

# Rains raise havoc with Western United States golf courses

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ing all of his irrigation computer hardware and severely damaging his extensive machinery inventory.

At nearby Whispering Palms Resort in Rancho Santa Fe, the rains sent the San Dieguito River over its banks eroding through five fairways and closing the course for a week.

Superintendent Larry Jones also had a unique guest on his course one morning, a 500-pound sea lion.

"Over thirty inches of rain fell on Mount Palomar and the runoff forced water over the Lake Hodges Dam," Jones said.

"The seal had made its way up the river three and a half miles inland following an easy catch of fresh trout and bass that had washed over the dam."

At Temecula Creek Resort, site of nationally televised flooding, the course itself received minimal damage from the creek overflow.

"We only had damage from the

runoff from Interstate 15's drainage pipes that dump near the 9th fairway of the Stonehouse nine," said Assistant Course Superintendent Bill Huss. A temporary bridge to get over the accumulated debris had to be built, but play on the course was never hampered.

"Our course was built in 1969, another wet season, and the architect, Ted Robinson, obviously learned where the flooding problems would be and how to plan for course drainage. That knowledge

really showed last month," Huss said.

In fact the drought situation has forced course superintendents to work on different ways to control runoff of irrigation water and rain water in hopes of capturing the runoff.

At the Meadow Club in Fairfax, the private club has been involved in a drainage plan for the past 10 years.

"Our water came entirely from country water supplies," said Bob Bruner of the Meadow Club.

"We've been working to hold on to, and reuse, as much irrigation water as possible.

"We've been redoing our cart paths in concrete that directs runoff to collection areas for trench drains that carry the water back to a holding pond for re-use."

With the Marin County area receiving more than 30 inches of rain, the reservoirs are full.

But the idea of sufficient water has not entered into the equation here.

"The restrictions that we have been under for the past few years may be relaxed, but the cost of the water will certainly not do down," said Bruner.

"We have learned first to deal with the water situation from a supply standpoint. Now we look at dealing with the water situation from an economic standpoint."

With a solid snowpack for the first time in five years, the potential for more water availability exists.

But recently passed federal water allocation laws have added another wrinkle to the water equation. More water is to be allocated for wildlife and metropolitan areas out of the enormous amounts of water controlled by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

But no one in the golf industry thinks massive amounts of inexpensive water will be coming their way.

"I have already been informed by the Southern California Metropolitan Water District of future water allocations for our courses," Vaubel explained.

"In the next five to eight years our water rates will double. We will continue to work on better ways to get along with less water."

## N.C. symposium studies course effects on coast

WILMINGTON, N.C. — The impact of increased golf courses on the coastal environment will be explored at a symposium March 24, at the University of North Carolina here.

Panelists will discuss issues relating to wildlife and natural habitats, coastal water quality, and community concerns. Speakers include representatives of the golfing industry and conservation groups, scientists, policy makers and environmental regulators.

Information compiled will be presented to policy makers for their use in determining adequacy of current laws and regulations relating to the siting and operation of golf courses in the North Carolina coastal zone.

For more information telephone Lauren Kolodij at 919-393-8185.



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