Ocean Course sale delayed by environmental concerns

By PETER BLAIS
CHARLESTON, S.C. — Just how much wetlands restoration work will have to be done and just who will pay for it is holding up the final sale of The Ocean Course at Kiawah Island to the New Audubon Society.

The South Carolina Coastal Council, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Resolution Trust Corp., Virginia Investment Trust (VIT) and New York Audubon are trying to determine the extent of unplanned and damage done to wetlands during construction and whether the placement of certain bridges violates environmental permits, according to New York Audubon Executive Director and Counsel John Santacrose.

Santacrose said he had expected the deal — which would make New York Audubon and investor VIT the property owners — to have originally been completed by this spring. Now he doubts the issue will be resolved before late summer or early fall.

“It's such a unique transaction that it's been fairly difficult,” Santacrose said.

Technically, the Resolution Trust Corp. still controls the environmentally sensitive course built by the now-defunct Landmark Land Co.

“It's the RTC's problems to correct,” explained VIT Vice Chairman Beverly Armstrong. “We have no involvement in that whatsoever.

But the Coastal Council and U.S. Army

“Hasn't affected our financial commitment to the purchase at all. It's just taking longer to get it done than we'd expected.”

New York Audubon was the winning bidder for the RTC property at last summer's bankruptcy auction of Landmark holdings.

Under the purchase agreement, VIT subsidiary AMF Inc. was to eventually take over management and financial ownership of the property in exchange for certain conservation easements that would allow New York Audubon to stipulate how further development would proceed.

But the Coastal Council and U.S. Army

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GREENVISIONS BECOMING MAJOR PLAYER IN MIDWEST MANAGEMENT

By PETER BLAIS
NORTHBROOK, Ill. — The steady growth in golf course development in the Midwest has helped a Northbrook firm become one of the leading management companies in the region, if not the United States.

GreenVisions currently operates 10 golf facilities in Illinois, Wisconsin and Iowa. In early May the Northbrook firm took over the management contract at New Berlin (Wis.) Hills Municipal Golf Course. It plans to spend $500,000 on capital improvements there over the next five years. It is building Sand Creek Country Club in Chesterton, Ind., and remodeling Emerald Hills Golf Club in Sterling Hills, Ill. Plans are to add two to four courses annually.

“We'd like to be in the 15 to 25 range within five years,” President and Chief Operating Officer Tim Miles said. “We have no ownership interest in a course, yet. But it will happen.”

GreenVisions leases and manages golf clubs for a variety of clients, ranging from banks to municipalities to forest preserve districts.

Marketing Idea of the Month

Getting word out called key to success

By JOE GLASSER
Getting the word out on the benefits of your facility is the greatest challenge facing course operators. Whether you are starting a new facility or want to improve business at an existing one, your solicitation plan should start with establishing a relationship with the media.

Invite editors and reporters to see what you are developing during construction. Get to know them on a first-name basis. Invite them to lunch. Keep them posted on the development’s progress. Feature articles during development can create interest in your target markets and give you a head start promoting what you plan to offer the golfing public.

Prepare a master list of media representatives from local, regional and national publications and broadcast outlets. Plan a media day celebration including complimentary golf before the official opening to introduce your facility.

While I was with Marriott, we held a media day at Marriott's Grand Hotel at Point Clear (Ala.) to introduce a nine-hole addition. It is a fairly isolated facility and needed an aggressive marketing approach. The event resulted in numerous stories at the local, regional and even national level.

The media can also be helpful at an existing facility. Whether you have remodeling plans, management changes, or simply

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by Peter Blais
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Textron donation pushes CMAA closer to goal

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Textron Group has made a pledge of $100,000 to The Club Foundation's Campaign for Excellence, a Club Managers Association of America fundraiser.

The Textron Group consists of Jacobsen, Textron Financial Corporation, Textron Specialty Materials and E-Z-Go.

The Campaign for Excellence was launched in 1992. In April, 1993, the Club Foundation announced the successful completion of the first phase of the Campaign for Excellence, with $81 million, or one-third of the total

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by Joe Glasser
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John Santacrose
Seeing double can speed up play!

The problem with placing yardage markers in the center of fairways is that most golfers rarely hit the ball down the middle. When you add the fact that distances to the green can vary dramatically from one side of a fairway to the other — especially on doglegs — it's easy to see why doubling up with our affordable Yardage Marker System makes sense. Each pair of bright, highly visible PVC Distance Markers features colorful decals that specify distances of 100, 150, 200 or 250 yards. Since they slip into ground anchors, they're easily removable and replaceable for mowing. The complete nine-hole system includes enough markers to cover both sides of the fairways on each par 4 and par 5:

- 14 each of the white 100-yard, 150-yard and 200-yard markers,
- 4 each of the white 250-yard markers and 46 ground anchors.

For more information, contact your nearby Standard Golf distributor and ask about our complete Yardage Marker System. Once you're seeing double on your course, you'll know why two markers are better than one!

Ocean Course

Corps of Engineers intervened last fall. The agencies claimed permit violations occurred during construction and are demanding restoration work be done to the affected areas. The bankruptcy court has held up the closing on the property until the matter is resolved.

Part of the problem is that Hurricane Hugo struck during the middle of construction. Work resumed shortly after the storm passed. But no accurate pre- and post-hurricane maps exist, making it difficult to determine what permits might have occurred, Santacrose said.

"The Coastal Commission and RTC are trying to decide what the violations are," he added. "We want to be in on those discussions so that we know what we are getting into and whether it is technically possible to make and maintain the corrections."

AMF continues to operate the facility under a management contract with the RTC.

"I think the purchase will still go through," Santacrose said in mid-May. "It will be a couple more months before everything is resolved and then there is a 60-day wait once the bankruptcy court okays the plan. That means it will be late summer or early fall before the closing is finalized."

Armstrong, whose company plans a $15 million renovation of the Charleston resort and its other three courses once the deal is finalized, added: "We'd certainly like to see the matter resolved so we can make the improvements we'd planned."