

# Nicklaus takes on preservation challenge on Rocky Gap project

CUMBERLAND, Md. — The developers of one of the East Coast's newest destination resorts were faced with a formidable task: to design a golf course of the caliber and quality of a competition course in a mountain setting, while preserving the site's natural beauty and distinctive environment.

The result is the 18-hole Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Course, the cornerstone of the soon-to-be-opened Rocky Gap Lodge & Golf Resort in the mountains of western Maryland near Cumberland. With the front nine holes scheduled to open in late summer, and the back nine in the fall of 1998, the Rocky Gap

course promises to be a mountain marvel combining modern engineering with Mother Nature's handiwork.

"Jack Nicklaus is very excited about this course," said Troy Vincent, design coordinator with Nicklaus Design, who is overseeing construction of the course. "Rocky Gap presents a

unique site, with multiple terrains. By preserving as much as possible of the natural mountain landscape and foliage, the course provides more challenges to player than other courses."

The front nine holes will provide wide open spaces and gently sloping holes, similar to golf courses found in the Southwest.

The back nine will climb the area's natural rugged mountain terrain, with woods surrounding the fairway.

Greens are being planted with bentgrass. Formations of natural stone are scattered throughout the periphery of the course, and grass and foliage native to the region will be planted. Many natural springs and wetlands, carefully preserved, are on site.

Natural methods and materials will be extensively employed in maintaining the course. Pest control will use organisms found in nature and introduced into the irrigation system to prevent weed and insect infestation. Once the course is open, organic fertilizers will be used to nourish the greens.

Water run-off from the course has been minimized. Water used for irrigation will filter through a turf canopy, thatch layer and into underwater aquifers to remove contaminants.

A "wash down" area for golf carts and maintenance equipment has been designed specially for Rocky Gap. Water used to wash equipment drains into a unique "weir" system, where wooden barriers trap solid waste. The newly cleaned water flows into underground separators and runs back into the lake as pure as when it was removed.

An average of 250,000 gallons of water will be used to irrigate the course each day. A system using more than 18 miles of pipe and 139 miles of wiring will deliver water to approximately 900 sprinkler heads throughout the site.

A hi-tech satellite control allows operation of the sprinkler system from several points around the green, rather than just one.

Computers will manage each of the aspects involved in the course's upkeep, including irrigation, labor analysis, chemical inventory, equipment and project management.

Players will be able to practice their swings from a 2-tier, half moon-shaped driving range with a putting and chipping green nearby.

A PGA professional will provide expert instruction in the game, and golfers can visit the lodge's pro shop, offering first-rate golf clothing, shoes and equipment.

For after-golf celebrating, duffers can visit the 54-seat Signatures Bar and Grill, overlooking the lake. Plans call for the establishment of a professional golf academy at the resort in the near future.

The resort is managed by Florida-based Buena Vista Hospitality Group.



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