

NEWS IN BRIEF

HANA, Hawaii — A majority of area residents polled oppose Keola Hana Maui Inc.'s proposed 200-acre, 18-hole golf course project. Of the 726 people who cast ballots, 388 — or 53.4 percent — said "nay." The issue of the golf course will come before Maui's County Council's Planning Committee soon.

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SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — TRIMS Software International has announced the TRIMS \$1,000 Scholarship Award, bestowed annually on a student studying turfgrass management in a school or college with TRIMS Grounds Management Software as part of its curriculum. Students may receive information on the TRIMS Software Scholarship by contacting their turfgrass adviser or TRIMS at 1-800-733-9710.

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JANESVILLE, Wis. — Rock County officials will soon be accepting proposals for the development of an 18-hole golf course on 200 acres of county-owned land just south of the southern Wisconsin airport. The land was specifically set aside for recreational purposes under the Rock County Airport Master Plan.

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WILLOUGHBY, Ohio — Lake Metroparks recently spent \$2.7 million to buy the 18-hole Pine Ridge Golf Course, located in Wickliffe. Apparently, the public approves. Since the course went municipal in May, golfers in the immediate area have flooded the phone lines of Lake Metroparks Executive Director David Noble. Greens fees and course hours are the main concerns.

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DIXON, Ky. — Golf developer Mike Walker has completed the first nine holes of his Wildwood Golf Course complex just off Kentucky 132 between Dixon and Sebree. Walker, who broke ground in July of 1992, also has plans to build an adjacent 18-hole championship course by next summer.

In California, Coastal Trails finally gains approval...

By PETER BLAIS

RANCHO PALOS VERDES, Calif. — The California Coastal Commission's recent approval of an oceanfront golf course here represents a successful conclusion to a four-year battle waged by the local Zuckerman family and Orange County developer Barry Hon.

Local permits are still needed for the Ocean Trails Course at Palos Verdes. And an environmental group — the Coastal Conservation Coalition — has enlisted the support of such heavyweights as the Sierra Club and has a lawsuit pending to stop the project.

But the Zuckermans and Hon — who recruited some big-name support of their own in the persons of state Assembly Speaker Willie Brown and acting Senate President David Roberti — overcame their biggest hurdle April 14.

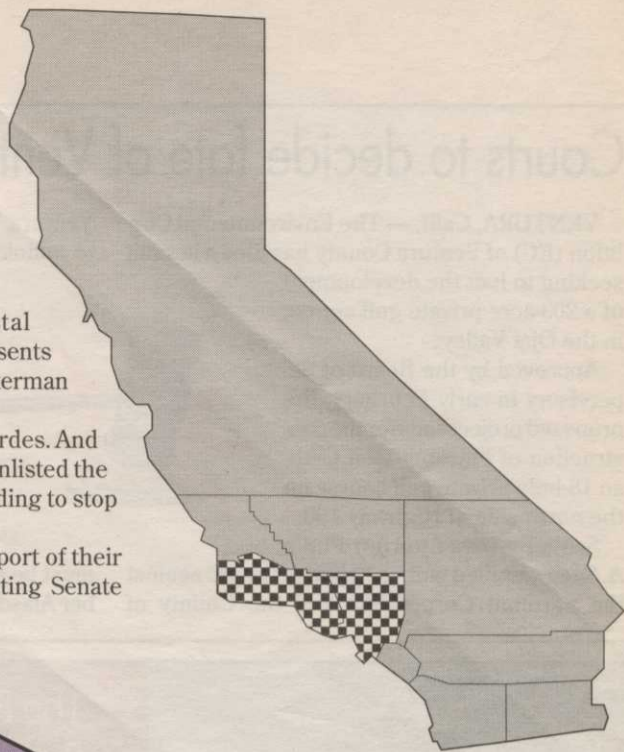
That's the day the Coastal Commission gave its blessing to the 260-acre project. In so doing, it overruled a staff recommendation that would have required tripling the amount of land set aside as a public park while reducing the course to just a dozen holes.

"We saw limiting the course to 12 holes as a way of effectively killing the project," Peggy Zuckerman said. "Conditioning something to death is a well-known method of stopping a project in California."

As is, developers agreed to many conditions. Approximately 30 acres of coastal sage scrub areas around the course and another 34 acres along oceanside bluffs have been set aside for public access and as a nesting area for the California gnatcatcher, a threatened species.

"We chose to treat the gnatcatcher as if it were endangered [rather than *athreatened* species that requires less protection]."

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... while Ahmanson Ranch project remains in bureaucratic limbo

By PETER BLAIS

VENTURA, Calif. — A land deal and lawsuit must still be settled before the long-awaited Ahmanson Ranch golf project becomes a reality in the hills abutting Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

The proposed Ahmanson Ranch community includes two golf courses, 3,050 homes, 400,000 square feet of offices and shops, and 300-room hotel. Developer Ahmanson Land Co., a subsidiary of Home

Savings of America, first proposed the project more than six years ago.

