Foreseeing rebuttal, PGA may drop plans

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — The PGA's plans for a $1.1-billion golf development in the Mandarin area may have been abandoned because of anticipated problems in winning environmental permits, but there is hope that it will stay in northeast Florida.

There is suspicion that the Hall of Fame could be heading south into St. Johns County.

Jacksonville had stood to gain more than merely another couple of golf courses.

Among benefits expected from the PGA Tour complex were:

- A 1,700-acre nature preserve.
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- The PGA Tour Hall of Fame.
- A Florida community college.
- 4,500 homes, from luxury housing to apartments.
- 204 acres of office parks.
- Two 18-hole golf courses.
- 12,000 jobs.
- $6.8 million in property, sales and tourist taxes.
- A resort convention center and 700-room hotel.
- While indignant letters were pouring into the Florida Times-Union lamenting loss of a project with such economic impact because of "a very small group of environmentally concerned extremists," little noticed was another sad development locally.

The Fort George Island Golf Club, opened in 1923 as the Ribault Club, was closed for good.

Manager Dawn Tomberlin said closing came as no surprise: "We've been fighting the environmentalists for years. They claim runoff from chemicals polluted nearby pristine waters, and a well that irrigated it damaged the ground water."

Tomberlin said she and her staff of seven would go on unemployment.

San Francisco mayoral race puts course project into limbo

WOODSIDE, Calif. — Political infighting for the San Francisco mayoral race has balked plans for a public golf course on Crystal Springs watershed land here, according to San Mateo County supervisors and Peninsula golfers.

Not so, says the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. The board contends an environmental impact study is needed before the course can be built. A $350,000 limited study, which San Mateo County had agreed in April to pay for, would have shortened the time before construction plans could be considered.

Peninsula golfers for 30 years have sought a course on watershed land. The proposal calls for a 55-million, 200-acre, 18-hole course along Canada Road.

Said veteran golfer Jack deFigueiredo, "It seems we can't get anything built in San Mateo County without some environmental issue creeping up."

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