



GREAT LAKES BAY INVITATIONAL

2021 Dow Great Lakes Bay Invitational

July 13-17, 2021

Midland Country Club, Midland, Michigan



GEO Certified[®]
TOURNAMENT

Certification Report

May 2022

1. Summary

GEO Foundation is delighted to recognize the 2021 Dow Great Lakes Bay Invitational as having retained its status as a GEO Certified® Tournament for a second successive time.

The Dow Great Lakes Bay Invitational was the first LPGA Tournament to be GEO Certified in 2019, and the first event globally to achieve this award in its first year. The 2020 event was cancelled due to the COVID-19 global pandemic but the tournament returned in 2021, building on the foundations laid in 2019 to become a showcase for sustainability in sport.

This report provides a summary of actions undertaken and results achieved, including delivery of the Continual Improvement Points that were identified following the 2019 edition of the event.

The tournament, played from July 13-17, 2021, at the Midland Country Club, Michigan, received the internationally recognized award for sustainability in golf from Scotland-based GEO Foundation for Sustainable Golf.

To become "GEO Certified®" the Dow Great Lakes Bay Invitational, completed a custom-built program for golf tournaments, including document and evidence submission, a third-party verification carried out by the Council for Responsible Sport (the official verification body for GEO Certified Tournaments in North America), a thorough review by GEO, and agreement to a range of Continual Improvement Points.

The 2021 event demonstrated leadership across a range of sustainability indicators to meet international criteria and continually improve and innovate across planning and engagement activities, staging operations, venue actions, accommodation, legacy and community outreach projects. Despite continued the challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic during the 2021 event, the team adapted and continued to keep sustainability at the forefront of the event.

As a result, the Dow Great Lakes Bay Invitational has:

- Undergone an official third party verification process
- Successfully passed the GEO Certified® Tournament evaluation
- Met the required criteria of golf's international voluntary standard for sustainable golf tournaments

GEO agrees with the Council for Responsible Sport's verification assessment and opinion that, having achieved 46 from 45 credits

"The Dow Great Lakes Bay Invitational is a shining example of what can be achieved through the collective efforts of all stakeholders to deliver a sustainable golf tournament. The ambition to continually strive for improvement and always do more is evident throughout the event. The Dow GLBI is going from strength to strength and has quickly become established as a showcase for leadership in sustainability and climate action not only in golf but all sport. Our congratulations to all involved."

**Jonathan Smith,
Executive Director,
GEO Foundation**

sought, from 56 credits available, and with Continual Improvement Points set for the future, Dow Great Lakes Bay Invitational is therefore awarded GEO Certified® Tournament Status for the 2021 event.

Retaining this certification for consecutive years recognizes the Dow Great Lakes Bay Invitational, supported by Outlyr, for its continued credible and important leadership in advancing sustainability - in and through golf - helping foster nature, conserve resources, take climate action and strengthen communities.

This official GEO Certified® Tournament Report summarises the highlights and best practice activities taking place, and continual improvement points accepted for future editions of the tournament.

Jonathan Smith
Executive Director
GEO Foundation

2. Verification process

The official tournament audit was carried out by the independent verification body, The Council for Responsible Sport, accredited by GEO Foundation for golf tournament verification in North America.

Verification involved the following activities, using the International Sustainable Tournament Standard as the guide to ensure comprehensive and consistent evaluation of performance:

- Prior to the event, reviewed individual criteria/credits with organizers—primarily from Outlyr, the key event management and operations delivery partner—as well as reviewed plans in place through an electronically shared 'certification package' including an excel workbook tracking progress on individual criteria within the framework;
- During the event, a representative of the Council, Rico Tesio, received an in-depth operations tour of the event venue and interviewed relevant staff of the event host organization for the second time (first was in 2019), including engaged sponsors and contracted parties. Rico provided continuity to the verification effort, easily identifying where improvements and adjustments had been made since the previous edition of the event.
- Worked with Outlyr to identify key evidence and submit documentation

“The work that the DOW GLBI is doing is not only a benefit to their community, but also setting the standard for sustainability in professional golf. Their commitment comes from a dedicated title sponsor in Dow and a belief that anything is possible when everyone works together.”

– Rico Tesio, verifier, Council for Responsible Sport.

thereof. Thoroughly reviewed the submitted evidence to ensure compliance met the intent of individual credit criteria.

