



Border collies are "intelligent, active dogs that constantly need stimulation, rigorous exercise and supervised activity. They certainly are not couch potatoes and can be quite a challenge."

• **Environment:** Because of the chemicals stored and used on a golf course, there is more of a chance that an active, inquisitive dog could develop health problems because of exposure. There is also the problem of cleaning up after your dog. Our handlers carry poop bags and always clean up after our dogs, but

if the dog is running free that is not always possible.

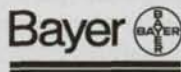
• **When There Are No Geese:** There is nothing harder on a working dog than no work. They become bored and a bored dog is a problem dog. Because they are herders, Border collies will herd anything that is

(continued on page 12)

A great reason for a resident dog is that he is always there when you are. If you take him out routinely, he will do his job well and rid your course of geese. However, owning a dog is a commitment and dogs are not disposable.



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available: mowers, cats, people, and worst of all, cars. More than once, a good dog has been hit by a car that he was trying to herd. Boredom also means digging holes, tearing up anything available, becoming aggressive, and last but not least, marking anything he considers worth possessing.

- **Cost:** There is the initial cost of the purchase of the dog plus the maintenance, vet bills, medicine, grooming, insurance and the emotional cost of getting attached to the dog.

Hiring a Dog

Migratory Bird Management dogs live with their individual handlers and are always eager to work. This is one hallmark of a good service. Because these dogs go to many accounts, they are daily exposed to geese and have the satisfaction of constantly working. This means that they never have the opportunity to sour and are always stimulated to work. Off-season, a good service will ensure that the dogs are retrained and take agility training so they don't become bored.

- **Servicing an Account:** Most accounts can be serviced with one dog and one handler. On accounts where there is a larger-than-normal goose problem, a good service will use multiple dogs and handlers. Because a goose will naturally return to its birthplace to mate and multiply year after year, it is important that the geese realize that your property is not a safe place to stay and raise a family. Varying the times of service visits is vital, because the geese will figure the schedule out after a few days, and if visits are random it will confuse the geese. We want the geese to sense that there is a predator on the property. A herding dog moves like a predator and, therefore, we can accomplish our goal. No goose wants to live where there are foxes or coyotes, consequently, they will move on.

- **The Cost Of Service:** The cost of this type of service is based on a formula with several parts to the equation. Applying that formula

should entail a visit to the property for observation and an opportunity to speak to the golf course superintendent about acreage, water and seasonal differences in goose activity. At that time, a good service will also collect information about how the superintendent has addressed the goose nuisance problem in the past. After a thorough analysis comes customized design of a service program that will best manage the unique goose problem. Eventually, when the goose population is at a "manageable" level, a good firm will service as maintenance only. At MBM, for example, we have found that as geese counts get less and less, we need to be "on-call only."



A Border collie practices her dog paddle.

- **Professional Crews, Two- and Four-Legged:** In investigating use of a service, remember to check the credentials of personnel, both the two- and four-legged varieties. A good service will have dogs and handlers specifically trained in goose removal to get the job done professionally. Further considerations: are the handlers uniformed? Do they drive company vehicles so they are easily identifiable? What about insurance? A reputable service will be fully insured and will furnish certificates of insurance to each account.
- **Prove It Works!** From a good service, expect documentation like we provide customers of MBM: a monthly service report that gives an accounting of our days of visit, time of visits, goose counts, location of geese during visit and direction of flight of the geese. With this report, a superintendent is able to clearly see the progress.

Because a goose will naturally return to its birthplace to mate and multiply year after year, it is important that the geese realize that your property is not a safe place to stay and raise a family.

- **Egg Depredation Service and Flight Control:** Goose control can sometimes require a multifaceted campaign, so a good service should be able to offer egg-depredation services (egg adding, or shaking) and help you obtain a permit for this process. Flight Control is a turf application that discourages geese from feeding on the property. MBM, for instance, is an authorized agent for Flight Control; we can supply the product and are well-versed in advising on when and how to best use this technique.

In Conclusion

After living with three Border collies for four years, I have discovered that they are intelligent, active dogs that constantly need stimulation, rigorous exercise and supervised activity. They certainly are not couch potatoes and can be quite a challenge.

