

# GCM

*golf course management*

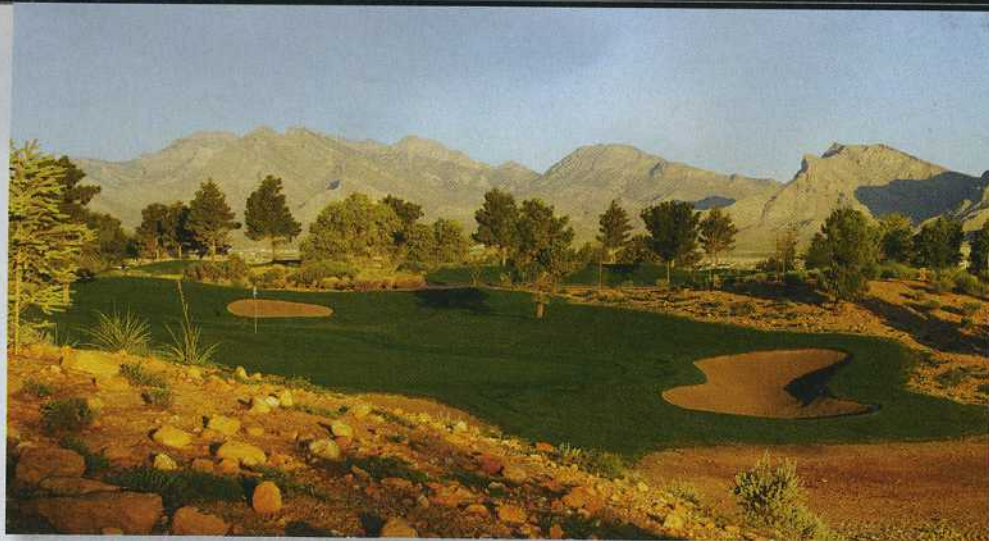
## **Shark Attack!**

GCSAA's 2008  
Old Tom Morris Award winner,  
Greg Norman

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Angel Park GC in Las Vegas removed 70 acres of turf and used xeriscaping techniques to design a more water-friendly golf course. Photo by Rick Martin



## Accommodating the drought

**In the desert, water can** be as elusive as a mirage. In Las Vegas, that especially holds true as the Colorado River system faces its worst drought on record, the area's main source of water, Lake Mead, is severely low, and southern Nevada has been placed on a drought alert.

To counter that uncontrollable variable, two Las Vegas golf courses are taking proactive measures to limit on-site water use through an incentive program offered by the area's water district, Southern Nevada Water Authority.

Angel Park Golf Club and The Legacy Golf Club, both managed by OB Sports Golf Management, are embarking on major turf removal projects in conjunction with SNWA to reduce the amount of out-of-play turf on the clubs' layouts.

Bill Rohret, CGCS, director of maintenance and superintendent at Angel Park, says the water district's program pays golf courses a dollar per square foot of turf removed and converted to xeriscaping to encourage landscape designs that use less water.

"You can't just take a bulldozer and scrape off an acre of turf and just make it a parking lot," Rohret says. "We have to plant desert plants; we have to revegetate the golf course to make it look like the desert again."

Many courses in this area, like Angel Park and The Legacy, were built in the late 1980s when water was a less critical issue. They were designed to look green and lush, not congruent with the area's natural landscape.

"Las Vegas used to have inexpensive water, and everybody's from somewhere else," Rohret says. "They built golf courses that looked like back in the Midwest."

At Angel Park, 70 acres of turf were removed, resulting in a nearly 28 percent reduction of turf overall. Rohret estimates the reduction will result in a water savings of around 80 million gal-

lons every year.

The incentive reward from the water district about covered the costs of turf removal, revegetation and re-laying irrigation, Rohret says, adding that many courses break even.

After the turf removal, which included 33 acres from out-of-play areas on Angel Park's 18-hole Mountain Course, golfers raved about the resulting "Southwest desert" look, he says.

About 50 acres of turf also were removed from The Legacy, a 7,233-yard course perhaps best known for its tee boxes in the shapes of spades, clubs, diamonds and hearts. The course, where Robert Laas, Class A GCSAA member, is head superintendent, features three holes crisscrossed with desert canyons and lava outcroppings.

These aren't the only two courses to take up the offer.

According to the SNWA, 26 out of 50 courses in the area have completed similar projects, removing 15 million square feet, or 346 acres, of turf on golf courses, and saving 1 billion gallons of water each year.

Besides water conservation, OB Sports says the turf removal projects have yielded plenty of other benefits, such as aesthetics and less time spent per round as golfers can find errant golf balls much faster in the desert landscaping as opposed to long rough.

**GCM**

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### NEWS & notes

**This month**, a variety of irrigation professionals will gather in San Diego for the 2007 International Irrigation Show. Classes run Dec. 9-11, and certification exams are offered Dec. 6-11 at the San Diego Convention Center. The show now features a business track along with sessions geared for landscape and agricultural irrigation. More than 90 conference sessions over three days will include subjects such as lean management in irrigation, selling smart irrigation, urban rainwater harvesting for landscape irrigation and technologies for longer pump life.

**The city** of Calgary, Alberta, Canada, has implemented a water management plan that requires Irrigation Association-certified irrigation designers and certified irrigation contractors to design and install city park projects. The city also adopted the IA's "Turf and Landscape Irrigation Best Management Practices" for landscape and irrigation construction and maintenance.

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