

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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US-UK study: It is greener on the other side of pond

By ANDREW OVERBECK

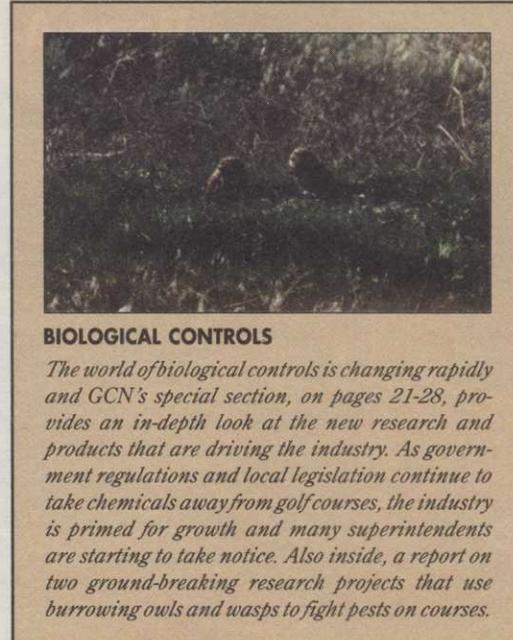
SANTA ROSA, Calif. — The top American golf courses earn twice as much and spend twice as much on maintenance as their U.K. counterparts, according to a survey by novice architect Bettina Schrickel.

Following a year comparing the maintenance practices of 25 of the top golf courses in both the United States and the United Kingdom for her graduate thesis in golf course architecture at Merrist Wood College in Surrey, England, Schrickel has published the findings of her study.

"Some of the numbers really surprised me," said Schrickel. "For example, the large gap between the financial income of the clubs, the maintenance budgets and the number of greenkeepers."

Of the American courses that she visited, the average income was \$2 million, the maintenance budget was \$970,000 and the number of greenkeepers was 18. Comparably, U.K. courses had an average income of \$800,000, a maintenance budget of \$340,000 and an average of eight greenkeepers. Further, annual member-

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BIOLOGICAL CONTROLS

The world of biological controls is changing rapidly and GCN's special section, on pages 21-28, provides an in-depth look at the new research and products that are driving the industry. As government regulations and local legislation continue to take chemicals away from golf courses, the industry is primed for growth and many superintendents are starting to take notice. Also inside, a report on two ground-breaking research projects that use burrowing owls and wasps to fight pests on courses.

Certification the goal of CMAA env'l audit

By PETER BLAIS

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Audubon International (AI) hopes to develop a certification program within the next 12 months for clubs, club managers and superintendents, using the recently developed Club Managers Association of America (CMAA) Full Facility Environmental Audit for Clubs (see March issue).

"Audubon and CMAA are discussing what to do next with this information," said AI Executive Director Ron Dodson, referring to the self-audit that CMAA began mailing to its members in late March. "What we

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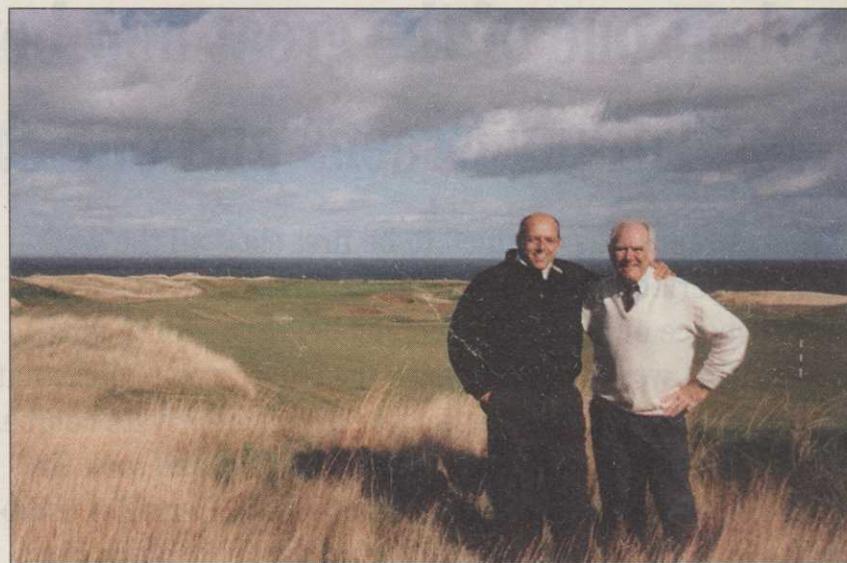
Simplot to buy Turf Partners

By A. OVERBECK

RANCHO BERNARDO, Calif. — Eco Soil Systems Inc. has accelerated its original February deal to sell the assets of its Turf Partners subsidiary to Post Falls, Idaho-based J.R. Simplot Co. Instead of buying \$20 million of convertible Eco Soil stock and enduring a 12-month valuation period before definitively purchasing Turf Partners, Simplot has agreed to buy out the distribution channel this summer.

