

# Michaud hails success with experiments to control erosion, dust

By MARK LESLIE

CARRABASSETT VALLEY, Maine — Somewhere between laissez faire and the toxic-to-turf liquid calcium used by highway crews there lies an answer to dust control on golf course cart paths. The quest for that answer — and to an end to erosion along the steep slopes the cart path traverses — has led Ed Michaud to several solutions from outside the normal industry marketplace.

Michaud's Sugarloaf Golf Club is a "wilderness course" that treks up and down a mountain alongside Sugarloaf USA Ski Resort. Crucial to him is maintaining the natural feel of the course.

"You can put 2 inches of asphalt down if you want to," Michaud said, "but we're looking for a natural alternative. The asphalt gets hot in summer; plus, you have this black ribbon going up the golf course."

Referring to one of his solutions, Poly Pavement Soil Solidifier, he added, "If you can use this, it works as well and it is more appealing and natural."

Among the products Michaud has used at Sugarloaf, in addition to Poly Pavement:

- Stabilizer, a powdered, completely natural product much like Poly Pavement;
- reclaimed asphalt;
- regular concrete mixed with stone dust; and
- a byproduct of bark mulch from a paper mill.

He is also excited about the promise of Road Oyl, another soil stabilization product out of California.

Last year Michaud mostly experimented with Poly Pavement, a natural, non-toxic spray-on product that is marketed from Los Angeles.

"We have major concerns with erosion along the paths on our hills," Michaud said. "The dust control from Poly Pavement is an added plus."

A 55-gallon drum Poly Pavement cost \$752, or about \$1,000 after shipping, he said. "So it is not much cheaper than conventional pavement, but you don't get artificial-looking paths. We have a wilderness course and a rustic feel, and it is important to us to keep it natural looking."

The more Poly Pavement that is applied, the harder the ground surface becomes. Michaud and his crew used about 10 gallons of the product along a steep 700-foot stretch of the 7-foot-wide cart path.

The result?

"It worked quite well," he said. "Erosion control was good over the heavy fall rains. But it needs the proper environmental conditions when you apply it and it was fairly damp when we put it down, so we won't really know

until midsummer exactly how well it worked."

Meanwhile, Michaud used ten 50-pound bags of Stabilizer on a hill, with good results. In fact, he said: "It was easier to use because it's a powder. We mixed it with stone dust and it cost about the same as Poly Pavement."

Using both Stabilizer and Poly

Pavement as Michaud did, he said they treat a couple thousand feet of paths for about \$1,000. If superintendents want the path as firm as asphalt, they will get about 500 feet stabilized, he said.

This year, he said: "I may go back to areas already done and add more until I find the right ratio to keep it from washing out

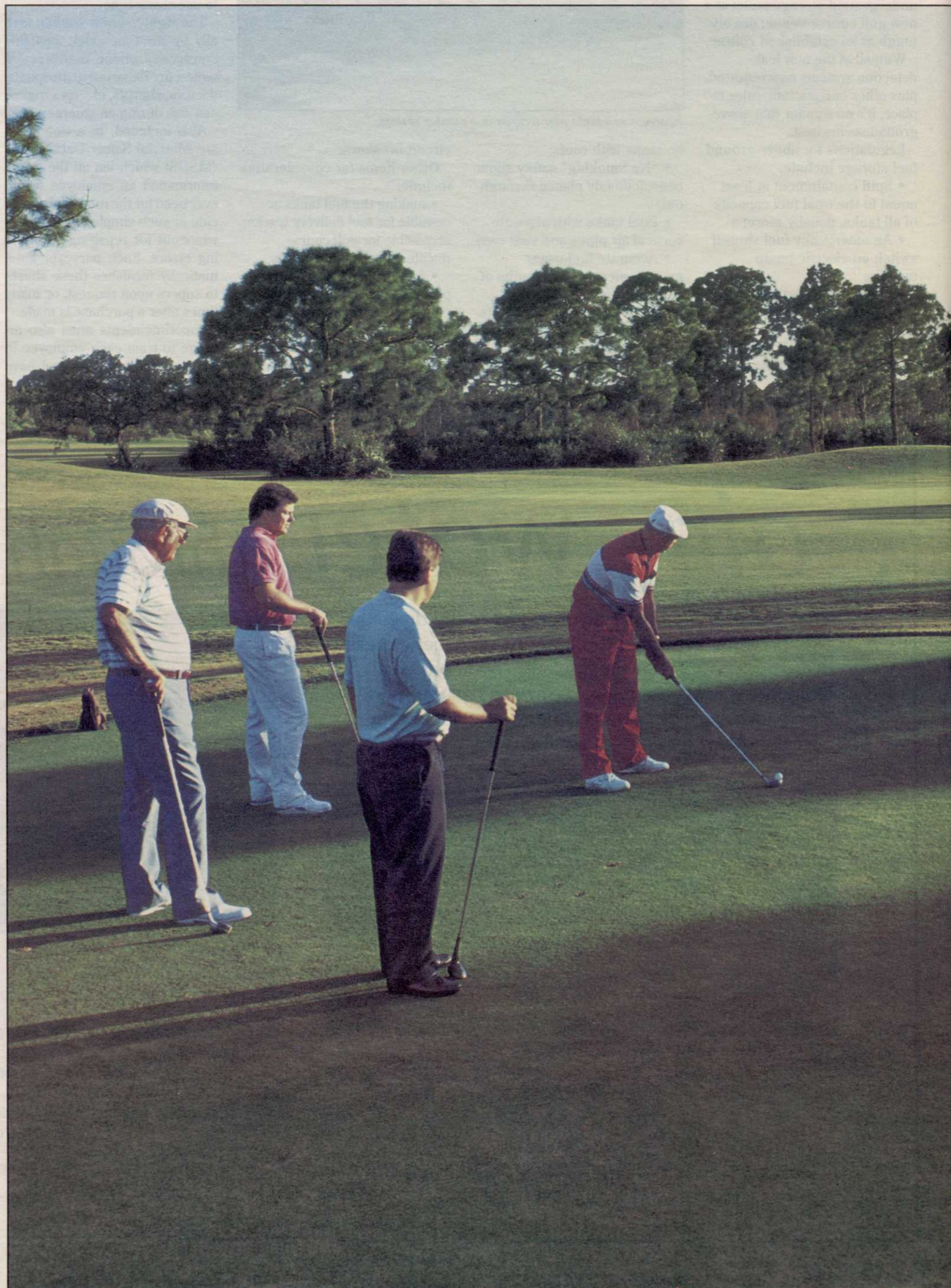
and to control the dust. On the steeper hills we'll mix it more aggressively. And on a flat area where we're looking more for dust control we'll back off a bit. "Then, two years down the road, if it gets a little dusty we'll go back and touch it up."

