Cape Cod Study director defends findings

To the Editor:

The article on the New York attorney general's report attacking golf courses was balanced, thorough and interesting (GCN, Sept. '91, pp. 1, 1,7, 19).

The article summarized statements made by one of the study authors, Dr. Michael Surgan, attacking the Cape Cod study. I was the director of the study, and first or sole author of the two articles published on it.

I would like to respond to his statements.

"Some of the wells were dug too deep to detect surface applied pesticides."

This is an incorrect statement for several reasons, First, all monitoring wells "... were screened at or just below the water table" (Cohen et al., Ground Water Monitoring Review 10 (1), 160-173, 1990). In other words, the sampling points (the screens) could not be placed any shallower. Second, the average depths to water in non-background (non-control) wells was 21 feet at Bass River, 35 feet at Falmouth, 6.5 feet at Eastward Ho, and 10 feet at Hyannisport. The range was 5.28-35.63 feet, the average 18 feet.

I have been working in the field of pesticides in ground water since 1979 and do not know anyone who would consider these depths "too deep," especially when one considers the sandy subsurface.

Third, these depths are similar to ground water depths in the areas discussed in the "Toxic "Fairways" report, the subject of the GCN article.

For example, in our review of aldicarb in ground water (Lorber, Cohen & DeBuchananne, Ground Water Monitoring Review 10 (1), 127-141, 1990), we summarized the approximately 12,000 detections on Long Island. One study cited in our text documented significant detections in ground water around 100 feet deep, much deeper than the Cape Cod sites.

"Others (wells) were placed upstream from where the pesticide applications were made, so that the chemicals had no chance of flowing past the well...".

If Dr. Surgan is referring to the background wells, he is correct and I appreciate the compliment. That is the point of background wells. If he is describing the green, tee or fairway wells, then that is not a a correct statement. All those wells were drilled at the edge of those areas so that ground water would be sampled that was influenced by turf management of greens, tees or fairways as appropriate.

Perhaps he is noting correctly that we did not place our wells as one would do in a hazardous waste landfill study. In such investigations, one normally places most of the monitoring wells downgradient of the whole site, near the property boundary.

In our study we were interested in determining whether there were differences in ground water quality under areas with different turf management programs. (And there were differences, as noted in the first paper cited above, as well as the one published in Golf Course Management (58 (2), 26-44, February 1990.)

"The Cape Cod study authors acknowledged the deficiencies ....".

Anything is possible, but this is news to me. I have never discussed this with Dr. Surgan, nor has my geologist-coauthor, Joe Senita.

The only deficiency we ever acknowledged was in the method used to install the wells. The drive-and-wash method may have caused vertical cross contamination down the boreholes, thereby increasing the number of detections than we otherwise would have seen.

I hope this clarifies the issue.

Sincerely,
Stuart Z. Cohen, president
Environmental & Turf Services

Trett/Triplett management firm omitted

To the editor:

Peter Blais' article about management companies (August issue) provided a good profile of the growing acceptability for such contracted services. It also conveyed the professionalism, stability and effectiveness these firms offer owners, developers and club boards.

Disappointingly, TrettCo/Triplett Services was not among the firms listed in your chart of golf course management companies, even though we proudly manage and operate country clubs throughout the state of Michigan. We also consult to owners and club boards in all regions of the country. Information about the services of TrettCo's club management division can be obtained by contacting J. L. Fournier or Raymond F. Zall at TrettCo, Inc./Triplett Services, 33469 Fourteen Mile Road, Farmington Hills, Mich.; 313-661-9000.

Cordially,
Raymond F. Zall

Letters to the editor are welcomed. Please address them to: Letters, *Golf Course News*, P.O. Box 997, Yarmouth, ME 04096.

Comment

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GCSAA International Golf Course Conference and Show close many gaps in knowledge.

But organizations should, together, decide to gather, store and share their knowledge.

The hallmark of success is the same everywhere. Have a good foundation of knowledge and follow it up with righteous decisions.

RIGHT CHOICES

That's another crucial factor for golf's future: How it is perceived by the public. One bad pesticide application by one greenskeeper reflects on all greenskeepers. One bad decision by a land developer reflects on all his colleagues.

Likewise, the developer who agrees a wetland should be protected or replaced twofold will win goodwill for not only himself, but other developers as well.

Golf has always been a sport of highest standards. Unlike soccer, hockey—or even baseball—which are marked by brawls and unsportsmanlike conduct, golf stands erect as a gentleman's game... even when played by a young boy or elderly lady.

Those who are the backbone of the sport — the "insiders" who design, build and maintain them— should also stand erect as righteous decision-makers. That has got to be the bottom line — and the common line.

Trees, shrubbery add depth, character and scenic impact

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vive the future. It is much more satisfying to play golf in a spectacular botanical environment-native grasses and wildflowers inclusive-than to play on a green rug surrounded by "civilization."

Creative design or renovation does not overburden the superintendent with a phenomenal quantity of repetitive physical work. Rather, the truly creative design allows for minimum routine maintenance while creating the visual character and environmental "signature" of the course.

Sweet Bay Island in south Louisiana is a golf course arboretum currently in the preliminary design and development state. Figure 1 illustrates the proposed layout of the par 5, 553-yard 2nd hole. (Could be Anywhere, U.S.A.) Figure 2, however, illustrates the proposed native plantings that support the design and create visual uniqueness.

Please note that the shaded areas on the plan indicate native grass, cane or wildflower plantings. The tree massings create the density of twig and branch development necessary to mirror the cypress and maple groves common in Louisiana.

