

Off The Fringe

Balboa Park Golf Course Gets Major Overhaul

BY BETH GERACI

A ribbon cutting ceremony was held last month at The City of San Diego's Balboa Park Golf Course, marking the completion of a \$4 million renovation of the 96-year-old course's irrigation system.

The 27-hole facility comprises an 18-hole layout and a 9-hole layout. Work on the 18-hole layout began in February and was completed in September, said Paul Cushing, assistant deputy director of the City of San Diego Golf Division, which oversees maintenance on all four of San Diego's city golf courses. Work on the 9-hole layout began this September and was completed at the end of November, Cushing added.

"The golf course is in the best condition it's ever been in," he said. "It's just phenomenal. It's a crown jewel. The maintenance programs have been

lacking for many years and the course is now back."

With the overhaul, Cushing said Balboa's irrigation system is now ET-based and features new spacing, new HDPE main line laterals and more than 2,000 new sprinkler heads. "We're anticipating anywhere between 20 and 30 percent water savings, comparatively speaking," he said.

In addition to the irrigation system renovation, Balboa engaged in a separate restructuring of the golf courses, which ran concurrently with the irrigation system redo.

Cushing wouldn't elaborate on the cost of that project, but it was extensive. Among other things, the course was lengthened by about 200 yards, six new tees were added and turf was completely renovated and overseeded.

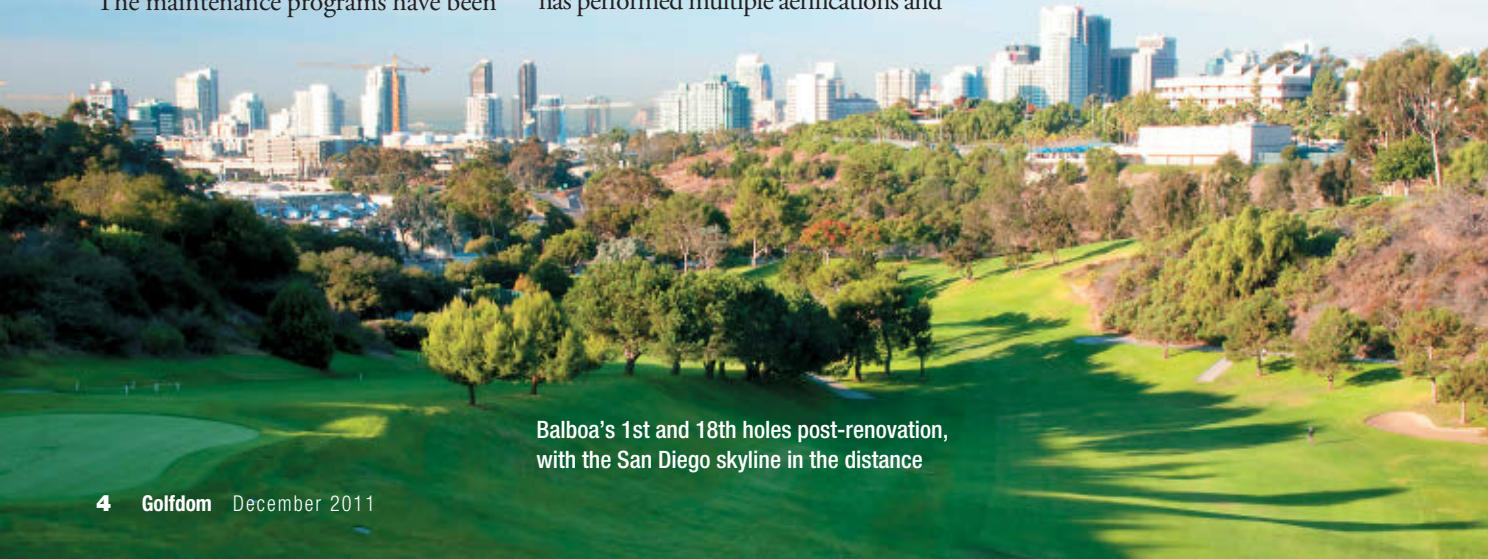
To improve its soil structure, Balboa has performed multiple aerifications and

applied more than 200 tons of gypsum over the past year. The maintenance team also trimmed trees and cleared overgrown brush on both courses, Cushing said. The programs will continue on both courses, he added, because golfers have enjoyed the benefits of both.

Cushing said new Balboa golf course superintendent Wayne Carpenter, formerly the superintendent at Torrey Pines, is "bringing a new set of standards and a higher level of maintenance and attention to detail" to the course overall. And given all of the renovation that's taken place at Balboa, "the course is more playable now," Cushing said.

The renovation disrupted play substantially, and many golfers stayed away during it, Cushing said, but now that word is spreading that the project is complete, "the place is jumping again."

PHOTO COURTESY: PAUL CUSHING



Balboa's 1st and 18th holes post-renovation, with the San Diego skyline in the distance