

Sanford busy in Mexico, Canary Islands as well as Egypt's Sinai

By MARK LESLIE

PUERTO PENASCO, Mexico — Developer Seven Cities Inc. and golf course designer John Sanford of Jupiter, Fla., are teaming up on major resort projects that will add 36 holes of golf and a large

The par-4, 405-yard 3rd hole at the John Sanford-designed Sharm El Sheikh Golf Resort in South Sinai, Egypt.

marina on the north end of the Gulf of California here and 27 or 36 holes on the Island of Le Palma in the Canary Islands.

On the 6,000-acre Puerto Penasco (Rocky Point) property, which is situated 60 miles south of the Arizona border and encompasses two miles of beachfront, Sanford is devising a land-use plan to accommodate hotels, restaurants, golf and water sports among other recreations.

The project, called North Beach, "is really targeting Americans from the Southwest," Sanford said. "A lot, particularly retirees, come down here in the wintertime and the service is lagging. These amenities have not been developed."

The plan by the Canary Island-based Seven Cities Inc., which operates an office in San Diego, calls for a 1-square-mile lagoon with direct access to the gulf, villas, a private beach club, and various water sports and marina activities.

The two golf courses will sit partially on the dune-type beachfront and partially on the inland Sonora Desert.

"The project will mean tremendous earthwork because of a lagoon and the golf course," Sanford said. "There's not a lot of topography to the site other than the dune itself, so a majority of the 36 holes will require earthwork to create undulations and strategy."

North Beach will be water self-sufficient, with water rights from off-site wells as well as operating its own water and sewage treatment plants.

Meanwhile, in the Canary Islands, Sanford has what he calls "an unbelievably breathtaking site on the ocean."

The resort will feature two Sanford designs, nine or 18 holes on the ocean and 18 on a mountainside at about 2,000 feet above sea level in a pine forest "with phenomenal views down and beyond to the ocean," he said.

The project is wading through a lengthy permitting process in the Spanish province whose government is known for stringent environmental standards.

"We intend to have five or six holes directly on the edge of the cliffs, about a 20-meter drop to the ocean," he said. "It's the site of an old lava flow that is now a banana plantation. The wonderful thing about the ocean site is very light breezes because the prevailing winds are blocked by a volcano."

Sanford's 18-hole design, which will be the cornerstone of the Sharm el Sheikh Golf Resort on the Red Sea at the southern tip of Egypt's Sinai Desert, will have a soft opening in October.

While Total Golf of Vero Beach, Fla., completed the course on schedule, the club, hotel, golf villas and other facets of the project are behind schedule, Sanford said. The developer, Naama Golf and Touristic Co., will tie the course's grand opening to unveiling the other amenities.

Sanford said that a corral shell 1 meter deep covered about 90 percent of the site, and that corral rock to be disposed of was buried in the desert.

On the positive side, ancient river beds running through the property offered up to 5 to 6 meters of sandy material used for top soil on the course.

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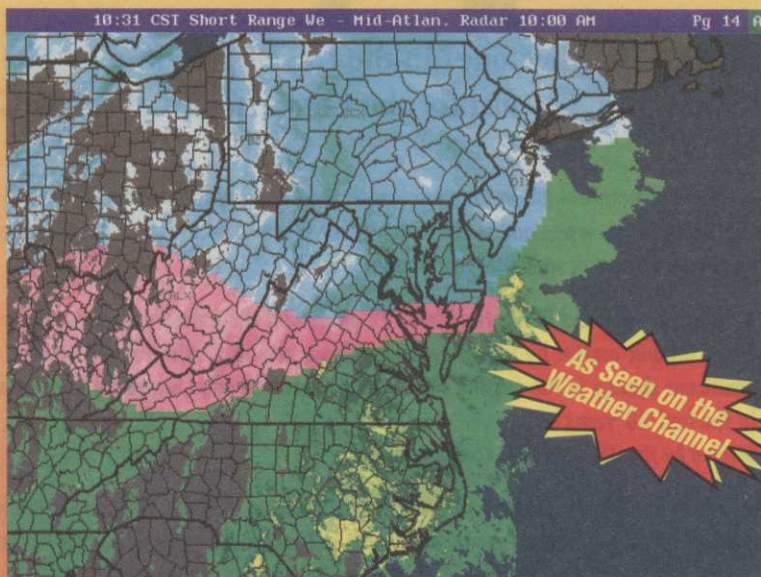
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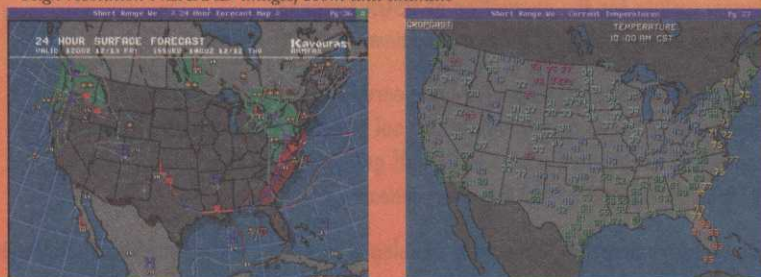
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