



GEO Certified®

GEO Certified® Report Old South Golf Links

Prepared by independent verifier Teresa Wade

Certified by GEO Foundation: 2026
Recertification due: 2029

GEO Certified®

 **GEO
Foundation**
Sustainability in and through golf

“Old South Golf Links continues to uphold its commitment to sustainability and being the ‘locals golf course’. While the lean operation can rarely take on new, costly, projects, the leadership team continues to do more with less and innovate with available resources. Despite increasing challenges with the economy, climate, and unknowns of the ever-changing golf industry, the course continues to see an increase in rounds and participation by women. The 19th Hole Challenge, Wine and Nine, and Fling golf tournament are examples of how the facility is impacting golfers and non-golfers nationwide. I look forward to seeing the results of the expanded communications about sustainability efforts via social media to the wider community and visiting golfers.”

Teresa Wade
(GEO accredited independent verifier)



Introduction

GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that Old South Golf Links 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.

Old South Golf Links 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, Old South Golf Links should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, Old South Golf Links 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
Director, Certification and Credibility,
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 – 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	General knowledge of the wildlife and habitats on the site	Wetland area increased .25 acres from 2024 to 2025 providing additional habitat area. There are thriving communities of all wildlife on the grounds. A Wildlife Challenge is now optional for golfers to look out for the full list of mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians on the property. CIP: Please place educational signage on the course at various locations with wildlife and scenic views.
	N1.1.2 Knowledge of legal designations for protected areas, habitats and species	Identify rare, protected or endangered species found on the golf course; Understand legal responsibilities for landscape protection and special area designations, if applicable	Beaufort County, SC has stringent environmental preservation codes for land development. A conservation easement surrounds a majority of the property, set in place by the original owners of the land. The initial course design considered these codes and current operations honor these stipulations.
	N1.1.3 Sound understanding and respect for cultural heritage	Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site, if applicable	The golf course property was once home to transient Native American Indian campgrounds. A study of the area resulted in recovery of more than 30,000 artifacts. A report of the findings is on file with the State of South Carolina Department of History and Archives. This area remains protected on the course. CIP: Please place signage indicating the previous campground use.
N1.2 Opportunities to naturalise the golf course	N1.2.1 Measures taken to identify and minimise the required area of managed turfgrass	Monitor patterns of play to identify underutilised areas of turfgrass	Wetland area increased .25 acres from 2024 to 2025 providing additional habitat area. Rounds increased from 2024 to 2025 which means more visibly monitored wear on the course. At this time, there are no further opportunities for naturalization due to needs for playable areas.
N1.3 Actively create and manage habitats for wildlife	N1.3.1 Projects to create and manage habitats in the best way for wildlife and golf	Prioritise native species of varying size and structure when planting Prioritise native trees and shrubs when planting	A conservation easement surrounds a majority of the property, set in place by the original owners of the land. The original property owners plant 8 acres annually to feed local turkey and deer populations. CIP: Please consider partnering with state or nationally funded ecological programs to formally inventory and monitor key species through regular consultations and/or surveys.

		Prioritise native aquatic species of varying size and structure when planting Establish mowing buffer zones next to water bodies and wetlands	
N1.4 Conserve key species	N1.4.1 Practical conservation measures for priority species	Follow local best practice to protect or attract endangered, protected or rare species found on site	Wetland area increased .25 acres from 2024 to 2025 providing additional habitat area. A conservation easement surrounds a majority of the property, set in place by the original owners of the land. The original property owners plant 8 acres annually to feed local turkey and deer populations. CIP: Please add strategically placed birdhouses to support priority species.
N2 Turfgrass			
N2.1 Maintain optimum turfgrass and soil health	N2.1.1 Appropriate turfgrass varieties adapted to climatic and other geomorphological factors	Select appropriate grass species for the climate	Bermuda turfgrass (cynodont transvaalensis) continues to be the choice grass for Old South. Bermuda is climate hardy, tolerant for brackish and effluent water, and requires fewer inputs than other grass varieties.
	N2.1.2 Practices to maintain good soil structure and condition	No specific international requirement, however, identify course management and agronomic activities and look for continual improvements	Old South only overseeds tees and greens, while allowing other areas to go off-color during the winter months to avoid unnecessary inputs. Less inputs helps preserve soil integrity.
	N2.1.3 Careful and responsible fertiliser application throughout the year to avoid over-fertilisation	Test and monitor soil pH; Follow legal requirements when timing fertiliser applications Ensure staff are fully qualified to use fertilisers Ensure staff use appropriate protective equipment Regularly calibrate and test applicators	Monitoring evapotranspiration rates and “as needed” considerations determine fertilizer application. Beaufort County, SC has stringent environmental preservation codes that also guide chemical applications. CIP: Please analyze annual reports from purchasing agents to best understand continued improvement opportunities.
N2.2 Prioritise mechanical maintenance	N2.2.1 Non-chemical pest, disease and weed management	Sharpen mowing blades; Remove surface moisture; Change hole locations frequently	Scott Adams, GM, has completed the GCSAA program with a focus on IPM Specialization. He applies this knowledge with a focus on “less is more” to guide the Old South team that he has led for more than 30 years.

