

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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Researchers rejoiced when informed that the USGA had doled out \$4.5 million 4

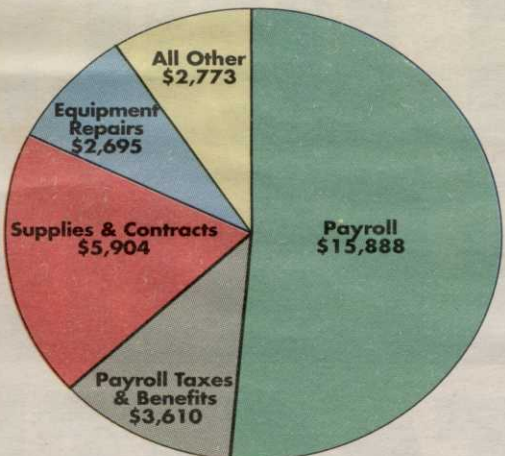
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Maintenance breakdown per hole



Based on a 1991 survey of private country clubs in the United States. The average maintenance cost per hole is \$30,870. Source: Pannell Kerr Forster

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Michigan Homestead gets go-ahead

By Peter Blais

GLEN ARBOR, Mich. — The four-year battle apparently isn't over for the Homestead Resort's golf course project.

The national office of the Environmental Protection Agency May 8 approved the controversial northern Michigan course, including the filling in of 3 1/2 acres of wetlands.

EPA Director William Reilly's decision upheld the Michigan Natural Resources Commission's 1990 approval

Despite EPA approval, controversial project not out of the woods yet

and the wishes of Republican Gov. John Engler. But it conflicted with the recommendations of the regional EPA office and four other government agencies.

Three days later, project opponents — including Friends of the Crystal River, Sierra Club, Michigan United Conservation Clubs, National Wildlife Federation

and Trout Unlimited — filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court seeking to overturn the EPA ruling. A decision whether to issue a permit to the resort course near Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore isn't due until June 8.

"It's still a hot topic around here," said John Tune, editor of the Record Eagle in nearby Traverse City.

Homestead developer Bob Kuras is unsure when he will start construction,

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Erosion control blankets fast proving their worth

By Mark Leslie

Erosion control has become a byword in the construction industry, transforming erosion control blankets from a secondary to a major tool of the trade.

"We used to only use them (blankets) from an engineering standpoint when you really had a problem," said Ron Boyd, president of Williamsburg Environmental Group, Inc. in Williamsburg, Va. "Now you've got more regulations — such as laws on cutting, d tilling on steep slopes — so that their use is sometimes mandatory."

Ken Starrett, vice president of marketing for American Excelsior Co. of Arlington,

"People see the quick growth and ask what kind of fertilizer we use. We don't use any."

— Ken Starrett

Texas, said over the last few years strong laws regulated by the Soil Conservation Service, Corps of Farming Engineers and highway departments have been adopted by communities.

"The number increases

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Equal access: A tall order

By Hal Phillips

Equal access and fair hiring practices for the disabled used to be goals; now they're the law of the land.

With regard to accessibility for handicapped citizens, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) took effect in February, 1992. Come July 26 of this year, golf clubs with more than 24 employees will be subject to the ADA's employment provisions.

While tax-paying clubs with 15 to 24 employees needn't comply for another two years, golfing establishments nationwide — tax-paying or not, public or private — should study the ADA provisions. The law will

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Emerald Dunes: Voted best new public course.

The envelopes please...

Architects, builders vote on the nation's top new courses

By Mark Leslie

Diamonds. Emeralds. Golf course architect Tom Fazio must be into gems. Two of his Florida jewels — Black Diamond in Lecanto and Emerald Dunes in West Palm Beach — have been selected by course architects and builders as the best private and public golf courses, respectively, to open in the last five years.

Fazio, who designed three of the top six private courses and two of the best seven public layouts, attributed the achievement to excellent sites and developers.

"It's the people involved that make a project happen," he said. "I've got a story for every course I've done. There's a

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Erosion control blankets

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every day," he said.

