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GCM

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Making the Grade

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GCSAA 

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2014 NEW GOLF CONSTRUCTION

*YEAR TO DATE SUMMARY
as of 7/28/2014

HOLES

9 18

PROPOSED



| | | |
|-----------|---|----|
| Daily Fee | 5 | 35 |
| Municipal | 0 | 3 |
| Private | 1 | 2 |

IN PLANNING



| | | |
|-----------|----|----|
| Daily Fee | 14 | 52 |
| Municipal | 4 | 1 |
| Private | 0 | 8 |

UNDER CONSTRUCTION



| | | |
|-----------|---|----|
| Daily Fee | 6 | 15 |
| Municipal | 0 | 2 |
| Private | 1 | 2 |

COMPLETED



| | | |
|-----------|---|---|
| Daily Fee | 2 | 3 |
| Municipal | 0 | 0 |
| Private | 1 | 0 |

Source: National Golf Foundation



The Heron Course at The Oaks Club in Osprey, Fla., soon will have a new look.
Photo courtesy of The Oaks

The shape of things to come

As an architect, Jason Straka gets it.

He realizes that each project, whether a new build or a renovation, is under the microscope. Often, the eyes that closely monitor his work are those of golf club members who want the facility to be shaped according to their own vision.

As he embarks on a project in one of the fastest-growing complexes in the country, Straka is prepared to soothe their concerns.

Straka, one half of Fry/Straka Global Golf Course Design, launches a renovation this month at The Oaks Club in Osprey, Fla. Straka is in charge of redesigning the Heron Course, designed on behalf of Hurdzan/Fry Environmental Golf Design, at The Oaks, a gated community with two golf courses that earlier this year scaled new heights in its total of equity members (536). Some of them — including some who may have felt disregarded in previous course renovations — have met with Straka, who has been more than willing to hear their thoughts. In 2007, the other 18-hole course, The Eagle, was rebuilt.

"I've already had many of the members say that they have not had anyone listen to them in the past, scared that this job we are going to do will make the course too darn hard. But they are so happy when I call and talk to them, explain that we will do what we say we are going to do, and then follow up with them," Straka says. "I want to do a great job on all of my projects, but it will be wonderful to give these members something that will satisfy them and a process they will be proud to be part of."

Straka certainly has references to show that he is making a difference. In July, *Golf Inc.* revealed the winners in its 2014 Renovation of the Year competition. Straka oversaw two projects that claimed prizes. In the daily-fee category, his work at Camelback Golf Club's Ambiente course earned first place; what he accomplished at Columbia (Mo.) Country Club took third place in the private course division. Both courses were designed on behalf of

Hurdzan/Fry Environmental Golf Design.

The Oaks director of greens and grounds, Nick Kearns, says he and Straka are rebuilding a trust with members that had waned throughout the years. If that isn't enough to keep Kearns occupied, the unique circumstances at the two golf courses surely will. Each golf course has different types of grasses. The Eagle is totally Sealsle Supreme Seashore paspalum. The Heron, when the renovation is complete, will be Celebration, TifGrand and TifEagle bermudagrass.

"There was a lot of skepticism out there before we got into this," Kearns says. "There is no question in my mind this project will be successful."

Kearns says they hope to have the Heron ready by November 2015. That, of course, may depend on hurricane season. The Oaks is close to the Gulf of Mexico, which makes it susceptible to hurricanes. Fortunately, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration forecasts a near-normal or below-normal Atlantic hurricane season this year.

Straka, meanwhile, has been busy fielding calls from The Oaks residents. One of them sure sounds like a Straka fan.

"A man who lives on the 17th hole has had some drainage problems," Straka says. "We came up with a solution we thought would help him. He called back and said, 'Jason, I have lived here 14 years and finally someone listened to me. I cannot tell you how thankful I am.' Things like that, and the joy we can bring, are part of our drive to succeed and to give clients a product they will enjoy and deserve."

— Howard Richman, *GCM* associate editor