

McNeil forms own golf design firm

FAIR HAVEN, N.J. — Robert McNeil, a former design associate with Keith Foster Golf Course Design, has formed The Northeast Golf Co., offering complete course design and renovation services.

McNeil has already secured several projects throughout the Northeast, including a new 18-hole course at Canon Farms

in Marlboro, N.J., and renovations at Agawam Hunt Golf Club in Providence, R.I., and Chester Valley Golf Club outside Philadelphia, home of the Senior Bell Atlantic Classic.

The Northeast Golf Co. is the course design entity of The McNeil De-



Robert McNeil

sign Collaborative, which specializes in landscape architecture and land planning.

A Massachusetts native, McNeil intends to work with golf course clients from New England to Virginia.

The Northeast Golf Co. is located at 50 Gillespie Avenue, Fairhaven, N.J. 07704; telephone 908-747-1888; facsimile 908-933-4750.

Calif. floods

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pletely correct.

"But I am lucky in that my course is built on very sandy soil that drains quickly," Thilo pointed out. "I had to dig silt out of the bunkers and clear silt from the fairways, and there was some puckering of the greens from the water. But I will hopefully have the golf course playable in a week."

The levee system on the Feather River was designed to withstand flows of 100,000 cubic feet per second (CFS). However, New Year's afternoon Oroville Dam was forced to release 200,000 CFS just to keep up with what was entering the dam. The pressure downstream was too much and a 1,000-foot-long levee break south of Olivehurst suddenly flooded a 20-square-mile area.

Just a mile from the break was Plumas Lakes Golf Course. In a matter of hours, the entire course was under 20 feet of water, totally submerging its two-story clubhouse, equipment sheds—everything. It was estimated the water wouldn't recede until late January. Whether the course can be rebuilt is debatable until a full damage assessment is completed.

On the American River, outflows at Folsom Dam were up to 115,000 CFS when the river spread out over Ancil Hoffman Golf course in Sacramento.

"The river grew to almost a mile wide as it poured up over my course," said superintendent Rich Sizelove. "Two of the seven spill gates broke last spring—the flow in the river then was only 55,000 CFS. I had more than half of the course under water."

Sizelove's major problem stemmed from debris carried by the river's force. Trees, limbs, old fencing and thick silt covered the course. It took three days for the water to subside before he could clean up. Sizelove estimated it would take two weeks to collect and haul away the debris.

The downstream flow also hit hard at Dry Creek Golf Course in Galt, near Modesto. The normally tame Dry Creek became a raging river, as deep as 15 feet, and soon covered the golf course.

"Even though this is the most water I've ever seen on our golf course, we pulled through rather well," reported Club Manager Tom Park. "Our clubhouse and pro shop did not get damaged and we lost no bridges. I should get the front nine opened within a week and the back nine a few days later."

It was interesting how well some newer courses handled the test of a 100-Year Flood Plain. Clearly, precautions were taken during construction. Still, the devastating floods gave course operators a glimpse at the true power of nature and how they need to account for it in the future.



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The Toro Site Management System™ provides all the software tools for golf management professionals to stay on top of the daily operations of their course.



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