

# GOLF COURSE NEWS

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Britain's Prince Andrew (right) presents American William Montague with his Master Greenkeeper Certificate, the highest international honor of its kind. See page 18.

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## Study: Course maintenance costs up 4.9%

By PETER BLAIS

Course managers have done an excellent job trimming budgets while maintaining quality in the face of an ongoing recession, said a private country club industry consultant.

Golf course maintenance expenses rose just 4.9 percent in 1992 at private country clubs, compared to 9.8 percent the year before, according to a preliminary study of 90 courses by the accounting firm Pannell Kerr Forster. The survey is part of its annual *Clubs in Town & Country* report involving hundreds of private clubs nationwide.

Payroll and related costs (which make up about two-thirds of course maintenance budgets) rose a mere 3

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#### WHEN LIGHTNING STRIKES...

Who's liable? Golf course owners and managers want to know. One man's legal opinion can be found on page 43.

## Bridging the 'market gap' with design technology

By MARK LESLIE

Walt Disney animators, move over. Larry Hawkins is center stage at his easel, and while his rendering of Mickey may not compare, his animation of prospective golf courses could win him an Emmy.

You know those televised fly-overs of golfholes? Hawkins' Geoscience Golf Development Services has developed a computer program to create similar three-dimensional animations of proposed golf courses. The digitized animations are transferred to videotape, creating a VHS-ready fly-over before dirt is ever moved.

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The celebrated Winged Foot elm was taken down in February.

## Effective treatment for Dutch elm emerges too late for Winged Foot

By MARK LESLIE

MAMARONECK, N.Y. — Had it been available for public use earlier, a new fungicide may have saved the life of the famous American elm tree that until recently dominated the 10th green at Winged Foot Country Club's East Course.

Dr. R.J. Stipes of Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Va., one of the leading American tree scientists, said the new compound, called Alamo, is effective against Dutch elm disease, which is believed to have killed the Winged Foot tree. Alamo — the ornamental

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## EPA insights on Browner, from fellow Floridians

By HAL PHILLIPS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — With 100 days of the Clinton Administration behind them, members of the golf course industry are still looking for clues as to how Carol Browner will conduct her business as head of the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

However, Florida land planners, superintendents, engineers and chemical suppliers are plenty familiar with Browner, who led the state's Department of Environmental Regulation (DER) for just under two years. Opinions vary, but most agree Browner is an aggressive, intelligent, politically motivated person whose views on the environment are essentially protectionist, but not necessarily set in stone.

"We had a lot of clashes with her. She has a very strong personality," said Bobby Brantley, former lieutenant governor and state representative who served as the first executive

Continued on page 42

## Floridians familiar with Browner appraise new EPA chief

Continued from page 1

director of the Florida Golf Council. "Her original impression of the golf industry was not good. She thought it was a frivolous game that wasted water and used too much pesticides.

"But she's a very dedicated person, a person the golf industry should view with an open mind. She definitely went through a transformation [in Florida]. I think towards the end of her tenure, she realized you can accomplish a lot more by working with all the

industries affected. Hopefully, she'll take that attitude into this new arena."

Bob Yount has sat through numerous meetings with Browner. Yount is executive director of the Orlando-based Florida Turfgrass Association, 38 percent of whose membership is superintendents.

"Generally, I think she was very realistic in her approach to protecting our environment," he said. "A politician? Yes. But a very practical person. If there's an opportunity to compromise, she is very receptive."



Carol Browner

Tom Benefield served as president of the Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association from 1991-92, during which time he saw a lot of Browner — usually concerning effluent issues. Browner wanted to charge golf courses for its use, and Benefield — the head superintendent at Ballen Isles Country Club of JDM in Palm Beach Gardens — led the fight against effluent charges.

"She sure is on a fast track," said Benefield, who noted the 35-year-old Browner was appointed

to DER by Gov. Lawton Chiles in early 1991, then worked on behalf of the Clinton ticket beginning in the fall of '92. "Generally speaking, she's a politician more than an environmentalist. An environmental politician, I should say.

"I don't think she saw golf courses in a very good light at the outset. She was very approachable for meetings, which was unusual. And we made some inroads with her and her staff. But some of that was political expedience and some of it was her staff.

"As with any huge bureaucracy, there's too much for one person to deal with. Carol relies heavily on an inner circle of people. If you educate the staff and reach out to the director, you can make a difference because the staffers don't like to be ignored."

What effect did she have on the golf industry in Florida?

Well, golf courses have not been charged extra for effluent use and Yount points to several golf course issues that elicited Browner's participation and support. For example, according to Yount, Browner opposed legislation that would have created a distinction between agricultural and recreation water use (though Brantley hinted this gesture was Browner's obligatory stance in a political trade-off).

