

Where does golf fit into the land-use argument?

By RON DODSON

The main problem with land is the fact that we can't make any more of it. There is only so much to go around and we each want to have a say in how to use it. We want to live on it, grow food on it, play games on it, bury our wastes in it, or try to set it aside so that future generations have access to its recreational and historical value.

Each of us has our own opinion concerning the most appropriate and effective ways to use the land, and this leads to inevitable conflict as communities make daily decisions about land use and planning.

So where does golf fit into all of this? For a number of years Audubon International has said that properly sited, appropriately designed, and well-managed golf courses can represent one of the better types of land development and use. From a wildlife and habitat perspective, given that the land is suitable for development, we do believe it's better to develop a golf course than a parking lot, or 500 residential homes, or a mall.

Some would argue that we promote land development, but that's not accurate. We accept that land development is

a reality, but we support and promote land development that is sustainable.

The reality is that this county is founded on the free enterprise system and it is the economic engine that runs our nation. It helps to support such things as social programs and land acquisition for state and national parks, as well as private enterprises. It helps to provide jobs that, in turn, provide opportunities for people to better their economic positions in life for themselves and their offspring.

Since the creation of the United States, the free enterprise system has included the concept that one can own land — that it can be bought and sold and used for a variety of purposes. However, we have made some poor choices and unsustainable decisions regarding the use of land and resources. That is why we have seen totally polluted lakes and rivers, acidified lakes, wetlands drained, significant habitat loss and the extinction of many species.

So, if we accept the economic reality of land development, then we must set ourselves on a path of sustainability so that we don't use up or abuse what we have left. Then, we can have something for our children and grandchildren to enjoy.

PROPERLY SITED

The first and most critical decision is golf course site selection, and the rule

should be obvious to everyone: Choose properties that are good sites for golf courses. Why purchase land to build a golf course, or anything else for that matter, when the land is full of wetlands?

Some people believe a golf course can be built anywhere, and, in reality, there are machines that can make

it happen. This has caused the creation of stringent laws and regulations to protect land and the rights of adjoining landowners. That, in turn, has created extensive environmental impact statements and prolonged public hearings. This expensive government regulatory process, coupled with the use of expensive construction equipment, has driven the cost of development to astronomical levels.

It is clear that this approach is unsustainable economically and most certainly environmentally.

APPROPRIATELY DESIGNED

In addition to site selection, the next most obvious decision is designing the golf course with the land rather than over



The bridges at Casino Magio, a Gold Signature project.

it. Modern-day technology and heavy construction equipment have made it possible to move, shove, cut, scrape, pile, fill, and shape nearly any site to fit the most unrealistic dream a developer or architect may have.

A golf course can be anything you want it to be. But again, at what economic and environmental cost? Asking golf course architects to design an "environmentally sensitive" golf course on a piece of property that is inappropriate for development is begging for disaster for the project, the course, and the golf course industry.

Doesn't it make more sense to study the contours of the land and take into

Continued on page 46

Ron Dodson is president of Audubon International, based at 46 Rarick Rd., Selkirk, N.Y. 12158.

If Pump Station Paranoia Has You Fearing The Heat, Here's A Way To Save Your Grass.

Worried? Nervous? Sweating your job because your pumping system has gone to the dogs? Call FLOWTRONEX PSI. No one has created more industry innovations. No one gives you better, more advanced service. No one else maintains over \$2 million in parts. And no one engineers a better pumping system to fit your needs. So talk to FLOWTRONEX PSI. We may cost a little more. But we'll keep you out of the dog house.

FLOWTRONEX PSI
Pumping Systems

(800)786-7480 (214)357-1320
E-mail: ftxpsi@flowtronex.com

© 1998 FLOWTRONEX PSI

E-Z-GO's 800 ready for action

The welding, fitting and painting have begun on the newest tough-jobs tamer from E-Z-GO. The new Industrial 800 utility vehicle is ready to ship. E-Z-GO developed the Industrial 800 as the latest in a long line of dependable, workaholic utility vehicles. Available in both gasoline and electric models, the 800 offers the features that in-

dustrial users need for close-quarters automotive transportation and hauling.

Optional features include a scuff guard to protect the differential over difficult terrain, a canopy top and weather protection package, a locking glove box, an hour meter and a power dump bed. For more information, contact 706-798-4311.

CIRCLE #201

Dakota fashions 440

Dakota Peat & Equipment has developed a special model of the Turf Tender 440 for the golf course industry. The machine is configured with the equipment most requested by golf course superintendents. Haul, spread, fill and level a wide variety of materials. For information contact 800-424-3443.

CIRCLE #202

Dodson

Continued from page 9 consideration natural features and resources, and enhance or restore the pre-existing uniqueness of the land rather than destroy it all and then recreate it in ways that can't be sustained over time?

