

Golf and The Environment: The Battle Continues

By Bob Costa

"Few suburban landscapes are as pretty or as toxic as your typical golf course." "If you scraped a golf course green and tested it, you would have to cart it off to a hazardous waste facility." (National Audubon Society)

"The modern golf course, with its perfect fairways and pretty flowers, at any price, is a living laboratory, and it appears greenskeepers do have more than their share of lung cancer." (Paul Harvey)

"What makes a golf course? One thing, and that's water! Anything you can do to dry up a golf course will be productive. Even two days will take the green out of the grass and the spring out of the golfers and greenskeepers alike. Forget all that you've heard about pouring gasoline, or Roundup on the greens. Don't even

bother carving up the tees or stealing golf carts, just cut off that IV from the aquifer." (Earth First)

On a recent local radio commentary, golf courses and development were cited as the primary cause for the placement of over two hundred species of plants and animals on the endangered species list, on the island of Hawaii.

The preceding comments are just the latest salvo of anti-golf course comments being made across the nation. If this isn't enough, the National Golf Foundation suggests that some key environmental attitudes amongst golfers and non-golfers are more negative than previously thought. According to the study — more than one third of golfers believe that golf courses pollute lakes and streams. Both golfers and non-golfers perceive that too much water is used for course conditioning.

In a survey conducted by Golf Digest on consumer attitudes and perceptions, 68% of the respondents, who were subscribers of Golf Digest and an environmental magazine, didn't know if courses in their area were taking actions to mitigate environmental problems.

Clearly, we need to do a better job of communicating to those, other than ourselves, that golf courses do provide some benefit to the environment and community. It's time as individuals, and as an industry, that we begin to openly promote our profession, as opposed to hiding our heads in the sand. Educating the public is the only effective method of improving golf's tarnished image. Now is the time to act, after all, your future may just depend upon it. Next month I'll discuss some strategies to help accomplish this goal.

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Do Away With Bad Shots

Many bad shots result from a poor address, and especially incorrect ball position. Every golfer is different, so each one's proper ball position is different. To find your best ball position, take some practice swings with wood and irons. For woods, the correct ball position for you is where your wood first scrapes the top of the grass, for an iron, at the start of the divot hole.

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