

America the Beautiful



by Fred D. Opperman, CGCS

From your Editor: I recently had the pleasure of driving across the country with my son, who is going to a summer job in the forests of Idaho. Since we all work outdoors, I have to presume we all get a kick out of seeing the different wildlife that frequents our golf courses (and I am not speaking of the two-legged variety, unless it has feathers), and our travels unveiled some memorable wildlife sights.

On the road from my mother-in-law's home in Arkansas, our starting place, we watched white tail deer jumping the pasture fence heading for the dogwood-filled hollows that are so common to the northern part of that state and skirted numerous painted turtles coming out of hibernation crossing the roads for the nearest water.

Further along the road in Colorado, antelope grazed on the high sagebrush plains where white cumulus clouds almost touched the ground due to the elevation. Little pika scurried through the rocky cliff sides of the Rocky Mountain National Park. At 6,000 feet elevation, mule deer were plentiful and fed along the snow-covered banks of streams and they also ran across the road in Utah, where the aspen were almost pure white with junipers at their bases, the forest floor a sea of waving emerald green grass.

Crossing into Utah at an elevation of 3,000 feet plus, we traveled from the rocky outcroppings to the sagebrush plains to find dozens of road-killed prairie dogs that only wanted to find a mate or greener grass on the other side of the road. Their mounds or burrows were no more than ten yards apart for miles on this one section of road. We watched a coyote search his ear, just like the family dog, but in a setting of ferns and wild flowers with towering pines in the background and snow-capped mountains beyond.

Our national bird, the American Eagle, sat proudly on the top of a dead lodgepole pine alongside Jackson Lake with the beautiful snow-topped Tetons as the background.

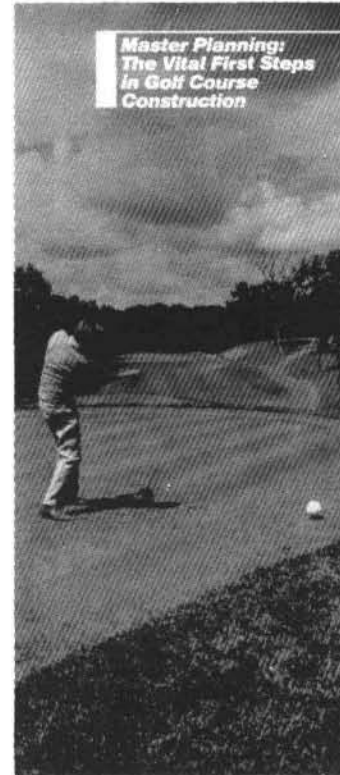
In Yellowstone on a dead stump killed by the minerals of the geysers at "Old Faithful", a marmot soaked up the sun. The ever-prevalent elk browsed on fields of succulent new grass which sprouted after the wildfires of the summer of 1988, while bison contentedly grazed with their young alongside the road by Hellsfire Creek. Imagine wading into the ice cold Yellowstone River up to your belly and dining on newly sprouted water weeds. The moose didn't seem to mind.

A Wyoming beaver pushed a branch down a mirror-like pond to stem the flow of water at his dam, the pond reflecting the mosaic hillside where the fires of Yellowstone skipped across the mountainsides burning some areas completely, scorching others, while leaving green oases in the middle. A hawk flew

overhead, framed against the red walls of the Flaming Gorge, with a snake grasped in its talons.

The sight I cherished most took place on a forest road in northern Idaho about 50 miles from British Columbia. A black bear loped across the road with its back hunched, swinging its head from side to side, sniffing the air, and no doubt not liking what it smelled as it disappeared into the second-growth bush of a logged area.

It was a good trip — father and son together for a week at a time in life when a young man starts to go his own separate way, seeing "America the Beautiful," and being thankful for good health and a free country in which to come and go as we please.



New Brochure on Master Planning Offered by American Society of Golf Course Architects

"Master Planning: The Vital First Steps in Golf Course Construction," which has been developed for those planning to remodel a golf course as well as those planning a new one, is now available from the American Society of Golf Course Architects.

This new brochure contains information on tees, fairways, bunkers, ponds, irrigation systems, greens, and landscape treatments.

It also includes guidelines on how to budget a golf course project, as well as the services included in a master plan. For those interested in renovation, the brochure demonstrates how various parts of the plan can be phased in over a period of years as funds become available.

To obtain a free copy of this master planning brochure, write the American Society of Golf Course Architects, 221 N. LaSalle St., Chicago, IL 60601.