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Audubon Lifestyles partners with Equestrian Services LLC and The International Sustainability Council to develop a Sustainable Equestrian Facility Program

(Palm Harbor, FL – March 24, 2009) Three organizations, Audubon Lifestyles, Equestrian Services LLC, and The International Sustainability Council have developed a sustainability-based program for equestrian facilities. The program, named The Audubon Lifestyles Equestrian Facility Program, was a collaborative effort, but will be administered in it's entirely by Audubon Lifestyles, with support from Equestrian Services LLC. The program includes guidelines and incentives for equestrian facilities owners and managers seeking to adopt economic, environmental and socially responsible best practices. In addition, the program includes safety protocols for horses and riders, as well as criteria for facility planning, environmental practices and operations. Through these standards, equestrian facilities will be recognized for following design and operational parameters that promote all aspects of sustainability.

The Audubon Lifestyles Equestrian Facility Program is a voluntary program that will set the standard for sustainably managed equestrian facilities and the equestrian industry. The intent was to create a program that was achievable yet comprehensive, and to reward facilities that do more through a series of recognition and branding opportunities. Not every facility will choose the path toward sustainability, but those that do will become the leaders in the industry that stand the test of time.

Audubon Lifestyles, based in Palm Harbor, Florida, provides education, advisory services and certification assistance based on the Principles of Sustainability. The organization facilitates sustainable living and lifestyles by assisting businesses and individuals in sustainable solutions that are reliable, practical and efficient. Learn more at www.audubonlifestyles.com.

“We couldn’t have found a better partner in this effort than we did when we were approached by Equestrian Services LLC. Their unsurpassed knowledge in equestrian facility management is second

to none, and allowed us to develop the most comprehensive sustainably-based equestrian facility program that exists today.” states Eric Dodson, Executive Officer for Audubon Lifestyles, “Their breadth of knowledge allowed for the creation of a program that not only focuses on the environmental and social aspects of sustainability, but also the economics behind what it means to run a successful equestrian facility.”

Founded in 2000, Equestrian Services, LLC, plans, designs and manages equestrian amenities for communities and resorts, worldwide. Setting the standard for equestrian facilities, the company offers the only branded facility, the Karen and David O’Connor Signature Facility, for builders and developers offering equestrian amenities. Equestrian Services provides comprehensive services from feasibility studies to equestrian facility management. Equestrian Services is headquartered in Charlottesville, Virginia. For more information, visit www.equestrianservicesllc.com.

“Equestrian Services is thrilled to partner with Audubon Lifestyles and the International Sustainability Council,” said Jennifer Donovan, co-founder of Equestrian Services, LLC. “When we created Equestrian Services, LLC nearly 10 years ago, we understood that through the implementation of innovative planning ideas, conservation and development could effectively coexist. A successful way to accomplish this is by building communities around the horse enthusiast. This partnership has arisen out of increased public appreciation of and desire for the sustainable practices followed by successful equestrian communities.”

Requirements in the Audubon Lifestyles Equestrian Program include developing a Nutrient Management Plan, requiring that all persons under the age of 18 wear approved helmets, ensuring that horses have access to clean fresh water at all times, having only non-barbed wire fencing where horses are contained, and providing proof of negative Coggins tests for horses at the facility. In addition, a facility must adopt an Equestrian Facility Sustainability Charter to publicly display their intent to run and manage their facility sustainably. And lastly, the facility must complete a sustainability audit specifically designed for equestrian facilities. The audit provides opportunities to meet and exceed minimum requirements in the following categories: Economics & Business, Horse Care & Safety, Facility & Operations, Environmental, and Outreach & Education. Upon completion of the audit, the equestrian facility will be awarded a rating of up to five stars. Any facility awarded a three-star rating or higher will also receive the International Sustainability Council Seal of Sustainability.

Striving for and ultimately achieving the Seal of Sustainability from the International Sustainability Council (ISC) means that the equestrian facility is setting a new standard for excellence. The Seal of Sustainability means that the facility has adopted and put into place recognized Best Management Practices that equal environmental superiority, social responsibility in economic viability. The ISC Seal of Sustainability is the hallmark of excellence not only regarding the facility itself, but in regard to the actual equestrian experience for individuals that enjoy equestrian activities, as well as the symbol of excellence in care of the horses residing in those facilities.

The International Sustainability Council is a not-for-profit organization comprised of individuals representing universities, non-profit organizations, government agencies and businesses with a broad range of expertise and experience. The council's main purposes include promoting the adoption of the Principles of Sustainability, serving as a think-tank on all topics pertaining to sustainability, acting as a virtual warehouse of information related to topics related to sustainability, showcasing and recognizing specific places, businesses, organizations and individuals who are leading the way toward a more sustainable planet, and defining and encouraging scientifically based methods that we, as a society, can use to merge sustainability into the operation of our businesses, create new or improve existing "places," foster new products and technology that will improve our lives at home, and provide sustainable lifestyle choices that are economically priced, environmentally healthy and socially beneficial. To learn more visit: www.thesustainabilitycouncil.org

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