Kiawah purchase blocked

By Peter Blais
CHARLESTON, S.C. — Believing the potential buyers could not live up to environmental deed restrictions imposed on the property, a bankruptcy judge has nullified the Resolution Trust Corp.'s sale of the Ocean Course at Kiawah Island to the New York Audubon Society and financial partner Virginia Investment Trust.

The RTC opted not to appeal the judge's ruling and will auction off the property again at some as-yet unspecified date.

South Carolina District Court Judge Falcon Hawkins' ruling reflects the sensitive environmental nature of the Ocean Course, portions of which are located within the boundary of the Coastal Barrier Resources System covered by the federal Coastal Barrier Resources System Improvement Act of 1990.

In his six-page order, Hawkins said VIT told the court that a deed restriction in the closing documents was not part of its original bid agreement and would make it difficult for VIT to operate the facility.

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Winter kill a boon to sod growers

By Mark Leslie
A nightmare spring of winter kill has left superintendents in the Southeast frustrated, but fertilization producers and sod growers are ringing in the cash registers.

"There are a couple things for sure: It's a good year for sod producers and fertilizer companies. And a good year to be a turf consultant," said Patrick O'Brien, director of the Southeastern Region for the U.S. Golf Association Green Section.

Saying the turf industry "can't handle anything with this magnitude of loss," O'Brien said, "Superintendents have got to get on the [waiting] list to get a sprigging machine and to buy sod. Sprigging machines and Bermudagrass sod in the Southeast are in high demand for the restoration of winter-kill-damaged greens this year."

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Course development booming on Indian land

By Hal Phillips
Indian culture and golf would appear, on the surface, to be strange developmental bedfellows. But the sovereign nation status enjoyed by many Native American groups — plus the creation of destination resorts alongside gaming institutions — have resulted in more and more (fee-fee) reservations on the reservation.

In Riverside, Calif., the Temecula Band of Luiseno Indians is planning a $15 million complex with casino, hotel, golf course, entertainment and shopping center. Under a proposal from the Alex Michaels Group of Companies, each of the 500 tribal members on the Pechanga Reservation would receive $300,000 over the next seven years.

In Ledyard, Conn., the wildly successful Foxwoods Casino — run by the

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New zoysias may provide the best of both worlds

By Mark Leslie
In a perfect world, a golf course superintendent could choose a turfgrass that uses as little water as buffalo grass and can thrive even if that water is low-grade effluent; a grass that is heat-tolerant like Bermudagrass but with far better disease and pest resistance; a grass that, at the same time, provides golfers a quality playing surface.

"Nobody's sure how big the potential is, but it's big," said Kevin Morris, director of the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program administered by the U.S. Depart.