

Golf & The Environment continues

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WILMINGTON, N.C. — The dialogue between environmentalists and golf course developers and superintendents that began three years ago with a conference at Pebble Beach, Calif., continued at the University North Carolina-Wilmington on March 13.

"A little bit of blind faith was involved, but I think it's working," said Paul Parker of the Center for Resource Manage-

ment in Salt Lake City, which has organized the series of Golf & the Environment conferences, including the "Is Golfing Greener?" session held here.

Golf & the Environment has since created a universally accepted set of environmental principles for golf course management and distributed 25,000

copies across the country.

Yet a look into the proliferation of golf in Brunswick County, home to 29 courses, reveals that even improved management isn't good enough in some sensitive areas, according to Todd Miller, execu-

tive director of the North Carolina Coastal Federation.

A recent study done for the South Brunswick Water and Sewer Authority concludes golf courses in Sunset Beach and Calabash are contributing too many nutrients to coastal waters closed to shellfishing.

Dean Walters, owner of Sea

Trail Plantation near Sunset Beach, said developers should not be demonized for looking at land through a different set of green lenses, one that brings jobs and money to the region. "I'm a developer," he said. "It's important that I make a profit."

Environmental protection is a natural outgrowth of golf course developments, he said, because people want to live amid nature.

The public's growing knowledge of runoff is helping golfers understand why vegetative buffers are used, several conference participants said.

Drawing a comparison with the beer industry, Kevin Moody of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service urged golf developers to learn from the proliferation of microbrews and capture the 30 to 40 percent of consumers seeking a diverse golf experience.

"You can take the natural attributes of your land and use them as a feature of your course," he said. "You don't have to have Augusta National."

Terry Vassey, who manages Carolina National Golf Course at Winding River near Southport, said he has taken great pains to incorporate natural vegetation and wetlands.

GCSAA invests in 'beauty' of game

LAWRENCE, Kan. — The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America has launched its "Investing in the Beauty of Golf" campaign, an effort to raise \$3.5 million to fund applied agronomic research (research conducted on golf courses under actual playing conditions) and new educational programs.

"The GCSAA is looking to create an endowment through which we can fund the research and further education for members as they enter into the new century," said Stephen Mona, chief executive officer of the GCSAA.

According to Mona, the campaign isn't focused on simply continuing GCSAA's existing educational programs, "But developing a new program that will teach what we believe the superintendent of the next century will need to know."

This new education will then play a major role in a member's GCSAA standing.

"Essentially, there's going to be a day in the next three to five years that in order to be a Class A GCSAA member you're going to have to achieve some blend of formal education and continuing education. If you're a class A GCSAA member, and if that's going to have some meaning in the marketplace, members will have to maintain this education."

GCSAA has already raised \$2.3 million toward the goal.

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