

2. Communicate with the membership about the realistic start and completion dates of the project. Focus on the positive aspects.

3. Develop a good working relationship with the contractor. I brought ours coffee each morning and we talked about the day's work.

One problem was encountered during construction when trying to spread the stockpiled topsoil. The topsoil, which looked more like muck, is the original wetland soil and is a valuable seed source of wetland plants. The material was difficult to work with, and I had to borrow a farmer's disc harrow to move it. It took seven weeks to complete the contouring and finish grading.

To establish a natural buffer, we seeded the area around the pond perimeter with a ryegrass and fescue mix to control erosion and to slow runoff. The buffer zone provides food and cover for wildlife and also shades the shallow water along the edge, helping

to moderate the water temperature. Switchgrass, marsh hibiscus, Joe-pye weed, wild iris, and broomsedge were planted the following spring. More native plants, including buttonbush and shadbush, are planned for subsequent plantings.

### Project Costs

The entire restoration project cost approximately \$12,000, and several factors helped keep the costs down. The permit application was only \$50 since the area disturbed was less than an acre. The DEC did not require the standard engineering drawings, but allowed my sketches. I did a portion of the work with my crew and utilized local resources to accomplish many of the tasks. A local nursery provided invaluable advice on wetland plant materials.

The most cost-effective labor for seeding of the pond edges was provided by the local

elementary school. The kindergarten and second-grade classmates of my two sons, armed with cups of switchgrass seed, were the most enjoyable and enthusiastic workers. We plan to include these future environmentalists in more projects.

The Bridgehampton Golf Club is registered in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses, and I am delighted with the program's suggested projects and advice. This program has provided information for making Potash Pond even better for wildlife, along with other projects that we can incorporate on the golf course.

While I started out trying to improve an undesirable situation on my course, I have found a new avenue to enhance the golf course, improve the area for the wildlife, and educate a future generation about the environment. The restoration of Potash Pond has been a rewarding experience.

## ALL THINGS CONSIDERED

# HIT THE BALL!

by DAVID A. OATIS

Director, Northeastern Region, USGA Green Section

A COUPLE of years ago, I visited a golf course and was shocked to find that the club had played "preferred lies" for many years because of having poor-quality fairway turf during a portion of each summer. At the time of my visit, the fairways were nearly flawless, yet the club continued to "roll the ball" because a few thin areas of turf existed (1% or 2% of the total fairway acreage), and thus it was possible to have a less-than-perfect lie in the fairway. In essence, this membership was saying that a ball landing in a fairway should be guaranteed a perfect lie and to have less simply would not be fair!

I was so shocked by the attitude of the club that I related the story to the golfers at another course the following week. To my dismay, the story was met with blank looks and embarrassed stares from the committee members, as they admitted having played preferred lies for years as well!

The account typifies what has happened to American golfers and American golf courses. Perfection is demanded, and if it can't be attained, we cheat! Golf isn't sup-

posed to be fair. Golf is supposed to be a test of nerves, physical skill, and mental acuity. It should be a challenge and a lesson in overcoming adversity, not a cakewalk *and definitely not a guarantee!*

The major objective in golf turf management always has been to improve playing conditions, the theory being that by doing so we would increase the skill factor and reduce the luck factor. Playing conditions have been improved unbelievably over the years, but the demands of golfers have increased along with the quality of the playing conditions. A well-struck tee shot landing in the fairway should not be intentionally penalized; that would make no sense at all. By the same token, neither should the golfer be guaranteed a perfect lie. Removing the luck factor entirely also eliminates the need for the skill required to negotiate a tricky lie.

I contend that luck is an integral part of golf and that it adds great interest to the game. Can you imagine how boring it would be to be able to predict exactly what type of lie you would face on your second

shot immediately after striking your tee shot? Do not misunderstand me; I am not advocating that we should trick up our golf courses, only that they need not, and cannot, be perfect. Above all else, we need to play the ball as we find it, not as we think we should find it, or would like to find it.

It is time we put things in perspective. There should be no guarantees in golf. If a shot landing in a fairway comes to rest in a divot, invent a shot to get it out of the divot. If a ball plugs in a bunker, don't change the sand or raking techniques or complain to the course manager. Figure out a way to get the ball unplugged. If the greens are hard and do not hold shots as well as you would like, try landing the ball short. If the condition of the golf course doesn't suit your particular game, adjust your game. It is not the responsibility of the golf course superintendent to tailor course conditioning to a particular golfer's desires. We do not need to trick up our courses, but neither do we need to perfect their condition. In short, play the course as you find it. Just hit the ball!