

Tenn. park project to be replaced?

TIMS FORD, Tenn. — Tims Ford State Park here on the shores of Tims Ford Lake may not get a new, 18-hole Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course after all.

Just months after the state and the contracted Golf Services Group of Houston indicated Tims Ford had become a leading candidate to be one of the four state parks for new golf courses under a \$20 million project, it appears things have changed.

State Architect Mike Fitts recently told a Tims Ford Council

meeting that the state still has hopes of building a golf course at Natchez Trace even though the site was deemed too costly to build on by Golf Services. Fitts said a new golf course at Natchez Trace would fit with plans to expand a convention center and build a new inn. If Natchez Trace is chosen as one of the four sites to build a new course, Tims Ford would probably be removed from the list.

The other proposed sites are Chickasaw, Cumberland Mountain and Harrison Bay state parks.

Jersey renovation won't impede play

KENILWORTH, N.J. — The show will go on here at the 27-hole Galloping Hill Golf Course complex.

Despite undergoing a \$6 million facelift to improve drainage, install a computerized irrigation system and rebuild all tees and bunkers, Galloping Hill will remain open for public play.

Although the project is expected to take three to five years to complete, play on the

course will not be disrupted, according to County Manager Ann Brann.

Brann said construction will occur on only nine holes at a time, adding that the pitch-and-putt course will not be affected at all.

Beyond the major renovations to the course, the county is also in the conceptual design phase of a new driving range at Galloping Hill that would be lighted for night use.

Liberty Park

Continued from page 3

make money. They also said it would turn a large chunk of a public park into a place that only a minority of people — golfers — could use.

"Liberty State Park provides green sanctuary in the state's most densely populated county," Whitman said, in announcing her decision. "More important, the park belongs to all the people of New Jersey. Public sentiment overwhelmingly supported keeping it that way, without a golf course. I agree."

"It is time to close this issue once and for all and move ahead with the original intent of Liberty State Park," Whitman said. "The idea was for Liberty State park to be a park in a classic sense — where people can go to enjoy quiet and solitude. A golf course doesn't fit that definition."

Instead of a golf course, Whitman has said she will direct state officials to tap part of the state's Green Acres fund to improve the park and make more of it available for public use. Officials have said it could cost as much as \$12 million to improve the partially run-down park.

Along with a golf course, Liberty State Park Development Corp. had proposed nine acres of ballfields and a 40-acre picnic and playground area.

Whitman and Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Robert Shinn Jr. had been expected to make a decision on the proposed course before the end of 1994. But several self-imposed deadlines came and went without a decision on the \$20 million question. Her rejection of the proposal was particularly interesting given the fact that she has been criticized by environmentalists for her business-friendly policies.

"It's obviously a disappointment," said Peter Ylvisaker, president of Liberty State Park Development Corp., an advisory group made up of local professionals. "We had asked Gov. Whitman to make a decision on the project and it's not the decision we had wanted. Now the task still before us is what we do with the 225 acres which is a valuable public resource and working on alternatives to the funding of the greening of Liberty State Park ... We still have our thinking caps on."

Whitman's decision to reject a golf course at Liberty Park comes at a time when several other states around the country are in the midst of proposals, some highly controversial, to build new golf courses in state parks. Tennessee is in the midst of protracted negotiations over a contract signed in 1994 to have four new Jack Nicklaus-designed golf courses built in four different state parks (see story above). Golf courses are also either under construction or soon to be inside state park land in Mississippi, Maryland and Texas.

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