

Lohmann design solution benefits city & private club

LOVES PARK, Ill. — The interaction between municipalities and private country clubs therein is generally limited to tax collection. However, with help from Lohmann Golf Designs, the City of Loves Park and Forest Hills Country Club have together killed two birds with one stone. Based in nearby Marengo,

Lohmann Golf Designs (LGD) has overseen construction of three retention ponds at Forest Hills that improved playability at the course while also providing much-needed stormwater detention capacity for the city of Loves Park.

"Forest Hills had a major drainage swale running across the entire golf course," explained

Jay Wille, the LGD senior architect who oversaw the project. "During any substantial rain storm, flowing water would run through the swale, causing unsightly erosion, unplayable conditions and continual maintenance problems. As it happened, the city also needed to expand its stormwater confinement ca-

pability. We were able to provide a dual solution."

LGD and Wille designed a series of three ponds that served the city's stormwater needs while, at the same time, improving the layout's playability and aesthetics. Further, the swale was essentially submerged by piping it underneath several fairways.

"More often than one might think, municipalities and private clubs have compatible goals when it comes to land use," said Bob Lohmann, founder and president of LGD and its sister construction company, Golf Creations. "Jay Wille deserves credit for coming up with an exquisite design solution. But the city and club deserve equal credit for their willingness to recognize common ground."

LGD worked closely with the engineering firm — Hanson Engineers of Rockford — to ensure the integrity of the golf course was not compromised.

"Those holes look far more attractive now," said Wille, "and they're not nearly so soggy."

Soil generated from the pond excavation was used to build several new tees, a new practice range and target green. Indeed, the practice tee was substantially enlarged while extensive new mounding now screens the range from an adjacent road and tennis courts.

Q&A: Lohmann

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particular "Lohmann fingerprint"?

BL: No, and I don't think I ever will. I've learned from seeing other people's work and talking to clients to see what they want and applying what I know and apply it to their site. I worked for nine years for Ken Killian and Dick Nugent. They taught me a lot about golf course design and construction. I took that experience and, as time passed, I changed some. Your best design is always going to be your next design. You learn from each project, and when you go back, you see things you would tweak to improve.

GCN: Do you have a favorite designer?

BL: I always say my favorite designers are all the dead ones. That way you don't offend anybody. You learn from all those people, but you never know if it's really their work, or their associates', or a superintendent's, or a golf pro's, or whoever. Because there's always something a little different on every course you visit.

The key is to be creative, provide options, and make whatever option you create fit the site and the client's needs. We tell people it's their course and we direct them and lead them through all the planning and construction to create a course they will like. But if they want to do something that is out of space, we tell them it will not work.

We know they want to buy a suit but they have to determine what color they want, so to speak.

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