- Provided feedback considerations for continued future improvement on standard criteria within GEO Sustainable Tournaments Standard Workbook.
- The Council then submitted a full verification report for evaluation by GEO Foundation Ltd.

About the Council for Responsible Sport

The Council's vision is for a world where responsibly produced sports events are the norm and its mission is to provide objective, independent verification of the socially and environmentally responsible work event organisers are doing, and to actively support event organizers who strive to make a difference in their communities.

The Council first offered third-party certification of event production practices according to a stakeholder-reviewed collection of sport-industry best practice standards in 2007. As of October 2021, 186 individual events have achieved certification in eight countries and 27 U.S. States.

GEO is proud to work with the Council for Responsible Sport. We have a shared vision and mission, which combines to offer golf tournaments the most effective pathway to credible recognition.

Find out more about the Council at <http://www.councilforresponsiblesport.org>

GEO Certification review

GEO undertook a full review of all tournament and verification materials and evidence, ensuring:

- **Comprehensiveness** – those activities undertaken touched on all elements of the Tournaments Standard
- **Consistency** – that the verification approach was balanced, well-weighted and with consistent depth of evaluation across criteria
- **Accuracy** - matching the verification report with evidence submitted by the tournament to ensure statements and claims were accurate.

3. Best practices and highlights

Sustainability was implemented in a planned and coordinated way across all key elements of event staging, building on the consistency and momentum of previous years and delivered in line with the GEO tournament certification criteria.

A wide range of activity spanned the following sustainability action areas:

1. Planning & communications
2. Site protection

3. Procurement
4. Resource management
5. Access and equity
6. Legacy

Key Highlights

Among the highlights from the 2021 tournament were:

- ✓ **"Sustainability" added to the main tournament website navigation menu, reinforcing the tournament's commitment and providing the public with clear information about the tournament efforts and achievements**
- ✓ **Animated recap video with calls to action for 2021 attendees**
- ✓ **Social media campaign featuring sustainability stats during event build up**
- ✓ **Dow held a Canopy Walk through nature areas surrounding Midland Country Club, which served as an opportunity for kids to have fun while learning about the environment.**
- ✓ **Extensive reuse of materials and signage from the previous event in 2019**
- ✓ **Mesh repurposed into tees for gifts**
- ✓ **A range of programs – First Tee, STEM focus, For our Future – created meaningful engagements local youth and particularly girls**

3.1 Planning and Communications

Engagement through effective planning and communication is a key component of the tournament's sustainability programme in sharing the initiatives to all stakeholders and delivery partners.

Best Practice and Highlights included

- ✓ **A comprehensive sustainability report that outlines all tournament impacts and initiatives, approved by the tournament leadership**
- ✓ **Pre-event press conference video on facebook showcasing sustainability initiatives and impacts.**
- ✓ **Animated recap video with calls to action for 2021 attendees**
- ✓ **Tournament app promoted sustainability program while social media campaign featured sustainability stats during event build up**
- ✓ **Signage included QR code leading back to Dow company initiatives across sports.**

3.2 Site protection

The tournament took place at Midland Country Club and is actively engaged with the GEO OnCourse program helping facilities to measure and track their sustainability progress, calculate and offset carbon, and get world-leading recognition. Midland Country Club became GEO Certified in 2019.

Best Practice and Highlights included

- ✓ **Updated environmental assessment of Midland Country Club from Cippewa Nature Center which focused on protecting ecologically sensitive areas.**
- ✓ **Dow held a Canopy Walk through nature areas surrounding Midland Country Club, which served as an opportunity for kids to have fun while learning about the environment.**
- ✓ **Chippewa Watershed Conservancy holds free classes for public to educate them on protecting the area**

3.3 Procurement

A strong and effective procurement policy focuses on ensuring the products and materials supplied to the tournament are as sustainable as possible.

Best Practice and Highlights included

- ✓ **Extensive reuse of materials and signage from the previous event in 2019**
- ✓ **Mesh repurposed into tees for gifts**
- ✓ **The 'Eat Great Hospitality Trail' featured local/regional food and beverages from participating restaurants served with all compostable service wares.**
- ✓ **16 community and charity groups received leftover unserved food donated for redistribution for a total of 4,300 lbs of recovered-then-donated food goods, (comprising about 15% of the overall weight of waste generation by the tournament.)**
- ✓ **Focus on sourcing locally owned businesses for event delivery services saw 3 local businesses identified and highlighted in 2021, including one that is both local and woman-owned.**

3.4 Resource Management

Measuring energy, water, waste, transport and carbon provides a valuable tool to continually monitor and track progress of the tournament.

