



The Floating Lab

The buoyed green at Coeur d'Alene Resort is a heck of a hazard — and an excellent testing tool for environmentally sensitive course management

Superintendent John Anderson positions himself at the controls of Coeur d'Alene Resort and GC's famous floating green like a skipper at the wheel of a cruise ship. Anderson jokes that he would love to move the green while golfers are in their backswings and aiming for the pin on the No. 14 hole — as if the island green on the Idaho course wasn't hazardous enough.

Anderson kiddingly boasts that he's the only superintendent in the world with the power to move the 4-million pound green in minutes from 150 yards to 170 yards from the tee. He's right, unless Superman is a superintendent.

While Coeur d'Alene's 15,000-square-foot island, which includes rough, bunkers and trees in addition to the 7,000-square-foot green, is regarded as one of the most extraordinary and picturesque holes in golf, it's a challenge for Anderson and his crew to maintain for obvious reasons. Remember, you have to haul your equipment along with yourself when you ferry by boat to the green to maintain it.

But Anderson, regarded by his peers as a dedicated and hard-working superintendent, enjoys the challenge of keeping up the green. A devout

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golf course environmentalist, Anderson also allows the floating green to be used for research purposes. In fact, the USGA and Washington State University are funding a study to determine the amount of nitrates filtering through the green's soil profile after fertilizer applications.

Anderson sits next to a water-sampling machine within the floating hole and explains how it draws water from a plastic membrane lining that captures the moisture draining from the green. The water samples are collected every three weeks and analyzed for nitrates.

While nitrates can't seep from the floating green into Coeur d'Alene Lake because of its self-contained construction, the study is being used to show how nitrates can effect ground water on regular land greens.

"The water is clean," Anderson reports. "It's great to get verification that these programs are working and are environmentally safe."

The study also determines how much water is used on the green.

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“Everything that goes through the green is pumped back to shore through an umbilical cord into the monitoring well,” Anderson explains. “A flow meter determines how much water we put on the green, how much water is lost to evaporation and how much water is wasted. We check those readings daily.”

For Anderson, the water sampling program is of great personal interest. He has been at Coeur d’Alene for nearly five years and proudly admits to practicing an en-

vironmentally sound golf course maintenance program.

Anderson says the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program, which he joined about eight years ago, changed the way he manages a golf course. He subscribes to Audubon’s philosophy that courses can co-exist as features of nature, not foes.

Anderson says he only uses a small amount of pesticide on the Coeur d’Alene course. He relies more on frequent and light topdressings to maintain the course.

“You can have a championship course

The floating green is equipped with a flow meter to determine water usage, evaporation and waste.

maintained to the highest quality and still have sound environmental practices,” Anderson contends. ■

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