

Where the Water Runs North—

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They also utilize the flag poles to mark their territory and leave "scrapes" next to the cup during the fall rut. What is the ruling on a Red Fox or a Timberwolf stealing your ball? Unlikely as it may seem, it happens quite often in Ely and Lutsen. Beavers are highly creative, intelligent animals also. Bad sprinkler coverage is not always an indicator of pump problems as a smart beaver knows the wet well is where his precious water is escaping. Some well placed sticks and mud will make you wonder "Why is there a steam coming out of the pump house!?" At times our furry friends may cause a few mishaps, but spotting them every day makes it all worth while. And our members and guests absolutely love seeing them.

How Do You Build a Golf Course On Ledge Rock You Ask?

Just talk to Vincent Dodge at the new Fortune Bay Wilderness course near Tower. Dodge says; "In a perfect world you would drill sample holes on a 30-foot grid throughout the entire site and use that data to make your design. Since doing that is not practical, when encountering ledge rock during the shaping process you first attempt to design around the ledgerock. We did this on more than half of the golf course. If that is not possible, then it is time to blast which is time consuming and very expensive. Construction in the area has to stop while blasting is being done.

After dealing with the ledge rock, all turfed areas must have at least 18 inches of the native peat/clay trashy material so that you can route irrigation lines. In some rare instances where this is not possible, trench blasting is in order. Special care must be taken to keep rocks away from the installed irrigation lines. After irrigation installation the entire site is capped of by 6-8 inches of what passes for topsoil in the area—basically a silty sand. All in all the ledge rock poses significant construction delays and cost, but when integrated into the design makes for a unique style of golf course."

Vince also adds, "Grow-in in this environment poses its own challenges as well. Low overnight temperatures well into June makes establishment a little slow. The weather in this area is also extremely fickle with thunderstorms popping up with no notice. The construction method described above is quite susceptible to washouts—particularly with the elevation changes on the site. We have been able to use Futerra blankets on troubled areas around drainage basins and steep slopes and its performance has been outstanding. Better than sod. One good thing about the climate is the absence of any sustained disease pressure. Pythium is unheard of and Brown Patch is rare. The only problems I anticipate are Dollar Spot and Take All Patch—especially with our straight sand greens and relatively sterile topsoil.

All in all, northern Minnesota is a great place to take care of a golf course. The hustle-bustle of heavy play during the summer months gives way to fantastic fall colors, cooler temperatures, and of course, hunting season. A good portion of superintendents here have some time off in the winter to sit in a fish house, ski, snowmobile, and just recuperate from the previous season. It is also nice to have the Boundary Waters Canoe Area right in your backyard where Mr. Walleye loves to hang out. Maintaining a golf course at the edge of the wilderness has been a great experience for me, and I hope to be doing it for a long, long time!

MGCSA Membership Report

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