I hope that this article will help you with your decision on whether owning a dog or hiring a service will suit your needs. Please feel free to call me with any questions that I have left unanswered and I will be happy to answer them.

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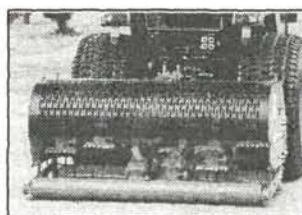
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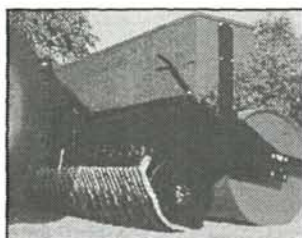
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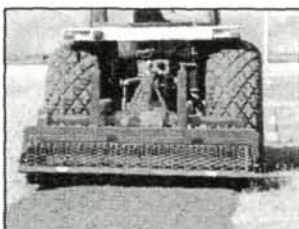
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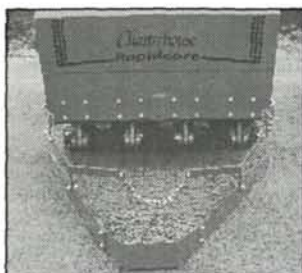
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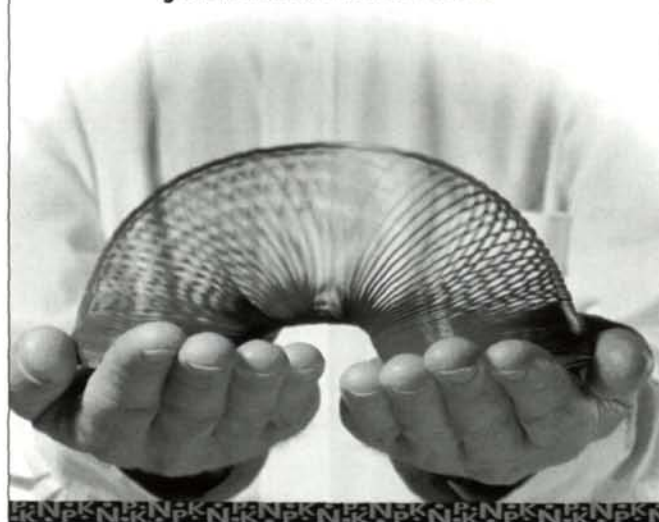
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Superintendents Speak

Think a dog might be the remedy for that gaggle of geese waddling across the fairway? Then you need to consider the pros and cons of dog ownership versus hiring a reputable service. Here are the personal experiences of a few MAGCS superintendents.

Henry Michna
Winnetka G.C.

Several years ago, I was faced with the crisis of 25 pair of geese calling Winnetka Golf Club home in spring, probably due to the absence of coyote/fox the previous year. For years, this ecosystem had one pair successfully nest on a small island. That spring, chasing the geese from the course with my two German shepherds was too cumbersome and staff working my family's pets was not an option. Migratory Bird Management solved the problem and has become an integral part of the operation. The part I enjoy most is working together observing patterns and developing strategies for the greatest control possible.

I feel the best-case scenario for controlling any goose problem is owning a Border collie. However, at Winnetka we opted for the service due to the 24/7 job of owning a dog. Due to the potential financial savings, the park district offered to buy a Border collie for any golf maintenance staff. None of my staff or I desired another pet at home. In addition, this breed's qualities that make it "the best" at goose control require the right owner to understand a working dog's needs. This last fall, we had seven or eight different dogs work the course at times, and if I spent more than five minutes saying hello to the Border collies and their handlers I would want to take one of the dogs home. They truly are a wonderful breed that have an excellent temperament.

Greg Thalmann
Fox Run G.C.

The Elk Grove Park District purchased Ami (a Border collie) in February of 2000 to control the goose population at Fox Run Golf Links. That year, we only had a couple nesting pair that hatched goslings on the course. Ami kept all other geese from staying around or nesting. In the spring of 2001, Ami chased all nesting geese off of Fox Run. We did have three pair that nested off the course and brought their young here for the summer, a total of about 24 geese. Once the young could fly, Ami made sure that they didn't stay around.

Most of the golfers think that Ami was the best purchase we have ever made because of the reduction of goose droppings. She has been here for only two years, and everyone knows her name. I have been here for almost 20 years and very few golfers know mine!

