

Agency seeks to reduce geese population

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing the creation of new regulations that expand the hunting of Canada geese in hopes of reducing the current resident population of 3.5 million by 1.2 million.

According to the Wildlife Service the geese, which used to

migrate to the Canadian arctic in the summer, are now living year-round in temperate parts of the country and are causing personal and public property damage. The geese can denude grassy areas including parks and golf courses and have become a safety threat at airports. Excessive goose droppings are also a

health concern.

As a result, the agency wants to allow states to undertake approved population control strategies, such as nest and egg destruction, trapping and culling programs and expanded hunting opportunities.

"The service believes that the problems caused by resident

Canada geese can be best addressed at the state level," said agency director Steve Williams. "To that end, we are committed to providing state wildlife management agencies with as much flexibility as possible to address the issue."

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Geese round-ups could make a comeback.

Scholarship accepting applications

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — The Grand Tour Scholarship, which offers golf course design and turfgrass management



students the opportunity to visit leading U.S. golf courses, is accepting applications.

Golf architect Bettina Schrickel, president of Lioness Golf LLC, is again organizing the program, sponsored by the Toro Co.

The scholarship allows four students to visit courses on the East and West Coasts in August. The Western Route leads to 22 golf courses in three weeks, and the Eastern Route includes 25 courses over four weeks. Among the courses to be visited are: Augusta National, TPC at Sawgrass, Cypress Point Golf Club and Pebble Beach Golf Links.

Students from all over the world are invited to apply. Last year's participants came from England, Germany and the United States. The scholarship covers costs for airplane tickets, rental cars, fuel and hotel accommodations for the duration of the journeys. Deadline for application is May 15. E-mail lionessgolf@aol.com for more information. ■

USGA program awards grants

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — The United States Golf Association (USGA) awarded a little less than \$2 million in grants at its first Foundation Grants Committee annual meeting as part of its "For the Good of the Game" program.

A total of 62 grants were awarded to programs in 27 states, totaling \$1,809,925, raising the total that the program has awarded since 1997 to \$27 million. The foundation's goal is to make golf more affordable and accessible to people with economic or physical challenges. ■

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Organic golf activists score victory

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Dutchess, Putnam, Westchester and Rockland County where the case originated.

"This expands the organic golf concept beyond Suffolk County," said Neal Lewis, executive director of the LINN. "It helps to establish a precedent to make developers at least study the use

of organics during the EIS process. This is the first court case that has gone to the appellate level that addresses pesticide use and the construction of golf courses."

While the last two court cases have applied to municipal- or county-owned projects, Lewis said the ruling will apply to pri-

vate developers once the EIS process is triggered. The law does not force courses to be all-organic, but it requires them to give a "hard look" to organic alternatives.

"It gives environmental activists leverage when working with developers," said Lewis.

12 HOLES ALREADY BUILT

The Town of Stony Point's attorney cannot believe that the

court shut down its construction project.

"We started construction in the fall of 2000 after getting approval from the Supreme Court [the state's lowest court] to proceed with construction," said attorney Frank Phillips. "We now have 12 of the 18 holes ready to be grassed. We are \$9 million into an \$18 million project and we get shut down. We have heavy

equipment that is just sitting up there and it is costing the town a significant amount of money."

Lewis took the Stony Point case on behalf of a group of homeowners who were concerned that their drinking water would be contaminated by pesticide runoff. They filed an appeal to the Supreme Court ruling in December 2000, arguing that the town had to complete an EIS. While the appeal was being processed, construction was allowed to proceed because Lewis and the homeowners were more concerned about stopping the use of pesticides that would be used when the course was completed.

"They argued that they did not have to complete an EIS because there would be no negative impact from the project," said Lewis. "They maintained that by using Integrated Pest Management, they would not damage the environment. The law states that if there may be an impact, an EIS is necessary. The higher court agreed with us and said that by using IPM the town cannot claim that there is no potential for impact."

Since the EIS process, which can take upward of a year to complete, could seriously delay the Stony Point project, Phillips is planning an appeal.

"In the appellate brief they just asked to stop the project before the point of applying pesticides or fertilizers, so we believe that we should be allowed to proceed with construction," said Phillips.

In the meantime, Phillips is recommending that the town get started on an EIS, but he is not sold on organic golf.

"We are not opposed to the idea of using organic materials," he said. "But all of the chemicals that we propose to use are being used on every course in Rockland County. If we are forced to go organic and be brown all the time, everyone else using pesticides will be green and the town will have an \$18 million project worth nothing." ■

Geese control

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Resident Canada geese are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and can only be legally taken during hunting season, unless a special federal permit is obtained from the Wildlife Service. The agency is in the process of drafting proposed regulations that would authorize states to undertake a number of population control and management actions without having to go through the permit process.

The Wildlife Service issued its draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) March 1 and a 90-day comment period will run until May 30. ■



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