GEO Certified®

GEO Certified® Report
Golf Club Les Bois

Prepared by independent verifier: David Bily

Certified by GEO Foundation: 2023
Recertification due: 2026

GEO Foundation
Sustainability in and through golf

“Golf Club Les Bois manages the golf course with a minimalist philosophy, retaining large areas of pasture and trees and maintaining the playing surfaces with minimal use of water and chemical products. The clubhouse is an important social meeting point in the region, with members opening their doors to independent golfers and non-golfers alike. I look forward to seeing updated biodiversity surveys and collaboration with a habitat specialist in the future, creating more detailed management plans for key local species.”

David Bily
(GEO accredited independent verifier)

Introduction

GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that Golf Club Les Bois 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.

Golf Club Les Bois 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, Golf Club Les Bois should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, Golf Club Les Bois 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.isealalliance.org**

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	The golf club, including the greenkeeper and members of the committee, have a very good understanding of the site and landscape from before the golf course was constructed until the present.

				There is a recently created digital map of the course. **CCIP: Please include all habitats and vegetation types on the map. This should be done as soon as possible.** **CCIP: Please conduct a biodiversity survey. There have been no surveys conducted since the construction of the golf course.**
		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	The club is aware of a number of protected species on the site including falcons, hedgehogs, bats and toads. **CCIP: Please conduct a biodiversity survey to identify any protected, endangered, or rare species found on the site.**
		N1.1.3 Understanding and respect for cultural heritage	Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site	There are no archaeological, historical, or cultural designations on the site. A hedgerow of native plum trees was planted along the edge of one fairway. The plums are used to make a local schnapps (Damassine). Existing farm buildings have been kept on site from the previous land-use. These are used by the greenkeeper for storage.
	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	The club maintains a reasonable amount of turfgrass considering the layout of the golf course. **CIP: Please consider where and how to reduce maintained turf to save on time and fuel. There is maintained turfgrass behind tees and in other areas that are not necessarily in play.** **CIP: Please undertake a more official player tracking survey to identify underutilised areas for further naturalisation.**
	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	The club maintains the wild grass hard-roughs with a local farmer, cutting these areas once or twice per year. There are some areas of “prairie maigre” along some slopes.

				Some other areas have been left natural since the construction of the golf course and provide interesting habitat for insects, birds, and small mammals. Native species are used almost exclusively throughout the golf course since construction. There is some valuable forest area covering a corner of the golf course which is generally left untouched. **CIP: Please consider engaging a biodiversity specialist to discover some interesting maintenance ideas and improve habitat for certain priority species.** The greenkeeper has a small tree nursery to raise saplings and then transplant on the golf course. **CCIP: Please develop and follow a habitat management plan.**
	N1.4 Conserve key species	**N1.4.1 Practical conservation measures for priority species**		Some bird boxes have been installed for owls and birds. Numerous micro-habitat structures have been created for insects, birds, and small mammals in the form of wood piles, dry stone walls, brush piles and brush pile hedges. **CCIP: Please complete / update a biodiversity survey to understand priority species and provide focus for future management priorities and plans. It might help to engage an external habitat specialist or biologist to compose this habitat management plan. This specialist can then regularly check the successful management of habitat areas and offer strategic recommendations for continuous improvement.**
	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	The greenkeeper is maintaining appropriate grass species for the climate. Nevertheless, he is intending to transition into maintaining fescue dominant turf on greens and tees, with fescue and raygrass on fairways.

