

Harbottle comment

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100 acres are maintained. All wetlands and wildlife habitat were preserved and integrated to create natural amenities and hazards for the course. To ensure that sensitive areas were linked to maintain circulation corridors for the wildlife, several new wetland and habitat areas were created... making aesthetic, natural hazards and creating diagonal carries from the tee. This brought the natural areas closer to the golfers, once again adding appreciably to the quality of the playing experience.

The Savannah Course at Stevinson Ranch Golf Club is another successful example of golf course construction within a sensitive site. About two hours southeast of San Francisco, this project is in the Audubon Signature Sanctuary Program. Again, the key was to preserve and design around the significant wetland and habitat areas. At Stevinson Ranch, the course actually wrapped around sensitive areas, creating a huge wildlife sanctuary. Golfers can bird watch many different species.

Although we did not physically impact any habitat while building the course, permitting the project was contingent on mitigation. In other words, in order to build the project, we had to agree to create roughly 100 acres of specific habitat, including wetland, riparian and savannah landscapes. Again, a team of experts was assembled to ensure the habitats were properly located and developed. Also, a critical concern was linkage, enabling the wildlife to migrate, nest and feed throughout the areas.

Golf course drainage was not allowed into sensitive areas. Buffer areas were developed to prevent any adverse impacts. Careful and thoughtful planning of the course around and within the sensitive areas protected the natural process and added to the character, as well playing characteristics of the course.

A good design process entails careful analysis of sensitive areas; developing a team of consultants to create solutions that preserve the environment and enhance the course; and working carefully with permitting agencies to keep everyone informed and understanding guidelines. It entails implementing strategies in a conscientious and conservative way and ensuring that neither the quality of golf nor the environment is diminished with the final product.

Using the proper strategies, sites that were once considered questionable or marginal can yield rewarding and challenging golf courses. There can be little doubt that a well-designed course, like no other playing field, offers everyone the opportunity to play a game in which nature is not a beautiful distraction, but also the ultimate challenge.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

ROBBINS KOCH INKED

TAMPA, Fla. — Robbins Koch Golf Designs, Inc. has been selected to design a 27-hole championship golf course for the residential community known as Sweetwater in Johnston County, N.C., east of Raleigh. Robbins Koch also assisted the master planners in developing the final layout of the project. Rick Robbins is under contract by Sunstar Homes to design the course, which will be the showcase amenity in the 975-acre project.

International Network of Golf honors Garl

HAINES CITY, Fla. — Ron Garl of Lakeland was awarded the International Network of Golf Industry Honors for Golf Course Designer of the Year at the 5th Annual ING Fall Conference at Grenelefe Golf and Tennis Resort.

The media-based International Network of Golf is formed to enhance and promote education and communication in golf. Its awards recognize individuals and organizations who have made outstanding contributions to the golf business. Ten thousand ballots were distributed throughout the industry.

Garl's creativity, environmental awareness, and talent for designing golf courses that are challenging and memorable for golfers of vary-

ing skills, is becoming his highly regarded trademark. His most recent project, the Tradition Club in Myrtle Beach S.C., opened Sept. 6, with five sets of tees designed and measured so that every golfer, regardless of handicap or gender, can play the same clubs on each hole.

"It is a great honor to be recognized by both the golf media and many of the leaders within the golf industry that represent the International Network of Golf," said Garl. "It is very rewarding to know that the voters believed in the same thing we have believed in throughout our 26-year existence... that the game should come first, and that the players are most important for the future growth of the game."



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