The oddest commodities

Old Works' magic: black bunker sand and much more

By MARK LESLIE

A NACONDA, Mont. — It's a legend before its own time, designed by a legend in his own time. Old Works Golf Course won't open until May 31, yet it has already made its mark: A Superfund cleanup site, which Jack Nicklaus called "one of the ugliest properties I've ever seen," transformed into a golf course that builder Chip Roe lauded as "breathtaking."

The former copper mine closed more than 90 years ago, but left behind a legacy of arsenic over its 250 acres. Turning it from a moonscape-like wasteland into a safe golf course presented immense technical and engineering problems — problems tangled in a web of legal hassles, extraordinary safety procedures and a sense of (as Roe said) "doing something for the children."

"It has transformed this whole piece of property," said Old Works GC superintendent Fred Soller Jr. "Plus, the scope of the entire project has attracted a lot of interest from the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] and scrutiny from people around the country waiting to see what's going on.""}

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Bay Harbor Golf Club took shape on a 5-mile stretch of Lake Michigan.

Blowing up quarry adds spark to Bay Harbor project

By NORMAN SINCLAIR

PETOSKEY, Mich. — Golf critics are running out of superlatives to describe Bay Harbor Golf Club, taking shape on a five-mile stretch of Lake Michigan shoreline in northern Michigan where once stood a cement factory and sand and gravel quarry. The 27 holes, 18 of which are open this season and nine of which will be ready for limited play in the fall, "shreds every adjective in the book," said golf writer Jack Berry.

Architect Arthur Hills had high praise for the site, describing it as the opportunity of a lifetime. The golf course is the centerpiece of a mega-million-dollar Victorian-theme development that includes a yacht club, condominium-suites hotel, and shopping and restaurant village.

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if it will fly."

Indeed, has any project drawn so much
attention from so many varied groups? The
Montana Fish and Wildlife Department,
U.S. Department of Justice, environmental-
ists of every ilk, sportmen, townspeople.
"There are 100-year-old pictures that
show not one blade of grass was growing
on that 200 acres," said Kirk Welsh, di-
ger of field operations for North
America for Nicklaus Design.
Soller confirmed the deadness of the
property in his initial contact with the
Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Pro-
gram. He listed "none" under "existing
species." Yet, today there are moose, elk,
deer, bluebirds... "You name it, it's amaz-
ing," said Welsh.

"When grass started turning green
people were driving off the road," said
Sandy Stash, general manager for the
Montana Division of Atlantic Richfield
Co. (ARCO). ARCO bought the old mine
property in his initial contact with the
County of Deer Lodge and operated by
the local golf authority board.
Approvals aside, building a golf course
on a smelting site, with its ovens and
flues, was a chore that consumed most of
nicklaus said, is "the best material he has ever hit
in the bunkers. Created decades ago when
mining theme through to the finished
product. Old flues and ovens provide a
fascinating backdrop to the fairways,
and Yellowstone national parks, with a
museum." 

Through it all, Nicklaus has carried the
mining theme through to the finished
product. Old flues and ovens provide a
fascinating backdrop to the fairways,
greens and tees.

"The idea," Nicklaus said, "was to put
up signs at each hole to give a brief his-
tory for people to understand what's there.
It's like a museum."
The result is a Nicklaus signature de-
sign that sits halfway between Glacier
and Yellowstone national parks, with a
$20 green fee.