

Health Check for Lakes



Jon Jinks, explains the importance of maintaining water quality on lakes, ponds and fountains, and why the provision of water features on golf courses is becoming increasingly popular.

Having spent much of my working life on golf courses and sports arenas, including some of the finest in the land, it is clear that the demand for bodies of water – both as aesthetic features and obstacles for play – is on the increase.

Indeed, most golf clubs we now visit in the course of our work have some form of water features such as reservoirs, ornamental ponds or fountains.

In the past, such features have always been viewed by the general golfing public as an aesthetic addition, or perhaps a means to affect the difficulty of the course. Increasingly, because of the recent extremes in our weather conditions, it has become commonplace for end-users to be aware of the environmental and financial benefits of water features, as well as the aesthetic qualities that they offer.

For example, irrigation reservoirs have historically always been 'out-of-play' areas

by the end of the season becoming due to the fact that the water has been used up and they have emptied and become unsightly. However, this can be overcome by introducing a network of water features around the property, which can be linked across the site by their own weir and transfer systems – all 'topped-up' naturally by the golf course drainage system. The addition of such features provide Course Managers with the ideal opportunity openly to discuss wider issues such as water harvesting and the need for water quality standards to be maintained. While it is now commonplace to construct holding reservoirs, maintaining water quality is a far more complex process requiring extensive design and planning in order to produce a sustainable water body on any golfing or sporting arena.

Items such as water sourcing, water quality and overall water management must be brought into play ideally at the design stage of any project. This is to ensure that the feature remains aesthetically pleasing throughout the golfing year, as well as meeting stringent standards required by the Environment Agency as to retained bodies of water on private land.

Aside of aesthetics, it should be remembered that it is the landowner's responsibility to maintain water quality of any pond on their property. Failure to meet these standards could result in severe fines. Therefore, it is essential that all persons responsible for such bodies of water are aware of the management tools available to both improve and maintain water.

The surest way of maintaining water quality is through the introduction of a plentiful

oxygen supply and by eliminating the stratification process which, in layman's terms, means preventing the water from layering at different temperatures. This can be done through the introduction of water falls, transfer recycle style systems within the pool network, or the usage of one of the many available aeration style units such as Otterbine or Kasco. Additionally, the introduction of suitable flora and fauna will enhance the appearance and assist in the replication of the natural environment processes that exist in any natural occurring body of water. Obviously, the promotion of aerobic bacteria requires oxygen to survive and will dramatically reduce the build-up of organic materials and prevent the production of foul odours, both of which will affect the overall experience of playing golf on the course. So, when investigating the idea of a water



feature give consideration to the irrigation requirements of the course and the possibilities of aligning the drainage network into the overall scheme. It is more likely that power is required at the features to mechanically introduce waterfalls or aeration units. In other words, before finalising budgets, ensure that all avenues have been visited.

In conclusion, we must start utilising the thousands of pounds worth of water which naturally falls on courses and sports areas to its maximum potential, thus improving environmental and ecological processes, while aesthetically enhancing playing areas through financially sound practices.

For further information on Osprey Irrigation please visit: www.ospreyirrigation.co.uk

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