



GEO Certified®

GEO Certified® Report

TPC Twin Cities

Prepared by independent verifier: Will Flemming

Certified by GEO Foundation: 2024
Recertification due: 2027

GEO Certified®

 **GEO
Foundation**
Sustainability in and through golf

“TPC Twin Cities is a beautiful course that is well managed and provides a feel for the natural habitats of Minnesota. Golfers have the true Minnesota feel through the many water streams running throughout the course providing a home to many species. While this club is new on the journey to sustainability, they have accomplished a groundwork that will allow them to achieve many future goals. I can’t wait to see how their involvement with the local community grows, and the ways they make impactful changes to their operations that promote waste reduction.”

Will Flemming

(GEO accredited independent verifier)



Introduction

GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that TPC Twin Cities has successfully achieved GEO Certified® status for its outstanding work to foster nature, conserve resources and support the community.

GEO Certified® is the most respected certification for golf, based on a credibly and transparently developed modern sustainability Standard of best practice.

TPC Twin Cities has:

1. Met the required certification criteria for sustainable golf operations
2. Successfully completed the official third-party verification process
3. Successfully passed the final evaluation by GEO Certification Ltd. (autonomous subsidiary of GEO Foundation)

GEO agreed with the conclusions of the official verification report, that, having achieved all mandatory criteria; and with specific Continual Improvement Points (CIP) set for the future and Critical CIP's (CCIPs) to be reviewed at recertification, TPC Twin Cities should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, TPC Twin Cities can therefore claim a position as a leader in advancing sustainability in golf – making important contributions in protecting nature, conserving resources and strengthening communities.

The GEO Certified® Report that follows comments on the actions undertaken against the criteria, as observed by the independent verifier during the assurance process.

Certification is nearly always the result of a dedicated team effort resulting in many practical and valuable social and environmental results around the golf course, maintenance facility and clubhouse. These dedication and leadership qualities are an important part of ensuring the resilience of the golf facility and the golf industry into the future and also as part of society's wider effort to pull together for people and planet.

We congratulate all involved.

Jonathan Smith
Founder and Executive Director, GEO Foundation
GEO Certification Ltd. Board Member

Kelli Jerome
Executive Director, GEO Foundation

Carole Kerrey
Manager, Data and Reporting, GEO
Certification Ltd.



Verification and Certification

Verification

The official third-party audit was carried out by an independent verifier, accredited by GEO to undertake verifications of golf facilities applying for certification.

Verification involves reviewing practices and data, using the International Voluntary Standard for Sustainable Golf Operations as the guide to ensure comprehensive and consistent evaluation of performance. A detailed verification report is submitted for evaluation by GEO Certification Ltd, a subsidiary of GEO Foundation.

Certification

GEO Certification Ltd, an autonomous subsidiary of GEO Foundation [both not-for-profit entities], undertook a full review of all content submitted through the OnCourse® online platform and the report submitted by the verifier, ensuring:

- Comprehensiveness – that activities undertaken touched on all elements of the Standard
- Consistency – that the verification approach was balanced, well weighted and with consistent depth of evaluation across each theme
- Accuracy - matching the verification report with evidence submitted by the golf facility to ensure statements and claims were accurate

GEO Foundation is an international not-for-profit founded to advocate, support and reward sustainability in and through golf. Over more than ten years, the group has worked collaboratively with dozens of golf industry associations and government and non-government organisations around the world, to help golf become a sustainability leader, striving for a net positive social and environmental impact. In addition to managing and assuring GEO Certified®, GEO Foundation also provides a suite of credible, practical programmes for golf facility management, new golf developments and golf tournaments called OnCourse®, often delivered in partnership with national golf bodies. Find out more at www.sustainable.golf

Credibility

GEO Certified® is part of the ISEAL Alliance, a group of the world's foremost credible certification systems including Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance, Forest Stewardship Council, Marine Stewardship Council and many others. GEO Foundation earned and retains full membership of the ISEAL Alliance global association following a rigorous evaluation against the ISEAL Codes of Credibility in Sustainability Standards and Certification. The ISEAL Codes cover standard-setting, assurance, and monitoring and evaluation. Find out more at www.isealliance.org



Verifier's Report

The Sustainability Agenda for golf covers the following themes and action areas:

THEMES	ACTION AREAS
Nature	• Habitats & Biodiversity • Turfgrass management • Pollution prevention
Resources	• Water • Energy • Materials
Community	• Partnerships & Outreach • Golfing & Employment • Advocacy & Communications

Included below are the observations made by the Independent Verifier against each item in the Standard.