Best Practice and Highlights included

- ✓ **A 10% increase in the rate of diversion of waste (from 68 to 78% overall) was observed and verified between 2019-2021.**

- ✓ Carpet from hospitality was donated to local Habitat ReStore for resale and reuse.
- ✓ Procurement of 2,383 Water Restoration Certificates from Bonneville Environmental Foundation for the specific benefit of restoring 2.3 million gallons of water to the Hillabahatchee Creek Flow Restoration project to mitigate water use
- ✓ Calculation of carbon footprint, offsetting through NCX's 'winter cycle' of forest preservation projects.
- ✓ 332 lbs less waste was generated in 2021 (36,892) than in 2019 (37,224) and of that, 3,660 fewer pounds went to the landfill in 2021 than in 2019 because of waste diversion and recovery efforts.

3.5 Access and equity

Access and equity have long been at the heart of the event, renowned around the world for the incomparable atmosphere and spectator experience.

Best Practice and Highlights included

- ✓ **Driving inclusion and diversity presentation highlighted the many initiatives to ensure broad community representation and participation**
- ✓ **Mobility scooters and accessible portable toilets among the facilities available for people with access difficulties.**
- ✓ **Organizers collaborated with community organizations to give youth from the surrounding areas a change to experience and participate in event activities including the STEM in sports center**
- ✓ **Provision of lactation room for breastfeeding mothers to have privacy if they wanted/needed it while enjoying the event**
- ✓ **Free tickets early in the week enabled 6,000 visitors to attend**

3.6 Legacy

Leaving a lasting legacy for those who take part and for the local region reinforces the importance of the event.

Best Practice and Highlights included

- ✓ **A range of programs – First Tee, STEM focus, For our Future – created meaningful engagements local youth and particularly girls**
- ✓ **Local and Women owned business partnerships prioritised**
- ✓ **Partnership with Michigan Health in a 'step challenge'**
- ✓ **36 non-profits participated in the 2021 #TeamUp for the Great Lakes Bay Region program. Over 100 non-profits in the Great Lakes Bay Region applied for the chance to be paired with two LPGA teams set to compete at the 2021 Dow GLBI. Each LPGA team is worth \$2,250 – guaranteeing \$4,500 for each non-profit. A total pool of \$237,500 donated through this program**

4. Continual Improvement Points

The concept of continual improvement, ongoing innovation and setting new and higher targets is an important aspect of GEO Certified® Tournaments.

The following **Continual Improvement Points (CIP's)** were identified during initial certification in 2019, addressed in 2021 and additional CIPs identified for future events, and their agreement with the tournament partners as priority areas for delivery and review reflects the tournament's highly credible commitment to continue to extend on a year by year basis.

CIPs from 2021 are:

Colour code:

Black = CIPs outlined in 2019;

Green = Actions undertaken in 2021;

Red = CIPs outlined for 2022

Section 1: Planning & Communications

- (from 2019) 1.1 – In future iterations of the Sustainability Strategy Plan, include a section explaining how previous efforts will be expanded upon in the upcoming year's event, such as using the key performance indicators from 2019 as a baseline for future goals. (2021 update) "Sustainability" was added to the main tournament website navigation menu and provides the public with clear information about tournament efforts and achievements with regards to certification and the criteria therein.
- (from 2019) 1.4 – Potential to include a submission box inside tournament app that allows users to submit concerns, questions, and/or ideas for improvement. (2021 update) A "Contact Us" form on the event website allows the public to easily express themselves and have the comment received by tournament organizers.
- For 2022: 1.7 – The "Early Birdie Breakfast and Sustainability Summit" has earned the innovation credit in section 1 twice now. In 2022 and beyond, planning should show how the event is growing and/or changing to keep 'innovation' present with this now-established annual event.

Section 2: Site Protection

- (from 2019) 2.1 – The environmental assessment walk-through should include golf club superintendent and other relevant club staff and maintenance crew managers/members. (2021 update) Environmental assessment of MCC from Chippewa Nature Center focused on protecting ecologically sensitive areas at event location. Assessment was led by Operations Manager, senior Sustainability executives, and Director of Land and Facilities.
- for 2022: 2.4 – The 'Canopy Walk' is an immersive educational experience benefitting those who receive the privilege. In 2022, organizers and DOW can consider, 'How might this beneficial experience be expanded to include more local youth and/or further support the good works of the CWC year-round in future years?'