N2.3 Use chemicals responsibly	N2.3.1 Application of chemicals only when necessary to prevent or cure defined / identified turf health issues	Identify and track pest and disease hotspots, including sensitive areas Scout the course daily for early signs and symptoms Accurately diagnose to determine the cause of weeds, pests and diseases	The course is aiming to extend the use of existing greens. An increased use of fungicide was required in 2024. Beaufort County, SC has stringent environmental preservation codes that also guide chemical applications. CIP: Please introduce regular planning efforts for continued improvement with more environmentally responsible chemicals and application strategy options.
	N2.3.2 Application of chemicals with full safety precautions	Use legally registered and approved products; Prefer products for the specific weed, pest or disease; Follow legal requirements; Ensure staff are fully qualified to use pesticides; Ensure staff use appropriate protective equipment; Regularly calibrate and test applicators; Dilute and dispose of leftover product on untreated areas of amenity turfgrass	Beaufort County, SC has stringent environmental preservation codes that also guide chemical applications. Scott Adams, GM, has completed the GCSAA program focused on Application Specialization, Storage, and Disposal and Recycling Specialization. He applies this knowledge with a focus on “less is more” to guide the Old South team that he has led for more than 30 years.
	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 ; Retain no-spray/no-spread buffer areas next to water bodies and wetlands; Retain no-spray/no-spread buffer zones in and around ecologically sensitive areas	The emergency action plan, evacuation map, fire prevention and hazardous materials policies are prominently displayed in the staff break room. There are patches of cattails in a creek of brackish water that filters water as it enters and exits the property with the tidal shifts. Vegetative buffers along the banks of water bodies and the marsh also help with pollution prevention. CIP: Please request annual reports from purchasing agents, as a collective analysis to promote cross departmental planning and collaboration for continued improvement.
	N3.1.2 Practical measures to ensure	Formal wastewater discharge agreement, if applicable	There are formal discharge agreements in place that Old South adheres to for water that is disposed of in a septic tank or sewer system.

	pollution risks are minimised from clubhouse operations		
	N3.1.3 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from maintenance facility operations	Wash machinery over an impermeable, leak-free surface; Mix and load pesticides and fertilisers over an impermeable, leak-free surface; Triple rinse pesticide containers and applicators	Spill containment area was updated since last onsite verification visit. Additional shelves and asphalt across the door were added as anti-spill strategies. Scott Adams, GM, has completed the GCSAA program focused on Application Specialization, Storage, and Disposal and Recycling Specialization. He applies this knowledge to guide the Old South team that he has led for more than 30 years.
	N3.2 Safely manage hazardous substances	N3.2.1 Legal compliance in the storage, handling, application and safe disposal of all hazardous substances List of hazardous substances, made available to authorised staff; Product and material data safety sheets; Well ventilated concrete or metal building; Impermeable, leak-free flooring; Sufficient storage capacity; Spill containment kits; Secondary containment e.g., bunds or drip trays; Emergency wash area, as per local requirements (body shower and / or eye wash station); Hazardous substances safely collected by a registered company or body ; Follow any additional legal requirements	Hazardous materials are securely stored in a designated building with an impervious surface pad to prevent leakage into the ground or storm water drains. Materials are organized to avoid misuse, and chemical and fuel spill absorption kits and emergency action instructions and supplies are readily accessible. Two staff members are licensed by the state for storage, application, and disposal of insecticides.
	N3.2.2 Legal compliance in the storage and handling of fuels and gases	Tank secured to a horizontal, flat, non-combustible surface; Secondary containment of fuel in the event of spills e.g. bunds and drip trays; Inspection of storage tank(s) at least quarterly, if required;	Scott Adams, GM, has completed the GCSAA program with a focus on Storage, and Disposal and Recycling Specialization. He applies this knowledge to guide the Old South team that he has led for more than 30 years.

		Fire extinguisher in the immediate area	
N3.3 Responsibly manage waste / storm water	N3.3.1 Appropriate wastewater usage, treatment and discharge	Impermeable, leak-free surface; Treatment as per local requirements (oil, grease and / or clipping separation; Formal discharge agreement, if applicable	All water used on the golf course filters naturally through the ecosystem. There are formal discharge agreements in place for water that is disposed of in a septic tank or sewer system. Water from the wash pad goes to a detention pond where nature filters and cleans it. CIP: Please analyze annual reports from Beaufort Jasper Water Authority to stay current on local efforts and plan for collaboration and future improvement.

