

Fulfilling a promise, with thanks to all

It was just a year ago that I first had the opportunity to write this column. At that time I outlined what *Golf Course News* would offer during the coming months. Included with these plans was a promise to deliver a news publication with an easy-reading format and stories related to the golf course industry that would help you do your job better.

In my opinion, our managing editor, Mark Leslie, and staff have accomplished this task as promised. In doing so, *Golf Course News* has established a strong following from readers, industry suppliers and (thankfully) advertising clients. Advertising supports this

publication, and we thank each one of our fine advertisers for their business, past and future.

A year ago, 5,000 copies of our premier issue were printed and most of them distributed at the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America conference and show in Anaheim. We "gave away" some 40 pages of advertising in that issue.

One year later, this issue will go to 20,000 qualified recipients, plus an additional 5,000 distribution at this year's GCSAA show. There are 75 advertising pages in this issue — all of them paid for by advertising clients. The 20,000 controlled distribution will be au-

ditioned by Business Publications Audit (BPA) to assure our advertisers of the quality circulation that we have stated from the first issue that was mailed.

This year's GCSAA show is bigger and better than ever. We salute this fine organization and its membership for putting on the conference and show for the golf course industry.

The GCSAA has been most cooperative in supplying *Golf Course News* with exhibit information so that we can help you during the show weekend. In the middle of this issue (pages 35-38) we've printed a "pull-out" section which we suggest you pull out and take

with you as a guide around the exhibit hall. *Golf Course News* advertising clients are highlighted in the listing and on the floor plan for your convenience. We're in booth 5801 and we'd like to meet you and hear your comments on *Golf Course News*. Please stop by to say hello.

Golf Course News has had a most successful first year thanks to the support of our readers and advertisers. We look forward to serving the industry for many years to come.

See you in Orlando.

Sincerely,
Charles E. von Brecht
Publisher

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COMMENT

For Sale: Prime land; includes wetlands

BY BOB LOHMANN

In the not-too-distant past, many golf course architects looked on wetlands as a nuisance — mosquito-breeding, swampy, low-lying areas that would be scheduled for dirt fill.



Bob Lohmann

Today, wetlands and golf course construction have established a much different relationship. First, the land available for new courses is many times unsuited for farming or housing, and a major reason is that the site is partially wetlands.

Second, architects now realize the environmental importance of wetlands. They help control flooding and reduce erosion. Also, a multitude of unique wildlife and vegetation is dependent on this swampy land. In nature's delicate balancing act, wetlands play a very important supporting role.

When you consider the staggering amount of wetland acreage that has been destroyed over the years — in Illinois, for example, more than 95 percent of the wetlands are gone — it is little wonder wetlands and the wetland environment are now protected under the Clean Water Act of 1977.

Golf course architects need to learn to work with wetland acreage, and to create new and better courses that are in harmony with nature.

A new site that includes wetlands not only offers unique design possibilities, but another element from which to create a memorable golf course.

One challenge in building on a wetland site is that wetland acreage cannot be reduced. For every

inch of wetland altered or "taken away," an equal area of wetland must be created. This process of wetland recovery is called mitigation.

Defining wetlands can also be a challenge. Any number of definitions are being applied, and some developers simply pick the one that suits their immediate needs.

But since the Army Corps of Engineers is the government agency in charge of verifying and protecting wetlands, architects and developers should follow the Corps' definition of a wetland: "Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequent rate and duration sufficient to support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions."

Therefore, to ensure builders don't destroy wetlands during construction, architects should always request a site analysis by the Army Corps of Engineers. With the Corps' assistance, they can verify and outline the protected wetland acreage.

Once the wetland areas have been identified, the key is to make them part of the course's character — to build a solid, fun-to-play golf course, and use the wetlands to enhance the beauty, definition and character of the individual holes.

We've faced this wetlands challenge on a number of golf courses that we've designed and built. The design of one wetland course, however, stands out: Oak Knoll Golf Course in Streamwood, Ill.

Oak Knoll is part of a residential development and borders the perimeter of the complex. The course covers a significant area of land unsuitable for homes and condo-

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Commentary

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miniums; in other words, wetlands. Once the Corps of Engineers outlined the protected wetland areas, the design concept for Oak Knoll was set into motion.

The design objective was to use the wetlands to create a playable, yet challenging course, without destroying the delicate wetland environment.

The first step was to relocate wetlands away from the target landing areas in the fairways. This helped speed play because errant tee and approach shots were not landing in low-lying marshy and weedy areas. This concept also helped protect the environment because golfers hitting the errant shots were not tromping through the sensitive environment of a wetland looking



The 5th hole green at Oak Knoll Golf Course in Streamwood, Ill., as seen across a wetland area set along the 4th hole.

When you consider the staggering amount of wetland acreage that has been destroyed over the years it is little wonder wetlands and the wetland environment are now protected under the Clean Water Act of 1977.

for their golf balls.

In addition to moving the wetland areas, ponds were built between the wetlands and fairways to act as a buffer zone. This water buffer offered additional wetland protection and improved overall water drainage on the course.

Around greens and tees, wetlands were established for definition and beauty, but wherever possible they were protected by "building" the hazard out of play except for the most errant shot.

An example

At Oak Knoll, the fairways and greens on the 1st and 9th holes and the forward tees on the 9th were built by filling in the low-lying wetland areas. Because total wetland area cannot be reduced, a new wetland environment was created to surround the 8th green. Also, a pond was built along the 1st fairway and green.

The 8th hole at Oak Knoll is a short par 3 requiring a tee shot over the new wetland area to a green visually surrounded by wetland. The beauty is that the wetland adds to the hole's character and definition and, at the same time, is protected because it is usually out of play.

For the approach to the green on the 1st hole, the golfer must factor in the pond next to the fairway. The pond buffer protects the wetland area and helps create a challenging par 4.

Today and in the future, wetlands will play a key role in not only golf course development, but in the balance between man and nature. The industry should look at wetlands as part of the environment that needs to be protected—and a natural feature to be used in golf course design.

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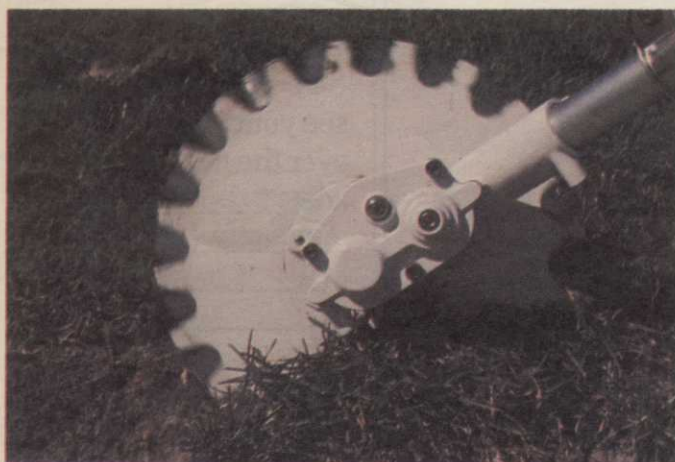
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