NATURE			
N1 Habitats and Biodiversity			
Objectives	Requirements	Mandatory Practices	Verifier Notes
N1.1 Understand the site and surroundings	N1.1.1 Sound understanding of the nature and landscape value of the site	Map all habitats and vegetation types on the site; Regularly update landscape / biodiversity surveys	TPC Twin Cities was built on top of an old sod farm. It includes lots of Minnesota indigenous grasses and plant life. It is also home to 24 lakes that are interconnected to each other and to local communities.
	N1.1.2 Knowledge of legal designations for protected areas, habitats and species	Understand legal responsibilities for protected landscapes and species; Record and monitor protected, endangered, or rare species found on the site	This club is not legally responsible for landscape protection, but are always mindful of the environment and the species that thrive around the property. There are over 48 acres of streams and ponds full of healthy wildlife. There is a designated "wildlife area" in the native grasses where they avoid mowing and applying pesticides. Signage is used to keep golfers out of the area as well. The sign reads, "This area is designated as a wildlife habitat. Natural nesting areas are being established through the efforts of TPC staff." Over the last few years, more and more bird species have become abundant.
	N1.1.3 Understanding and respect for cultural heritage	Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site	This location has no mentionable heritage or archaeological designations, thus no signage necessary.
N1.2 Opportunities to naturalise the course	N1.2.1 Measures taken to identify and minimise the required area of managed turfgrass	Observe, track and / or monitor golfer play	TPC is a fairly narrow course and is consistently monitored to balance pace of play with limited managed turf. All managed areas are within reasonable expectations of playable areas with the exception of the #1 tee box that has an old staging area now as managed turf and not playable. CIP: Please try to convert the old/removed tee box at hole 1 from managed turf to indigenous plant life.
N1.3 Actively manage habitats for wildlife	N1.3.1 Projects to manage habitats in the best way for wildlife and golf	Regularly review and follow a habitat management plan; Prioritise native species when planting and landscaping	This club is home to many fish species as well as blue bird. Storm runoff ponds are populated by various fish species such as bullhead, crappie, bluegill sunfish, pike, largemouth bass, and the common carp. These areas not only provide flood protection for the surrounding neighbourhood but also a habitat for these fish. No trespassing and no fishing signs are posted around the property to help prevent any unnatural stress and harm to these aquatic animals.

			National blue bird society manages the 21 blue bird houses within the golf course. Since 2021 this society has seen a growth in blue bird population.
N1.4 Conserve key species	N1.4.1 Practical conservation measures for priority species		Discussed how the course can be used as a way to promote ecological growth and biodiversity. They are currently already engaging with ways around the ponds/streams and aquatic life. Further opportunities can be explored for other natural wildlife opportunities.
N2 Turfgrass			
N2.1 Maintain optimum turf and soil health	N2.1.1 Appropriate turfgrass varieties adapted to climatic and other geomorphological factors	Select appropriate grass species for climate	Grass throughout the entire course is bent grass, which is mainly due to the feasibility and durability in the region. This variety has a natural growth in this climate.
	N2.1.2 Practices to maintain good soil structure and condition		Standard maintenance practices are established for the aeration of all turfed areas. Hand weeding done regularly to minimise equipment utilization.
	N2.1.3 Careful and responsible fertiliser application throughout the year to avoid over-fertilisation	Undertake soil tests and nutrient analysis	Soil tests are complete at 16 different locations on the property. Water quality tests are also performed annually. Fertilizer is applied monthly between May and September.
N2.2 Prioritise mechanical maintenance	N2.2.1 Non-chemical pest, disease and weed management	Sharpen mowing blades; Remove surface moisture; Hand weeding	Upon reviewing the course no areas were found to have excessive water or moisture. Regular moisture checks as weather gets colder to ensure no grass damage from walking on grass with frost. Hand weeding in place for 50% of the course and 100% of bunkers. Spot spraying is done on an as needed basis.
N2.3 Use chemicals responsibly	N2.3.1 Application of chemicals only when necessary to prevent or cure defined / identified turf health issues	Establish patterns and levels of risk for pests and diseases; Scout the course daily for early signs of pests and disease; Accurate pest and disease identification; Map and track pest and disease hotspots; Establish pest and disease thresholds	Full course inspection done daily to ensure no pests/diseases and will only spot spray as needed outside the regular scheduled application of pesticides and fungicide.
	N2.3.2 Application of chemicals with full safety precautions	Use only legally registered and approved products;	The club provided a full "Chemical Itemization List" that identified all products used. All products have been verified and are currently approved with an active EPA registration number.