A complicated arrangement was near completion earlier this year that would have placed 10,000 acres of private property under federal and state control in exchange for county approval of the multi-million-dollar development.

The land was to be acquired through developer donations as well as funds provided by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and federal government. Approxi-

mately 7,000 acres owned by entertainer Bob Hope was part of the package.

But the deal started to unravel in late January when Hope seemed reluctant to part with some of the property, according to Jeff Segol, a reporter who covered the story for the Ventura County Newspapers.

The National Park Service had placed a large amount of money in escrow to cover its share of the purchase. When Hope balked, the NPS threatened to use the

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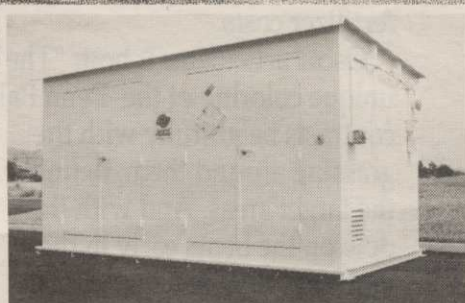
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CIRCLE #103

Ocean Trails

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Zuckerman explained. "Three gnatcatcher experts have permission to be on the property and were given free rein to make their observations.

"The ecosystem has been degenerating as non-native plants have moved in. We are going to restore that area to its natural state."

Originally, the Zuckermans and Hon owned neighboring-but-separate parcels along the bluffs. The Zuckermans, who built many area homes, planned a 130-lot residential subdivision on their parcel. Hon envisioned a golf resort on his.

Realizing their plans might not fly separately, the two combined their properties into a 260-acre site that would be home to a golf course community.

The City Council approved the original plan last year.

But the Coastal Commission said "no."

The developers revised the project by reducing the length of certain holes as well as the number and size of some housing lots. This time the City Council and Coastal Commission saw eye-to-eye.

"The city has been terrific from the start," Zuckerman said. "It realized the community wanted the project and will benefit economically."

Nearby Los Verdes Golf Course hosts 130,000 rounds annually, Zuckerman said.

Even at greens fees of \$65 to \$85 per round, upscale Ocean Trails anticipates 40,000 rounds per year. Local golfers hope it will relieve some of the pressure at county-owned Los Verdes, she added.

The \$125 million project includes 83 single-family, ocean-view homes on lots ranging from 15,000 to 64,000 square feet.

A 25,000-square-foot clubhouse will house a restaurant, lounge, pro shop and locker room facilities.

"The economic issues caught the attention of people inside and outside the area," Zuckerman said.

"We figure 13,000 jobs will be created during construction."

Given the difficulties of obtaining environmental permits to build just about anything in California, Zuckerman said the developers expected a long battle.

"But we didn't expect it to take this long," she said. "This project represents the difficulty everyone has in getting something done despite California's [depressed] economy. Even a sound project like ours has to wade through months and months of permitting."

Over the next few months, developers plan to implement the habitat plan, finalize a golf course design, seek final approvals from the city (not considered a major problem) and prepare for engi-

neering and grading to start after next spring's rains.

Architect Pete Dye is working on the final course designs for the course.

Zuckerman expects construction to get underway within 18 months.

Dye said he has made many site visits and expects some holes to rival the best Pebble Beach and his own Ocean Course at Kiawah Island, S.C., have to offer.

"If I can't route six or seven beautiful holes along oceanfront land near Los Angeles, then you ought to just take me outside and shoot me," Dye said.

Golf economics focus of NGCOA seminar

ORLANDO, Fla. — The National Golf Course Owners Association will hold a seminar focusing on golf economics, "Your Bottom Line," at the Orlando Hyatt, July 20-21.

Golf course owners and operators will discuss how such factors as agronomics, golf car fleet management and Americans with Disabilities Act compliance affect their bottom line.

Speakers include Jim Ellison, director of agronomy at Arnold Palmer's Bay Hill Golf Club; Mike Layel, national sales manager at O.M. Scott & Sons Company; Gary Robb, director of the National Center for Accessibility;

Mike Muetzel, national account manager of the Golf Car Division, Yamaha Motor Corporation, U.S.A.; and Bob McGrath, CEO of Golf Car Systems.

Florida owners and operators will meet before the seminar to address purchasing co-op opportunities, joint marketing efforts, statewide issues impacting Florida owners, and the development of the Florida Chapter of the National Golf Course Owners Association.

For further information on the seminar call 800-933-4262 or write NGCOA, P.O. Box 1061, 14 Exchange Street, Charleston, S.C. 29402.

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