

Fire on the hole!

Another benefit of golf courses emerges



The Habitat Golf Course proved to be an effective fire break against this raging 900-acre brush fire near Malabar in January. Photograph by Robert McDaniel.

Security and lower fire hazard

Expanses of green, low-growing turfs in the landscape provide a high visibility zone that discourages unwanted intruders and vandals. Such turfs offer a low-cost approach that is a viable security measure, especially around sensitive military and police installations.

Also, the low fuel value of green, prostrate-growing turfs serves a valuable function as a firebreak that significantly lowers the fire hazard if properly positioned (Youngner, 1970). This attribute is especially important for homes and buildings adjacent to extensive woodland or brush areas.

- James Beard and Robert Green

Fire at the Habitat

This past January a wildfire consumed approximately 900 acres of pine and palmetto woodlands adjacent to our golf course, The Habitat, in Malabar.

Arson was suspected, but no one has been arrested.

The fire did very little damage to the

course. Just a small area was burned by the twelfth tee but I think the damage could have been much worse if we had not used the irrigation system to fight it.

We have very little rough here at the Habitat. It is mostly fairways with woods on both sides. I hate to think what this course would look like if the fire had got to the other side.

As the fire approached the fairways, my irrigation technician, Doug Bonnet, would shut off the hydraulic supply to the satellites. All the heads started up at once which stopped the fire from crossing the fairway to the other side.

- Robert McDaniel

Golf course's water saves the day

A new state-of-the-art, multipump, computer-driven irrigation system at Crane Creek Country Club in Boise, Idaho, turned out to be a lot more than superintendent Richard Hutchins could ever hope for a few months ago.

The system, newly installed under the direction of Kuhn Associates of Mercer

Island, Wash., literally came to the rescue of the homes of several residents near the course during a wildfire that raged through the Boise area late last summer.

As the fire threatened to move through some of the sagebrush and cheatgrass bordering Crane Creek fairways and toward a condominium development, Hutchins—an 11-year member of GCSAA—had his crews turn the part-circle sprinklers 180 degrees and water down the out-of-play areas.

The move effectively abated the wildfire in that area and spared the nearby homes.

"Afterwards, in looking at the fire line, it's clear that the fire stopped at the sprinklers' water line about 200 yards from our homes," resident Ivan Strand told the *Idaho Statesman* after the blaze.

"We believe that without such a generous and neighborly act by Crane Creek Country Club, the Curling Cove Condominiums would be toast today."

- GCSAA Online