

FOUGHT DESIGNING DOVE MNT. TRACK

AURORA, Ore. — John Fought has been signed to a contract to design a 27-hole facility on an adjacent piece of property. The new course, Dove Mountain Resort, will include a golf school, training facility, 500-room Hyatt Hotel and mixed-use residential community. The Course at Dove Mountain Resort will be situated in a mildly undulating valley, with hundreds of specimen saguaro cacti and several 30-foot-deep washes. Cottonwood Properties is the owner/developer of Dove Mountain Resort.

Drought plagues East Coast

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like an oasis. The courses around Bristol are the first green courses I've seen in two months."

Most watering restrictions apply to courses whether they are on municipal water or have their own wells.

"The superintendents are irate," Zontek said. "You can have an impounded pond that doesn't rely on city water, streams or wells, and it doesn't matter. You're still under the same restrictions."

In addition to brown grass, the drought has led most courses to restrict golf carts to cart paths and/or roughs. But despite the inconveniences, Zontek said golfers have been extremely understanding of the superintendents' dilemma.

"You walk out in the sun and your yard is all burned up, it doesn't take a superior intellect to understand the problem," Zontek said.

According to Zontek, it's too early to tell what long-term problems could arise from

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— Stan Zontek
USGA Green Section

the prolonged dry spell. "Cool-season grasses have a very efficient dormancy cycle under drought stress," he said. "The grass may look white, but if you get rainfall for recovery, it will pop back just fine. High-traffic areas are the problem.

"The second major effect will be on trees. The ground is powder dry four feet down, and most tree roots are in the top three feet. They are losing leaves now. I'm seeing trees literally wilting. That's sayonara. Arborists say it takes up to five years to see the effects of a drought on trees. So that's where the greatest long-term effect is likely to be.

"The bent and poa annua greens are taking it on the chin. Anthracnose is out there... There definitely will be some re-seeding this fall."

Zontek said no courses have closed due to the drought. A course north of Philadelphia has turned to the tank trucks that supply water to swimming pools to water its greens, he said.

As of mid-August, there was no end in sight to the dry conditions. The tropical storms that spawn rain-laden, late-summer and early-fall hurricanes along the East Coast had yet to materialize.

"They had predicted nine hurricanes this year. So far there have been zero," Zontek said.

The drought will change how superintendents prepare their courses for winter.

"How can you aerate fairways, fertilize, overseed, or do your normal fall renovation without water?" Zontek said. "It's putting a lot of fall programs on hold. There was a course outside Baltimore that was going to convert from ryegrass to bentgrass fairways this year. That's got to be a big question mark now. It's making everyone pause and re-evaluate."

New Jersey has been the hardest hit state in the USGA's Northeast Region, according to Director David Oatis, who oversees New England, New York and New Jersey. Recently enacted statewide water restrictions state "Golf course greens and tees may be watered with sprinklers or other mechanical means from 9 p.m. to midnight and 3 a.m. to 6 a.m. Syringing is permitted for no more than 10 minutes for each green between noon and 3 p.m."

"I've heard about some major problems, but haven't really seen any catastrophes out there," said Oatis, noting that much of the damage occurred around July 4 when low humidities and high temperatures made it impossible to put down water fast enough to save some turf. "Courses have lost some shallow-rooted, weaker grasses. And there has been some pythium reported. But greens seem to be holding up. There hasn't been any widespread damage, yet."

A potential problem down the road could be gray leaf spot, Oatis said. "It's probably been to dry to germinate. But there could be a nasty outbreak coming. Gray leaf spot could just kill off the perennial ryegrass."

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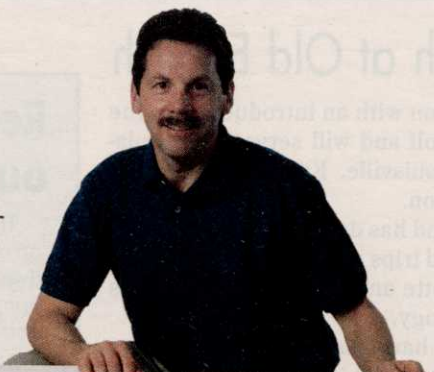
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