

## BRIEFS



### GCSAA BACKS JUNIOR GOLF

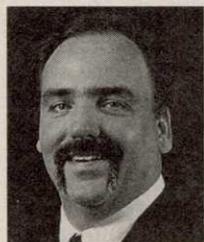
LAWRENCE, Kan. — Continuing its support of junior golf initiatives, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) has donated \$10,000 to the American Junior Golf Association (AJGA) in support of its 1999 qualifying and tournament sites. The funds will be directed for supplies used in marking golf courses for competition. "The golf course superintendent has a strong affinity for junior golf initiatives," said GCSAA President Dave Fearis of Blue Hills Country Club in Kansas City, Mo. "A vast majority chose the profession because of positive experiences with the game and golf course in their childhood."



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### REDSTONE HIRES WALKER

HOUSTON — The Redstone Group has announced the appointment of Johnny Walker as superintendent of its new project, which includes the adjacent Shadow Hawk Golf Club and The Houstonian Golf Club, two Rees Jones-designed layouts under construction in Fort Bend County. Walker has been superintendent at Inwood Forest Golf and Country Club and at Weston Lakes Country Club in Houston. He is a member of the board of directors for the Lone Star Golf Course Superintendents Association and the South Texas Golf Course Superintendents Association, where he served as president in 1996 and 1997.



Johnny Walker

### NTEP OFFERS CUSTOM ANALYSIS

BELTSVILLE, Md. — The National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) has announced a new service, Custom Data Analysis, for its members and other interested parties. Developed at the request of many members and sponsoring companies, the service allows more specific data analysis than is currently presented in NTEP annual or final reports. Three unique data analysis options are offered. Option 1 provides a regional or local analysis of data using locations the client specifies. If the client's interest is identifying the top grasses for summer performance or other seasons, option 2 fits the bill. To compare the performance of only a select group of varieties, people should choose option 3.

## USGA extends research into 21st century

By MARK LESLIE

FAR HILLS, N.J. — Buoyed by progress in "genetic transformation" of turfgrasses, discoveries on the environmental impact of golf and various other projects, the U.S. Golf Association (USGA) Green Section is preparing for another round of research funding.

Having poured \$17 million into research in the last 17 years, the Green Section Research Committee sent out a call for proposals in late May and expects to make final decisions on projects in November,

according to Green Section National Director Jim Snow.

The USGA doubled the research budget in 1990 when it added environmental projects to the mix. With many of those environmental questions now answered, the USGA will re-concentrate its efforts on "working with a lot of different grasses — including some native types that haven't been traditionally used on golf courses — and developing the grasses for the future that will require less pesticide and water use," Snow said. "Also, we're spending a fair amount of money

on genetic transformation."

The new funding will be a little different than in the past because the Research Committee will select projects for two- or three-year periods.

There is \$200,000 per year in the budget for projects that will begin next year, but more than \$500,000 per year for those starting in 2001, Snow said. Some of those studies will be renewed if necessary.

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## Russell discovers: Yes, you can go home again

By PETER BLAIS

BANDON, Ore. — Troy Russell grew up on a dairy farm in the neighboring town of Coquille, four miles from Bandon Dunes. In fact, as a teenager, Russell raced motorcycles on the eventual course site, which was then called The Circus.

"Lo and behold, now I work here," said the 40-year-old head superintendent of Bandon Dunes, the southern Oregon links-style course hard on the Pacific Ocean.



The Gleneagles Development Corp. layout opened this spring to rave reviews and is expected to be among the finalists for top new course in various media polls. *Golfweek* already voted Bandon Dunes among its top resort courses and among the top 10 courses overall to open in the past 40 years.

"I'd be lying if I said I didn't feel a little pressure [to keep the course maintained in line with the accolades]," Russell added. "We just try to go out and do what we do. As long as they



Bandon Dunes was raising golfers' expectations even before it was completed.

[management] allow us to keep doing our job, we're perfectly happy."

Russell knew at a young age he didn't want to be a dairy farmer and eventually gave up motocross ("An ambulance ride ended my motorcycle career," he said.). But while he left the dairy farm and bike racing behind, he never lost his attraction to the southern Oregon coast.

"I love it here," said Russell, whose parents still live on the nearby farm where he grew up. "But when I was 18, I didn't want to farm and the only other thing here was the timber economy. I didn't want to work in the woods or mill, so I went off to pursue other things."

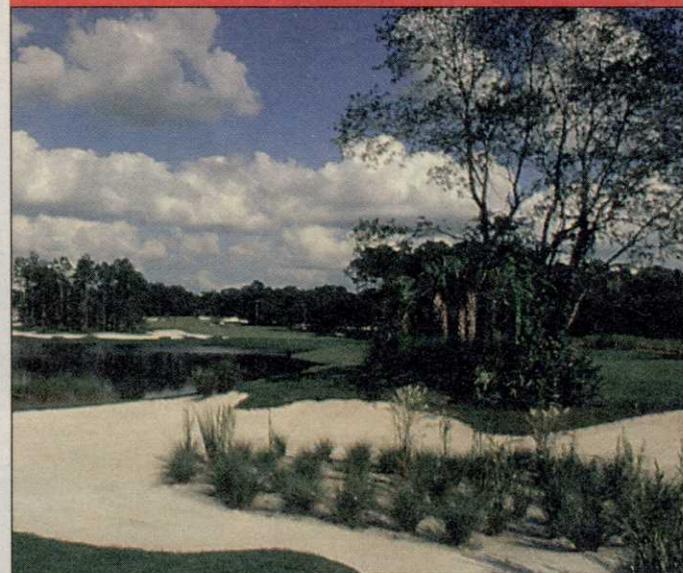
After high school, he moved to the Willamette Valley, attending Oregon State University (OSU) and eventually purchasing a Coast Range wine vineyard, which he still owns. Russell returned to OSU and received a bachelor's degree in horticulture with an emphasis in turf management in 1995.

