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bers, the guests of our resort and our neighbors to do everything we can to conserve all natural resources.”

PHASING IT IN

Phase one of the turf-reduction project, which was completed in September 2008, entailed removing about two acres of turf from the course and replacing them with 14 waste bunkers. The sand in the bunkers on the course is 75 percent Augusta white and 25 percent desert tan. To match the waste bunkers with the existing bunkers (the original mix has faded), Clark used a 50/50 mix of the two sands.

Most of phase one, which was contracted to Temecula, Calif.-based Weitz Golf International, was done while the 7,448-yard, par-72 course was closed to allow the maintenance crew to implement its winter maintenance program, which includes overseeding tees and rough. The course typically closes for three to four weeks

in September, depending on what’s involved. In 2008, it was closed from Sept. 8 until Sept. 29.

The course features 419 bermudagrass on the fairways; Bull’s-Eye (that’s thinning because they didn’t overseed this year) and Tifway II bermudagrass in the rough, which is usually overseeded with perennial ryegrass; 419 on the tees and A-4 bentgrass on the greens. It also features more than 170 mature native oak trees transplanted from other regions of the Barona Indian Reservation.

Phase two, which will be done in-house by Clark’s staff, will eliminate alternate tee boxes – there are between five and eight on every hole – and remove about two acres of sod surrounding tees and about eight acres in out-of-play areas, converting them to more natural areas. The teal-colored tees, which are right behind the burgundy-colored ladies’ tees, are being eliminated. The goal is to have four sets of tees on every hole.

Less than 1 percent of the number of rounds played were from the teal tees, which were designed for lower handicap women golfers. In addition to the burgundy and teal tees, the course features silver, gold and black tees, which are the championship set.

Phase three will consist of completing what doesn’t get finished during phase two and analyzing what was done overall.

“Anything we can reduce will be a benefit,” King says, adding the staff is always thinking about technology to help the club use less water to maintain the golf course.

BLENDING IN THE CHANGES

Most golfers didn’t notice the turf reduction because architect Todd Eckenrode, of Irvine, Calif.-based Origins Golf Design, blended it in so nicely, King says. No holes have been closed since the turf-reduction project started.

“And that’s the way we wanted it,” King says. “We wanted to make sure the turf-reduction project didn’t take away from the look or playability of the course. And we accomplished that with the help of Todd.”

When first working with the Barona Band of Indians to build the course about 10 years ago, Eckenrode learned the tribe has a great affinity for its land and wants it to be cherished and showed off.

“We moved very little dirt when we built the course,” he says. “The whole design and feel of the course was supposed to be about nature. The original turf allocation was typical of a desert course; they just wanted to take it a little further this time.”

The club was receptive to Eckenrode’s idea of replacing the turf with waste bunkers instead of native grass to help keep the course’s playability the same. Golfers can hit out of waste bunkers instead of tall native grass. To help reduce the maintenance required of the waste bunkers, Eckenrode’s design included native grass surrounding them.

“We wanted to take out all the frills without the course looking too drought stricken,” says Clark, who has been at Barona nine and a half years, since the grow-in.

A few regular golfers noticed finish work taking place after Barona reopened after winter maintenance. The Barona staff told golfers what the project entailed and why the resort was doing it. The upside for golfers is that the golf course will remain open during the turf reduction and

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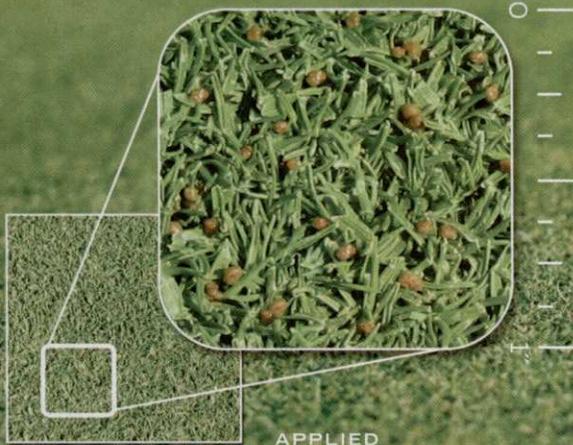
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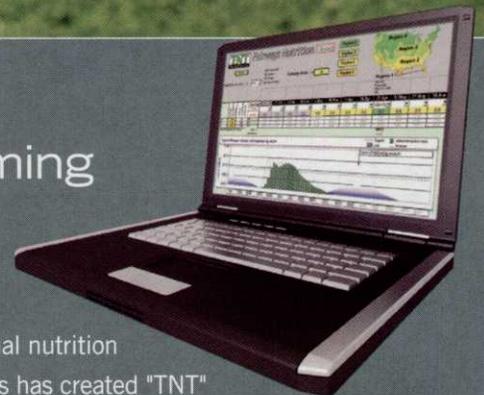
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COURSE MANAGEMENT

reseeding process, which, when completed in late spring, will result in better course playing quality with enhanced natural surroundings, Clark says.