		Ensure staff are fully qualified and licenced to use pesticides; Regularly calibrate and test applicators; Use appropriate protective equipment; Dilute and dispose of leftover product on untreated areas of turf .	
N3 Pollution Prevention			
N3.1 Prevent pollution across the entire site	N3.1.1 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from golf course operations	Document procedures for emergency spill responses; Maintain mowing buffer zones around water and all ecologically sensitive areas; Maintain spraying and spreading buffer zones around water and all ecologically sensitive areas; Create a map / aerial visual reproduction, drawing etc of the course showing buffer zones and no-spray, no-spread areas.	Buffer zones are 25 feet from any walkway or water zones. Rough areas are not regularly sprayed.
	N3.1.2 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from clubhouse operations	Ensure all hazardous materials are safely and securely stored; Ensure compliance with all required standards and systems for hazardous waste and wastewater discharge	TPC Twin Cities has several maintenance buildings on site for equipment storage, workshop, and chemical storage. Each location contains all PPE, hazardous response kits, and first aid/eye wash stations.
	N3.1.3 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from maintenance facility operations	Ensure wash areas are on impermeable, leak-free surfaces; Mixing and loading of pesticides and fertilisers over an impermeable surface; Triple rinse pesticide containers and applicators	Wash areas on impermeable concrete and include drainage storage tank that is then collected by Sullivan Septic Services to ensure proper handling of pollution risks. The clubhouse and all restroom wastewater is drained into metropolitan Water Resource Recovery Facility.
N3.2 Safely manage hazardous substances	N3.2.1 Legal compliance in the storage, handling, application and safe disposal of all hazardous substances	Maintain a register of hazardous materials available to authorised staff; Safe storage in secure and ventilated concrete or metal building; Sufficient storage capacity; Impermeable flooring; Spill containment kits present; Emergency wash area; Fire extinguisher in the immediate area; Secondary containment for fuel, either externally constructed, or integrally manufactured;	All hazardous materials are properly stored and disposed of. Each applicator has the appropriate license and training to utilize the chemicals. Oil bins are properly raised above an impermeable flooring and adequate spill containment kits are nearby if needed. All workshop spaces have the required emergency eye wash stations and first aid.

		Regular inspection of storage tanks	
N3.3 Responsibly manage waste / storm water	N3.3.1 Appropriate wastewater usage and discharge licences	Wastewater discharge licence; Appropriate treatment of machinery wash water (impermeable surface, oil / grease / clipping separation)	Golf cars are washed according to local regulation and water goes to a storm drain, but chemicals used in this process. Equipment washing is done in an approved wash bay basin per local legislation. Hazardous waste is properly disposed of through a local service provider.

