



THE WORLD OF DEVELOPMENT '97

An international environmental organization plans to develop 100 golf courses across the country, using land given to it by government agencies and individuals. A major developer begins construction of the largest (42-square-mile) golf course community west of the Mississippi River. New, more restrictive national wetlands regulations take effect but can't terribly slow construction as more than 400 new and expanded golf courses are unveiled to golfers.

While paradoxical in some ways, the 7th year of the decade of the 1990s added another rung to the ladder of spiraling growth in golf. In these pages we have put together a few slices of pie we hope give the flavor of golf industry this year.

— Mark Leslie

Notable Quotables

● 'To this day I've never had a 'job' — quote-unquote. My life is a continuous adventure, from one place to the other.'

— Dana Fry, course architect



Dana Fry

● 'By and large, it's [golf course construction] a pretty safe industry. You're dealing with dirt, not 2-by-4s.'

— Skip Lynch

● 'In the '20s there were pros who dabbled in golf course architecture.

But if you had a golf course today, who would you rather have had design it — Walter Hagen, or [A.W.] Tillinghast or [Donald] Ross? I think it would be Tillinghast or Ross.

And I think that's what's going to happen 20 or 30 years from now. People won't care that a big-time player who won two majors designed a golf course. They are going to want to know that it was Steve Smyers, or Bob Lohmann, or Stephen Kay.'

— Stephen Kay, course architect

● 'I was a one-employee show... I made sure I could park my dozer close enough to the tractor so I could jump from one to the other without having to hit the ground.'

— Allan MacCurrah, explaining his start in course construction



Allan MacCurrah

Audubon Int'l dives into development with a splash

Aims to plan and build 100 golf course facilities

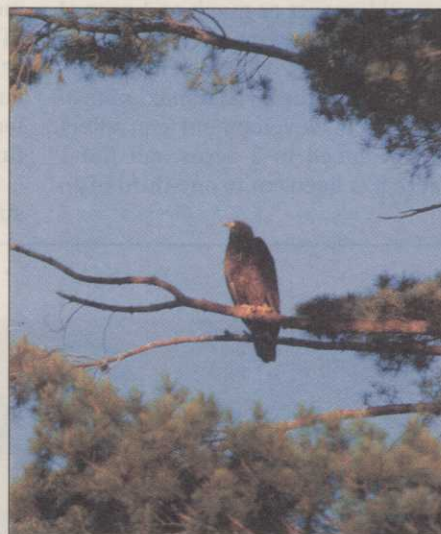
By MARK LESLIE

SELKIRK, N.Y. — When Audubon International (AI) entered the world of golf, no one would have dreamed of the heights it is about to reach — no one except, perhaps, President Ron Dodson.

AI has created the Audubon International Golf and the Environment Land Trust to accept "real property interest" that will be used to facilitate development of Audubon golf courses as environmental research and demonstration centers.

"We asked, Who better to implement our beliefs than us?" said Dodson. "One

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A baby eagle finds a perch on a fairway at Garland Resort in Lewiston, Mich.

Backers ready to pour in \$300M to \$500M

By MARK LESLIE

SELKIRK, N.Y. — In its quest to develop perhaps 100 golf courses, the Audubon International Golf and the Environment Land Trust has found a number of individuals and two major federal government agencies offering land, and a partner has stepped forward to finance, develop and operate those facilities. Contracts could be signed by the end of this year.

While the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Land Reclamation (BLR) are offering up tracts of land across the country, a newly created firm,

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GCN JANUARY



Carter (left) and father Jay Morrish prove blood runs thick in design business.

A Father & Son Union: No hazards reported in partnerships

By MARK LESLIE

Tim Nugent was born on a golf course construction site. W. Bruce Matthews III grew up at Grand Haven (Mich.) Golf Course, managed by his father. Carter Morrish has been around the likes of Jack Nicklaus and Tom Weiskopf since he was a toddler. Heck, golf course architect Bob Cupp was his youth football coach. When Trent Puddicombe was born two years ago, his architect dad, Mark, assessed him this way: "Just another little shaper."

This father-and-son golf course design gig can no longer be dismissed as merely anecdotal. It has gone beyond fad to trend.

