

Former antagonists trade ideas at Summit

By HAL PHILLIPS

PEBBLE BEACH, Calif. — Representatives of the golf industry and environmental community reportedly walked away from January's Environmental Summit here with good tastes in their mouths, having exchanged ideas, concerns and plans to go forward with their cooperation.

"They came from all walks and it was a very, very civil meeting," said Dr. Michael Hurdzan, a Columbus, Ohio-based architect who spoke at the meeting, which was closed to the press.

"Passions and priorities shone through, but they didn't preclude cooperation. I had a good feeling about the whole thing. It was very well orchestrated, which could have been luck — or it could be the parties really wanted to do something positive."

Sponsored by *Golf Digest* and the National Wildlife Federation, the Summit was touted as the golf and environmental communities have discussed their common interests across a common table. Among the 80 attendees were representatives of the U.S. Golf Association, Sierra Club, Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, American Farmland Trust, Environmental Defense Fund, Audubon Society of New York, National Audubon Society, and Friends of the Earth, plus individuals like Hurdzan and Collier's Reserve superintendent Tim Hiers — both members of the *Golf Course News* Editorial Advisory Board.

Instead of trading accusations and counter-strikes, both parties "showed a willingness to go forward," reported Hurdzan. Indeed, another Summit is tentatively scheduled to occur sometime during the next six months, probably on the East Coast, said Hurdzan.

Hurdzan reported that January's Summit — facilitated by the Denver-based Center for Resource Management — involved presentations from both sides on a series of salient issues, among them: water quality, site selection and pesticide safety. After the speeches, representatives of both camps broke into focus groups, where they hashed out differences and planned future action.

There were four "fertile areas" of discussion, said Hurdzan:

- Both sides agreed the golf course industry should create a set of environmental guidelines — not necessarily standards — by which golf courses would be constructed and maintained. "There was a move to adopt some principles that mirror the Canadian and British guidelines," said Hurdzan. "But none of [the golf representatives] were very comfortable with either approach because they were either too specific or not specific enough."

- Both sides agreed an education program should be devised

— aimed at golfers and non-golfers — detailing golf's positive environmental record. "And the notion that we're trying to improve," added Hurdzan.

- Both sides agreed that individual golf courses should vie for a series of newly created environmental awards, perhaps given by *Golf Digest* and various environmental groups.

- And both sides agreed the golf course industry should find and promote projects that demonstrate how environmentally con-

scientious superintendents can be.

Overall, the January Summit proved a very positive experience, said Hurdzan. Attendees even played a scramble together.

"We played with folks who had never been out on a golf course before," he said. "Forty-year-olds taking big ol' divots and having a good time. I give them a lot of credit... Everyone showed a personal commitment and showed the willingness to go forward. I think that golf is a winner here; there were no losers."

California city experiences golf boom

GILROY, Calif. — Whether the city or private developer does it, it appears momentum is building for some kind of 18-hole golf course near the existing nine-hole layout.

A \$10,000 study National Golf Foundation concluded there is enough demand to justify expanding or building a new golf course.

Milpitas developer Shapell Industries of Northern California has proposed building

an upscale, 18-hole golf course along with 853 homes west of Santa Teresa Boulevard.

The city was interested in taking over the Shapell golf course once it was built, something Shapell opposes. The city is now looking into acquiring land adjacent to the existing municipal course to allow for an expansion. Funding for a city-led expansion is still in question.



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