food, water, shelter, and space.

*Habitat Enhancement—To create the largest native habitat possible and retain the feeling of a sanctuary.

*Energy Efficiency—To design buildings, place vegetation, and set maintenance plans with energy conservation in mind.

*Waste Management—To make recycling an easy option for the club and the homeowners.



Visual evidence of these initiatives can be found throughout Collier's Reserve. Instead of endless turf, golf course fairways and even tees are closely bound by native vegetation. Overall, nearly 90 percent of the Collier's Reserve vegetation is native.

"We don't usually get involved in siting houses, but at Collier's

The centerpiece of Collier's Reserve is the Cocohatchee River, above, around which the environmentally sensitive plan was developed. This golf-cart path (center) is an elevated pressure-treated pine bridge across a wetlands, part of the 130-acre habitat preserve. Houses (bottom) are screened from the street by natural growth.

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Reserve, we actually picked out where all the homes had to go, so as much vegetation as possible could be preserved," says landscape architect Bill Renner of EDSA/Edward Durrell Stone, Jr. and Associates, master planners for the development. "You don't feel like you're in a housing development; you feel like you're in a park."

Golf course manager Tim Hiers was involved in the planning and development of Collier's Reserve, and he can point to thick manuals and detailed studies on flora and fauna used to guide their decisions. "But when you get down to the essence, the whole thing just makes common sense," Hiers says. "Since 1970, the cost of golf course development and maintenance has gone up 600 percent. We just can't continue without a more conservation-based approach."

Grass is good, he points out, since it absorbs millions of tons of dust per year. But reducing the acreage of grass used is even better because it cuts the need for watering systems, fertilizer, pesticides, and overall maintenance. And diversity of plant life promotes diversity of wildlife. "You have native wax myrtles and you get the myrtle warbler," says Hiers.

ABOUT COLLIER'S RESERVE

THE LOCATION—In the northern reach of Naples, Florida, easily accessible from I-75 and U.S. 41, Collier's Reserve is a 30- to 45-minute drive south from Southwest Florida International Airport at Ft. Myers.

THE CLIMATE—Average low/high temperatures for selected months are: January, 53/74; April, 62/85; July, 74/91; October, 68/85. Average rainfall is 53.6 inches per year, with most rain in late summer. Winters are mild and nearly rain-free.

DEVELOPMENT STATUS—Collier's Reserve properties are more than 90 percent sold. Lot prices range from \$150,000 to \$425,000, while houses average 3,700 square feet and \$820,000. Five featured builders are available to assist homesite buyers. Equity golf memberships have been capped at 300 to facilitate course access, but memberships have been reserved for owners of all remaining residential sites. Equity sports/social memberships, which include summer golf, are still available.

THE AMENITIES—On-site perks, in addition to golf, include tennis and swimming, plus a fitness center and pro shop in the plantation-style clubhouse. The Boathouse restaurant offers informal, riverside dining. Collier County's population is approximately 190,000, and nearby Naples offers sophisticated shopping and dining along its revived Fifth Avenue.

Back to that score of 62: It shows that the number of bird species at Collier's Reserve has actually increased since development began, not declined. A survey conducted by landscape ecologist Barry Devine showed that a nearby seminatural site—similar to Collier's Reserve prior to development—counted only 29 bird species. A standard golf course in the area counted 32 and a standard residential subdivision, 13.

If Collier's Reserve embodies an earlier, Eden-like Florida, the connections are real. The land had been in the Collier family since the 1920s, and Collier Enterprises partner-in-charge, Jeffrey Birr, represents an abiding concern with long-term issues of good land management. "Our residents and members have embraced the guidelines that were established, and we are confident that after we have completed our work, they will continue to be good stewards of the property."

The word "reserve" in the name of this development has real significance, and you can tally it—starting with birds.

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