**Big management firms shying away from RTC**

*By Peter Blais*

DANIA, Fla. — The expensive due diligence process and sometimes inflated bidding involved in recent Resolution Trust Corp. auctions of golf properties may scare away potential bidders in the future, according to some golf industry experts. "ClubCorp wasn't there. Neither were Cobblestone Golf, Fairways Golf, KSL Enterprises and Remper Management," said Jeff Woolfon, an associate with CB Commercial Golf/Resort Properties, which marketed Palm-Aire Spa Resort & Country Club and adjacent Oaks Golf & Racquet Club here for the RTC. "All the big players you'd normally expect just weren't there," said Woolfon. The only big-name management company to take part in the sealed bid/outflated bidding involved in

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**Despite public outcry, Florida DEP backs course conversion**

*By Mark Leslie*

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — The public is upset. Ditto, most local and county government officials. But the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has spoken and won't budge in a struggle over the 250-acre Fort George Island and its golf course designed by Donald Ross. The 18-hole Ft. George Island Golf Club, nine holes of which were designed by Ross in the 1920s, is a landmark to the golf world. But not to the Florida DEP, which has decided to make public lands available for "resource-based" as opposed to "user-oriented" recreation. Resource-based recreation means passive use, such as parks, nature trails, hiking, bird-watching and picnicking. User...

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**Researcher: Effluent yields better turf, with less water**

*By Lynn Tilton*

CHANDLER, Ariz. — Wastewater produces better turf growth and can cut annual supplemental water needs on an Arizona golf course by as much as 22 percent, according to a turfgrass and wastewater expert. Dr. Charles Mancino of the University of Arizona unveiled the positive results from his research findings at Turf Talk, an annual event sponsored by Garden Valley Distributors of Phoenix and attended by 150 superintendents and others. "With effluent water, we get better turf growth on an acre foot less of water," Mancino said. Before being used, effluent should first be settled out, clarified and subjected to aerobic digestion to reduce carbon-dioxide levels, he added. "Water thus treated is very low in carbon and is..."
Florida DEP overrules ‘locals’

They even allocated $2 million from the city’s River City Renaissance program to refurbish the golf course. Charges of railroading, arrogance and ignorance have been hurled at the Florida DEP and Audubon and Sierra clubs. Nevertheless, the DEP’s so-called 210 Plan, which would allow the course to be overgrown, sits on Gov. Lawton Chiles’ desk awaiting approval from him and his cabinet. The state, which operates the golf course, but the DEP and Parks and Recreation Committee have tried to railroad it through. In fact, they did railroad through their 210 Plan by appointing a board consisting of a majority of state environmental groups.

The board King referred to was a 20-person panel that included 11 appointees representing local, state and federal government agencies, three representing environmentally active groups and five independents selected by the DEP. King, Weed and William Blank, the president of the Jacksonville Golf Association, were appointed after the plan was already drafted.

“The park and golf course can co-exist,” Weed said. “We’re [in the golf industry] all birdwatchers, too. But they’re [DEP, Audubon and Sierra] above science. I was shocked. They didn’t want to include any discussion from a scientific standpoint.”

The Fairfield Corp. had owned the island and tried to develop it in the 1980s. Before its plans fell through, engineers produced a 17-volume master resource management plan for the island, encompassing myriad surface-, storm- and ground-water issues, aquatic and terrestrial ecological matters and cultural and archeological sites. But the DEP-appointed panel “didn’t even pursue” the data, Weed said.

“They kept saying the course was depleting fresh water,” he said. “But, we talked to residents who said there has never been a shortage. They have never had a salt-water problem. They’re using the same old tactics I’m seeing all over the country: no-growth and scare tactics claiming pesticide leaching, ground-water contamination — the fear tactics they get the most mileage out of.”

Weed wrote in a letter to DEP Secretary Virginia Wetherell, with copies to Chiles and several others in the state’s hierarchy. “To my knowledge, in 71 years of golf course operations on the island, the original nine-hole Fort George Golf Club and in the early 1980s when the course was converted to 18 holes, there has never been a violation or complaint recorded regarding golf course maintenance pesticides or fertilizer mis-application.”

“The state parks have 30,000 acres in this particular area, and we only want the golf course returned to us,” King said. “They won’t even discuss nine holes.”

“I say the golf course and clubhouse may have historical, significant value,” Weed said. “The Vanderbilts, the Rockefellers, a Who’s Who of members played. To my knowledge, in 132 years of golf course operations on the island, the original nine-hole Fort George Golf Club and in the early 1980s when the course was converted to 18 holes, there has never been a violation or complaint recorded regarding golf course maintenance pesticides or fertilizer mis-application.”

“We didn’t even discuss nine holes.”