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	Select appropriate grass species for the climate e.g., drought and disease tolerance; Target irrigation to essential playing surfaces; Prioritise native, drought tolerant species for landscaping and planting	The Bermuda turfgrass is climate appropriate for the Lowcountry and requires less water than other species. All water used on the golf course filters naturally through the ecosystem and is processed for reuse. No potable water is used in course maintenance. CCIP: Please add meters to cart barn and maintenance area water hoses; record quantities used per area, per day, as pinpointing water used in rinsing carts and equipment.
R1.2 Maximise water efficiency	R1.2.1 Practical measures to use water more efficiently on the golf course	Schedule irrigation based on informed assessment of soil moisture and weather forecasts; Evaluate new irrigation technologies e.g., central control, precision sprinklers etc.; Provide staff training on efficient irrigation practices;	The course and facility has no vegetation that requires excessive water. The tees, fairways and roughs are aerified and verticut on an as-needed basis. Irrigation practices are adjusted seasonally based on daylight hours, soil probe and moisture meter readings, the weather, monthly evapotranspiration rates and turf needs. John Cooler, Superintendent, has detailed records since 2002 of rain days and inches that he studies to inform decision making about irrigation. CIP: Please place signage on the course explaining self-sufficient water supply for the course and strategies for reduced consumption.

		Adjust sprinklers to playing surfaces only	
	R1.2.2 Practical measures to use water more efficiently in buildings	Monitor and record water consumption (bills, flow meter etc.); Encourage water conservation practices amongst players and staff	Low-flow urinals and other efficient appliances help reduce water use in the clubhouse kitchen and all restrooms. CIP: Please consider employee training and signage in close proximity to manually controlled faucets to encourage water conservation.
R1.3 Source water responsibly	R1.3.1 Measures towards alternative, lower quality sources of water	Water abstraction permit, if required; Report water consumption to environment agency, if required	There are sufficient onsite water resources; no irrigation relies on potable water. This was intentional in its thoughtful design.
R2 Energy			
R2.1 Reduce energy demand	R2.1.1 Measures to reduce the amount of energy consumed in golf course maintenance	Naturalise non-playing areas to reduce mowing and other energy intensive inputs	Old South has maxed out naturalization opportunities at this time to preserve the playing experience. However, with its conservation easement, there are many non-playing areas kept natural. The original property owners plant 8 acres annually to feed local turkey and deer populations. CIP: Please conduct regular energy audits to determine opportunities to reduce consumption.
R2.2 Maximise energy efficiency	R2.2.1 Measures to use energy and fuels more efficiently in buildings	Monitor and record energy consumption (bills, meters etc.)	Since launching the initial GEO Certification in 2016, Old South has converted all light bulbs in the clubhouse to be LED's to consume less energy. To date, 90% of the maintenance building light bulbs have also been converted to LED's. CIP: Add/update insulation and crack sealing for all buildings to better preserve conditioned space.
R2.3 Source energy responsibly	R2.3.1 Measures to source alternative, renewable forms of energy	Understand the energy mix of your electricity supplier; Explore possible greener energy providers	No current plans for new alternative energy sourcing, due to change of facility ownership that is in process.
R3 Materials			
R3.1 Reduce materials demand	R3.1.1 Products and materials selection based on	No specific international requirement, however, identify	Old South was one of a few area golf courses that remained open during much of COVID. In response to human and material limitations, the

	necessity, including opportunities for recycled, reused and locally sourced alternatives	activities to reduce the demand for materials and look for continual improvements	clubhouse restaurant revamped its cooking procedures and menus for more streamlined and simplified sourcing. Those practices are still in place and benefiting reduction of material demand. CIP: Please conduct regular audits of housekeeping and kitchen supplies to understand demand and optimize environmentally friendly options.
R3.2 Purchase responsibly	R3.2.1 Commit to sustainable purchasing practices	Favour responsible, lower impact products	The clubhouse restaurant sources from 1-2 local retailers only to minimize travel for delivery and streamline operations for economy of scale. Traditional fryers have been removed to eliminate use of cooking oil and that sourcing and waste stream. CIP: Please add seasonal offerings from local farmers to diversify the menu and support the local economy.
R3.3 Reuse and recycle	R3.3.1 Waste stream separation for maximum recycling and re-use opportunity	Put in place a recycling separation system, according to local rules and availability; Clear, simple and visible bin signage; Monitor and record weight of waste for each stream e.g. invoices, bills etc.	While Old South participates in single stream recycling, there is also an onsite effort to separate aluminium for a local recycle/reuse facility. Clearly marked bins are on the facility to help patrons separate waste from recyclables. These are new since Old South launched its GEO program 10 years ago. CCIP: Please develop a detailed documentation system to track ROI for recycling to include volumes, weight and type of materials diverted, to compare with traditional waste hauling costs and environmental impact equivalents.
R3.4 Demonstrate legal compliance	R3.4.1 Compliance with all local and regional waste management regulations	Authorised waste collector for general, hazardous, industrial and green waste, if required	All Beaufort County legal requirements are adhered to.