The golfing public generally knows the Joneses (Robert Trent Jones Sr. and sons Rees and Robert Trent Jones Jr.), the Dyes (Pete and Alice and sons Perry and P.B.) and perhaps the Nicklauses (Jack, Jackie and Gary). But, there are more: the Nugents (Dick and Tim), Morrishes (Jay and Carter), Robinsons (Ted and Ted Jr.), Aults (Brian and Eric), Cupps (Bob and Bob Jr.), Davises (Arthur and Lee), Phelps (Dick and Rick), Kernses (Gary and son Ron), Puddicombes (Sid and sons Grant and Mark) and Mootes (Bob and Dave).

The list goes on. There's Tom Fazio's boy in the dirt with his Tonka truck, and Dan Maples' son in his pile of dirt-cum-miniature golf course.

"Trent already has a toy John Deere dozer," said Mark Puddicombe. "He's the only kid with a USGA-

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Corps' flip on wetlands regs will have wide impact

By MARK LESLIE

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has changed a wetlands permitting regulation that will affect commercial and residential developers across the board.

Probably 10 percent of golf course projects built the last few years would have been affected by the new parameters had they been in effect, according to Dr. Stuart Cohen, president of Environmental & Turf Services, Inc. of Wheaton, Md.

The regulation is Nation Wide Permit (NWP) 26, which is routinely re-issued every few years. In recent years, it has

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Wetlands at Hammock Dunes in Palm Coast, Fla.

GCN OCTOBER

Diablo es mas Grande

By MICHAEL LEVANS

WEST STANISLAUS COUNTY, Calif. — When Jack Nicklaus and Gene Sarazen team up on a course design, you know there's something big happening.

The two legends have put their heads together for the first time on the design of The Legends West Course, one of two courses in phase one of Diablo Grande development 20 miles outside of Modesto, Calif. The course is scheduled to open next month.

At 33,000 acres — that's 42 square miles, or twice the size of the island of Bermuda — Diablo Grande calls itself the largest master-planned community west of the Mississippi. Once completed, Diablo will feature five residential neighborhoods, a polo and equestrian center, 45 acres of vineyards (in the foothills of Oak Flat Ranch), and a luxury hotel and European spa.

"The facility could have up to seven golf courses," said Don Panoz, president of the Diablo development who owns Chateau Elan in Georgia. Panoz is in the finishing stages of Diablo's first phase, 5,000 acres that will act as the hub, or village, for his final vision.

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Gene Sarazen



Jack Nicklaus

Audubon splash

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of the criticisms we've had about our Cooperative Sanctuary System is that we have no assurance that our program will continue when management changes at a member facility. Audubon courses is one way we can deal with that issue. Plus, we want to do long-term research, education and community-improvement projects.

"We truly believe that a well-sited, designed and maintained golf course is good... The idea of developing environmentally sensitive public courses that will have reasonable greens fees and with learning centers aimed for families... We're pretty excited about this.

"We have been talking with interested parties in the golf course industry who have expressed interest in financially backing the development of Audubon golf courses."

To accomplish the new golf course system, AI has created another not-for-profit organization that is "joined at the hip with AI" — Audubon International Golf and the Environment Land Trust. The land trust, according to Dodson, is to focus on golf and the environment.

Thus far, he said, just in conversations "testing the water" for this proposal, the trust has been offered six properties, including one of 20,000 acres.

He cited a government agency in the West that has thousands of acres of property and wants to see public golf courses built as part of its recreational mandate. It has already required that any new courses built on its property meet Audubon Signature standards, Dodson said, "So, when I told them we could not only guarantee they would be Signature, but Audubon courses, they were very excited. They sent us a laundry list of properties to build courses on. We couldn't own them because it's government land, so we would have something on the order of a 50-year lease."

This venture is a greater step toward Audubon purity, Dodson said, because it ensures Audubon's programs in perpetuity.

AI hopes to help create a for-profit firm that will actually oversee design, construction and management of the new courses.

"As we see it, the hammer that AI will have over this development entity," he said, "is, first, we will be the landlord because we will own the land.

