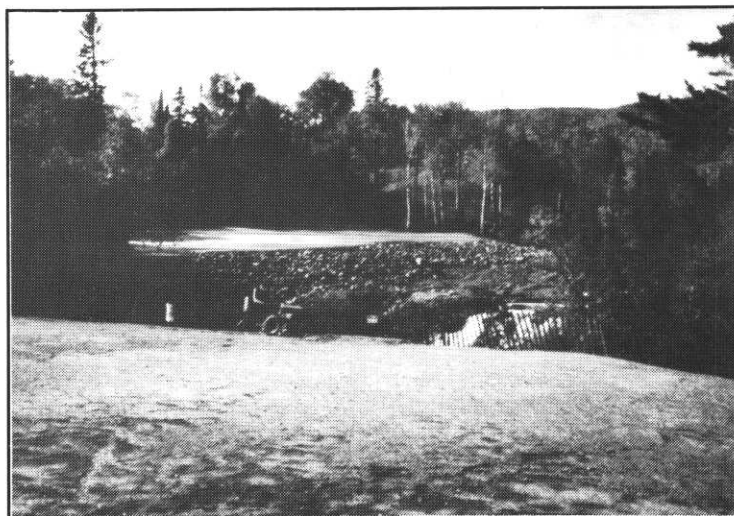


Beauty Abounds at New Golf Course at Lutsen; So Does the Challenge Of Building It

By **MIKE DAVIES**
Superintendent
Golf Course at Lutsen



ATTRACTIVE CHALLENGE—How about this shot of and to the 11th hole at Lutsen?

Driving from Duluth up the North Shore, most people love the beauty of the rugged shore of Lake Superior, the cascading rivers and the wildlife that inhabits the area. Golf course superintendents, on the other hand, look at all the rocks and wonder how grass could ever survive.

At Lutsen's new golf course we have it all. Lake Superior can be seen from 11 holes. Eight holes play along or over the Poplar River. You can even glimpse deer, moose, bear and wolves throughout the course, and yes, we did have plenty of rock to deal with.

Construction of the 18-hole golf course started September 18, 1989. A hundred



SPECTACULAR SCENERY—Mike Davies, Lutsen superintendent, poses at the 8th hole, which has a 90-foot drop. Poplar River is on the left and Lake Superior can be seen in the background.

acres of fairways, greens and tees were cleared that Fall before Winter shut us down. Construction started again on April 20, and we finished last October. I could write a book on what happened in between, but I'll stick to the highlights.

One of the first objectives we wanted to accomplish was to form an Erosion Control Plan. Before any construction was started, we knew that the "eyes" of the county, and indeed the "eyes" of many environmental groups, would be watching this project very closely. The Poplar River, which twists and winds throughout the golf course, is a designated trout stream. It is heavily fished in both the Spring and Fall. We also knew that our topsoil was precious, and we had to keep it from washing into the river.

Working with the Department of Natural Resources, the Soil & Water Conservation Service and the local Cook County Planning and Zoning Commission, we put together a comprehensive soil erosion plan that everyone agreed on. We channeled run-off from two fairways along the Poplar River into a sediment control pond. (This pond allows solids to silt out before entering the Poplar River and also serves to catch any run-off pesticides.) Temporary diversions were built throughout construction to help control water flows from summer and fall rains.

A big factor in the successful completion of the new golf course was the spirit of "team effort" by everyone involved. Construction was directed by Dick Freitag and his crew from Alpine Construction Company, based in Eau

Claire, Wisconsin. We had three local contractors who supplied men, equipment and a wealth of construction methodology and techniques that only workers experienced with this terrain would know. Weekly meetings with the Golf Course Construction Committee helped keep everyone informed of progress and identified concerns.

Twelve of the 18 holes were seeded by mid-September, and, weather permitting, should be ready to play next summer. The other six holes were dormant-seeded and will be ready by Spring of 1992.

Being involved in a project of this size from the ground floor was a very special opportunity for me. It was a learning experience from the start.

The first goal we had was to keep the public informed of our efforts to discourage any negative environmental effects. We minimized soil erosion and pesticide run-off. We had the honor of receiving Cook County's 1990 Conservation Landowner of the Year Award. This award is given in recognition of conservation efforts that show a commendable concern for man and the environment.

Now I'm hoping for a summer of warm, sunny days and an occasional light rain at night so I can get the course in shape to play. I encourage and challenge all of you to a round of golf at one of the finest golf courses in the Midwest.

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(Ed. Note: The golf course at Lutsen does not as yet have a name. A contest will be held to name it.)