RESOURCES

R1 Water

Objectives	Requirements	Mandatory Practices	Verifier Notes
R1.1 Minimise water demand	R1.1.1 Measures to reduce the need to consume water	Target irrigation to essential playing surfaces only	The main water source for this club is from storm water and/or a well system when needed. No water for irrigation is at a cost from local city water.
R1.2 Maximise water efficiency	R1.2.1 Practical measures to use water more efficiently on the golf course	Conduct regular irrigation performance checks; Provide staff training on efficient irrigation practices; Ensure effective application of water to target areas; Ensure irrigation schedules are informed by weather patterns and soil moisture analysis	Regular irrigation checks are performed for each hole, majority of tee boxes and fairways have single head irrigation systems that are individually controlled. Greens are more often manually watered as needed. Irrigation needs are determined based on local weather and moisture needs for current conditions.
	R1.2.2 Practical measures to use water more efficiently in buildings	Audit water use regularly; Review bills frequently and look for irregularities; Encourage water-saving practices amongst staff and visitors; Categorise and track water consumption	No current practice in place to reduce water usage within clubhouse, restrooms, or other areas of the facility. CCIP: Please monitor water usage more closely and determine needs/ways of reducing consumption throughout the clubhouse.

R1.3 Source water responsibly	R1.3.1 Measures towards alternative, lower quality sources of water	Ensure appropriate water abstraction permit and reporting, as required	Water supply comes from local storm system/well, while facilities are connected to local water district, all of which within proper guidelines and city requirements.
R2 Energy			
R2.1 Reduce energy demand	R2.1.1 Measures to reduce the amount of energy consumed in course maintenance	Minimise areas of managed turf to reduce mowing, irrigation, and turf inputs	TPC Twin Cities was able to provide petrol & diesel fuel usage for past 24 months. Currently, no plans in place to reduce usage, but efforts are made through hand weeding and hybrid equipment technologies.
R2.2 Maximise energy efficiency	R2.2.1 Measures to use energy and fuels more efficiently in buildings	Audit energy use regularly; Regularly review bills; Categorise and track energy consumption	Energy usage was reviewed and is currently powered by local utility grid per the utility website. Power is "sustainably sourced". Course provided documentation of a solar quote for their maintenance and clubhouse as part of their future plans towards energy reduction. CCIP: Please regularly record and evaluate energy usage e.g., through a dashboard, to determine high usage times and opportunities for reduction.
R2.3 Source energy responsibly	R2.3.1 Measures to source alternative, renewable forms of energy	Determine potential sources of renewable energy in the area and on-site, through renewable energy providers	TPC Twin Cities currently has a quote from a solar provider and are evaluating the impact that this system can provide.
R3 Materials			
R3.1 Reduce materials demand	R3.1.1 Products and materials selection based on necessity, including opportunities for recycled, reused and locally sourced alternatives	Undertake a review of materials consumed	This golf course installed water refill stations within the course, has compostable to go food containers. CIP: Please try to remove single use plastics such as the cups provided at water refill stations and those from providers of drinks.
R3.2 Purchase responsibly	R3.2.1 Practical use of an ethical / environmental purchasing policy	Adopt a sustainable, or ethical / environmental purchasing policy to maximise the use of locally sourced goods and goods made from recycled, recyclable and certified materials	TPC Twin Cities does not currently have any policy in place to encourage locally sourced goods or recyclable materials. However, they have sourced some foods locally as well as compostable materials. Course has multiple suppliers of food, 4 of which supply locally sourced items such as their produce and meats.

			CCIP: Please develop a more formal sustainable procurement policy, aiming to prioritize lower impact and locally sourced products before sourcing otherwise.
R3.3 Reuse and recycle	R3.3.1 Waste stream separation for maximum recycling and re-use opportunity	Demonstrate waste separation, reuse and recycling; Track how much waste goes to landfill, or is reused / recycled	This club has installed trash/recycle/compost bins throughout the course and facility to encourage proper recycling. In addition, they do regularly filter through the bins to ensure proper disposal of products.
R3.4 Demonstrate legal compliance	R3.4.1 Compliance with all local and regional waste management regulations	Use authorised waste and recycling contractor for general, hazardous, industrial and green waste	TPC Twin Cities has an onsite compost bin utilized for clippings from the course and used as “refill” when needed elsewhere on the course. Additionally, the course utilizes Waste Management for their trash/recycling needs in compliance with their local waste municipality.