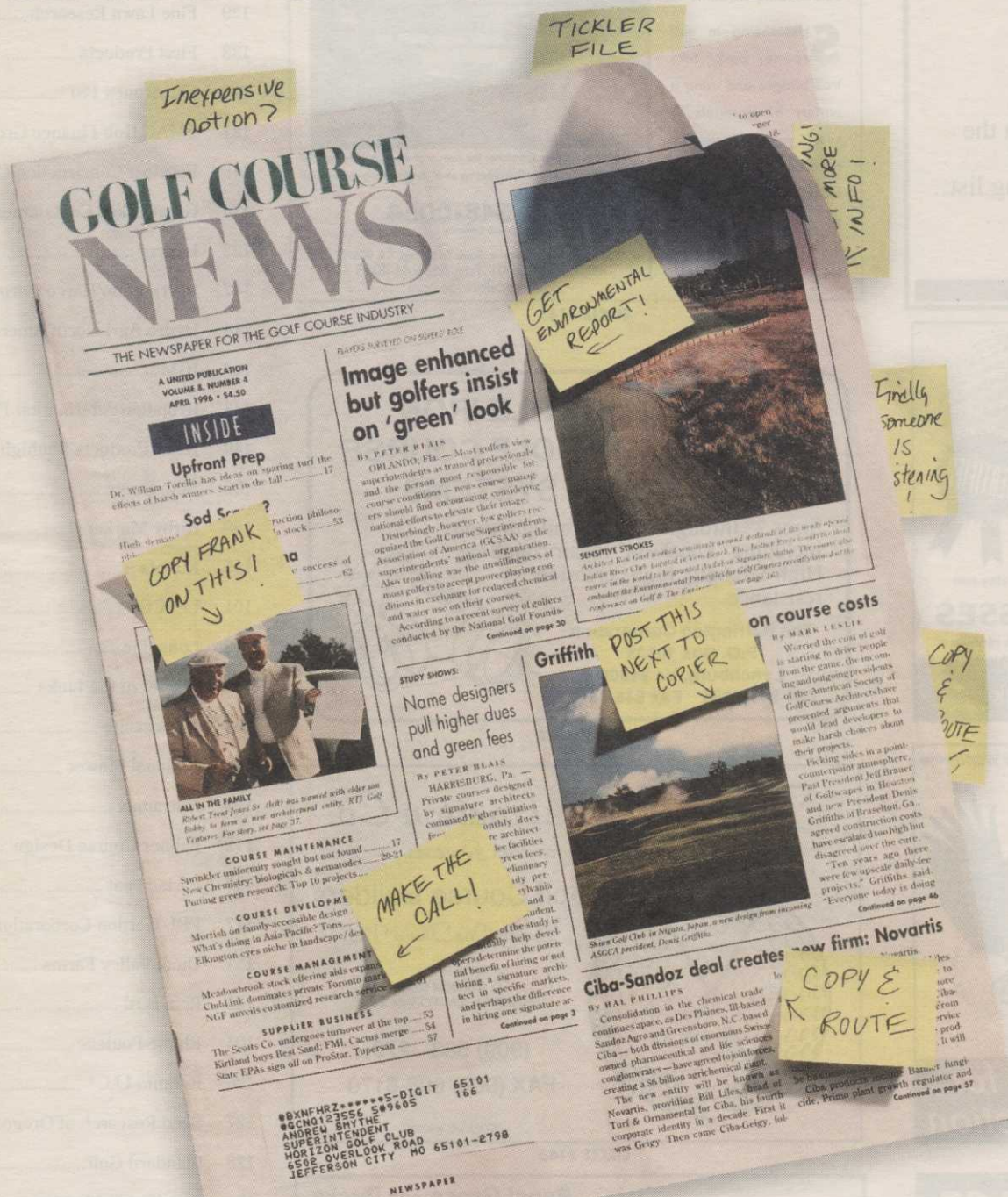
WELL MANAGED

The decisions made regarding a "proper" site and an "appropriate" design will have a

long-term effect on the superintendent who is left behind to manage the course. If poor siting and design decisions are made, subsequent management decisions may become expensive and burdensome. And for those who are dedicated to being environmental stewards of the land, it's a frustrating balancing act.

They will be required to make decisions and take responsibility for pesticide use, assessing

Stick to News.



'Decisions regarding golf course construction should always ultimately be founded on the history and tradition of golf.'

the subsequent impact on water quality throughout the community, and conserving natural resources, all the while keeping fairways green and members happy.

Decisions regarding golf course construction should always ultimately be founded on the history and tradition of golf — a game with its roots in nature. Nature rarely presents us with what has become the "television-studio" approach to golf course development and design.

Rather, we should develop land and design golf courses that provide the opportunity to showcase environmental stewardship. Likewise, we should manage our golf courses as exemplars of environmental stewardship. Anything less will be a disservice to our fellow human beings, the golf course industry, and the future of our planet.

Periodicals postage paid at Yarmouth, Maine, and additional mailing office. *Golf Course News* (ISSN 1054-0644) is published monthly by United Publications, Inc., 106 Lafayette St., P.O. Box 997, Yarmouth, ME 04096. Phone number is 207-846-0600.

The publisher assumes no responsibility for unsolicited material or prices quoted in the newspaper. Contributors are responsible for proper release of proprietary classified information. Copyright 1998 by United Publications Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction, in whole and in part, without the written permission from the publisher is expressly prohibited. Photocopies of *Golf Course News* are available through University Microfilms International, Serials Acquisitions Dept., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106, 800-732-0616.

Reprints and permission to reprint may be obtained from Managing Editor of *Golf Course News*. Back issues, when available, cost \$6 each within the past 12 months, \$12 each prior to the past 12 months. Back issue orders must be paid in advance either by check or charged to American Express, Visa or MasterCard.

Golf Course News is distributed in the U.S. without charge to qualified personnel of golf course facilities and to golf course builders, developers and architects. Subscriptions to Canadian golf facilities cost \$45 annually; other paid subscriptions to the U.S. and Canada cost \$55. All foreign subscriptions cost \$125 annually to cover air delivery. All payments must be made in U.S. funds drawn on a U.S. bank. For subscriber services, please call 215-788-7112. Send address changes to *Golf Course News*, P.O. Box 3047, Langhorne, Pa. 19047-3047.

When readership is what you're buying with your advertising dollars, *Golf Course News* delivers. Cover-to-cover, *Golf Course News* has the news your customers need to know. To deliver your message, call Charles von Brecht, publisher. (207) 846-0600 • Fax (207) 846-0657

United Publications, Inc. Providing the news in six markets: *HME News*, *Gourmet News*, *Security Systems News*, *Golf Course News*, *Golf Course News International*, *Kitchenware News & Service News*.