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Leading The Field

2017 Waste Management Phoenix Open First To Achieve New Sustainable Golf Tournament Certification

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (Nov. 28, 2017) - The 2017 Waste Management Phoenix Open achieved another first in golf sustainability, becoming the first tournament in the world to attain “GEO Certified® Tournament” status from Scotland-based GEO Foundation (GEO).

To become a “GEO Certified® Tournament” the Waste Management Phoenix Open, the largest attended tournament on the PGA TOUR, followed principles set out in the newly released “Voluntary Sustainable Golf Tournament Standard” and achieved outstanding results in six categories: Planning, Site Protection, Procurement, Resource Management, Access and Equity, and Community Legacy. Sustainability highlights from the tournament include:

- 100% landfill diversion through recycling, composting, donation, reuse and waste-to-energy.
- 63.3 million gallons of water restored to the Colorado River Basin and Verde River through the Waste Management Phoenix Open Water Campaign with [Bonneville Environmental Foundation](#).
- 720 MtCO₂e of carbon offsets with a strong socio-economic focus purchased, to cover more than double the emissions from tournament operations, player travel and volunteer travel.
- Zero Waste Stations used to engage attendees, educating and encouraging involvement in sustainability.
- An annual [Waste Management Phoenix Open Sustainability Report](#) with detailed metrics and program explanations.
- A venue Environmental Management Plan and commitment to become a fully GEO Certified® golf facility.

- Protection of ecologically sensitive areas and minimized impact of temporary structures and heavy machinery through a Site Protection Plan.
- Over \$10.1 million raised and awarded to local charities through The Thunderbirds and \$100,000 donated to environmental organizations from Green Out Day.
- Local youth engagement and free admission for local police, firefighters, active and retired military personnel.

The GEO accolade is the culmination of many years of commitment, planning and delivery on the part of Waste Management, the tournament host The Thunderbirds and other tournament sponsors, stakeholders, and vendors to ensure a comprehensive sustainability effort covering all aspects of the tournament. Sustainability efforts of the tournament have been validated through in-depth third-party verification, including the Council for Responsible Sport, UL and GEO.

To achieve GEO certification, the venue and organizers must complete a custom-built program for golf tournaments, that is both streamlined and robust, 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.

Paula Davey, Director of Sales and Marketing at Waste Management, said: “The achievement is another proud milestone for our organization and reinforces the Waste Management Phoenix Open as the ‘Greenest Show on Grass.’ Waste Management not only wants to stand out as a leading environmental services provider, but we hope to change how golf tournaments and communities view sustainability everywhere.”

Tom Carpenter, Director of Waste Management’s Sustainability Services, added: “GEO validates the wide variety of social, economic and environmental initiatives we work on year-round with tournament host The Thunderbirds. Becoming the first tournament to become GEO Certified® demonstrates the commitment to sustainability across all Waste Management Phoenix Open operations.”

Jonathan Smith, Executive Director of GEO Foundation, said: “There is absolutely no doubt that the Waste Management Phoenix Open deserves this accolade. If you look at the breadth and depth of what they have done to date, and the social and environmental targets they have set for the future, they are clearly leading in the practical delivery of sustainability in and through golf, as well as inspiring so many others, in golf, in business and in the community.

While there are other tournaments on the PGA TOUR, European Tour, and Majors such as The Open stepping strongly into sustainability, it is fair to say the Waste Management Phoenix Open has pushed some boundaries of how sports events can engage fans on environmental issues, and they are raising the bar for where other tournaments aspirations could be set.”

Shelley Villalobos, Managing Director of the Council for Responsible Sport, added: “After the Waste Management Phoenix Open achieved Gold, Evergreen and Evergreen Inspire over the



past six years, we are excited that the tournament piloted this new certification through GEO. It represents the next step in validating the sustainability of golf tournaments and the Council is proud to have been part of the collaboration to develop the Standard for the certification, and to deliver the verification that enabled this accomplishment.”

Find the Waste Management Phoenix Open Certification Report at www.sustainable.golf/wastemanagementphoenixopen.

Contacts and Information

About Waste Management

Waste Management, based in Houston, Texas, is the leading provider of comprehensive waste management services in North America. Through its subsidiaries, the company provides collection, transfer, recycling and resource recovery, and disposal services. It is also a leading developer, operator and owner of landfill gas-to-energy facilities in the United States. The company’s customers include residential, commercial, industrial, and municipal customers throughout North America. To learn more information about Waste Management, visit www.wm.com or www.thinkgreen.com. Media inquiries to Janette Micelli, jmicelli@wm.com, 602-579-6152 or Rob Myers, rob@rmprgroup.com, 602-317-6131.

About GEO Foundation

GEO is an international non-profit, entirely dedicated to advancing sustainability in and through the sport of golf. Established in 2006, GEO works closely with the golf industry, aiming to strengthen the social and environmental contribution of golf, help the sport credibly communicate its commitment and value, and champion sustainability in front of a large worldwide audience. In pursuit of this mission, GEO provides a suite of OnCourse® support programs for facilities, new developments and tournaments, and manages and assures golf’s externally-accredited and widely endorsed standards and certification system, GEO Certified®. Find out more at www.sustainable.golf. Media inquiries to Kelli Jerome, kelli@golfenvironment.org, +44 (0)1620 895 100.

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