These trees and shrubs massings will then be heavily mulched to retard weed development and eliminate the necessity to mow in and under each and every tree. Turf maintenance is restricted to the fairway, tee and green areas.

Lake perimeter out-of-play is planted with native aquatics that visually reinforce the ecological diversity found in Louisiana.

Figure 1 represents approximately 11 acres (less water) that would normally be "maintained." Figure 2 represents the true maintenance responsibility of only 4.7 acres. And this is just one hole.

The maintenance program for Sweet Bay Island is designed to be top-heavy with required maintenance for the first five-year period after opening. Then, because of the work performed within that five-year period, the maintenance responsibility is expected to steadily decline because of the "self-sufficiency" achieved over much of the course.

Sweet Bay Island represents a unique opportunity for golf to help provide a passive recreation or leisure experience for the "other" 85 percent of the population that amazingly does not play golf. Small boating, fishing, picnicking and nature trails are expected to peacefully coexist with golf within this 380-acre native plant arboretum.

Trees add depth to a golf hole if correctly placed. They create scale and add interest to the shot. Your club or course can begin to concede areas out of play to wildflower and tree plantings.

Correctly selected tree species add privacy and aid the player's concentration. Your course can also implement a good tree-planting program to create diversity and add interest and character.

Trees reduce visual pollution, screen undesirable views. organize space, stop erosion and help ease surface water evaporation.

Trees create sunlight and shade patterns and provide habitat and a food source for birds.

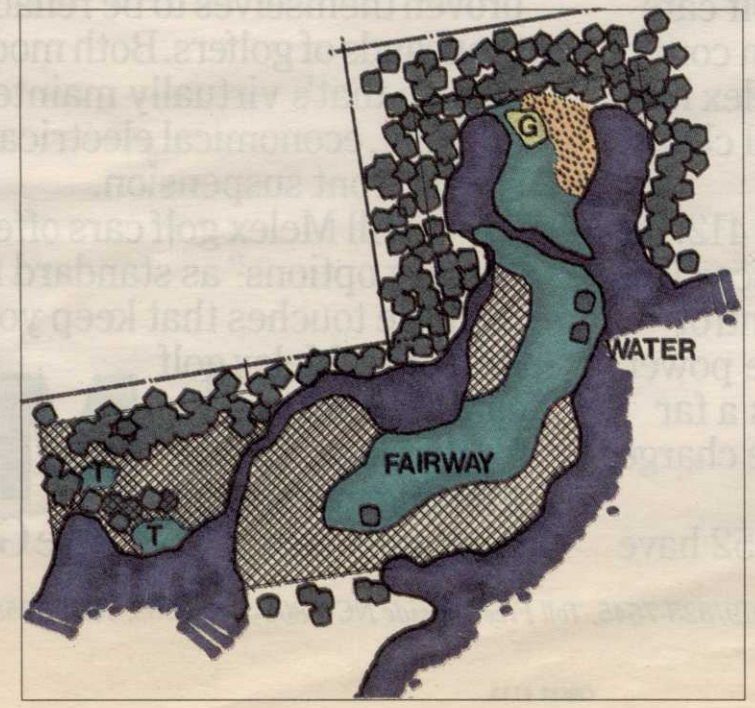
Developing a "no mow" strategy for certain areas of any golf course will surely reduce maintenance volume.

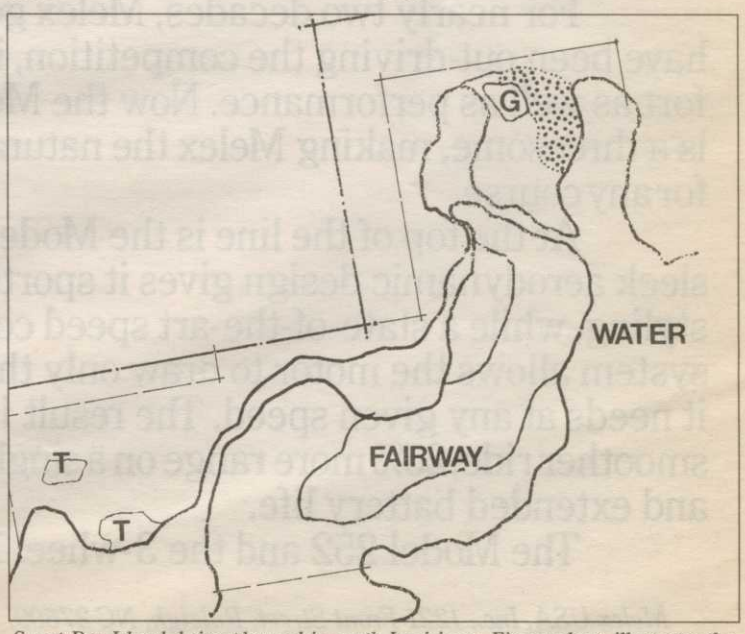
Because of the large area of land used, golf courses should evolve toward providing a more complete recreational or leisure experience not only for the golfer but for everyone.

Golf needs to assume a lead role in environmental repair, ecology and native plant use. Golf courses today should not only be a tremendous asset to the communities they are a part of, they could make a more significant contribution as bird and wildlife sanctuaries and as nature preserves or native arboretums.

But ultimately, should tree-planting programs reach fruition, the level of enjoyment derived from playing golf will rise and the number of rounds played will follow.

Stephen Rusbar is a registered landscape architect in Louisiana and frequently contributes his design talents on golf course projects in his area.





Sweet Bay Island, being planned in south Louisiana. Figure above illustrates the proposed 2nd hole. At left, proposed native plantings would support the design and create visual uniqueness.