"The stock deal was scrapped because Simplot didn't want to focus on our technology," said Max Gelwix, president and chief operating officer of

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NEIGHBORING THE OLD COURSE WITH AN OLD COURSE HERO

Longtime St. Andrews Old Course head greenkeeper Walter Woods, right, served as a turfgrass consultant for course architect Kyle Phillips, left, on Kingsbarns Golf Links whose 1st green sits in the far background. Kingsbarns, a public course, will have a grand opening the weekend following the British Open in July.

SubAir & Soil Air do patent combat in court

By MARK LESLIE

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — A battle about patents — spiced with added allegations of fraud, misappropriations and false advertising — will begin to be played out in U.S. District Court here in June between SubAir Inc. of Munnsville and Soil Air Technology of Middlefield, Conn.

The skirmish revolves around technology developed by Ferris Industries and



its subsidiary, SubAir Inc., starting in 1994 that uses subsurface piping to add air or remove water from the root zone of golf course greens to enhance root health; and a method developed by Soil Air Technology to measure pressure differentials and soil-gas concentrations to optimize soil growth.

But it gets much more personal than

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CMAA

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want to do is develop a certification program for the entire facility.

"Right now we're focused on golf courses. But now that we have club managers thinking about the entire complex, we want to develop a program that would provide Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program cer-

tification for the entire club. If a club has a golf course that is already certified, it's part way down that track.

CMAA and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America have also asked Audubon to develop a certification program for individuals. "Our certification currently is for the property," Dodson explained. "Both organizations

would like to see Audubon come up with a program that would eventually lead to an Audubon certification for both a club manager and a golf course superintendent."

CMAA Executive Vice President Kathy Driggs said CMAA has mailed the audit to all its members and enclosed a partnership form asking whether clubs intended to participate.

"We've been very pleased with the number of partnership forms we've gotten back," she said. "We want to make this [audit] available to the National Golf Foundation, National Golf Course Owners Association and other groups willing to share their mailing lists with us. Any facility can obtain the audit by simply calling CMAA [703-739-9500]."

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ClubLink/GolfNorth

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dar Creek Golf Club (nine holes) in Woodstock, Fairview Golf Club (nine holes) in Fergus, and Belwood Golf Club (18 holes opening this year) in Fergus. All these courses will now be marketed as GolfNorth by ClubLink(tm).

ClubLink and GolfNorth members will have reciprocal playing privileges at GolfNorth by ClubLink.

ClubLink has also agreed to purchase an additional \$2 million of debentures under certain circumstances. The debentures have a five-year term and are convertible at 30 cents per share, subject to an increased conversion price after March 24, 2001, based on GolfNorth's financial performance.

Justin Connidis and Susan Hodgkinson, senior officers of ClubLink, have joined GolfNorth's board of directors. ClubLink has also been granted a five-year option to acquire the GolfNorth shares held by Al Kavanagh, GolfNorth's founder and president, which represent approximately 70 per cent of the issued and outstanding shares of GolfNorth. Kavanagh is entitled to require such purchase upon conversion of the debentures.

ClubLink President and Chief Executive Officer Bruce Simmonds said: "ClubLink is pleased to enter this strategic relationship with GolfNorth, which provides us with greater penetration into the fast-growing Southern Ontario golf market. The alliance allows GolfNorth to benefit from synergies with ClubLink while focusing on operating and marketing mid-market nine-hole and 18-hole courses."

Troon Golf

Continued from page 37

we believe. There are probably some others planning on doing it. But it's a pretty gutsy move. We debated it and had a mandate from our board to study the Japanese market for quite awhile before we made a big move.

"The Australian market was a pretty easy decision. We had some good partners and big investors in our company who knew the country. We felt that was a good place to take a couple American expatriates who could do a good job for us.

Troon will open a London office this summer that will be the base for its European expansion.

"But all of Europe is not as big a market as Japan," Garmany said. If you look at the hotel model, like a Four Seasons or Ritz Carlton, you want to be represented in those major areas. But you won't be represented as deep into the European market as you would be in the United States or Japan."

