

Three MGCSA Members Receive GCSAA Awards As Environmental Stewards

(Editor's Note: Three MGCSA members are chapter winners in the Public Golf Course category of GCSAA's Environmental Steward Awards.)

Dan Steiger
The Legacy Courses at Cragun's
Brainerd, Minn.

As a new facility, with construction of 36 holes beginning in 1997, the Legacy Courses at Cragun's have incorporated technically advanced systems to maximize the efficiency of water usage and minimize the impact of management activities. The complex encompasses about 500 acres of forest with little surrounding development. The focus of the development was to limit the changes to the pristine woodland environment. During construction, more than 3 miles of silt fence was installed to protect wetlands. On slopes in front of the fences, berms were created to allow runoff to percolate into the soil. On more severe slopes, straw bales, biodegradable erosion mat and collection basins were used to slow runoff.

Water-quality management includes taking baseline water samples from a number of specific sampling locations and then conducting semi-annual sampling at the same locations. Water usage is controlled by monitoring natural rainfall and evapotranspiration rates to determine how much irrigation is needed. A carefully designed irrigation system allows Steiger to maintain the turf with minimum inputs.

David Solga
Giant's Ridge Golf Course & Ski Resort
Gilbert, Minn.

Located in the Superior National Forest of northeastern Minnesota, Giant's Ridge covers a portion of the southeastern region of the Mesabi Iron Range, the largest iron ore producing lands in the United States. The state-owned facility was completed in 1997 following the interruption of construction by allegations suggesting that sufficient environmental studies had not been completed for the course development. The action was largely a result of the discovery of two rare plants on and/or adjacent to the property. A one-year, \$1.5 million litigation resulted, with the court ruling that construction could resume, yet one hole was rerouted to protect one of the targeted species.

Boulders up to 8 feet in diameter were unearthed during construction, and these were used to form "glacial sculptures" on many of the holes. This ultimately led to one of the most distinguished features at the facility. An environmental board, including Solga's staff and other key individuals, has been established to suggest stewardship programs to benefit both the community and facility. In 1999, Golf

Digest recognized Giant's Ridge as one of the Top 10 "Best New Upscale Public Courses in the United States" as well as the

"Best Public Course in Minnesota."

Doug Hausman, CGCS
Dakota Dunes Country Club
South Dakota

Located in southeastern South Dakota, each golf hole at Dakota Dunes has edge habitat, allowing free movement of the abundant wildlife that resides on the property. The three primary types of habitat are prairie, woodland and wetland. Through the routing plan of the Arnold Palmer-designed golf course, all three areas are used to their full potential. In addition, 200 acres of the development, called "the point," will be left undisturbed.

The edges of the property were planted as shelter belts during construction to promote flyway usage by waterfowl and wildlife movement. This example of forward thinking by the developer earned the facility the Abex Award from the state of South Dakota. The Dakota Dunes Development Co. is currently working with an architectural firm to tie a bike trail system to a new trail system at the club, allowing the public to enjoy the "point" area at Dakota Dunes.

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