We researched both options, whether to purchase a dog or hire a service to control the goose problem. Some of our concerns about owning a dog were who would take care of the dog, where would it stay, the amount of time needed during the day to take the dog out, etc. Debbie Christensen, the clubhouse manager, volunteered to help me take care of the dog, so we decided that purchasing the dog would be our best option. Ami comes to work with me in the morning, and I take her on the course every time I go out. Debbie takes care of Ami when she has a few minutes or when I'm at a meeting or on vacation.



Scott Witte
Cantigny Golf Club

Cantigny Golf has a great reputation as a Certified Audubon Sanctuary, but when it comes to the Canada goose, where do you draw the line? Prior to my arrival in 1995, Tony Rzadzki did a fine job chasing geese with his dogs, and the geese didn't seem to be that big of a problem. Unfortunately, after Tony's dogs had been gone for a few years, the problem seemed to escalate. Now the obvious question was, "Scott, why don't you get a dog?" My response was and still is, "I'm not a dog guy." So we did other things. We obtained annual permits to manage eggs and nests, we used "Whizz-bangers" and "Whistlers," and we even used many of the new liquid deterrents on the really heavily trespassed areas. The geese just continued to overwhelm our best efforts. That is when it was clear to me that something had to be done.

So in the late spring 2001 prior to summer molting, we hired a service to help us out. Within two weeks, our goose count was drastically reduced. The only geese that stayed were the pairs with goslings. During the heavy migratory times, the service would visit two or three times in one day. I'll be using the service again this year, starting in March.



-Harold Frederickson
Migratory Bird Management, Inc.



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Domes on the Rise



Site preparation in advance of dome construction at Salt Creek.

Winter is upon us. I am looking across the golf course watching the deer running around, geese "fertilizing" the turf, golfers trying to play golf and there it is—the dome. This structure that blocks out the sun from reaching the clubhouse and is the center of attention during the winter months—yep, it's a good opportunity to discuss the usefulness of the indoor facility.

... domes have pros and cons that make them more or less feasible from a marketability standpoint. Herein, you'll find some insights on domes and their future in the Chicagoland area.

First of all, you need to get over the initial ugliness of the creature. Try to find a spot to hide it; behind trees, low areas, interior of golf courses away from roads or on driving ranges. But after awhile, the dome tends to grow on you and becomes second nature—part of the landscaping (a BIG part). However, domes have pros and cons that make them more or less feasible from a marketability standpoint. Herein, you'll find some insights on domes and their future in the Chicagoland area. My resources include Mike Munro, who has been in the dome business for 11 years at White Pines G.C., and Poplar Creek's Luke Strojny, who in 1999 inherited a dome that had previously spent five years in private ownership.

Let's start with the homework you need to do on the front end: planning and cost analysis. Mike spent five years investigating the Detroit area for ideas and searching for material before finding a site for his dome in the Chicago area. In 1990, Mike erected a dome at White Pines. Here at Salt Creek, our manager was approached by a private firm in 1997 about building a dome on the golf course land. The manager and I went out and conducted our own investigation. I made phone calls to other dome facilities, government agencies and material installers. Location of the dome was our next concern, our options being the edge of the parking lot or the driving range. The edge of the parking lot had too many variables requiring adjustment and construction traffic would have been a mess. So the range was the only site for our dome and even that wasn't an ideal spot. However, six months after the initial meeting with the private firm, a dome was erected at Salt Creek.



Exterior shot of the Salt Creek dome.

Costs start at \$1 million and go up from there. Mike Munro's cost was around \$1.5 million, including construction, dome fabric, utilities and range supplies. If successful, a dome starts to make a profit during its second or third year of existence. Weather is a factor here at Salt Creek because the course is open during the winter months, weather permitting, which takes revenue away from the dome. Last winter was probably our best because snow fell in December and didn't melt until early February. That was our fourth year of operation; the previous three years, the weather was mild until Christmastime.