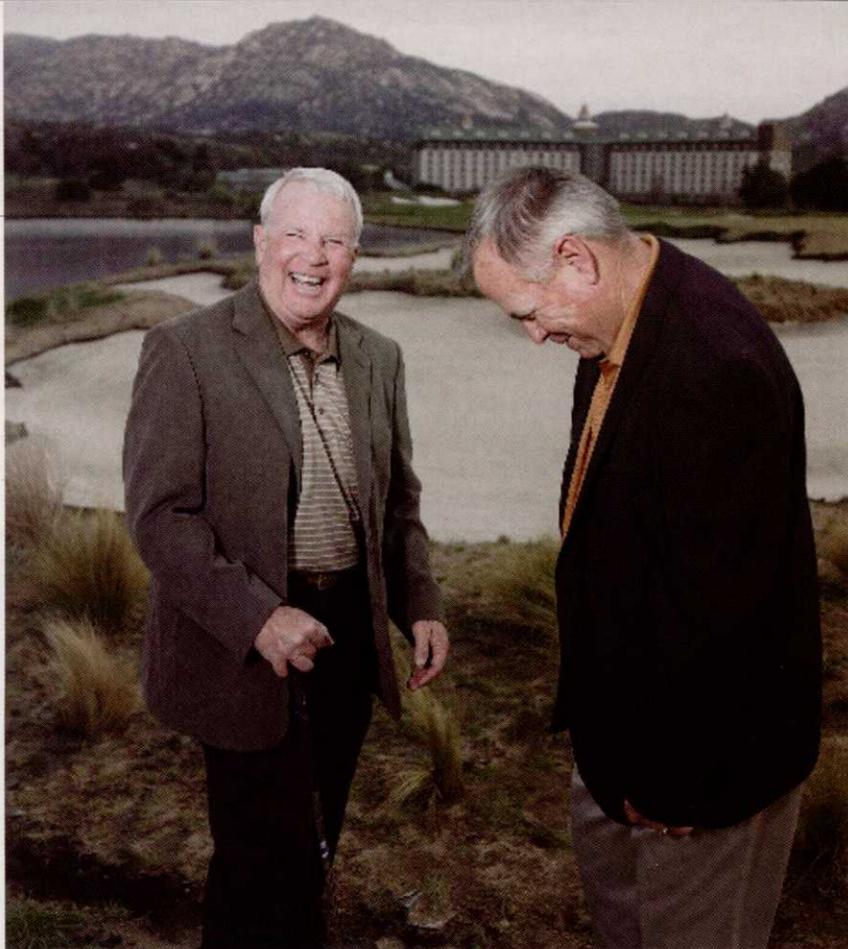
LESS CONSUMPTION

Clark, whose crew consists of 31 full-timers year round, has been looking at turf reduction for some time and discussed the idea with superintendents at courses in Arizona that have reduced turf.

"This plan will further reduce our water usage," says Clark, who was awarded the 2004 Environmental Leader of the Year by the GCSAA and Golf Digest Magazine. "Being more environmentally friendly and aesthetically appealing aren't mutually exclusive terms. We will still be green and gorgeous."

The multiphased project also includes limiting overseed-

Sandy Clark (left) and Don King are preparing Barona Creek for impending water-use restrictions in Southern California.



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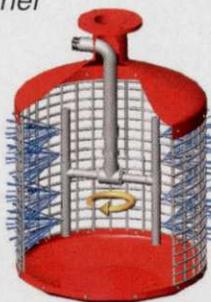
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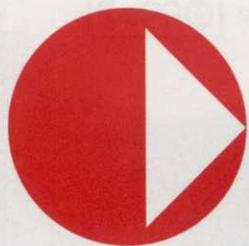


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Barona Creek removed about two acres of turf from its golf course during the first phase of its turf reduction program.

ing to tees and roughs, lowering maintenance requirements by an additional 10 to 15 percent. These measures will address several important environmental issues, ranging from reduced fuel and energy consumption to the use of fewer fertilizers and chemicals used for maintenance.

“What makes this program even more important, especially in a dry, drought-prone region such as San Diego, is the water savings that could run as high as 100 percent in those turf areas that will be eliminated or returned to native plantings,” King says.

Clark, whose maintenance budget is about \$1 million, says it’s too soon to determine what percentage of fuel, energy, fertilizer and chemical use will be saved by the program, but he’s hoping it’s at least 15 percent. Time will tell. He also doesn’t know exactly how much money the project will save. But any savings will be put into detail work on the course, which features 130 bunkers, and improving the property.

