

Sometimes casual family gatherings or even holiday gatherings can turn into impromptu board meetings. But no matter what is discussed or when it is discussed, one thing is for sure. It's all in the family.



*The 10th hole is the shortest par 4 at Colony West, but a sharp dogleg and green side bunkering keep applying the pressure. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.*

# Turf Trivia

## *Water Purification and Conservation*

The biology of turfgrass soils makes lawns a near ideal medium for the biodegradation of all sorts of environmental contamination. The soils are active in purifying the water as it leaches through the rootzone and down into underground aquifers. Soil microbes associated with turfgrass cover help break down chemicals, including turf pesticides, into harmless materials.

As the population of an area increases, more impervious surfaces are constructed like streets, driveways, parking lots and roofs, and as a result, the rate of surface runoff increases and the time elapsed before runoff occurs decreases. A thick healthy lawn reduces runoff "to next to nothing."

A high quality turf will buffer loss of nutrients in runoff water or in the leachate. When effluent water is used on turf, the water is cleaned and this is a tremendous benefit to our environment. Ten percent of U.S. golf courses are already using effluent waste water for turfgrass irrigation. This reclaimed water by law cannot be returned to most municipal water supplies nor released into streams, lakes or oceans. Turfgrass therefore helps recycle this water into the environment.

Turf fertilization has resulted in unfounded accusations against lawns when nitrates are found in nearby ground water. Growing grass plants absorb most fertilizer nitrogen almost immediately, or, in the case of slow-release fertilizer, the nitrogen remains immobilized in the sod for gradual feed-out. Tests of water seeping through sod show that very little in the way of applied nutrients escape the grass itself.

Groundwater recharge is an important benefit of turf. An acre left in open space provides an average of 600,000 gallons of recharge per year. An average golf course of 150 acres will recharge the water table with a net of 90 million gallons of rainwater and snowmelt a year allowing for evaporation and transpiration. Consumption of water by a golf course of the same size would be about 9 million gallons.