Developers strive to meet regulatory decision

There is little spring planting going on at the proposed Sherman Hollow golf course in Huntington, VT, but there is plenty of digging. The $23 million project, featuring an 18-hole layout as its centerpiece, had been mired for more than four years in state and district environmental board sparring with Sherman Hollow, Inc. President Paul Truax and state associates.

Truax also is principal owner of the Sherman Hollow Ski Resort, which did not open last winter because of insufficient snow. Backhoes, bulldozers and men with shovels in recent weeks have been probing the planted site of the golf course under the watchful eye of geologists.

The extensive earth-moving is the first step in checking course water supply, its purity, availability and contaminant possibility. It's part of a fairly lengthy list of measures outlined by the state Environmental Board as conditions to be met before course construction can proceed.

The extensive digging operation has been expensive, but Truax remains undeterred.

Sherman Hollow is 'working with the golf industry in the state to help assure that reasonable standards ... are developed so that future Vermont golf developers will not find themselves in a similar regulatory quagmire.' — Paul Truax

He said, "Even though we feel the permit process is excessive, we will proceed. We see no reason why this course can not be permitted and built."

He added, "Sherman Hollow is in the midst of field testing necessary to address the specific questions raised by the board in its February decision and stipulations. "Preliminary results confirm that the conclusions reached by the experts who testified on behalf of the golf course were sound. This further substantiates Sherman Hollow's contention that we had met our burden of proof in earlier proceedings and that the board's recent findings constitute an unnecessary and costly burden."

Truax said the results also again "raise the question as to why the board largely ignored Sherman Hollow's extensive expert testimony."

Truax concluded, "Sherman Hollow's representatives also are working with the golf industry in the state to help assure that reasonable standards of golf course review are developed so that future Vermont golf developers will not find themselves in a similar regulatory quagmire."

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