

# European environmental guidelines urged

By Brook Taliaferro

WIESBADEN, Germany — In an effort to “stop reacting and start acting,” architects and developers meeting at Golf Course Europe in October called for adoption of pan-European environmental guidelines on design and construction of golf courses.

“We must counter the criticism that golf is not environmentally compatible,” said German Golf Federation President Jan Brugelmann, who said he hoped these guidelines will be adopted by the European Golf Commission which was established earlier this year in Brussels. “The average length of time it takes for confirmation of a new golf course in Germany is five years. This is a significant obstacle to the growth of golf.

“We need a factually based public relations campaign illustrating that golf courses are good for the countryside and that they provide natural habitats,” said Brugelmann.

In 1983 there were approximately 1.26 million golfers in Europe, while in 1991 there are 1.94 million golfers—a 46-percent growth, according to Falk Billion of Deutche Golf Consult. Golf courses grew from 3,038 to 3,750, or only 21 percent.

“There is a tremendous gap between supply and demand, and the stagnation is due to environmental pitfalls,” said Billion.

Restrictions instituted by the city of Munich were cited as an example of some of the most severe limitations anyone at the conference had encountered. The Munich restrictions include:

- Fifty percent of the site must be reserved for ecological compensation.
- The course can not be built within a

## Debate ends, Jones' San Marcos course wins county approval

SAN MARCOS, Calif. — After months of political pot shots, the county Board of Supervisors approved the 18-hole Rancho San Marcos Public Golf Course by a 3-2 vote.

The course would be built on 300 acres between the southeastern corner of Lake Cachuma and Highway 154 and Paradise Road. The land will be rezoned for agricultural use.

Course supporters said the project would give the South Coast another badly needed recreational outlet while preserving the valley's scenic nature.

Opponents said the course would increase highway traffic and destroy the natural setting.

Cronyism charges were leveled at project supporters Gloria Ochoa and Tom Rogers.

Some of the county's most powerful environmental and community groups argued that the project will violate the county's own tough planning policies and expose the valley to sprawling Southern California-brand growth.

To reduce environmental impact, the board tacked 150 conditions onto the project designed by architect Robert Trent Jones Jr.

## ASTA moves Washington HQ

The American Seed Trade Association has relocated its office.

The ASTA is now headquartered to Suite 570 South, 601 Thirteenth St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005; telephone 202-638-3128.



Relaxing after a Ryder Cup-like golf round are front, left to right, Barbara Hauser and Cynthia Dye McGarey. Back, Matt Dye, Charles von Brecht, Gotz Mecklenburg, Perry Dye, Gerold Hauser, Rainer Preissman, Gunther Hauser and Herman Richter Sr., Herman Richter Jr. The Americans won the match, 67-61.

recreational area.

- No earth moving is allowed above one meter.
- No sand traps are allowed.
- The course must be kept 20 meters from any water.
- Greens and tees must be sealed from the ground water.

David Stubbs, managing director of Environmental Golf Services and the first conservation officer of the Golf Course Wildlife Trust which developed the guidelines, said: “We can't let the opposition take the high ground or environmentalists will price golf out of the market. As architects and developers, we have to show we understand the site through plans and studies in the beginning. Only then can we counter misinformed opinion. Don't just bring in ecologists as firefighters.”

Indeed, early involvement of environmentalists was cited as a key ingredient in the successful journey of a course through the approval process.

Environmental compliance studies may cost from \$250,000 to \$750,000 in the United States to an average of 200,000 francs in France.

British architect Howard Swan pointed out that 200,000 francs is nothing in the context of the entire project. “If our client is unwilling

to spend that money on environmental studies, then perhaps he's not a serious client. I would say we as architects have a responsibility to refuse such a client.”

“Environmental awareness can lead to increased marketability of a project,” Stubbs said. “We can't look at restrictions as a problem. We have to turn them to an advantage.”

Michael Harvey, president of the Environmental Consultancy Group, UK, echoed those sentiments in leading a panel discussion on the environment.

“Only now are developers making an effort to get their message across. Developers must show sensitivity and turn environmental issues to their own advantage,” said Harvey.

The guidelines are only a first step in trying to set pan-European standards for course design and development. They may lead to a mechanism to avoid abuses of the past by complacent developers.

“We hope that by early next year more definite guidelines will be issued. It has also been suggested that developers post a performance bond to insure that they follow guidelines and policies set by the commission in Brussels,” said Harvey.

“Perhaps we could use these guidelines to come down on rogue developers,” said Stubbs.

## Conservation of water major issue in Europe

WIESBADEN, Germany — Water conservation surfaced as a major issue during panel discussions at a conference on golf and environmental concerns.

“Water use is mismanaged on a global scale,” said Chris Tedeman of the Golf Course Wildlife Trust, UK. He claimed greenkeepers need more instruction in agronomic aspects of management.

In a comment reminiscent of Perry Dye's cry that “Brown is beautiful” at Golf Forum 2000 in Palm Springs, Calif., last year, Stig Persson said, “We need to educate golfers that they can play on brown courses.”

Persson is chairman of the Greens Committee in Sweden and has completely re-seeded his own course, Ljunghusens Golfklubb, in grasses from the United Kingdom instead of those from the United States.

American-style watering was judged the culprit by many attending the discussion.

Michael Harvey, president of the European Environmental Consultancy Group, UK, said: “We don't need American-style watering. We need a return to the links-style original.”

Architect Gerold Hauser, president of the European Society of Golf Course Architects, said, “We need to find other ways of green construction that makes it easier to save water.”

The most extreme position was taken by Thierry Huau of Environnement et paysage in Giverny, France, who suggested that architects recommend against courses where there is little water such as Cypress.

Other suggestions ranged from learning to measure water use by the needs of the plant rather than soil dampness to using different grasses.

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