WATER CONSERVATION EFFORTS

Before the turf-reduction program started, Barona Creek implemented water conservation efforts through its advanced water reclamation plant, computerized irrigation system, sophisticated weather-monitoring program and sustainable landscape plan. The water reclamation and wastewater treatment facilities allow the tribe to save and reuse almost every drop of water runoff at the resort.

“These water-saving innovations at Barona Creek are about more than self-preservation,” Clark says. “They’re also helping the environment and hopefully influencing the golf community at large.”

Barona Creek’s water supply comes from three sources: effluent water, which comes from the hotel; rain water, which is captured in a 22-million-gallon-capacity reservoir; and on-site emergency wells that contain nonpotable water, which is the last source Clark taps into. Some

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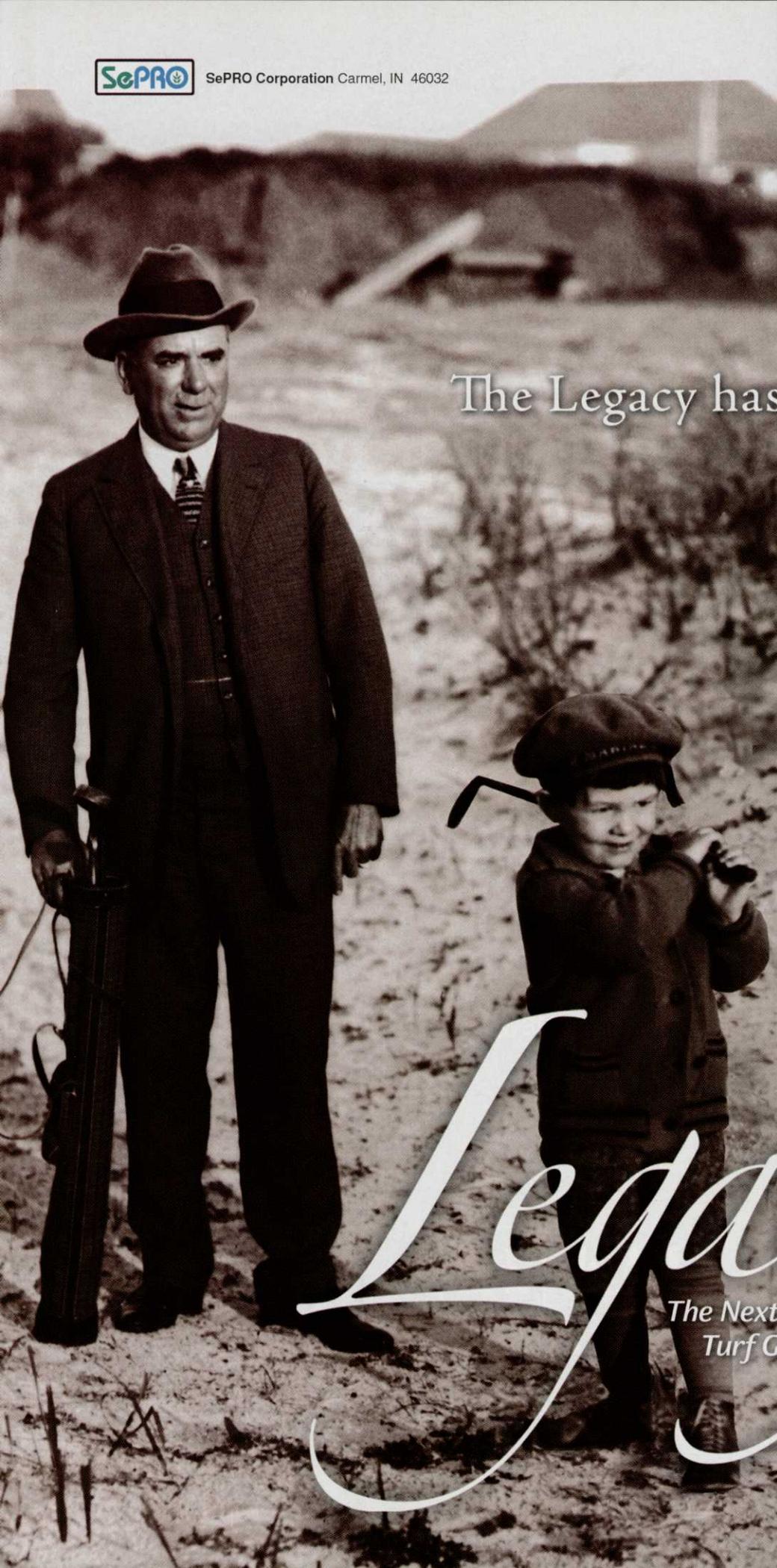


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