March 18, 2005

To: John Szerlag, City Manager

From: Laura Fitzpatrick, Acting Assistant City Manager/Services
Carol K. Anderson, Parks and Recreation Director

Subject: Agenda Item: Golf Inc. Article

Attached please find a copy of an article published in the January 2005 issue of Golf Inc. pertaining to the development of Sanctuary Lake Golf Course.

Golf Inc. is a publication for golf course operators published monthly.

Prepared by: C. Anderson

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One-time dump now haven

success story Officials go extra mile to ensure Sanctuary Lake course lives up to its name by Jim Dunlap

Applause that greeted the ceremonial first tee shot at July's grand opening of Sanctuary Lake Golf Course in Troy, Mich., was undoubtedly echoed by the chirps, squeaks, barks and snorts of the numerous wild critters who now enjoy new habitat on the former city dump site.

City officials and the design-build team of Treadwell Golf Associates earned kudos from both golfers and environmentalists for their extra efforts in not only preserving existing wildlife and plant life habitat around the site, but creating new areas and features on the site itself.

The city course construction cost approximately $5.8 million, not counting the clubhouse, parking lot and nature trails — not an usually high figure for a brownfield development. Considering that the city received more than 1 million cubic yards of free soil fill to cap the site from other construction sites in the area, the course was a bargain, said Jeff Parks, vice president and operations manager for Wyandotte, Mich.-based Treadwell.

"When we started, there were actually spots where you could pick dirt off the ground and see the garbage [beneath]," Parks said. "Now they've actually got a bio-diverse site."

The city and Treadwell pushed the envelope to come up with new ways to protect and create wildlife habitat, cleanse stormwater runoff from the landfill site and maintain the integrity of the neighboring Lake Plain Prairie Nature Preserve. Nearly four acres of new wetlands were created in various spots around the site, partially to protect the hydrology of runoff water and partly to create habitat.

Animal and plant life were uppermost in the design and construction scheme for the course. In addition to creating natural corridors for migrating wildlife, features such as mounds with buried stumps for hibernating and nesting animals, birdhouses and waterfowl nesting areas, bee hives and even a nesting ground for turtles in an out of play sand bunker were created.

Jennifer Lawson, who worked with the city's environmental consultant firm before coming on board as the city's environmental specialist, said the project was designed to maximize habitat and preserve a positive ecology wherever possible on the site. Native grasses were planted in non-maintained areas and now provide additional wildlife habitat. The city also got help from community groups.

"The Boy Scouts built birdhouses and now we have lots of purple martins as well as bluebirds and other birds," Lawson said. "The martins help control mosquitoes. The Girl Scouts contacted us wanting to plant a butterfly garden. The first spring, we had incredible color. We're using that as a pilot and thinking of planting others around the course."

Flora rare to the area was preserved, including spice bush, Christmas fern, witch hazel, beech trees, wild leeks and tulip trees. Seeds were collected from the few rose mallow plants on the site and distributed around other wetland areas, where Lawson said they are now thriving.

Jake Pilat, director of golf operations, said the new course has gotten excellent play, although the city was only scheduling four tee times an hour during the summer before moving to 10-minute intervals in the fall. Sanctuary Lake provides area golfers with a higher end municipal option — the other city course, Sylvan Glen has peak greens fees of $35 with a cart for residents, while Sanctuary Lake charges $50 with cart for city residents.

Treadwell Golf Associates, which designs, builds, owns and operates courses, managed the course through grow-in and will continue to manage its maintenance through the end of the year, Parks said. At that point, the city may either extend the contract or take over course maintenance in-house.

Ducks join numerous other wildlife and plant species that call a former dump site home.

University to build $8 million course

John Harbottle Design has been chosen as the architect for a new $8 million golf course to be built on the campus of Washington State University in Pullman, Wash.

The new course, which will include a practice facility, will replace Washington State's existing nine-hole course. It will be built entirely by private funding.

Planned groundbreaking is in Spring 2005. The course will be located on about 110 acres of a 300-acre site that will be a part of a giant recreational hub on the campus.

The area where the new course will be constructed has significant elevation changes in a rural farmland setting. Harbottle's ultimate goal is to create a course that will be able to compete with renowned college golf courses such as those at Stanford and Ohio State.

Other current Harbottle projects include designs for the Running Horse golf course in Fresno, Calif., which will be the centerpiece of a new residential development, and Eaglewood, a private golf club set to break ground this spring in Truckee, Calif., near Lake Tahoe.

—Mike Besack