"DOW QUOTE to be added"

Chris Chandler

Section 3: Procurement

- (from 2019) 3.5 – Consider establishing a sustainable food charter for the food policy at the tournament. Ideas for this can be generated and established through stakeholder engagement meetings (re: Credit 1.4). (2021 update) Organizers created a procurement code and communicated it to all vendors.

Section 4: Resource Management

- (from 2019) 4.5 – Consider creating a Water Conservation Plan that points out all water sources, sets conservation targets, and works with partners and suppliers to reduce water usage. When creating this document, bear in mind water usage from toilets, food tents, and irrigation practices, while including total water usage metrics (re: Credit 4.6) from 2019 as a baseline for continual future water usage reduction. (2021 update) Tournament continues to rely upon the facilities management and tactics of the course operators.
- (from 2019) 4.7 – Build upon the idea of implementing free water stations and providing reusable water bottles to patrons by considering improved water conservation methods among catering/food providers and other amenities. (2021 update / 2022 CIP) Attempt to gather or estimate data on usage and the amount of single-use plastic bottles prevented from having the fill stations available, as well as water saved through the hand sanitizer stations at the port-o-lets instead of freshwater.
- (from 2019) 4.9 – The next iteration of the Energy & Carbon Management Plan should include strategies for reducing carbon footprint in the future, such as ideas related to the use of energy on-site and in the supply chain, such as deliveries/route efficiency/regional sourcing. (2021 update) Tournament procured carbon offsets for the first time to cover all tournament energy use and player and staff travel.
- For 2022: 4.11 – While renewable energy was used, measurement of how much of total event energy consumption was generated from renewable sources is required to earn credit. Additionally, set a goal to reach 40% renewable energy by a specific event year. (2021) No change noted.
- (from 2019) 4.13 – Consider purchasing carbon offsets, such as contributing to local reforestation projects or forest restoration efforts in nearby parks or protected lands. Additional efforts include purchasing carbon offsets with partners or stakeholders. (2021 update) Tournament procured 1,000 metric tons of carbon offsets (forest preservation through a collective of landowners in 39 US states through 'harvest deferral') for the first time to cover all tournament energy use and player and staff travel, which totalled 765 MT CO₂e.

Section 5: Access & Equity

- (from 2019) 5.4 – Potential to expand outreach by advertising efforts (e.g. lactation station, free admission days, explanation of Charitable Impact Program, veterans' access, bussing system) on website (in easy to access way) and on social media in days leading up to event so people can be informed before they enter the event. (2021 update) Significant expansion of information available on the website noted, including sections "Community Legacy," "Volunteering" and "Volunteering FAQs" and an easy-to-use "contact us" form.

Section 6: Community Legacy

- (from 2019) 6.2 – Perhaps advertise the outcomes of various initiatives (e.g. STEM center for kids, Fore Our Future) on the website, including first-hand accounts of participants to show others the benefits their fellow community members experience. (2021 update) Significant expansion of information available on the website noted, including sections "Community Legacy,"

- (from 2019) 6.4 – Encourage increased participation in Healthy Living Step Calculator initiative by setting a goal to surpass the 2019 total (final totals unreported). (2021 update) 422 individuals, and participation totaling 7.7 million steps recorded between July 12-17, 2021.

5. GEO Foundation for Sustainable Golf

GEO Foundation is an international not-for-profit organisation entirely dedicated to advancing sustainability in and through golf, collaborating with the golf industry worldwide to:



- ✓ Strengthen the social and environmental contribution of golf
- ✓ Help the sport credibly communicate its commitment and value
- ✓ Champion sustainability in front of a large audience

GEO manages and assures the OnCourse® program for facility and course management, new golf development and tournaments – currently used in 76 countries worldwide.

In addition to the delivery of programs and solutions, GEO's wider activities include research and innovation, communications and reporting, and support for strategy and policy.

GEO also administers GEO Certified®, the international mark of credible and comprehensive sustainability in golf, and part of an elite group of well-known ecolabels which include Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance, and Forest Stewardship Council. After completing OnCourse®, a golf facility, development or tournament can apply for this international distinction.

Join OnCourse® - for sustainability, climate action and golf's future!

Congratulations to Dow Great Lakes Bay Invitational for making sustainable development such a central part of what they do, and for showcasing action and continual improvement through the Dow Great Lakes Bay Invitational