The construction phase entails soil samples, surveyors, blueprints, then foundations that are about 2' wide by 6' deep around the perimeter of the dome. Domes are usually 300' long by 225' wide. Next is installation of the upper and lower tee lines (each 50 stalls), a heater and a blower that requires both electric and gas so in case of power shutdown the dome does not deflate. An airlock door is required so large items can be brought into the dome without causing deflation; this feature helps especially in case of high winds. Finally comes hook-up of utilities: gas, phone, fire alarm, cable. Mike's heating bill for one month was once \$30,000—last year's natural gas costs were high. During construction here at Salt Creek, a detention pond had to be built because the dome was displacing water run-off.

Fabric usually comes in about four sections, depending on the structure shell. The shape can approximate a tall tunnel, flat top or high at the tee line and lower down-range. Mike has had to replace his fabric twice. An outside contractor erects the dome each fall and removes it each spring. This process takes a lot of manpower, usually 30-40 temporary workers over a three-day period, according to Luke.

As you plan your dome's interior, decisions to be made include whether the facility is to be a range only or open for softball and soccer as well. Your fire inspector will tell you whether that's an option for you, if
(continued on page 18)

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Inside the golf dome at Salt Creek G.C.



The upper tee line at the Salt Creek golf dome.

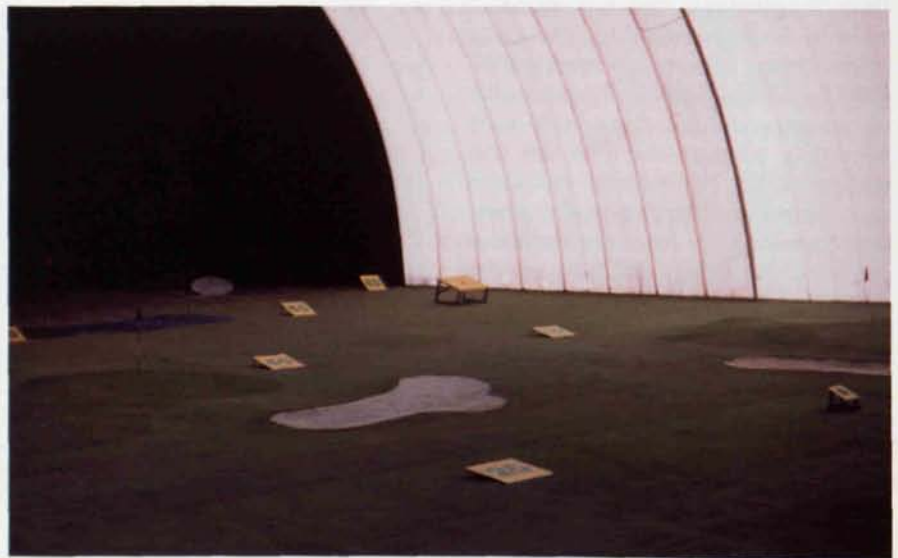
the dome is equipped with fire exit doors at all four corners and if there is some kind of structural support to slow the deflation process allowing customers to exit without harm. Watch out for target greens that can't be removed . . . tough to play soccer around them. Installation of synthetic turf for down range with target greens is common. Get different turf that allows backspin for the target greens versus common-area turf. Also available are colored turf to represent water and sand traps. Tee mats are used for the hitting area, but there is a market now for synthetic turf incorporating sand to get the feel of real grass. This could be used year-round. Then, you'll require range supplies like golf balls, tee dividers, ball picker with vehicle, baskets, ball-washing machine and automatic devices to tee up the ball.

The benefits of the dome are having an indoor facility for use during the winter months to keep your golfers busy working on their swings, taking private lessons (and bringing in dollars), and that is a major plus. A dome can be a social place for seniors and gives the snow birds a place to go. If the facility is also used for soccer and softball, that means more revenue and again, social events, especially if run by the park district. The strikes against a dome are the upfront cost of \$1 million or more, the unpredictability of the weather and site limitations on location.

Mike Munro thinks the still-hurting economy at present might mean a market saturated for further dome development. Still, park districts and villages continue investing to meet the demands of taxpayers who want to use domes for golf and other activities. Some park districts and villages are limited in providing for their constituents, and a dome may be cheaper to provide than a golf course. Whereas a private firm's interest is primarily the bottom line, park districts and municipalities have community-service interests and revenue sources to offset the costs of a dome. Ultimately, domes are here to stay.



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Salt Creek's dome features colored turf to simulate bunkers and water.



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