COMMUNITY			
C1 Health & Wellbeing			
Objectives	Requirements	Mandatory Practices	Verifier Notes
C1.1 Improve health and wellbeing	C1.1.1 Benefits to human physical and mental	Plans in place to respond to incidents and emergencies	Several pieces of collateral are publicly displayed around the facility to promote sustainability efforts and GEO participation. The emergency action

	health from golf and facility activities		plan, evacuation map, fire prevention and hazardous materials policies are prominently displayed in the staff break room. New hires receive an employee handbook that outlines facility responsibilities to staff regarding emergency and incident response protocols.
C1.2 Be open and inclusive	C1.2.1 Inclusivity and diversity in membership and visitor policies	Membership policies free from discrimination across age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and ethnic background	Old South is a public course, no membership required. Green fees are discounted for local residents.
C1.3 Employ fairly, safely and provide career opportunities	C1.3.1 Ethical and legal employment, working conditions and professional development	Adopt an equal opportunity recruitment and hiring policy; Follow all relevant legislation and best practice for hiring and employment; Follow all relevant legislation and best practice for worker safety	Scott Adams, GM, has completed the GCSAA program that includes Employee Safety and Right-to-Know Specialization. He applies this knowledge to guide the Old South team that he has led for more than 30 years. New hires receive an employee handbook that outlines facility responsibilities to staff regarding emergency and incident response protocols.
C2 Outreach & Inclusion			
C2.1 Diversify access and provide multifunctionality	C2.1.1 Social and recreational activities at the facility	No specific international requirement, however, identify multifunctional activities and look for continual improvements	Old South offers FlingGolf, creating a diverse use opportunity for the facility. They recently hosted the 2026 World League FlingGolf Pro Series, garnering national coverage via ESPN. The weekend events included the Lowcountry Open and a Doubles Tournament. Three players earned spots on Team USA for the upcoming Britain's Cup. Old South also hosts regular "wine and nine" events targeted toward women that are very popular.
C2.2 Provide for volunteering and charity	C2.2.1 Opportunities available for volunteering and support of charities and good causes	No specific international requirement, however, identify activities to support volunteering and charity and look for continual improvements	The 19th Hole Challenge is a fun, impactful way for patrons to give back to our nation's heroes through the nationally recognized Wounded Warrior project. For \$5, patrons receive 12 balls to test their chipping skills on the floating green for a chance to win a \$10 credit. To date, Old South has donated more than \$10,000 to the Wounded Warrior project through this program. CIP: Please consider an event with Wounded Warrior representatives to be onsite for additional fundraising and awareness.
C2.3 Establish active community partnerships	C2.3.1 Positive and constructive engagement with neighbours, the local community and other groups	No specific international requirement, however, identify partnerships and community activities and look for continual improvements	Engaged in the Lowcountry Golf Course Owners Association for networking and collaboration to benefit the market as a whole. Recently hosting a nationally recognized Fling golf tournament brought attention to the facility and the multi-use opportunity for a golf course.

			CIP: Please consider partnering with local or national ecological programs to pilot innovative strategies for new sustainable practices.
C3 Communications & Advocacy			
C3.1 Engage staff and golfers	C3.1.1 Communications activities that raise awareness and understanding amongst members and visitors	Involve staff and committees in sustainability efforts; Involve golfers in sustainability efforts; Post sustainability information in the clubhouse and / or on the golf course	In the clubhouse there are prominent posters and educational collateral to educate and promote sustainable practices at the facility. The Pro Shop facilitates regular employee appreciation events providing lunch, a round of golf, and PTO for the afternoon. CIP: Please conduct regular “round table” events with the staff for collective contribution to improvement ideas and problem solving strategies.
C3.2 Celebrate and promote sustainability	C3.2.1 Activities that raise awareness and engage people in the wider community	Share at least 3 Highlights on sustainable.golf	A dedicated social media promotion and marketing team member was hired. Vanessa integrates sustainability education and GEO participation in her communications on this platform and more.
C3.3 Follow a journey of continuous improvement	C3.3.1 Measures to help track, review and improve sustainability and climate action	Put measures in place to ensure that OnCourse can be updated annually	Joy Glover-Coe continues to lead and communicate data analysis via her detailed accounting efforts across all areas of facility operations. CIP: Please develop a detailed documentation system to track ROI for sustainable practices and environmental impact equivalents.

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