

Golf Course Value Goes Far Beyond Game

A golf course has value as a beautiful playing field for golf, but has additional value well beyond the game. Today, golf courses must be sustainable economically, environmentally and socially beneficial to the community.

The American Society of Golf Course Architects is active in educating the public and improving the perception of golf. Golf courses benefit communities as revenue and tax sources, green space, wildlife and plant sanctuaries and water filtration, among other uses. There are numerous advantages to the community that comes from the positive environmental, financial and social impact of a golf course.

As a group that loves golf and works to create sustainable layouts for others who love the game, Sanford Golf Design has seen firsthand how golf courses truly benefit their communities. Those in the golf industry understand this, but it's important to share this message with those who may not be familiar with the positive benefits of golf courses.

In Jupiter, Florida, Abacoa Golf Club provides important infrastructure functions for the entire community including drainage, irrigation and water treatment usage. The on-site lake system utilizes treated effluent from the local sewage treatment plant and storm drainage providing a reservoir to irrigate the golf course and surrounding Abacoa community. Overflow must make its way through a manmade wetland on the course that biologically filtrates the effluent before it reaches the community drainage system. This system was a joint effort by the Town of Jupiter, Abacoa Development and the golf course architect. Golfers and residents benefit by reduced water costs and premium turf conditions.

In a world of smartphone devices, Facebook pages and Twitter accounts, there is no substitute for personal interaction, the kind found every day through the game of golf. Golf courses provide the basis for numerous social benefits both personally and professionally. You will learn far more about someone during a single round of golf than a week's worth of meetings in an office environment.

Golf courses are a source of tremendous economic and environmental value to a community, but the social benefits a golf course provides are just as valuable. Whether you are out for a round with some friends, conducting formal business in a friendly, competitive atmosphere or introducing your son or daughter to a practice range for the first time, the golf course remains a truly unique place. Further, golf provides a plethora of health benefits from being outdoors.

Walking a golf course leads to better health. Anyone looking for a moderately paced, cardiovascular workout will benefit by walking nine or 18 holes designed to work with the natural features of the land. A recent MSN.com article cited additional benefits of walking, including lowering the risk of Type 2 diabetes, reducing stress, preventing heart disease and decreasing the need for medication.

A course can also be used for other activities, which benefit a community, including trails for jogging and cross-country skiing or concert space. The practice range at a course is a great place to bring in a portable movie screen. A course manager or owner who invites area residents for an evening's entertainment under the stars may find they will return for a lesson or round of golf.

A golf course's value is not limited to the United States. On the Mediterranean coast of Egypt, Sanford Golf Design is building a resort course that includes a promenade on the perimeter of the course for resort guests to walk around and enjoy the striking landscape. The promenade moves into the golf course and leads to a promontory / café where guests can enjoy a beverage and capture magnificent views of the Mediterranean Sea. Several Courses in the western US have been developed to include equestrian trails on the perimeter as well, to provide a unique interaction of activities for community residents.

Other cultures have embraced alternative uses on golf courses. At the Old Course in St. Andrews, Scotland local citizens walk their dogs and ride horses on the sacred links. Maybe it's time for us to take a page from the book of those who invented this great game.