				He has begun a turf study to see which species of fescue or Agrostis could be the most appropriate for the site conditions. Also, maintaining these areas with organic and non-organic fertilizers to see if there is a difference. The goal is to find the most appropriate species to reduce water, fertilizer, and pesticide applications.
		N2.1.2 Practices to maintain good soil structure and condition		The greenkeeper has a solid maintenance regime with yearly aeration of greens and tees to maintain good soil structure. Aeration of fairways is difficult because topsoil is too shallow. Regular sand topdressing is also done to improve golf surfaces.
		N2.1.3 Careful and responsible fertiliser application throughout the year to avoid over-fertilisation	Undertake soil tests and nutrient analysis	Responsible use of fertilizer. A mix of mineral and organic, transitioning towards more organic.
	N2.2 Prioritise mechanical maintenance	**N2.2.1 Non-chemical pest, disease and weed management**	Sharpen mowing blades; Remove surface moisture; Hand weeding	Regular sharpening of mowing blades with their in-house sharpener. Hand weeding when necessary. Generally, a high tolerance for weeds on fairways. The greenkeeper removes the surface moisture daily on greens to reduce the risk of disease.
	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	The greenkeeper uses very little pesticides and basically only on greens to control diseases. Scouts course daily for early signs of disease. A high threshold for pests and diseases, focusing any treatment on greens for Winter Snow Mould.
		N2.3.2 Application of chemicals with full safety precautions	Use only legally registered and approved products; Ensure staff are fully qualified and licenced to use pesticides; Regularly calibrate and test applicators;	Only legally registered products are used. Staff are qualified and licensed to use pesticides.

		Use appropriate protective equipment; Dilute and dispose of leftover product on untreated areas of turf .	Leftover product is automatically diluted by rinsing the tank and is applied on some rough areas.
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.	The greenkeeper has an emergency spill response plan. There is a mowing buffer zone around all water and ecologically sensitive areas. Generally, the club maintains spraying and spreading buffer zones around water areas. No pesticides are used on fairways however there are a few greens which are reasonably close to water. The club has confirmed the new requirements for buffer zone widths in the Canton du Jura. **CIP: At the moment these retention basins on site are not considered official waterways or waterbodies and are entirely restricted to the golf course property with no connection to other water bodies flowing off-site. However, this could change in the future and may mean that a slight change in green size would be necessary in the future. Please continue to monitor and adapt.** **CCIP: Please create a map of the golf course showing designated buffer zones and no-spray, no-spread areas. This will help to optimise management practices as well as possible internal or external communications.**
	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	Any hazardous materials are safely and securely stored in locked rooms. A wastewater discharge licence is in place for all wastewater leaving the clubhouse.
	N3.1.3 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from	Ensure wash areas are on impermeable, leak-free surfaces; Mixing and loading of pesticides and fertilisers over an impermeable surface;	Washing station is on an impermeable surface. Mixing and loading of pesticides is done over an impermeable surface.

		maintenance facility operations	Triple rinse pesticide containers and applicators	Fertilizer is loaded on site next to the area to be fertilized. Pesticide container on the applicator is rinsed and leftover product is spread on un-treated areas of turf.
	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; Regular inspection of storage tanks	The greenkeeper has a list of hazardous materials. All hazardous materials are stored in secure and ventilated concrete building with metal doors. Pesticide shelves have a leak-proof bottom. Secondary containment around fuel tank. Fire extinguisher in place. Emergency spill kits are present, although have not yet been needed.
	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)	A wastewater discharge licence is in place. Wastewater and clippings are directed to an underground storage tank which is regularly pumped out and then spread on some rough and hard-rough areas. No wastewater flows away from this washing station. **CIP: In the future, it may make sense to have wastewater pumped out and removed from the site to minimize any additional nutrients applied to hard-roughs.** **CIP: Please also consider installing an oil/grease separator, ensuring that if this material is pumped out and spread on some rough areas, the oil or grease has been removed.**

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	Only greens and tees are irrigated, but the club is looking at the possibly of adding a few extra sprinklers on some sensitive areas of fairways or for-greens. Toilets on the golf course use the treated effluent water. The same water is used for the irrigation.
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	The irrigation system was updated 2 years ago, and the club is now undergoing a replacement of all sprinklers so they are individually controlled and more efficient. To be done in groups of 6 holes per year. The club does not have an on-site weather station but refers to a local weather station regularly for any irrigation on greens or tees.
	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	The club regularly audits water use in buildings. Some water saving devices are present. **CIP: Please do more to encourage water saving practices amongst staff and visitors.**
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	The club is already using 100% effluent water (STEP) or stormwater runoff from the municipality for their irrigation needs. The water from these two sources is piped into a lake on the golf course property where it is further partially filtered and used for irrigation. Extra water is pumped up to a second lake near the clubhouse for further storage. The club has enough water to be self-sufficient for up to 4 months without rain. Potable water is only used for the clubhouse. The club has a project to collect all rainwater from the roofs to use for washing clubs, machine washing station and washing the balls at the driving range.

