

Off The Fringe

Business briefs

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on the road," Scott said in a statement. Scott, who was vice president of agronomy for the Tour, led nine agronomists. He worked for Nicklaus for 10 years prior to joining the PGA and rejoins the company at a time when it has more than 50 projects under construction and at least 50 more in the planning stages.

PGA Picks Jake

Charlotte, N.C.-based Jacobsen signed an agreement to be "The Official Turf Equipment Supplier to The PGA of America" and "The Exclusive Turf Equipment Supplier to PGA Golf Properties." The 10-year agreement comes as The PGA of America begins major renovation efforts on two of its championship facilities: the PGA Village in Port St. Lucie, Fla., and Valhalla Golf Club in Louisville, Ky. ■

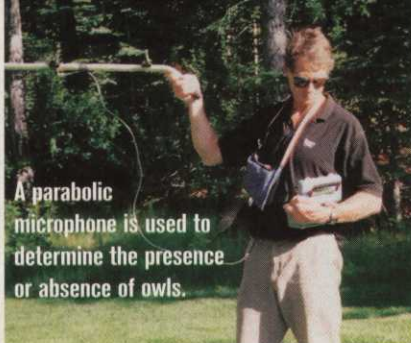
Take a Walk on the Wild Side

By Ron Dodson

Editor's Note: *Dodson, CEO of Audubon International, can be reached at rdodson@audubon-international.org. His column will appear intermittently in *Golfdom*.*

Golfers at Stewart Creek Golf & Country Club have a hard time keeping their heads down and their eyes on their golf balls. But they have some extraordinary excuses for doing so. They might be distracted by hooting owls, passing grizzly bears, elk

A parabolic microphone is used to determine the presence or absence of owls.



and other critters of the Rocky Mountains — or perhaps just the stunning views on the golf course.

Stewart Creek, located in Canmore, Alberta, Canada, was completed in 1999. Stewart Creek joined the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses in 2000, and became a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary in 2004. The superintendent of this golf and environmental paradise, Sean Kjemhus, is an International Environmental Leaders in Golf Award winner.

Stewart Creek is a semi-private, 18-hole, seasonal golf course and is part of the 2,300-acre Three Sisters Resort in the Canadian Rocky Moun-

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tains. Within the resort, the golf course sits amid 245 acres, of which more than 62 acres are in-play turf and 150 acres of forest. It has three ponds equalling about 2.5 acres and one seasonal stream, all of which are surrounded with natural vegetation. Stewart Creek is located in a recognized "wildlife corridor," which connects the course to Wind Valley, an area recognized by government and conservation groups as having significant biological importance.

One form of wildlife, the grizzly bear, seems to hold special significance to the course and the region. But managing a golf course for people and minimizing bear-human interaction is of key importance.

Buffaloberry is a staple of the grizzly bear's diet from late July to mid-August. To minimize bear-human encounters, hand pruning and thinning of female Buffaloberry shrubs reduce the possibility that conservation officers will need to remove or destroy any large mammals that might get too close for comfort. Stewart Creek also created Xeric gardens to reduce human impact on the natural movements and behaviors of deer, elk and bears on the property.

A radio transmitter collects data on grizzly bear movement with the use of radio collars. This data is relayed to the provincial Fish and Wildlife division and the Eastern Slopes Grizzly Bear Research Project, a private organization. It affords Stewart Creek the ability to inform golfers if a bear is in the area and to take appropriate actions to avoid confrontations. Officials also track cougars and elk with the instrument.

Three 35-millimeter remote monitoring cameras also have been mounted. The data is provided to provincial agencies and private conservation organizations, such as the Eastern Slopes Grizzly Bear Research Project and the Central Canadian Rockies Wolf Research Project. Sand track pads also help track movement on game trails.

A variety of research and monitoring has been implemented on the course property. A master's thesis was written on the long-toed salamander and included ponds found within the Stewart Creek property. Ponds that are used for breeding all have no-spray zones and vegetative buffers, with portions connected to woodlands com-

prised of differing successional stages of habitat. A parabolic microphone is used to determine the presence or absence of owls in the spring.

At Stewart Creek, the course management believes golf is truly a game played in nature. So one can take a walk on the wild side and enjoy the beauty and challenges of the nature of the game. ■

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