

Badlands site looms as friendly soil for North Dakota developers

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Red Mike, which will include the golf course and 80 spots for recreational vehicles, holds an intense attraction to each of the four partners. For Weeks — the superintendent at Country Club of Williston — “we already have better quality soil than we could even buy.

“Everything around this spot is clay hills and buttes. Yet, there is virtually no rock on this particular property. You could take an 18-inch soil probe and

bury it to the handle.”

For Kay, the architect, this may be the site of a lifetime. “I thought it was Ireland,” he said. “It is pot-marked, dunesy terrain, but similar to the cliff areas of Ireland. On half the holes we have beautiful views of Lake Sakakawea. But, water does not come into play.”

For Schlauch, it's a much desired chance for an extended visit to his home state.

Ames? “Stan and I decided this area desperately needs a real golf

course. We started looking for a place, and found our little bit of Scotland right out here in North Dakota,” he said.

Ames and Weeks searched along the Missouri River on the lookout for just the right land a year ago. A farmer whose land they singled out told them the best spot was not his farm but Red Mike Hill — a 270-acre property, sitting high above the waterway and named for a notorious cattle thief of the early 1900s. Weeks, who drove to

Nebraska to walk the much-talked-about Sand Hills Golf Course (GCN, February 1994), said: “I feel we have as much to work with as they do. They have higher mounding with the sand hills. We've got higher elevations. We've got the lake. And the land is like big sink holes.”

“What spurred me on,” Ames said, “was that I knew the soil type was right and we don't find that often in this part of the country. And we had a wonderful water supply.

Courses around here are built on poor soil and have poor-quality water for irrigation.”

“This site is a miracle,” Weeks said.

Indeed, only 1,000 to 2,000 cubic yards of dirt will be moved, Kay said. “We will only cut and balance the tee and green locations... The sandy loam soil is such high quality that [soil laboratories] said if we build big greens and have good surface runoff we can do pushup greens.”

That same soil also poses a challenge for Weeks. It contains a pH ranging from 8.3 to 9.4. Weeks has run test plots of grasses he intends to use:

- A blend of Seaside bentgrass and Jamestown II chewings fescue on the fairways
- A blend of Southshore, Cobra and Providence bentgrasses and Jamestown II chewings fescue on the greens and tees.

Ground will be broken in late April or early May. Late August or September is the target for completion and the foursome hopes to open the track by Labor Day 1995.

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The Red Mike project is a testament to how to overcome financial obstacles.

Ames and Weeks formed a partnership, bought the land and are leasing it to Red Mike Development Corp., consisting of the four men.

Kay and Schlauch are forgoing their fees in exchange for part ownership of the facility.

“We're leaving money on the table so they will have enough to do the project,” Kay said. “We'll have a cash outlay of around \$500,000 for 18 holes and a practice range.

Ames' company will install the costly irrigation system. Thus, his share of Red Mike will be greater.

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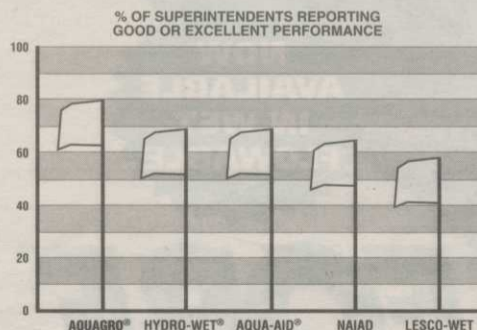
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14 course builders earn certification

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — Fourteen golf course builders have met requirements for certification for 1994, according to the Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBA).

Passing the GCBA-instituted criteria and tests were Buky Golf of Mt. Washington, Ky.; Central Florida Turf of Avon Park, Fla.; Paul Clute & Associates of Hartland, Mich.; Dye Construction of California in Denver, Colo.; Environmental Golf of Santa Ana, Calif.; Fairway Construction of Temecula, Calif.; Golf Development Construction of Louisville, Ky.

Also, Greenscape Ltd. of Menlo Park, Calif.; Guettler & Sons of Ft. Pierce, Fla.; Landscapes Unlimited of Lincoln, Neb.; Moore Golf of Culpeper, Va.; Pierman Golf Co. of North Palm Beach, Fla.; Prince Contracting Co. of Palmetto, Fla.; and Wadsworth Golf Construction Co. of Plainfield, Ill.