



Across the country, native plant materials are being incorporated into course design. Golfers should recognize that golf courses are managed land areas that should complement the natural environment. Breckenridge GC, Colorado.

Attitudes must change

BY JOHN H. FOY
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 USGA Green Section

As with numerous other aspects of every day life in America, television has changed the game of golf. With the broadcast of a large number of tournaments and championships each year, a change in golfer attitudes towards course conditioning has occurred.

A standard of "wall to wall" perfection has been established. Most golfers however, are totally unaware of the amount of work and cost required to put a course into championship conditioning for the few days of a televised event. On the other side of the coin, golf course superintendents have risen to meet the challenge, and across the country, superbly conditioned courses are being provided.

Yet, over the past several years, golf courses and turfgrass have been heavily criticized for their perceived negative en-

vironmental impacts. University research continues to document that properly maintained golf course turf can be provided without detrimental effects on the environment.

Numerous positive steps are also being taken in management and design to further minimize possible negatives and accentuate the positive environmental aspects of golf courses.

It is essential however, that additional changes in golfer attitudes be made to ensure that the game continues to flourish. This is especially true with regard to water bodies and out of play areas. Education of golfers and the general public is an important part of this process.

In 1994, the Center for Resource Management, Golf Digest Magazine, the National Wildlife Federation and the Pebble Beach Resort Company, resolved that the time was right to bring representatives of many of the country's most influential golf and environmental organiza-

tions together to address issues related to golf and the environment.

Following the first meeting in January, 1995, a committee of approximately 25 golf, environmental and government representatives worked together to develop a guide titled, *Environmental Principles for Golf Courses in the United States*. At the second meeting of this group, in March 1996, this document was reviewed and approved. Endorsing organizations include:

- American Society of Golf Course Architects
- Arizona Golf Association
- Audubon International
- Center for Resource Management
- Club Managers Association of America
- Friends of the Earth
- Golf Course Builders Association of America



Golfers should respect environmentally sensitive areas within the course. Marsh Landing CC. Florida.



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In the past, maintaining close cut turf cover around lakes has been demanded. This attitude must change.



Buffer strips, as well as shoreline and aquatic plantings are essential for minimizing potential for chemical and fertilizer runoff and soil erosion. They also improve water quality and create wildlife habitat. Yacht & Country Club of Stuart.

Golf Course Superintendents of America
 Ladies Professional Golf Association
 National Association of Counties
 National Club Association
 National Coalition Against the Misuse
 of Pesticides
 National Golf Foundation
 National Wildlife Federation
 North Carolina Coastal Federation
 Pamlico-Tar River Foundation
 Save the Bay
 Southern Environmental Law Center
 United States Environmental Protection
 Agency
 United States Golf Association

The following is Section F, "What Golfers Can Do To Help," from this environmental principles document:

"The American golf community is dedicated to preserving the game's treasured links to nature. As a result, golf courses are now being developed, designed and managed more responsibly than ever before. However, we who play the game also have a responsibility to help ensure that golf remains compatible with nature and that our courses are well-managed and in harmony with the environment".

As golfers, we should:

1. Recognize that golf courses are managed land areas that should complement the natural environment.
2. Respect designated environmentally sensitive areas within the course.
3. Accept the natural limitations and variations of turfgrass plants growing under conditions that protect environmental resources (e.g., brown patches, thinning, loss of color).
4. Support golf course management decisions that protect or enhance the environment and encourage the development of environmental conservation plans.
5. Support maintenance practices that protect wildlife and natural habitat.

6. Encourage maintenance practices that promote the long-range health of the turf and support environmental objectives. Such practices include aerification, reduced fertilization, limited play on sensitive turf areas, reduced watering, etc.
 7. Commit to long-range conservation efforts (e.g., efficient water use, Integrated Plant Management, etc.) on the golf course and at home.
 8. Educate others about the benefits of environmentally responsible golf course management.
 9. Support research and education programs that expand our understanding of the relationship between golf and the environment.
 10. Take pride in our environmentally responsible courses.
- For a copy of this document, call the USGA or the GCSAA.

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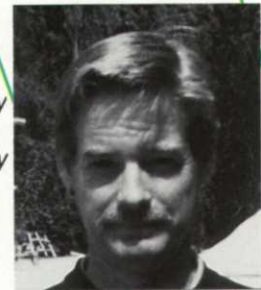
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