Mission Accomplished, Again
Survey says: Mission Hills has repeated as the Best Maintained Course on the LPGA Tour

GCSAA Show Review
Missed the big show in Las Vegas? Fear not. GCN provides complete coverage

NEW PARTNERS
Architect Dr. Michael Hurdzan (right) has asked longtime associate Dana Fry to join him in his growing Columbus, Ohio, practice. For story, see page 44.

COURSE MAINTENANCE
Pinehurst No. 2 and its new greens are ready
Survey says: Mission Hills has repeated as the Best Maintained Course on the LPGA Tour

COURSE DEVELOPMENT
Marsh teams with HNTB, opens U.S. office

COURSE MANAGEMENT
Muni course operators: Good news from IRS

SUPPLIER BUSINESS
Zeneca & its distributors roll out Heritage

DELICATE WORK AT GLEN DORNOC
Architect Clyde Johnston has unveiled the newest addition to South Carolina’s Grand Strand. At Glen Dornoch Waterway Golf Links, now open for play in Little River, Johnston employed 26,000 feet of silt fence to secure the surrounding wetlands and waterfronts from construction activities.

Fearis joins GCSAA order of ascension
By PETER BLAIS
LAS VEGAS — Blue Hills County Club’s David Fearis, 50, was elected GCSAA secretary/treasurer at the recent annual board of directors election here, meaning the Kansas City (Mo.) superintendent will eventually succeed Paul McGinnis and George Renauld as leader of the national superintendents’ organization.

Palmer Mgmt. moves toward franchising
By PETER BLAIS
ORLANDO, Fla. — Arnold Palmer Golf Management Co. has unveiled a franchise program that allows course owners to use the Palmer name and proprietary operating systems, but permits course owners to continue operating their golf facilities themselves.

Factory stores meet market-specific needs
By HAL PHILLIPS
DALLAS — Factory stores here in the competitive Texas golf course market have shown how much distribution has changed, while simultaneously re-emphasizing the importance of independent distribution to the selling process.

Policy-makers hold key to development
By MARK LESLIE
WASHINGTON, D.C. — The country’s hotly debated wetlands policies are in turmoil following contradictory developments issued in the early days of 1997: First, Nation Wide Permits for wetlands were tightened, then a court ruling weakened regulations limiting excavation of marshes and swamps.

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Factories develop product lines for smaller courses
By HAL PHILLIPS
DALLAS — Factory stores here in the competitive Texas golf course market have shown how much distribution has changed, while simultaneously re-emphasizing the importance of independent distribution to the selling process.

Citing loss of market share, The Blooming, Minn.-based Toro Co. has opened three factory stores serving the Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston and San Antonio markets. One of Toro’s major competitors — Ecake, Wis.-based Jacobsen — has also opened a factory store here in Dallas.
Wetland rulings
Continued from page 1

rule," which was adopted in 1993 to prevent developers from digging ditches and draining wetlands. Harris said the Corps of Engineers and EPA had exceeded their authority in adopting regulations that he said far exceeded the original intent of Congress. He declared that Congressional action — not unilateral bureaucratic rulings — needs to be taken to correct anything the agencies feel is imperfect.

Jon Canon, general counsel to the EPA, wrote a letter in mid-February to the Department of Justice, asking the solicitor general to request a stay on Harris' decision and asking that the government seek an appeal of that decision in appellate court.

Dismantling the Tulloch rule was hailed by developers including National Homebuilders Association Vice President Michael Luzier, who told the Washington Post. "We were not skirting the law. It was the government that was violating the law."

Mike Kelly, vice president of Williamsburg (Va.) Environmental Group, Inc., which works on many golf projects, cautioned the golf industry about diving into drainage projects and losing ground it has gained in its continuous move toward environmental awareness. While the Tulloch rule involved a North Carolina businessman who wanted to drain wetlands for a golf resort, Kelly said golf developers have gone so far to prove they do things in an environmentally sensitive manner, that to go out and drain wetlands when it can be avoided is counterproductive. "

Saying developers need to take their ultimate goal into consideration, he added: "You may have areas that are jurisdictional wetlands that are not attractive, in which case this might allow you to improve them, or beautify them, whereas before you could not touch them. The golf industry was able to work with the environmental issues and wetlands. It still needs to incorporate prudent planning out front. In a nutshell it needs to be aware of it but recognize it at the same time."

While the judge's ruling may open the way for some projects to go forward more easily, developers are fearful the NWP modifications could extensively delay development. "About 10 percent of the 35,000 activities we authorized in 1996 were occurring on over 3 acres, but 65 percent of the impacts were occurring in that 10 percent of activities," Peck said. "So you can see, there was a compelling argument for us to continue to authorize projects but reduce the larger impacts. We can authorize 90 percent of activities but reduce impacts by 65 percent."

Peck also assured concerns that the Corps of Engineers would now evaluate the impacts of a project cumulatively, rather than separately — a change that could overshadow all others. In the past, a developer could obtain road and utility crossings in different NWPs. For instance, NWP 14 would allow a certain acreage for cart crossings and that land would not be included in the NWP 26 calculation. Kelly said a change to this regulation could have "a significant impact," pushing a project "over the 3-acre threshold pretty quickly." Peck said developers will still be allowed to "stack" NWPs — they just have to notify the Corps beforehand.

Anticipated long delays in permitting is another fear of developers that Peck tried to squelch. "I think we've made a lot of progress reducing permit time," he said. "Our estimate is there will be 500 new permit applications because of these changes. That's divided by 40 districts nationwide." He said the dismantling of NWP 26 will not have a major impact because there are 39 other NWPs, and "many of the activities allowed under 26 are authorized under those other permits NWPs, or by regional permits."

While NWP 26 expires in two years, EPA intends to implement a new system before then. The agency expects a proposal in the Federal Register for public review and comment within 12 months, and have the program operative within 18 months. "We can actually continue to reduce the regulatory burden of this program but provide for appropriate environmental protection — if we focus these NWPs correctly," Peck said.

Greg Peck, EPA's branch chief in the Wetlands Division for Wetlands and Aquatic Resources, disagreed, citing a figure of 8 percent or less. "About 10 percent of the 35,000 activities we authorized in 1996 were occurring on over 3 acres, but 65 percent of the impacts were occurring in that 10 percent of activities," Peck said. "So you can see, there was a compelling argument for us to continue to authorize projects but reduce the larger impacts. We can authorize 90 percent of activities but reduce impacts by 65 percent."

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