

## Relationships the key to cordial relations

**“W**atershed” may be a bit dramatic, but under the circumstances it’s a doubly appropriate description of January’s Environmental Summit, where representatives of the golf and environmental communities for the first time discussed their differences face to face.

Whereas in January’s *Golf Course News* we presented a golf-centric view of the Summit — through the eyes of attendees like architect Dr. Michael Hurdzan — we concentrated this month on perspectives emanating from the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), Friends of the Earth and Save the Bay, organizations which sent representatives to the Pebble Beach conference. I’m confident their views will interest you (see story, page 3).

Relationships were the most important ramifications of the recent Summit. Friends of the Earth, for example, should no longer evoke images of tie-dyed radicals strapping themselves to centenarian oaks. Instead, those who attended the conference will think of Courtney Cuff, a “friend” of the earth who happened to play golf for Wake Forest and is eager to further understandings reached on the Monterey Peninsula.

On the flip side, environmentalists on hand for the Summit can no longer honestly consider golf course superintendents as chemical dumpers obsessed with maintaining pristine conditions to the exclusion of natural habitats. Instead, they see Tim Hiers, the superintendent at Collier’s Reserve, a man clearly passionate about native plantings, recycling and ecosystem preservation.

“The environmental groups were very receptive to hearing about the positive aspects of golf and its relation to the environment,”



Hal Phillips,  
editor

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## Hugging the learning curve?

**A**re government agencies and environmental groups wising up?

We have good signs and bad. I feel like New England Patriots cornerback Maurice Hurst after a disastrous season opener last fall (1994) against Dan Marino and the Miami Dolphins. “First, [you ask] when will you stop it?” he said. “Then it’s can you stop it? Then it’s when is it gonna stop!”

Good ... bad ... good ... bad. Like a tennis game, you could get whiplash keeping score.

**The good:** At January’s Environmental Summit at Pebble Beach, the co-sponsoring National Wildlife Federation and a number of colleagues from such groups as the Sierra Club, Environmental Defense Fund, National Audubon Society and Friends of the Earth held positive discussions with representatives of the golf world.

**The bad:** Only weeks before, the National Wildlife Federation’s *Ranger Rick* magazine ran a feature story entitled “Rick and the Gang Visit a Beautiful Golf Course — and Find That Looks Can Fool You.”

**The good:** The Scottsdale, Ariz., Planning Commission has endorsed Pinnacle Peak Partners’ planned The Estancia golf community, which will include 340 acres of natural preserve.

**The bad:** A reporter for none other than the *New York Times*, writing about golf development in Asia, quoted Sreela Kolandai of Friends of the Earth Malaysia and a founder of the Global Anti-Golf Movement as saying: “Golf has become a serious environmental threat all across Asia. I call [golf



Mark Leslie,  
managing editor

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## Letters

### TAKING ISSUE WITH INTOLERANCE

To the editor:

In regards to the article in the February 1995 *Golf Course News*, “New Congress might result in mixed golf bag,” I found a number of troubling quotes about the new Congress being “good news for the golf course industry.”

Ms. Elizabeth Kirby-Hart quotes, “The new Congress will impact golf clubs for the better” and says “the laws and regulations we’ll be looking at should be far less onerous than before.” She goes on to cite the potentially damaging law under consideration by Congress to afford the same rights to gay Americans that is afforded the rest of society in the Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 1994. This law would amend the Federal civil rights law to protect individuals from discrimination based on sexual orientation.

How being discriminatory toward one group of Americans in employment status will be better for golf clubs is a disturbing and puzzling statement. Webster’s New World Dictionary describes “onerous” as oppressive. I believe, that in this society, there is nothing more oppressive than discrimination against an individual or group based solely on race, creed, sex or sexual orientation.

Truly good news for the golf industry will come when people such as Ms. Kirby-Hart open their minds and broaden their horizons to include, not exclude, Americans with different ideas

**MORE LETTERS, SEE OPPOSITE PAGE**

and lifestyles than their own. Can’t we all get along!

Thomas M. Morris,  
superintendent  
Berkshire Hills CC  
Pittsfield, Mass.

Ed. Hear, hear.

### THANKS FOR RATING COVERAGE

To the editor:

My sincere appreciation to you for taking the time and space to discuss the subject of course ratings [*GCN* January, p. 1]. While the furor has subsided stemming from the demeaning comments Colonial Charters GC received in the 1994 *Places to Play* guide, we are awaiting the 1995 edition [November] to see how well *Golf Digest* “reviewed the methodology and looked at ways of refining the final product.”

Thanks again for the attention dedicated to this subject.

Richard Staughton,  
superintendent  
Colonial Charters GC,  
Longs, S.C.

### AIRING NEW IDEAS ON RUNOFF REDUCTION

To the editor:

Nice job with Skip Wade’s Cherry Valley article under Super Focus in the January issue.

On Feb. 4, I was invited to speak at Citizen’s Summit ’95 held at SUNY Maritime College in New York City (in the middle of the blizzard!). The conference was sponsored by the National Audubon Society and the Long Island Sound Watershed Alliance. The topic I was asked to speak on was “Reducing Polluted Runoff from Golf Courses.”

My presentation focused on the specialized cultural practices we

do for soil modification and improvement. These techniques include new deep aerification methods and thatch control. The net result of those IPM strategies are:

1. Loosen the soil profile, thereby reducing runoff.
2. Improve the soil microbiology for sustainable plant life.
3. Create a healthier turf and thereby reduce reliance on chemicals, fertilizers and water.

The presentation was well received. Hopefully, some of the “bad press” of the past was countered by a better understanding of what we do.

Patrick Lucas, CGCS  
The Innis Arden Golf Club  
Old Greenwich, Conn.

### REMEMBER TO COUNT HUMANS AMONG EARTH’S SPECIES

To the editor:

In regard to the article (*GCN*, January) concerning the ecosystem research proposal being supported by Jim Snow, USGA, along with the Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, National Wildlife Federation, Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation, and several other organizations and government agencies, I think this is a very positive move on behalf of all these individuals. It is this reader’s opinion and belief, while the environmentalists have the obligation and right to be concerned about environmental matters, we must not lose sight of all the earth’s species. Mankind and his environment is the most important! Our cities are growing at a rapid rate. We stack people into 20-story apartment buildings to live.

If not for parks and golf courses, most people would not have the chance to get out into

the open to enjoy grass, trees, birds and such. Golf courses create jobs and help or generally support themselves.

It has been our experience with working with DNR, Corps of Engineers and PCA, that while they have laws and rules to uphold, they still do what is best for all. The Green Section working with these governmental agencies should be able to make for a better environment.

Michael J. Pierce, president  
Dakota Peat & Blenders  
Grand Forks, N.D.

### PATE SETS RECORD STRAIGHT

To the editor:

I am writing regarding your February issue discussing Paul Clute being named Builder of the Year. In the clip on the front page of this issue, you made reference to the award-winning Old Overton Golf Club in Vestavia Hills, Ala.

This course was indeed designed by Tom Fazio. However, this was a collaborative effort with Jerry Pate, who now has his own design firm, and should have been listed as a co-designer.

Jerry’s involvement in the project was extensive. During construction, Jerry lived in Birmingham, and with Fazio’s approval he re-routed the back nine. He was also responsible for many bunker locations and playing strategies of the holes.

Congratulations are in order to Paul Clute being named Builder of the Year and Tom Fazio for his contributions to make Old Overton such a success. However, Jerry Pate should also be given the credit he is due.

Scott Pate, vice president  
Jerry Pate Golf Design Inc.  
Pensacola, Fla.

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