## RECLAIMED ASPHALT

Reclaimed asphalt, Michaud

said, is excellent in areas invisible from the tee. "It has the asphalt look and it tends to have larger chunks because it is reground," he said. "But, if you can get a 95-degree day and roll it, it packs like pavement. If we had spent more time and used grade rakes pulling out chunks,

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The Northeast Golf Course Superintendents Association (NGCSA) has become the first organization to join the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System's Supporting Membership Program for Golf Associations. This new program gives superintendents the opportunity to financially support the education and research programs of Audubon International, while encouraging and publicizing their environmental efforts.

"When it comes to golf courses and the environment, there is probably no link as important as the golf course superintendent," said John Risler, NGCSA spokesperson and superintendent at Pinebrook Golf Club in New York

## Northeast GCSA 1st group to join Audubon membership program

state. "By becoming a supporting member of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System, we can only further connect the two in a positive way."

Added Jean Mackay, director of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System: "The involvement

of the Northeast chapter and other golf associations is so valuable — not only because it will directly benefit our programs, but because it is a positive way to show people that superintendents are environmental stewards."

Risler and his colleagues pro-

posed the greater role for golf associations within the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System last summer. In cooperation with Audubon staff, they designed the Supporting Membership Program for Golf Associations to support Audubon's mission and help superintendents practice and communicate good environmental stewardship.

To join the Supporting Membership Program, a golf association makes a financial contribution based on its number of Class A & B members. Funds raised through the program go directly to expand and improve Audubon's research, education, and member services such as site visits, workshops, Internet and web-site communication, and new publications.

Yet finances aren't the only focus of the Supporting Member Program for Golf Associations. The golf association can work to achieve several Levels of Accomplishment by getting members actively involved in Audubon's Golf School and Backyard programs. "By reaching each Level of Accomplishment, the superintendent's association achieves greater public awareness of its commitment to the environment," said Mackay.

"Becoming a supporting member is a win-win situation," Risler said. "Audubon continues to receive much-needed financial support, the golf industry receives many benefits, and the environment continues to thrive because of stewards like us."

Information on the program is available from Audubon International at 518-767-9051.

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## Don't eat my dust

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it would have come out better."

Erosion-control mulch from BFI Organics also came in handy in certain spots around Sugarloaf, Michaud said. The product is mostly bark, but contains some aggregates. Since the bark pieces are elongated and fibery, they lay over each other like shingles on a roof, and when it rains the water runs right over it.

"The only problem," he said, "is that metal-spiked shoes sometimes pick up the bark and it gets carried onto the turf. In areas where there is no turf nearby it works well. It has the feel of a garden or woodland path. It's a nice aesthetic effect for up here."

Finally, Michaud said, mixing concrete with stone dust, soaking it down and rolling it in "doesn't work as well as these other products. But I may continue it on hills for erosion and dust control, upping the ratio, because it is quite a bit cheaper."