"The first time I went through Oregon State I was in agricultural and resource economics," Russell said. "I had classes with some guys in the turf program and I always thought if I ever had a chance to go back to school, that's what I'd do. I

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## GOLF AND THE ENVIRONMENT



The Legacy Club at Alaqua Lakes in Longwood, Fla., has become the third non-private course in the world to become a member of the Audubon Cooperative Signature Sanctuary Program. Taylor Woodrow Communities is the developer and operator of the golf course, which opened last Sept. 1. See story, page 15.

### Flying high

## Birdwatching Open looks good for golf

By JEAN MacKAY

Do golf courses provide suitable habitat for a diversity of bird species? The results of Audubon International's 1999 North American Birdwatching Open suggest that a great variety of birds can indeed be found on courses. A total of 310 different bird species were sighted in this year's one-day bird count, held May 8 to coincide with International Migratory Bird Day.

Forty-eight courses in the United States and Canada participated in the event. Because all participating courses are Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuaries or Audubon Signature Sanctuaries, the North American Golf Course Bird Watching Open generated valuable data about the types of species found on courses that are managed with wildlife and the environment in mind.

For the second year in a row, The Club at Seabrook Island in South Carolina soared to the top of the list of participants,

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## Birdwatching

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sighting 84 different bird species. Second place was shared by The Greenbrier in White Sulphur Springs, W.Va., and Eagles Landing Golf Course in Berlin, Md., which both recorded 74 species during the 24-hour event.

Of the 25 birds that were most commonly sighted, the majority are fairly generalist species that can be found in a variety of habitats. Indeed, the top 25 list scarcely changed from last year, with sightings of red-winged blackbirds, mourning doves, European starlings, blue jays, and common grackles on 80 percent of the courses.

Though one would expect to find such common species topping the list of most national bird counts, several birds on the list may be benefiting from golf course habitat-enhancement projects. More than 50 percent of the courses reported bluebirds and tree swallows, benefactors of nest-box placement, while species such as red-winged blackbirds, green heron, great blue heron, and mallards may be benefiting from improved shoreline vegetation near water features.

Species that were sighted on only a few courses depend on specific habitat types and reflect the range of habitats that can be found on courses.

Eighteen courses sighted federally endangered or threatened species — good news for the bald eagles, wood storks, least terns and Florida scrub jays spotted, and a good indication of habitat diversity.

Results submitted showed a wide spread in species counted on the various participating courses (18 to 84 species). Yet the majority, 66 percent, counted 40 or more birds. An individual course's list largely reflects the size and diversity of natural habitat, the course's location, and the quality of environmental management. Other factors may include the skill of the designated bird-watcher, weather conditions, and the timing of the event. Courses that reported sighting the greatest number of birds were generally larger and contained more diverse or specialized habitats than those with fewer sightings.

While not a scientific study, this one-day count seems to confirm that the amount and diversity of wildlife habitat incorporated into a golf course is key to the number and variety of birds found on the property. The bird-count also reveals that properly managed golf courses can indeed provide habitat for a diversity of bird species.

Persons interested in obtaining a species listing should contact Audubon International at 46 Rarick Rd., Selkirk, N.Y. 12158; telephone 518-767-9051.

### VITAL STATISTICS

Number of participants: 48  
No. of courses counting more than 50 species: 21  
No. of courses counting 40-49: 11  
No. of courses counting 30-39: 13  
No. counting less than 30 species: 3  
Average (mean) number of species per course: 48  
No. of federally endangered and threatened species sighted: 6  
No. of courses sighting endangered/threatened species: 18  
Total bird species sighted (all courses): 310

## Legacy joins Signature

LONGWOOD, Fla. — The Legacy Club at Alaqua Lakes, owned by Taylor Woodrow Communities, has become the third non-private golf course in the world to join the Audubon Cooperative Signature Sanctuary Program.

To achieve this status, each course must apply for membership before the design phase through a committee review process. Upon obtaining membership, the developers must comply with certain principles set by Audubon International for each natural setting.

Prior to development, the land at Alaqua Lakes was monitored for water quality, wildlife management and irrigation for three years. The 170-acre course is a nurturing habitat for wildlife, birds and native or indigenous plants.

"One day this type of process will be required if corporations want to build more golf courses, so this is our way to honor the ones who are already trying to save the environment," said AI President Ron Dodson.

Developers spent approximately \$150,000 more on construction and manhours to take care of this natural environment.



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