

# Mindful of environment

## Courses seeking Audubon approval

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Staff

**O**n a wall outside Jeff Kadlec's office at the Westin La Cantera Resort, a small poster includes an inventory of the plants and animals found on the two golf courses on the 500-acre property.

From coral snakes to jackrabbits, cactus to junipers, the checklists represent a veritable wild kingdom for golfers.

"Golf courses can be great experiences for guests," said Kadlec, director of agronomy at La Cantera. "And that's not just playing golf but enjoying the trees and animals. It's a way to learn more about the environment around us."

With that in mind, La Cantera has joined TPC San Antonio and a scattering of other facilities in South Texas in working to be certified as offi-



STEVE NURENBERG/CONTRIBUTOR

**Jeff Kadlec, director of agronomy at La Cantera, tests the moisture on the fourth hole.**

cial Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary facilities.

The designation by Audubon International is available only after a course meets a series of five mandates regarding environmentally friendly agronomic and wildlife initiatives. Audubon International has tapped roughly 800 courses worldwide for the honor:

The award, Kadlec said, is serves as a shout-out to the community re-

garding a course's commitment to protecting natural resources.

"It's something to hang our hats on," Kadlec said. "We're good neighbors for the community. We're aware of the environment. We're good guys, not the enemy out there."

Courses wishing to gain Audubon's blessing must present proof of efforts to reduce harmful environmental effects, protecting wildlife in the

process. They must show evidence of a focus on water conservation and quality management, a reduction in use of chemicals and fertilizers and a commitment to outreach education.

TPC San Antonio, which recently unveiled a closed-loop irrigation system ballyhooed as the most environmentally sound in the industry, has constructed two courses adjacent to a 778-acre bird sanctuary.

La Cantera, which expects to be certified by May, includes 300 acres of native area north of its Palmer and Resort courses in far west San Antonio. They join Briggs Ranch, Cordillera Ranch near Boerne, The Club at ConCan and Cedar Creek municipal among several area courses that boast heavy concentrations of wildlife.

Neither Cordillera Ranch nor the Alamo City Golf Trail, which oversees the seven city-owned golf facilities, has elected to pursue an Audubon designation. However, ACGT has contracted with Echo Designs to assess its commitment to wildlife habitat.

