

Drainage Project Helps A Golf Course Play Firm And Fast

Wade Hampton Golf Club
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Issue

Wade Hampton Golf Club is located in a sub-tropical rain forest in the mountains of western North Carolina. The average rainfall in this area is between 80 and 100 inches annually. Heavy clay soils that drain poorly are found throughout the golf course and the original drainage system could not handle the excessive annual rainfall. Even small rain events would require closing the golf course for extended periods of time. In such a wet climate, it was essential to improve the golf course drainage system.

Action

A comprehensive drainage master plan was developed with the assistance of a drainage expert. Every hole was analyzed over a period of several days. The end result was a drainage plan that would dramatically improve playing conditions and allow golf cart traffic to return to the course within 24 hours of a major rain event.



Installing more than 25 miles of drainage pipe at Wade Hampton has dramatically improved the playability of the golf course.

Once the plan was approved, a multiyear drainage project was scheduled and performed. Drainage work on the two wettest holes was completed in the initial year of the project. Based on the positive results, drainage on the rest of the golf course was completed the following year. In all, more than 25 miles of drainage pipes have been installed throughout the golf course at a depth of 2-3 feet below the surface. This extensive drainage project was performed during the winters, when Wade Hampton is closed, to avoid disrupting play. Additional drainage is installed annually to address small issues as they arise.

Results

The golfers at Wade Hampton have been very happy with the results of the project. The drainage work has dramatically improved playability and access to the course. Golf carts and maintenance equipment face considerably less restrictions following a rain event.

The biggest challenges faced during the project were rock, rain and freezing weather. An excavator with a rock hammer was needed regularly during the project and working through winter weather required patience. At times sod had to be moved into the maintenance facility to thaw before laying it and rain slowed the project down on a regular basis.

One tip for success when performing a major drainage project would be to review the costs associated with renting versus purchasing equipment. With a multiyear project, it may be better to purchase the equipment needed and own it at the end of the project.