

NEWS IN BRIEF

TORRANCE, Calif. — "Fit more parkland into the proposed Rancho Palos Verdes golf course project." That was the message the state Coastal Commission gave Barry Hon and the Zuckerman family in denying development of 83 homes and an 18-hole course on a 258-acre coastal parcel near San Pedro. The Torrance City Council approved the development in August. The commission decided, 6-3, that the development doesn't provide enough wildlife protection and open coastal area for non-golfers.

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MYRTLE BEACH, S. C. — The Surf Golf and Beach Club reopened Sept. 15 after completing a \$1 million greens renovation project. Golf course architect John LaFoy of Taylors used original designer George Cobb's plans as a starting point. Landscapes Unlimited of Lincoln, Neb., did the reconstruction work. The course is the third oldest in the Grand Strand area of coastal Carolina.

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SANTA FE, N.M. — Opponents of the proposed La Cienega de Santa Fe golf course community plan to file a suit against Santa Fe County officials for approving the project. The group Friends and Neighbors of La Cienega claim the county violated water rights and land grant codes and failed to conduct a necessary environmental impact study, the *Santa Fe New Mexican* reported. County officials, who are named in the suit, say the suit will not necessarily stop the project.

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QUEENSBURY, N.Y. — Hiland Golf Club, the 18-hole golf course and resort complex conceived on 713 acres in 1986, has filed for bankruptcy protection, listing debts of more than \$3.9 million. "The golf course is doing very well, but not enough to pay the mortgage," said Gary D. Bowen, president of Highland Park Inc.

1992 Golf Course Development — So Far

Through Aug. 15	Opened		Under Construction		In Planning		Totals	
	'92	'91	'92	'91	'92	'91	'92	'91
Source: NGF								
Daily Fee	154	143	393	330	384	400	931	873
Municipal	37	36	82	80	106	113	225	229
Private	39	52	149	162	157	229	345	443
TBD	—	—	2	3	10	13	12	16
Totals	230	231	626	575	657	755	1,513	1,561

Summit focuses on environment, growth

ORLANDO, Fla. — Building better facilities and drawing non-players into the game were the main topics of concern at Golf Summit '92, as more than 300 members of the golf industry gathered at the Marriott World Center in late October.

This year's Summit, sponsored every two years by the National Golf Foundation, drew fewer participants than its 1990 incarnation. However, more consensus was drawn on account of the meeting's interactive nature. Attendees formed and set policies on player and facility development following interactive panel discussions. NGF will release the resulting strategies later this month.

One of the most pertinent panel discussions featured environmental lawyer Sharon Mattox, William Roberts, president of the GCSAA; golf course architect Rees Jones; and Bob Johnson, president and CEO of ClubCorp. They discussed the continued impact environmental issues will have on golf course construction and operation costs.

Mattox, whose firm was retained by the NGF to develop environmental recommendations, discussed the need for a clearinghouse on environmental information operated by one or more of the industry's major associations. Roberts volunteered the superintendent's association for

the task, although others felt it should be a shared responsibility.

Another interactive discussion centered on non-traditional developments, such as a golf complex and learning centers run in Kansas City by Dennis Tull. Smiley's New Golf Complex features three different ranges, two miniature golf courses and a mid-length, 18-hole golf course. The course features bentgrass fairways and greens, maintained by two certified superintendents.

"The golf industry has to make it easier for people to learn and enjoy the game," said Tull, who noted that many of his clients "graduate" to full-sized courses after two years of playing at Smiley's.

Also on the panel with Tull was Richard Barrett with SunBelt Golf Inc., the firm responsible for the Jones Trail in Alabama. This multi-course venture used state pension funds to develop top-notch public golf courses on donated land with greens fees ranging from \$11 to \$28. This sort of public/private partnership needs to become more common if public golf is to grow, while remaining affordable, Barrett and others agreed.

According to Ed Abrain, chair of the NGF's Facility Development Committee, 350 courses will open before year's end. Abrain expressed concern that most of these new facilities were high-end.

Courts ready to accept briefs in Homestead case

CINCINNATI — The 6th Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati has set deadlines for legal documents in the continuing dispute involving a proposed golf course at the Homestead Resort in Glen Arbor, Mich.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Roland Harmes, director for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), have filed for an appeal of a June 8 court order that blocks a proposed wetlands fill at the resort.

Briefs are due in Cincinnati Nov. 16. No hearing dates have been set.

In May of this year, the DNR approved developer Robert Kuras' plan to build a golf course along the Crystal River, whereby 3.68 acres of wetlands would be filled. Under orders from Director William Reilly, the EPA withdrew previous objections and cleared the way for Kuras to receive the needed wetlands permit.

However, later in May the Friends of the Crystal River — an environmental group fighting the proposed golf course plan — sued the EPA, Harmes, Reilly and LuJuana Wilcher, the assistant EPA administrator for water. This led to the June 8 injunction.

Michigan is the only state that issues federal wetlands permits because its laws are stricter than federal regulations. Other states rely on findings from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Opponents of the project argue the EPA caved in to the wishes of Gov. John Engler, who headed George Bush's 1988 election campaign in Michigan. Reilly is a Bush appointee.

Opponents, who believe the federal agency acted illegally in approving the project, also maintain the authority to issue permits now rests with the Army Corps.

Meanwhile, golf architect Bob Walker and Kuras are confident the course will eventually be constructed. "This project has met every standard of law," said Kuras.

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