

# USGA adding 'quality control' arm for construction

By Peter Blais

Making certain course developers get what they are paying for is the raison d'être for the United States Golf Association Green Section's newest venture.

Turf Renovation and Construction Services (TRACS) will act as the USGA's quality-control arm, serving course developers and owners seeking assurance that major new or remodeling projects are done properly.

Newly appointed TRACS Director Jim Moore will evaluate whether builders have followed the USGA's or other specifications in any major building or renovation contract.

"This is something we've always wanted to try" said USGA Green Section National Director Jim Snow. "We've been working on our Green Section specifications recently. Whenever we do that, the question always arises 'What do you do in the field to make certain courses are built to those specifications?'"

"A builder may have good intentions, but due to accidents or cutting corners, a developer doesn't always get what he's paid for. The developer might never find out until it's too late. This new service can help avoid that."

Any new course or course undergoing renovation are potential TRACS' clients. TRACS will review greens reconstruction, bunker renovations, newly installed irrigation systems or any other major construction. The USGA's environmental ecologist will also be available to review wetlands projects.

"Many clubs are having to rebuild features, like greens, because of age, incorrect management techniques, poor water quality, construction techniques that weren't appropriate for that area and many other reasons. TRACS will help make sure the job is done right this time," Snow said.

Moore will be available to help determine if a project is necessary; prescribe an appropriate construction program; oversee the process and any testing; establish a quality control program; and monitor progress through completion.

Unlike the Turf Advisory Service, which Snow said loses money, he expects TRACS will run on a break-even basis. He estimates construction projects will require five to 10 visits at a cost of \$1,500 to \$2,000 per day.

While that may seem steep, Snow said, quality control can save many times that amount in unneeded repairs down the road.

"Construction is the key time to reduce maintenance costs," Snow said. "Not only can investments made now save on later repairs, but they can also lead to reduced water and pesticide use in the future."

Some large golf course architectural firms may already offer these services, Snow conceded. But most smaller firms do not and could benefit greatly from TRACS.

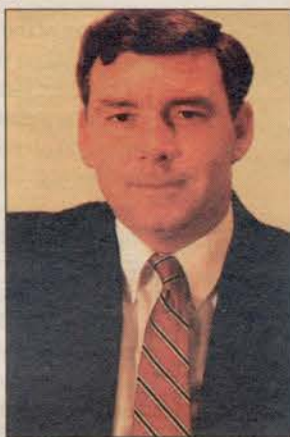
Lending the USGA name to a construction project may also lend it credibility, he added.

Prior to this appointment, Moore

was director of the Green Section's Mid-Continent region, making nearly 1,000 Turfgrass Advisory Service visits to 350 courses in a 10-state region over the past seven years.

"The Mid-Continent is the most diverse region of the Green Section, which has given me the opportunity to develop expertise in extremely wide-ranging climactic conditions, turfgrass varieties and usage, and construction techniques," wrote Moore in his biographical summary.

He has also been superintendent at Briarcrest Country Club in



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Bryan/College Station, Texas, and Ridgewood Country Club in Waco, Texas, where he built greens and tees, designed and installed irrigation systems, and hired and managed maintenance crews.

Moore will handle most of TRACS' calls, with new staff added as necessary. Any additional employees will likely come from construction backgrounds, Snow said.

Western Region agronomist Paul Vermeulen will replace Moore as Mid-Continent Region director and a new agronomist hired to fill his former slot.



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