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# GOLF COURSE NEWS

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### U.S. golf course supply

	Daily Fee	Municipal	Private	Unknown
Open before 1990	6,331	2,185	5,146	—
Opened in 1990	166	37	86	—
Opened 1st Qtr. '91	14	7	16	—
Under Construction	351	86	205	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,862</b>	<b>2,315</b>	<b>5,453</b>	<b>5</b>
Total of all courses when construction complete: 14,635				

Source: NGF

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## Developer submits chem-free plan

*Sherman Hollow's Truax draws fire, support over Green Life use*

By Peter Blais

HUNTINGTON, Vt. — Hoping to end a six-year battle to gain state environmental approval, Sherman Hollow developers will submit plans to manage the controversial golf course without pesticides or fertilizers.

Sherman Hollow, Inc. will present details of its organic turf management program at a July 25 hearing before the same Vermont State Environmental Board that voted 2-to-1 against the project last September because of fears regarding pesti-

cide and fertilizer use.

The use of a non-toxic soil conditioner called Green Life, in conjunction with an organic program, will allow the course to be maintained without chemicals, according to Sherman Hollow President Paul Truax.

"This should remove concerns about the use of pesticides and fertilizers on the proposed golf course that, for the last six years, have prevented Sherman Hollow from receiving a golf course permit from the state of Vermont," Truax said.

Green Life has been researched and tested on several courses over the past 10 years by a Glendale, Calif., company hoping to make inroads into the environmentally conscious

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## Maintenance costs high all around

From staff reports

Paced by a double-digit increase in payroll taxes and employee benefits, golf course maintenance costs rose 7.8 percent at private country clubs in 1990, according to a recent survey of 250 facilities.

Last year's increase brings the national average figure to \$27,266 per hole and continues the spiraling cost of golf course maintenance, which has jumped 500 percent in the past 20 years, reported the international accounting firm Pannell Kerr Forster in its annual publication *Clubs in Town & Country*.

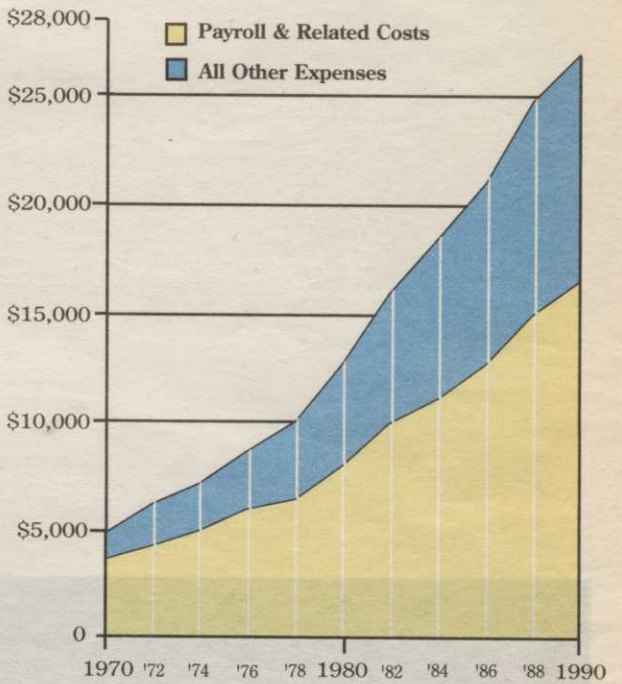
The highest per-hole costs occurred in the Far West, \$34,328. The South, \$27,443, East, \$25,143, and Midwest, \$22,567 followed.

Nationally, payroll (\$14,031) along with payroll taxes and employee benefits (\$2,718) averaged 61.4 percent of per-hole maintenance costs. The \$16,749 total is more than four times greater than the \$3,800 spent on the same items 20 years ago.

Why have labor costs risen so dramatically? Golfers' demands for perfect conditions simply require greater numbers

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Yearly average costs per hole at country clubs



Source: Pannell Kerr Forster

## Florida lawmakers put water law on hold

By Peter Blais

The Florida Legislature will delay action until next year on a proposed water tax that could greatly impact the state's \$5.5-billion golf industry.

The Legislature adjourned last month before committees released bills to levy a 10-cent charge on every 1,000 gallons over a water user's allotment — a fee some estimate would cost many courses \$20,000 to \$30,000 annually.



*'A lot needs to be worked out before the Legislature goes forward.'*  
— Bobby Brantley

But Gov. Lawton Chiles has promised to make passage of a water tax a top

priority when the Legislature reconvenes early next year, according to Florida Golf Council Executive Director Bobby Brantley.

"We're pleased the bill didn't pass," Brantley said. "A lot needs to be worked out before the Legislature goes forward with plans to tax water consumption."

Besides raising much-needed revenue, tax supporters say the extra charge

Continued on page 12

## GCSAA out \$1.4M to McLoughlin

By Mark Leslie

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America will appeal a May 9 jury verdict in a Topeka, Kan., federal district court awarding \$1,457,742 to former Executive Director

James McLoughlin.