Indeed, Browner has garnered nationwide praise for her tough, bartering stance on wetlands protection. She may be best known for her habit of demanding the preservation of wetland space in return for permit approvals.

"But there's one big problem with Browner's policy," said Steve Beeman, president of Ecoshores Inc., a wetland mitigation and creation firm located in Port Orange.

"She is more in favor of protecting existing wetlands as a tradeoff than the creation and mitigation of wetlands as a trade-off. When you take this approach, you've actually done nothing because those wetlands were already protected.

"It looks good, but you've saved nothing."

•••

Do these Floridians have any advice for colleagues around the country who may have occasion to deal with Browner?

"I would tell them to have their facts in order, and present them in a logical manner," said Yount. "Across the board, she's very fair."

Brantley reaffirmed the virtue of patience, and added that Browner listens to her own people. "You have to be persistent, and you can't lose your temper," he said. "And it wouldn't hurt to find someone inside her department who will take time to understand and work with you."

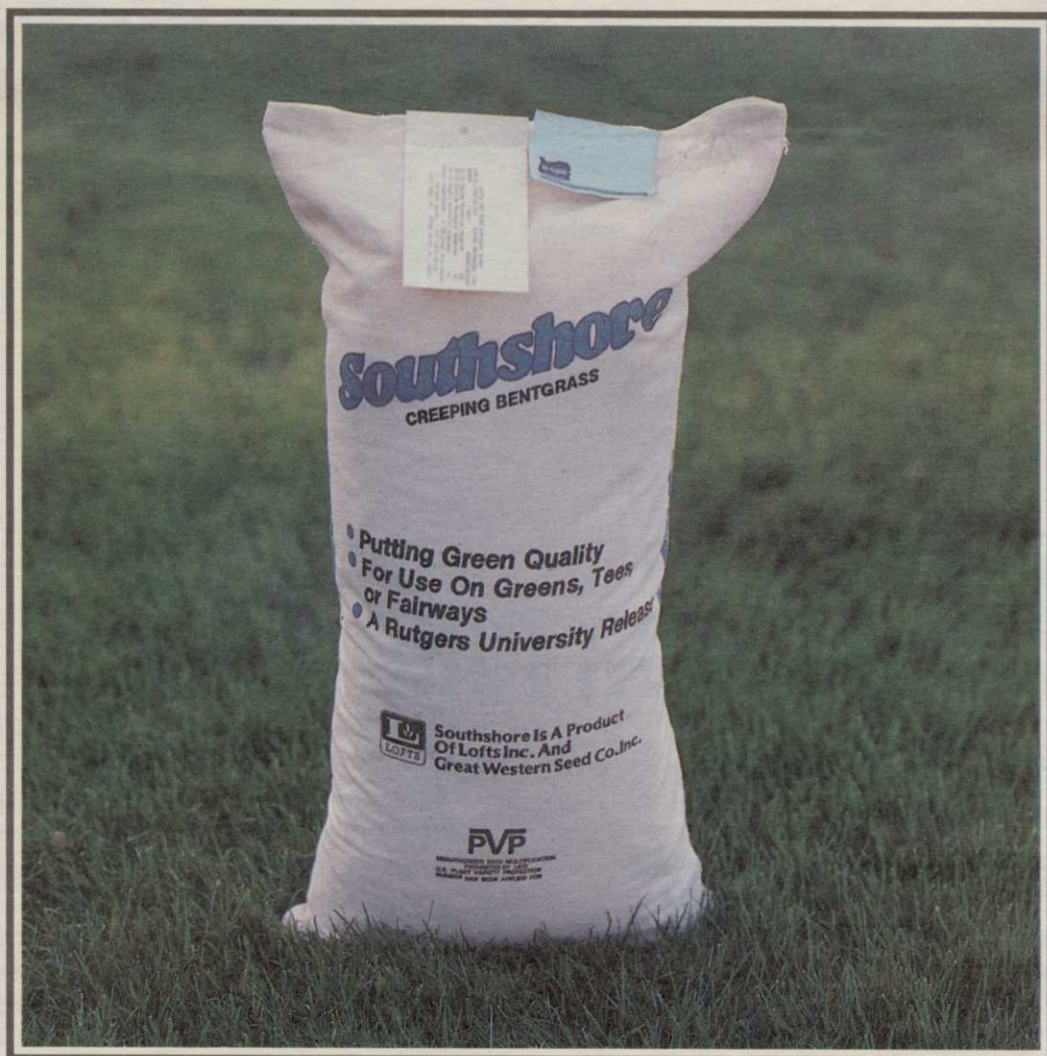
Benefield agrees: "I think my advice would be to educate her staff. She listens to them."

Beeman disagrees: "I didn't find that to be the case. The staff people here [in Florida] were encouraged to be less believing of private sector scientists than the government scientists. And she encouraged that view."

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