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IRRIGATION

CMAA and Audubon

Continued from page 38

Jozsef de Kovacs, general manager of Deal (N.J.) Golf & Country Club for the past seven years, has long been an environmental advocate. Early in his tenure at Deal, he had his golf course crew set up bird houses, monitor wildlife feeding habits, and protect wetland areas on the Donald Ross-designed course. He has expressed great interest in the full-facility environmental audit.

"I think all our employees should be a part of this," de Kovacs said. "If you set up an environmental program for the outside crew, you should also do it for the inside crew."

Printed audits are currently available. CMAA plans to have it available on CD-Rom by early summer.

The United States Golf Association (USGA) awarded CMAA a \$95,000 grant earlier this year to help offset the cost of developing a comprehensive self-audit for the entire club facility. CMAA worked with AI, USGA and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to develop the audit, which is based on the foundation established by the GCSAA and the "Golf and the Environment" initiative.

The audit allows managers to assess all aspects of the club operation in terms of its environmental impact on its community. Club supervisory personnel can use the audit to identify challenges in their environmental practices and set a working strategic plan to enhance those practices, without oversight from local, state or national regulatory agencies.

The audit addresses all components of a club facility including environmental planning, training and communication; buildings and landscaping, dining facilities; parking lots and roads; golf course; tennis courts; swimming pool and spa; marina, equestrian; shooting club and general maintenance facilities. Managers complete only those sections that apply to their clubs.

The audit examines six key components pertinent to almost all facilities:

- environmental planning, training and communication;
- wildlife habitat enhancement and management;
- energy conservation;
- water conservation and water-quality management;
- chemical-use reduction and safety through integrated pest management, best management practices and other environmentally sound maintenance facility; and
- waste reduction and recycling.

The audit provides a series of statements regarding environmental management practices. The golf course is the component with the most questions (122) compared to buildings and landscaping (64); dining facilities (22); parking lots and roads (9); tennis (8); aquatics/spa (6); marina (13); equestrian (20); shooting club (9); and general maintenance facilities (18).

Managers review each statement and determine to what extent, if any, the practice is being carried out at their clubs. The club's overall score is based on the number of environmental practices in place in each component.

Following are some examples of component headings and sample statements:

- *Golf course:* Our plan for wildlife habi-

Continued on next page

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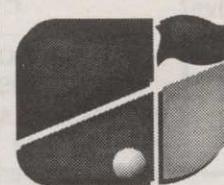
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Calendar

May

1-2 — 54th Annual Southeastern Turfgrass Conference in Tifton, Ga. Contact 912-386-3416.

5-13 — American Society of Golf Course Architects Annual Meeting in Ireland. Contact Tony Hourston at 312-372-7090.

July

22-24 — International Lawn, Garden & Power Equipment Expo in Louisville, Ky. Contact 800-558-8767.

November

14-16 — New York Turf and Grounds Exposition in Syracuse. Contact 800-873-8873.

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CMAA and Audubon

Continued from previous page

tat management specifically incorporates the needs of wildlife for suitable space, food, cover, water and breeding sites.

- **Buildings and landscaping.** We have set up a recycling program that includes collection and recycling of paper, glass, cardboard and plastic.

- **Dining facilities.** We compost food scraps and uneaten food, and/or donate edible food wastes to homeless shelters or food pantries to reduce the amount of food waste sent to the landfill.

- **Parking lots and roads.** We have examined alternatives to conventional road salt and use where appropriate.

- **Tennis courts.** High-pressure sodium bulbs or other energy-efficient bulbs are used to light courts.

- **Aquatics/spa.** When pools or tubs are drained, the water is not discharged directly into a storm-water sewer or to a natural water body.

- **Marinas.** Signs are posted to alert marina patrons about sensitive vegetation or wildlife in area.

- **Equestrian.** We understand the need to prevent excess nutrients from manure from reaching water bodies and have policies in place to prevent nutrients from reaching surface waters.

- **Shooting club.** Lead shot has never been used on the premises, or we are making efforts to remove spent lead shot from the facility.

An environmental performance index is calculated for each component of the club. The audit eventually provides a total score to rate the club's overall environmental performance. It also highlights strengths and opportunities to improve environmental performance.

CMAA developed the audit so that club facilities can demonstrate a proactive approach to fulfilling their obligation to preserve and enhance the environment.

In the introduction to the audit itself, CMAA Executive Vice President/Chief Executive Officer James Singerlmg writes: "In the past decade, CMAA club managers have become increasingly concerned with environmental issues. Managers recognize that understanding and managing the impact of the club operation on the surrounding environment is vital to protecting that environment, preserving the natural beauty of a facility, and making positive contributions to the communities they serve."

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