Environmental Summit
Leaders of the golf course industry and environmental movement will sit down together next year to establish them and make them more accessible.

Preservers & Creators
Wetlands: A special report discusses how to save them, movement will sit down together next year to establish them and make them more accessible.

The Public Arena
Private clubs are opening their doors to public activities in attempts to flourish amid new tax laws.

GOLF COURSE
At Kiawah, PR ammo for golf course industry

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Parting duo: Morrish & Weiskopf

European market growing; has anyone noticed?

Mass discounting pays off for World Woods

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Money-saving ideas via Public Golf

Harrison to lead Emerald Coast association

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Arizona groups eye golf tax to benefit turfgrass research

By MARK LESLIE

PHOENIX, Ariz. — Following unproductive campaigns to raise research funds through volunteer donations, the Arizona green industry is taking steps in a new direction.

The newly formed Commodities Group is drafting legislation that would assess 10 cents per round on golf played in Arizona. The levy could potentially generate $800,000 a year, according to Mark Clark, president of Cactus and Pine Golf Course Superintendents Association and superintendent at the Country Club of Green Valley.

Similar assessments reportedly have worked well for lettuce, citrus and grape growers, who all tax each unit of produce to fund research and development.

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Schultz to assume leadership role at CMAA conference

By PETER BLAIR

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — A resident Texan will be elected president of the Club Managers Association of America when the group holds its 67th Annual Conference here Feb. 6-10.

William Schultz, general manager of Houston Country Club since 1980, will assume leadership from outgoing President Richard Kolasa.

Schulz has been on the board since 1988, serving on several national committees and community organizations during that time. He graduated from Milwaukee Area Technical College and is currently CMAA’s vice president.

In addition to Houston CC’s 18-hole Robert Trent Jones-designed layout, Schulz has overseen Twin Oaks CC in Long Grove, Ill., and Brynwood CC in...
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Monte Forest land on Monterey Peninsula. It bought the 57,000per-acre property in 1982 and opened Robert Trent Jones Jr.-designed Poppy Hills in June 1986. "The course provides a place for us to hold our tournaments [22 days worth annually] and provides a source of public golf for our members," said Executive Director Bill Paulson.

For their $20-per-year dues, SCGA members can play Poppy Hills for just $45 a round. Guests of members pay $65 and non-members $95. "Eighty-five percent of Poppy Hills is membership play," Paulson said. "It's another service [in addition to tournaments, handicap services, news updates] we can provide them. We have 165,000 members, larger than any other state or regional association."

Poppy Hills has been so successful the association is negotiating for a 283-acre parcel in Livermore, an hour's drive north-east of San Francisco. Rees Jones has done a preliminary design for 27-hole Poppy Ridge. The seller agreed to first obtain all necessary building permits. Financing will come from a combination of membership dues, residual income from Poppy Hills and some form of debt serviced by the NCGA's holding company. Paulson hopes to start construction of Poppy Ridge this summer or fall and open the NCGA's second layout by summer 1996.

"Because of the success of Poppy Hills, we're committed to building golf courses from scratch [rather than buying existing facilities] and staying away from residential real estate," Paulson said. "But the other two are going different ways. Southern California is buying an existing course and Oregon is working with a real estate developer."

The SCGA went the acquisition route after confronting countless roadblocks along the construction highway.

"The SCGA has wanted to build a golf course for almost 20 years," Morgan said. "We were spurred on by the NCGA. We wanted to build one from scratch. But we kept having environmental permitting and entitlement problems. We just couldn't get it done."

The SCGA decided to change course in mid-1992 after the proposed Firestone Ranch project in Brea fell through because of environmental and access problems. The board decided acquiring a course would be easier. Permits would be unnecessary and the slumping real estate market meant bargains were available.

The OGA board decided on Rancho California in Murrieta, an 18-hole, Robert Trent Jones Sr. design, which opened in the early 1970's. "The owners had financial problems and they were trying to get more out of it through the bankruptcy court," Morgan explained in early January. "We hope to finalize the paperwork and open the course in the next few weeks."

The board had several reasons for buying Rancho California. Morgan added. First, it would provide an alternate site for the association's 70 annual tournaments currently spread among the SCGA 234 member clubs. Second, the 140,000 SCGA members would receive reduced green fees at a top-notch facility. And third, projected profits would help hold down member dues.

"We looked for a quality design that, with proper maintenance, could become a first-class course," Morgan said.

"Rancho California was one of Jones' first California courses. It had a good reputation. But it was hard to keep up while the course was going through bankruptcy. We want to bring it up to SCGA standards. We plan some pretty extensive renovations, mainly bringing the irrigation system up to speed and rebuilding many of the greens."

Morgan said if Rancho California is "half as successful" as the NCGA's Poppy Hills, the board would consider buying or building more courses.

The Oregon Golf Association has taken a third tact. Tukwila Partners gave OGA land for an 18-hole layout in Woodburn while retaining surrounding acreage for house lots.

Working with architect Bill Robinson, OGA will open the driving range this March. The first nine is under construction and should be ready for play by mid-summer. The second nine will be financed by a dues increase and should begin construction within the next five years, according to OGA President Tim Stetson.

The OGA board had the foresight 19 years ago to realize an association course would be necessary to take pressure off member courses to host tournaments, Stetson explained.

OGA began assessing a $1 annual fee on its 45,000 members to establish a golf course usage and acquisition fund. Ten years ago, the levy doubled to $2. By last year, the fund had grown to $1.2 million, allowing the association to build the first nine holes and driving range with no debt.

The annual fee was bumped up to $5 this year, which should allow OGA to pay cash for the second nine, also.