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A PRESIDENTIAL VISIT

While in town for the Republican Convention in Philadelphia, former President George Bush paid a visit to Eric Bergstol's latest project — Pine Hill Golf Club in Pine Hill, N.J. Bergstol, president of Empire Golf, plans to officially open the Tom Fazio-designed layout this spring.

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PERIODICAL

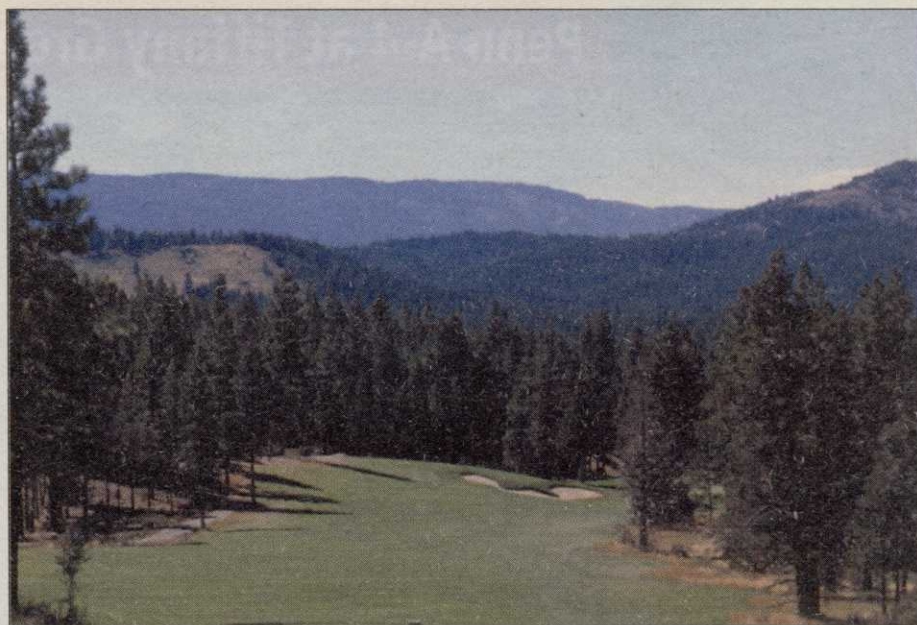
Water crisis looms in S. California

By JOEL JOYNER

SANTA ANA, Calif. — Radical changes in California water policy could leave Southern California golf courses in “a world of hurt,” according to agronomist Mike Huck, of the U.S. Golf Association’s Green Section. From his base here in the southwest region, Huck has been tracking a complicated battle between environmentalists, farmers, municipalities, government officials and others over the future of water distribution in the Golden State.

Indeed, the unfolding situation portends such dire consequences that one water-resource specialist, engineer Dana Ripley, is urging that Southern California

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The 1st hole at the “Dragon” course at Gold Mountain

Dramatic new Dragon course opens in remote ‘Lost Sierra’

By DOUG SAUNDERS

CLIO, Calif. — The surging economy has been the catalyst for numerous golf-driven real estate developments around the country. Every region has seen the creation of new golf courses, including some areas where you would least expect it. A prime example is Gold Mountain, located in this tiny hamlet in California’s Sierra Nevada mountains.

Here, in a town of 200 located in a county that has only one stop light, is a 1,300-acre development situated on a two-lane mountain road overlooking ranch land, the Feather River, a solitary railroad track, and the towering Sierra peaks.

Is this where you want to retire? Why not, is the philosophy at Gold Mountain.

The developers, Dariel and Peggy Garner, have made their mark in such various business ventures as marketing wood by-products overseas, developing bank-

ing software, and growing specialty vegetables. Their diverse interests and imagination lead them on a search for a natural setting, a place to settle down. They stopped looking when they found this remote area of Northern California known as the Lost Sierra.

“We were trying to find a place that we could retire to, but what we found was a place of such solitude and natural beauty that we felt we should share it with others,” explained Peggy Garner.

SELLING SOLITUDE

To make that dream a reality required a different approach to development. From the beginning, the Garners would make their remote mountain setting the cornerstone of its appeal. To incorporate these features the Garners took careful steps in the design process by bringing together an interesting mix of collaborators.

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Going East: Simplot buys Lange-Stegmann, to extend POLYON deal

By ANDREW OVERBECK

BOISE, Idaho — Simplot Turf and Horticulture (Simplot T&H) continues its eastward march with the acquisition of the professional product line from St. Louis-based fertilizer formulator Lange-Stegmann. The deal includes the Lange-Stegmann production facilities for its professional products in the golf, landscape and lawn-care markets. The financial terms of

the agreement were not disclosed.

Located on the Mississippi River, the newly acquired production facilities provide Simplot T&H with efficient intermodal distribution service to a large segment of the United States east of the Rocky Mountains.

“This allows us to move east,” said Bill Whitacre, Simplot T&H president. “The

mountains are a natural barrier for our operations in the West. The Lange-Stegmann facility has a phenomenal location right on the Mississippi and has access to an intermodal barge terminal. The efficiency of having that location right in the heart of the United States is really an opportunity for us.”

Simplot T&H will also add Lange-branded greens-grade and

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Safety-minded lawyer urges ‘mulligan’ ban

By JAY FINEGAN

NEW YORK — “NO MULLIGANS!” If there is one sign that every golf course should post prominently, that would be it. So says lawyer Robert D. Lang, who has drawn fresh attention to the dangers — legal and otherwise — of wild golf shots.