The jury verdict awarded McLoughlin \$457,742 for breach of a separation agreement and \$1 million for libel — \$500,000 compensatory damages and \$500,000 punitive damages.

GCSAA attorney Robert Ochs said he would first file motions with Judge Richard Rogers for a new trial, and if that is denied, he will appeal the decision to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Cir-

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# Florida water tax would help make more H<sub>2</sub>O available

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would conserve potable water by encouraging golf courses to use effluent.

Golf courses are already the major users of effluent and would like to use more, Brantley said. The problem is availability and cost.

Some courses are located far from a reclaimed water facility, making it impossible or economically impractical to build pipelines needed to carry effluent to the course.

"Is it fair to charge courses more for potable water if reclaimed water

isn't available?" Brantley asked.

Industry officials also fear effluent prices could skyrocket since suppliers are not regulated by state government and are free to raise prices as they see fit. The effluent supplier for one Florida course recently quadrupled its price from 10 cents per 1,000 gallons to 40 cents, Brantley said.

"We'd like to see some sort of regulation of reclaimed water companies so prices don't go out of sight," the Florida Golf Council director said.

*'We'd like to see some sort of regulation of reclaimed water companies so prices don't go out of sight.'*

— Bob Brantley

The Legislature heads back to Tallahassee in January to discuss reapportionment. It could also work on the water tax or wait until the regular session begins in February, Brantley said.

But debate will continue between now and then, he assured. Industrial, agricultural and recreational users must obtain the consumptive use permits upon which the proposed tax is based.

Brantley said agriculture is likely to receive a tax exemption or some type of tax credit because most of the water it uses, agriculture supporters argue, is returned to the water table. Golf courses do the same thing "and the water returned to the water table is usually much cleaner," he added.

But golf is considered a recreational use.

"When the debate comes around to where water needs to be conserved," Brantley said, "there will probably be a tendency to lean toward recreational use. It's generally considered the most frivolous and viewed as the best place to make cuts.

"Golf has an image problem that the industry needs to address. It's going to be an uphill battle to convince the Legislature of the environmental and economic benefits of golf that we all know exist."

## They're ready on the beaches for the 1991 U.S. Open assault

Narrow fairways, long rough, strategic bunkers and lightning-fast greens. Welcome to the U.S. Open—the toughest major test in golf.

Preparing a course for this kind of battle is no easier than playing it. It takes years of hard work. Fortunately, Certified Golf Course Superintendent Chris Hague and Minnesota's Hazeltine National—site of the 1991 U.S. Open—have been there before.

"I've been here since 1982," says Hague, "and the club has prepared for two U.S. Women's Opens, the PGA Grand Slam and the U.S. Seniors Open since hosting its first U.S. Open in 1970.

"Our John Deere equipment has been a big help this time around. I've got 15 John Deere machines that we've used in everything from course reconstruction to daily maintenance.

"The new 1200 Bunker and Field Rake has been a very pleasant surprise. We've found that it does a better job and is physically easier to operate than other machines we've tried. The style of the rake fits with our plan to keep firm, smooth bunkers. In fact, it's done such a good job that it was the only machine we allowed in our bunkers all last year."

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Superintendent Chris Hague depends on a John Deere 1200 Bunker and Field Rake to help groom one of Hazeltine National's more than 100 bunkers for the 1991 U.S. Open.



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## Pebble Beach memberships question in air until July 2

MONTEREY, Calif. — Who will play Pebble Beach National Club, the scheduled new name of famed Pebble Beach Golf Links, has been the subject of speculation for months.

The answer to that puzzler, and when the first swing will take place, should be clear early in July.

The owner, Pebble Beach Co., said it will wait until July 2 for the Monterey Board of Supervisors to study plans for semi-privatization of the oceanside course.

The study, according to board Chairman Sam Karas, will determine if the sale of memberships constitutes development as defined by Monterey County.

If so, the permitting process and a public hearing will be required before selling memberships.

The owner plan calls for two hours of tee times a day for members, and guarantees an extra 30 minutes daily for public play.

Member price has been pegged in the \$750,000 range, high tariff by American standards.

That fancy figure apparently is considered more realistic than exorbitant by Minoru Isutani of Tokyo, Japan, owner of Ben Hogan Property, which owns Pebble Beach Co.

Isutani and his Cosmos World Corp. executives are "very much concerned" about local residents' opposition to future residential development in Pebble Beach.

To market the memberships, two companies reportedly would be created: "Pebble Beach Japan" and "Pebble Beach USA."

The Board of Supervisors and the State Coastal Commission declared that any change in the use of any of the golf courses within Del Monte Forest, including creation of a membership program, requires a coastal permit.

A Tokyo source said September is the earliest Cosmo World would sell memberships in Japan.