

## GCN JULY

By BOB SPIWAK

GRAND FORKS, N.D. — The Red River has receded into its banks after cataclysmic flooding this spring, but golf courses in the Red River Valley are still struggling to get back to normal.

In the Grand Forks area alone, damage estimates are around \$8 billion, and not one golf course is fully operating 18 holes again. Courses are still tallying up the damage with Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) — not only for facilities but lost revenues in an area where an estimated 80 percent of the population plays golf.

At Lincoln Park, a municipal facility run by the Grand Forks Park District, superintendent Steve Mullally said 60 acres of the 18-hole course will have to be reseeded, and nine of the holes may be lost to either a diversion ditch or a new dike. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is deciding the path to take, but in either case, the course will be reduced to nine holes and a new 18 built elsewhere. By a stroke of good fortune, the land for 18 holes had already been purchased.

"The people need diversion from their troubles and we're working as hard as we can to get them a place to play golf," Mullally said. Reseeding will cost about \$60,000. Revenue loss is estimated at \$200,000 and it will cost at least \$500,000 to replace the destroyed clubhouse.

The north-flowing Red River is the dividing line of North Dakota and Minnesota, and is joined at Grand Forks by Red Lake River. The land is flat, comprised of rich, black soil. At normal flow, the Red runs at around 5,000 cubic feet per second (cfs.) At the peak of the flood, it was gauged at 150,000 cfs and ran 31 feet higher than normal. Millions of tons of water brought with it uncountable tons of fine silt, which choked the land when the river returned to its banks — silt so fine that when it dried, it hardened like concrete.

Mark Lindberg, superintendent at Edgewood Golf Course in Fargo, is having a hard time dealing with the dried silt. In an effort to reseed through an inch of the hardpan, his aeration equipment is suffering.

"We're doing a lot of welding and repair on equipment," he said. The turf is gone from the course which was under water for 40 days. He is attempting to aerify it and then re-seed with a slit seeder. The hardened silt does not wash away under high-pressure hoses. Breaking through, or removing the silt, is the only way to deal with the

problem.

The flooding was not the only problem. When it was certain the water would rise, Lindberg and his crew hastened to erect the driving range net while there was still vehicular access to the poles. Once the net was up, a blizzard hit and was followed by a sleet storm which destroyed

the entire netting system.

Grand Forks Country Club was under water for 20 days. Superintendent Mark Bergstrom figures at least \$250,000 damage was done there. The course lost five fairways, and has been reconfigured to a nine-hole venue. The day before the flood reached its peak, Bergstrom and crew

boated to the maintenance shop and emptied the chemical building, putting the materials on a tarp and moving it and the equipment to a green on higher ground. He had everything moveable on the floor put on shelving 18 inches off the floor. The waters rose to 17 inches.

At Edgewood, Lindberg had

the fertilizer shed sandbagged, which saved the contents.

Despite billions of dollars in damages, the cost to the human psyche has been phenomenal, and probably longer-lasting. Bob Leach, owner of the Golf Center driving range in Grand Forks, said his business is better than ever. He attributed this to people coming to combat stress and take their minds off their troubles.

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