In a recent cover story in the Journal of the New York State Bar Association (NYSBA), Lang cites numerous personal injury cases in which errant shots struck golfers, caddies, spectators and even motorists. Among the potential defendants, he said, are the golfer who hit the shot, the course or club owners if a suit alleges negligent



Robert D. Lang

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Water crisis

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courses build their own on-site reclamation plants to protect themselves from a water cutoff. "Things are happening at this moment that are just mind-boggling," said Ripley, of Ripley Pacific Company in Pleasanton, near San Francisco.

The background of the crisis can be quickly told. Essentially a desert, Southern California has historically pulled water from the Sacramento River, which flows into San Francisco Bay, and from the Colorado River, which flows into the Gulf of California. Water has been channeled from those sources into the Central Valley, an agricultural powerhouse, and down to Los Angeles, San Diego and other parts of the region.

THE BAY DELTA IMBROGLIO

One drastic change involves the Bay Delta program, an \$8.6-billion plan to restore the Sacramento River's fresh-water habitat. "What has happened," said Huck, "is that they were taking so much fresh water out of the system that salt water backed up further into the Bay Delta area. They're losing brackish habitat for fish and other wildlife.

"They formed a group called CAL-FED," Huck said, "which is a combination of the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the California EPA. They are proposing that a lot of water being diverted through dams and pipelines to Southern California be freed up to flow into the bay and push that salty water back out again."

The plan has touched off a "big uproar" by Central Valley agricultural interests, Huck said, "who fear they won't have enough water to irrigate their crops. But they have the long-term water rights, as we understand it, and it will probably end up being Southern California regions that end up catching the brunt of this."

COLORADO RIVER FIGHT

The Colorado River situation is equally contentious. Nevada and Arizona also draw water from the Colorado, but for years they allowed California to use some of their allotment. With population growth exploding, especially in Nevada, that arrangement appears to be ending.

"There was a closed-door session recently, between California, Nevada and Arizona," Huck said. "Arizona said to California, basically, that it needs to cut back its draw from the Colorado over the next 12 to 15 years. Arizona is afraid that if they continue to let California use their excess allotment, they could end up in court, and the court would say 'Sorry Arizona, you let them use it for so long that it now belongs

to them' - like an eminent domain thing."

Consequently, Huck said, Southern California is "positioned right now to be in a world of hurt, potentially, because there's yet another issue with the Colorado River. The federal EPA has mandated that, by a certain date, we are going to have outflow going into the Gulf of California. Currently, it's pretty much a dry stre-

ambled by the time it reaches the Mexican border."

Complicating the picture is the stunning rise in California's population, already at about 33 million people. The next 20 years are expected to see 15.4 million new arrivals, primarily from immigration.

"We're growing at a population rate throughout the state that probably cannot be sup-

ported by the amount of available water," Huck said. "They are pumping groundwater faster than it's being replaced in most areas, and we're taking more out of the rivers than is good for the environment."

ON-SITE RECLAMATION STRATEGY

Against this grim backdrop, the hundreds of golf courses in Southern California are being encouraged to seek protection.

One solution is construction of on-site reclamation plants.

"This is Dana Ripley's idea," Huck said. "He figures you can build on half an acre a plant that would supply you with adequate water. Basically, it would be a little satellite plant that would scalp off water before it goes downstream to the regional reclamation plant.

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Moss in N.E.

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to fight moss invasion. These days, some superintendents spray bleach or dish detergent to desiccate the grass and suppress moss growth.

Noel Jackson, a Ph.D. plant pathologist at the University of Rhode Island, explains that "the mercury fungicides had a good

suppression effect on spore germination of mosses. The mercury supplies are now exhausted and the ban against manufacturing them leaves nothing else on the market that has the persistence of the mercury against moss. With the iron sulfate, superintendents get a quick knock down, but it's only a temporary expedient."

COPPER HYDROXIDE STRATEGY

Frank Rossi, a Ph.D.

horticulturalist at Cornell University, is working on a micro-nutrient of copper hydroxide to help prevent moss growth. He has discovered that four applications, two weeks apart in the fall, not only reduced moss populations on the order of 80 percent, but also prevented new moss growth in the plots even after the treatments stopped.

"In the summertime, at higher concentrations, there has been

some injury to annual bluegrass," he said. "On the plots we only top dressed and didn't treat, the top dressing obviously made the moss problem worse."

Rossi is now testing "extremely low levels of copper hydroxide that are applied throughout the golfing season. "We are working towards copper being used as a micro-nutrient that not only prevents moss invasion, but

doesn't injure the grass," he said.

According to Rossi, superintendents have two possible approaches at the moment. "There's the desiccant route, which is probably a variable means for getting control of existing plants," he said. "And there's the nutritional route, where we strive to get suppression and prevention of further moss invasion.

"The desiccant methods will knock back what's there," he said, "but they won't prevent moss from returning. We have a lot of questions about spray volumes, availability, injury, and long-term effect issues. But for now, I think we're on the right track."

For Cybulski and many superintendents in the Northeast, the fight to control moss on the greens goes on. "The most effective procedure would be, ideally, to raise the height of cut on the greens," said Cybulski. "But golfers demand green speed and performance, and that makes moss tough to control." ■

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