"And, second, our requirements that the company adopt the Audubon principles of sustainable resource management as part of its corporate structure. Since our environmental principles and programs actually will be written into their structure, it is much more than a simple license agreement."

New wetlands regulations to cause turmoil for some

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allowed projects affecting 1 to 10 acres of isolated wetlands or stream headwaters. People could impact as much as 1 acre of wetlands without seeking permits. Under the new parameters, which went into effect in December, the 10-acre maximum of wetlands that a development can affect has been reduced to 3 acres and the 1 "free" acre has been cut to one-third of an acre.

"One-third of an acre is next to nothing — a few cart path crossings," said Ron Boyd, president of Williamsburg Environmental Group, Inc. in Williamsburg, Va. "This puts more people into the permit process. It will mean a lot more permitting and paperwork for the Corps... It also affects mitigation requirements, so more time and cost are involved there."

Williamsburg Environmental has consulted on golf projects where it has tried to

keep the wetlands impact under an acre, "so that it would only entail field verification and the project is off and running," Boyd said. "Now if you're at an acre you have to go through the permit process. It may add three to six months to the process."

Several states already require state-level permitting for properties affecting under an acre of wetlands. In those states, developers must deal with both the Corps of Engineers and the particular state agency.



We never said you wouldn't see unattractive spots on your course. They just won't be dollar spots.

Golf Co. Audubon Int'l's partner

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The Golf Company, has stepped forward as Audubon International's (AI) colleague. The partnership promises to be the most significant windfall of new golf course construction in the history of the game.

Saying that AI President Ron Dodson's forecast of 100 courses

"is pretty aggressive," The Golf Company President Stan Waterhouse nevertheless added: "We will build as many as makes sense. We have the resources to do whatever's necessary."

Waterhouse, a former regional vice president for ClubCorp. of America, said: "But by the end of the year, we will

have signed some contracts for projects. They will be under construction sometime next year."

"I don't know if we'll do one, two, or five at a time — it depends," said Dodson from his headquarters here. "We've already looked at properties in Missouri, Florida and Arizona."

The BLR and Corps of Engineers both operate under a mandate that they shall, as appropri-

ate, provide public access and recreation to lands under their management. The Bureau is responsible for water and works west of the Mississippi River and manages thousands of acres, much of it along water corridors.

Waterhouse predicted that many individuals will also offer land for Audubon golf courses. One on the east coast of Florida has already offered

a 20,000-acre property.

The key link to all these groups is maintaining effective environmental stewardship on each property:

- The Golf Company's corporate structure embraces Audubon environmental principles.

"It's personally important to me and it's part of the basis for our company," said Waterhouse, who once managed a Canadian course and Robert Trent Jones Golf Course, both of which won Environmental Stewardship Awards. "We believe very strongly that golf and the environment are inextricably linked. The growth of the future of golf is clearly tied to how well we do our job with regards to environmental issues. If we don't, we won't be able to build any more. That's been pretty obvious..."

"The principles are simple. Basically, you do the right stuff with the land and resources you're involved with. In a corporate sense, it doesn't make sense to build environmentally sensitive golf courses and then create radioactive waste."

- Each property would join Audubon International's Golf Signature Program — the organization's premier environmental plan which starts operating on a project before a course is sited and designed.

- An Audubon land trust team will be involved in a project from its inception. As Dodson said: "We essentially will become the environmental conscience of the project from the point of view of land-use management, habitat restoration and water and wildlife."

Dodson envisions a phased approach to development. Once a piece of property is proposed as a site, The Golf Company would inspect it and decide if, demographically and from a golfer's point of view, it is viable.

If the land gets a go-ahead, the company would perform an economic analysis and a team from Sienna College and the Audubon Institute would do "a full-blown environmental assessment encompassing the lay of the land, hydrology, geology, types of habitat and the watershed," Dodson said, as well as bring in an attorney to look at the permitting process and how it might affect the economics of the project."

After this phase Audubon will be able to say if the project should proceed or be dropped.

As Waterhouse explained: "Audubon is a participant, but they don't have the expertise or wherewithal to put a project together. They need someone on the business side of the deal, and that's the relationship we're trying to establish."

The intention is for all the courses to be public-access and affordable.



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