

Even New Courses Need To Address Water Use Issues

The Stock Farm Club
Don Tolson, CGCS, superintendent

Hamilton, Mont. 59840

Issue

The Stock Farm Club opened in 1999 to great reviews, thanks in part to its magnificent setting and superb conditioning. Since its opening, the club has been committed to responsible water use. The total golf course footprint is 205 acres, with only 80 of those acres consisting of irrigated turf. The remaining 125 acres were planted with over 5,000 drought-tolerant native sage plants. Superintendent Don Tolson, CGCS, has attempted to keep the course playing firm and fast since it opened, using only the amount of water necessary to maintain healthy turf. However, water use remains a serious concern in the western United States and The Stock Farm Club was looking for further opportunities to save water.

Action

Despite the course's young age, Tolson recently completed the first phase of a bunker renovation process. They renovated two holes and, in the process, decreased irrigated turf by approximately one-half acre. This was accomplished by adjusting the original irrigated turf



During a recent bunker renovation, native areas at The Stock Farm were expanded. The project improved playing conditions and helped save water.

line to correspond with the newly constructed fairway bunkers. The current master plan involves reducing irrigated acreage even further by continuing to replace maintained turf with native areas where possible.

Results

Once the master plan is complete, The Stock Farm Club expects to reduce overall irrigation by 6-10 percent. This type of water-conscious renovation shows a commitment to improving playing conditions and decreasing water use at a time when water issues are of major concern in the western U.S.