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	The club keeps a reasonable amount of turfgrass for the game. **CIP: Please consider reducing some of the semi-rough or rough areas, especially around the backs of tees, to save on energy use.** The club is testing 2 solar/electric robot mowers on 2 fairways with the intention of trying to reduce the fuel and human time spent on mowing.
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	The club is aware of their energy use in the clubhouse and other buildings. The present clubhouse building is more or less Minergie standard with good insulation and many windows on the south side to provide passive solar heating. Motion detectors are found in most areas of the buildings. Appliances are quite new and updated when necessary to be as energy efficient as possible. They have a meeting in one month to discuss what improvements or changes they can make with the buildings or on the golf course. The club is trying to find a solution to separate the hot water tanks. Tanks which need to be heated all season, and a few tanks which only need to be used in winter for 1 apartment.
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	The club has installed solar panels on the clubhouse and about 100m2 of photovoltaic solar panels on the driving range to produce electricity for charging carts and other machines. Extra electricity produced is injected back into the local network. The club will soon have 4 chargers for electric cars. The buildings are heated by mazout (oil) at the moment and the system was updated about 5 years ago so it will be continued for

			at least another 5 to 10 years. Nevertheless, they are investigating alternative energy sources for the future, including pellets and heat pumps.
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	Some materials bought in big bags. Deliveries of kitchen produce are combined to minimise transportation impacts. **CIP: Please consider a waste audit for all areas of the golf course to see what decisions could be made to reduce waste.** There is a project to eliminate plastic bottles from the club and offer refillable metal drinking bottles. No plastic or paper used for table settings. Tablecloths only in tissue.
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	Materials are sourced locally whenever possible. The person responsible for the restaurant buys cheese, meat, fruit and vegetations, breads from very local producers. **CIP: Please consider creating a more official ethical / environmental purchasing policy, including increasing the use of organic and fairtrade products.**
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	General recycling is done throughout the clubhouse, restaurant and maintenance area, including all normal material recycling like glass, metal, oils, paper and cardboard. Some recycling bins are present around the clubhouse and pro-shop.

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	A local waste contractor is used to pick up all industrial and green waste from the clubhouse once a week. Another contractor removes used oil and other industrial waste from the maintenance shed on a regular basis. Food leftovers are sent to a place to make biogas.

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**		The restaurant is open to everyone. The club allows external groups to use reception facilities for weddings or other gatherings.
C1.2 Provide for volunteering and charity	**C1.2.1 Opportunities available for volunteering and support of charities and good causes**		Some charity tournaments are held during the year.
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'	Good relationship with the local community. The club has a sustainability working group composed of members of the direction, head greenkeeper and committee members. **CIP: Please ensure that this group meets regularly throughout the year to discuss their sustainable management and designate priority projects. Please also consider appointing an external member to the working group e.g., someone with knowledge of ecology or environmental management.**

C2 Golfers & Employees			
C2.1 Improve health and wellbeing	**C2.1.1 Benefits to human physical and mental health from golf and facility activities**		Storm shelters are found on a few areas of the golf course in case of thunderstorms.
C2.2 Be open and inclusive	**C2.2.1 Inclusivity and diversity in membership and visitor policies**	Demonstrate inclusive policies for members and visitors	Very open club, for women, juniors, new members, and visitors and green-fee players. Organise golf initiation to groups. The golf club is a regular stop for tour buses visiting the Jura region.
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	Good working conditions for staff. The club adheres to all relevant legislation and best practice for employment.
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	Some communication is done on sustainability commitments. A new brochure has been printed and distributed to members and non-members. **CIP: Please consider further communication around sustainability, including through the website, local newspapers, signs on the golf course etc.**
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	**CIP: Please be more pro-active in communicating with the local community, working together on various potential sustainable projects to raise awareness of what is being done on the site and what future projects could be undertaken to make Les Bois and golf in general a sustainable leader in the community.**

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