New environmental laws have helped produce "remarkable growth" among erosion control material manufacturers the last few years, said Tim Lancaster, manager of technical services for North American Green in Evansville, Ind.

"Over the past five years the environmental field in general has just ballooned and we've ridden that balloon up," Lancaster said. New national Clean Water Act regulations will

regulate erosion and sediment control at construction sites of more than five acres, he said.

Boyd said, generally, if a slope is greater than 25 percent, a blanket is used. "Depending on the soil, it could be anything over 10 percent."

Like sod, when blankets or mats are laid down, they immediately stabilize the area, Boyd said. "Mats add stability instantaneously in terms of construction — about three weeks. Sod adds stability but is generally more expensive. Sometimes sod will

slide and so you have to stake it."

Lawn Institute Executive Director Dr. Eliot Roberts said, given the choice, he would use sod instead of erosion control blankets because establishing a root structure is the most crucial factor.

But sod costs three to four times more than blankets, he estimated.

In Hawaii, where environmentalists from as far away as Japan are attacking golf course projects, erosion control blankets are a godsend. One such project is Koolau Golf and Country Club on the island of Oahu, where blankets helped save the site from erosion when 134 inches of rain fell from November through May —

20 inches during a single two-week period, and eight inches in one day.

Developer Minami Group Inc. and architect Dick Nugent Associates of Chicago worked with course superintendent Sean Hoolehan to solve the problem, which was compounded by the silty clay volcanic soils that easily erode.

"Irrigation alone is enough to create erosion," Hoolehan said.

Lancaster said that during construction the irrigation was turned on to discover where the runoff would go. Then, after the fairways were sprigged with Bermudagrass and hydromulched, the crew laid the blanket along those paths.

About 10 percent of the Koolau course area required erosion control blankets. The rest was hydromulched to cover sprigs and hold moisture.

Nugent said erosion control blankets are "absolutely" more important in this environment-conscious society with its growing number of new laws. "One of the major concerns in runoff," he said. "In Hawaii they (government agencies) were very concerned because we were upstream from a drinking water reservoir. We built a lot of water-retention basins. We dug pockets at the bottoms of our ravines and swales..."

"It would have been more expensive **not** to do it. The project would have been stopped by the government, saying we were contaminating a drinking water reservoir. How much is that worth?"

Nugent added that using blankets is plain "good soil conservation. Where topsoil is being stripped and replaced, it is always at a premium. You can get grass to grow on poor soil with lots of fertilizer. But then you're into a very intensive maintenance program getting grass to continue to grow in a hostile environment."

North American Green reported that after erosion control measures were applied at Koolau, nature proved the theory of establishing grass quickly. On the first fairway, where hydromulch provided the only protection, a two- by 200-foot gully was formed by rainfall and irrigation runoff, requiring expensive rework and reshaping.

On the second fairway, where blankets were used, no significant erosion occurred.

Starrett said: "Most erosion-control practices are geared around vegetation. Vegetation ultimately is what is going to help hold the soil together, so a lot of these products are temporary to make sure the soil is being held in place during germination period to establish a strong root system."

"Temporary blankets are more common on golf courses. They are used to expedite germination, plus we have special netting to put over the blanket so you can mow right over it."

Starrett equated the blankets to a miniature greenhouse.

"It keeps out the sun, protects from high wind, breaks up heavy rain drops, and keeps soil temperatures steady," he said. "People see the quick growth and ask what kind of fertilizer we use. We don't use any."

Erosion control blankets can be degradable, biodegradable or non-degradable. Their cost runs from 50 cents to \$4 per square yard.

Golf course builders mainly use single-net, quick-degrading straw blankets. Blankets can be bought already impregnated with seed ranging from wildflower to bentgrass.

The mats are made with a variety of materials from straw (which degrades in eight months) to coconut (which degrades in three years) to polypropylene and other materials that are non-degradable.

Starrett added that erosion control blankets are in the construction specifications of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Federal Highway Department, Soil Conservation Service and about every state.



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