COMMUNITY			
C1 Outreach			
Objectives	Requirements	Mandatory Practices	Verifier Notes
C1.1 Diversify access and provide multi-functionality	C1.1.1 Social and recreational activities at the facility		Discussed how TPC Twin Cities is engaged with their local community and beyond their private membership holders. They currently contribute to several tournaments, sponsoring 5k run, local school events, and junior golf clubs.
C1.2 Provide for volunteering and charity	C1.2.1 Opportunities available for volunteering and support of charities and good causes		TPC Twin Cities helps support the following charities: “Pitzl & Pitzl Children’s Fund, Nate Raich Foundation, Children’s Hospital, Cambridge Medical Center, Harry Slimmer Scholarship Foundation, United Way of the Twin Cities, Suicide Awareness Voices of Education, S.W.A.T. of Minnesota, Epilepsy Charities, Park Dental Foundation, University of Northwestern Student Scholarship Fund, and Mercy Hospital Foundation”
C1.3 Establish active community partnerships	C1.3.1 Positive and constructive engagement with neighbours, the local community and other groups	Create a 'sustainability working group'	TPC Twin Cities is new to the community aspect of sustainability and just beginning to explore opportunities over time. However, they are home to TPC Rose which “is a group of highly motivated, caring, TPC Twin Cities women members who share a commitment to make a difference in our community. We organize and host public fundraisers to benefit local charities. We also serve as volunteers for other charitable events hosted by TPC Twin Cities.” This group has raised over \$1.5million since 2008.

C2 Golfers & Employees			
C2.1 Improve health and wellbeing	C2.1.1 Benefits to human physical and mental health from golf and facility activities		This golf club is home to the TPC Rose gala. This gala is used to benefit local charities.
C2.2 Be open and inclusive	C2.2.1 Inclusivity and diversity in membership and visitor policies	Demonstrate inclusive policies for members and visitors	Membership and play is monitored by age and gender. About 16.8% of play is from the “junior” members. Play by gender: Male 76.3%, Female 23.7%. Discussed ways to increase junior membership play and reach out to local community engagement.
C2.3 Employ fairly and safely, and provide career opportunities	C2.3.1 Ethical and legal employment, working conditions and professional development	Follow all relevant national legislation and best practice for employment, health & safety etc	Depending on job role employees have training within the following areas: • CPR/AED • Employee Onboarding • Pesticide applicator • OSHA 10 hours • Skid loader
C3 Communications			
C3.1 Engage golfers and members	C3.1.1 Communications activities that raise awareness and understanding amongst members and visitors	Provide information on the facility's sustainability commitments, actions, or achievements	TPC Twin Cities is engaged through some social media activity and charitable events. All of which is accessible through their website through the “About” section. CIP: Please try to be more engaged with members etc., encouraging a sustainability focus for everyone throughout their experience at TPC Twin Cities.
C3.2 Celebrate and promote sustainability	C3.2.1 Activities that raise awareness and engage people in the wider community	Provide evidence of external communications and community engagement	TPC Twin Cities does not actively raise awareness to the greater community outside of TPC Rose, and some smaller events/programs. Such as their sponsoring of local school events, and “rounds for research” through local colleges. We spoke about ways the course could be more active and direct with their community engagement and celebrate their successes in sustainability.

Golf and Sustainability

Among all sports, golf has a particularly close relationship with the environment and communities, golf facilities can bring many benefits to people and nature - from the protection of greenspace and conservation of biodiversity; healthy recreation for all ages; local supply chains; and jobs, tourism and other forms of economic value.

Adopting a more sustainable approach is also good for golf. It's about presenting a high-quality golf course and providing a memorable experience in natural surroundings. It's about being as efficient as possible. And it's about supporting the community in a range of ways that bring increased recognition, respect and contact.

At a broader level, it's important that golf credibly demonstrates its commitment, and its social and environmental value – strengthening the sport's image and reputation for the long term.

Golf facilities that participate in OnCourse®, an international sustainability initiative assured by the non-profit GEO Foundation, are taking a comprehensive approach and striving to be leaders in the community.

Find out more at www.sustainable.golf