

## Credit the Crawler

**The flooded  
Guadalupe River  
dumped mud, water  
and nearly two feet of  
silt on the Bandit GC.  
But it was a nifty, all-  
purpose construction  
vehicle to the rescue.**

### Problem

The 500-year flood nearly wiped out the Bandit GC last fall. It left mud, water and silt in its wake, not to mention a clogged irrigation system. What to do to clean up the course?

### Solution

Bring in the crawler, a 9,000-pound vehicle with low ground pressure and superb traction. It cleaned up the mess and didn't damage the course in the process.

**I**t's hard to believe that it's the same Bandit GC that was submerged with mud, water and 24 inches of silt when the nearby Guadalupe River rose 39 feet during the 500-year flood on Oct. 17. During a storm that dumped more than 21 inches of rain within 20 hours on southwest Texas, the river flooded the entire region.

The river carried off dozens of homes, killed at least 20 people and caused damage of about \$1 billion. Golf courses in the area were severely damaged.

Yet after months of hard work, Bandit is back in shape, offering majestic views with its famous cliffs, bluffs and ridges. And it's back in business, attracting golfers from across Texas.

But the only way you could have played the course last fall was with a pair of hip waders and a floating ball. "I've been in business for 11 years and never saw anything like it," says Rich Cope, Bandit's superintendent.

### The problem

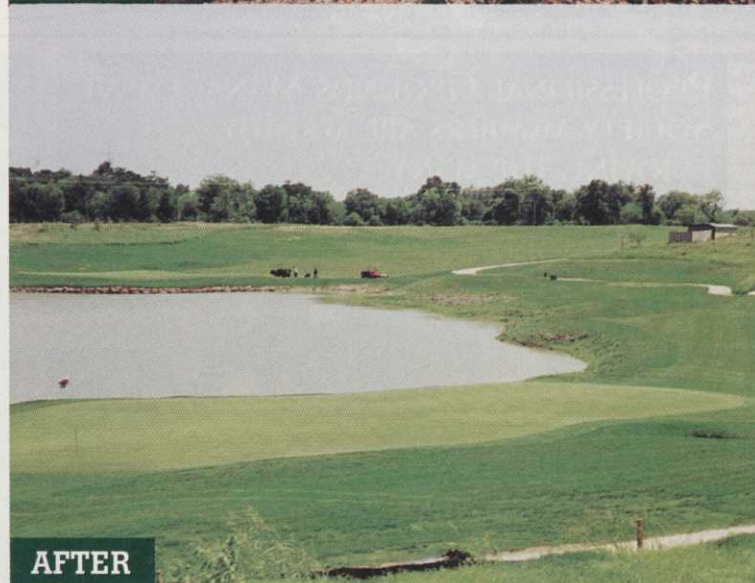
The destruction from the flood would have been bad enough, but when the water receded the aftermath was even worse. Mud had gummed up Bandit's entire irrigation system, and it was no longer functioning.

Though the entire course sustained damage, the worst was found on holes No. 12 and 13, where nearly 24 inches of silt had been deposited on the greens and fairways.

"We didn't know what we were



**BEFORE**



**AFTER**

going to do about it," Cope says. "It was a hair-raising experience."

### Options considered

When Cope and his team sat down to brainstorm solutions, few were forthcoming.

With the irrigation system gummed up with mud, hosing off the silt was not a viable option. Besides, it was doubtful that water

could rid the fairways and greens of that much silt.

"We also considered bringing in tractors and other heavy loading equipment, but none of that stuff would work because of the damage those machines would do to the course," Cope notes.

For a time, it seemed the Guadalupe River had won.

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### Solution chosen

Searching for an alternative, Cope contacted Steve Tolliver of S.H. Tolliver Construction, one of his primary contractors, who put him in contact with All Weather Sales and Rental, a Georgetown, Texas-based firm specializing in equipment that works in difficult terrain.

All Weather suggested that Cope rent a Posi-Track all-purpose crawler manufactured by ASV Inc. of Grand Rapids, Minn.

Though similar in size and shape to a skid-steer, the machine utilized a technologically advanced undercarriage and rubber tracks, giving the 9,000-pound vehicle extraordinarily

low ground pressure (3.0 psi) and traction. Cope rented the machine because it appeared to be the only viable solution.

### Outcome

Once on the course, the machine lived up to its billing. "It worked better than we had hoped," Cope says.

With a bucket attachment, Cope and his team pushed the silt and mud off the fairways and greens. The job took about three weeks.

Operating the 7,500-pound machine with rubber tracks was similar to allowing a third-grader in sneakers on the course. Historically, machines light on the ground don't have the power necessary to do heavy work, and powerful machines



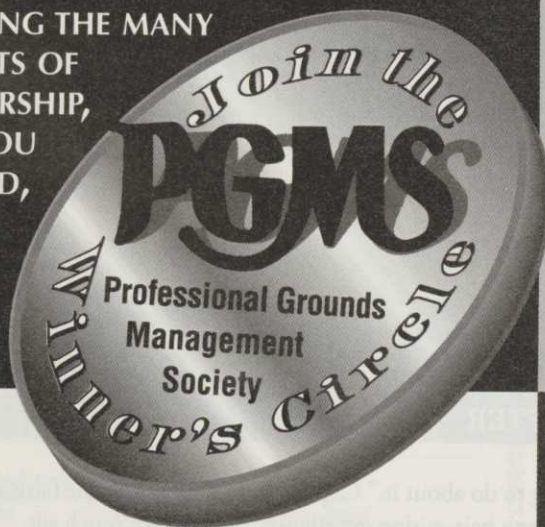
**The Posi-Track offers traction and power. But it won't tear up a golf course.**

cause too much damage. But Cope discovered that the Posi-Track's intricate wheel pattern within the rubber-tracked undercarriage not only gave the machine a light footprint, but also traction and power.

Thanks to the undercarriage,

the machine was able to touch softly on the turf at Bandit GC, but also have the traction to push the heavy sludge. With the bucket attachment, the machine was able to skim the sludge down to a half inch, a point at which water could be used. ■

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