



An industry leader in environmental golf course design, Jason Straka blends his formal education, rigorous professional training and considerable design experience to produce a tradition of excellence. Skillfully merging his professional training in the many facets of golf course design with his extensive hands-on design experience, he has shaped his specialty: integrating a golf course both functionally and aesthetically into its surrounding environment.

## RECOGNITION

An active member of the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA), Straka was one of the youngest members ever elected to its Board of Governors. Having served as the ASGCA Education Committee Chairperson since its creation in 2012 through 2018, he was honored in April 2016 with a Presidential Citation for his work in the development of meaningful professional education programs. He was also selected to be the ASGCA Task Force Representative on an Expert Working Group devised to coordinate input of leading industry experts with the Golf Environment Organization (GEO). In 2018 Straka was named to the ASGCA Executive Committee to serve a 5-year officer rotation, becoming President in 2021.

Straka has served as a 10-year Board Member of the Ohio Turfgrass Foundation (OTF), and as President in 2017-2018. He currently holds a board position on the Ohio Turfgrass Research Trust (OTRT). He also has been an Adjunct Professor at The Ohio State University and a judge for the Golf Digest/GCSAA Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards.

In 2010, Straka was rated by Golf Magazine as one of the most influential people in golf under 40 years of age, and three Straka-designed golf courses won awards in Golf Inc.'s Renovation of the Year Competition 2014-2016, a contest which annually seeks to recognize the best renovation projects of the past year from around the world. In addition,

Fry/Straka Global Golf Course Design was named Golf Course Design Firm of the Year for 2013 by The BoardRoom Magazine in the publication's annual Excellence in Achievement Awards and Top 100 Golf Course Architects Worldwide by Golf Inc. in 2019.

## EDUCATION

Straka, a native of northeastern Ohio, developed and strengthened his commitment to environmental design while a student at Cornell University. In 1994 he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Landscape Architecture, followed in 1995 by a Master of Professional Studies degree in Agriculture – Turfgrass Management and Environmental Golf Course Design Studies. His Masters work involved the development of Widow's Walk Golf Course in Scituate, Mass., which later would be recognized as the first environmental demonstration and research golf course in the United States.

In addition to his formal education, Straka also completed the Advanced Golf Course Design and Management Short Course at The Ohio State University in 1996, as well as the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Continuing Education Program from 1999-2008. Straka's educational background is complemented by an equally rigorous and diverse professional training as an associate in a certified golf course builder's firm, as a golf course greenskeeper and as a research technician in the design and construction of golf greens.

## THE ENVIRONMENTAL APPROACH REALIZED

The efficacy of Straka's environmental design philosophy is confirmed by the diversity and success of the projects with which he has been involved, not to mention their high public regard.

His most notable collaborative environmental design projects include: **Camelback Golf Club, Ambiente Course** (Scottsdale, AZ), a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary and Operation Pollinator member awarded Best New Courses of 2013 by *Golf Digest*, #1, Renovation of the Year (Public) 2014 by *Golf Inc.*, as well as the 2013 ASGCA Design Excellence Recognition Program Winner; **Erin Hills Golf Course** (Erin, WI), host of the 2017 U.S. Open and 2011 U.S. Amateur, rated #8, America's 100 Greatest Public Courses and #2, Best in State by *Golf Digest*; **Georgian Bay Club** (Collingwood, Ontario, Canada), rated #20, Canada's Best Golf Courses by *Golf Digest* and host of the former Wayne Gretzky Pro-Am Classic

as part of the PGA Nationwide Tour; and **Los Robles Greens Golf Course** (Thousand Oaks, CA), a project that featured a 40-acre environmental restoration and received the ASGCA Design Excellence Award in 2016.

Other noteworthy projects involving original designed courses are: **Shelter Harbor Golf Club** (Westerly, RI) rated #2, Best in State by *Golf Digest*; **Dundarave Golf Course** (Roseneath, Prince Edward Island, Canada), rated #6, Best Golf Resorts in Canada by *SCOREGolf*; and **Little Mountain Country Club** (Concord, OH) rated #2, Best Public in State by *Golf Magazine*.

The depth and range of Straka's work are evident in numerous high-profile golf course renovation projects as well. These include: **Acaya Golf Club** (Lecce, Italy) rated #1, Best New Golf Italian Courses of 2009 by *Golf Digest Italy* and host of the 2010-2012 European Challenge Tour; **The Oaks Club, Heron Course** (Osprey, FL) and **Hunt Valley Golf Club** (Phoenix, MD) both recipients of the ASGCA Design Excellence Award, and **En-Joie Golf Course** (Endicott, NY), host of the PGA Champions Tour Dick's Sporting Goods Open.

## PHILANTHROPIC COMMITMENT

Straka consistently demonstrates his philanthropic commitment to educating others within the golf community. He has served as an instructor at a variety of professional seminars around the world, including The Graduate School of Industry and the Environment at Kyungwon University (Seoul, South Korea), the Brazilian Golf Confederation, the Brazilian Superintendents Organization, the Portuguese Greenskeeper's Association, the Polish Golf Properties Conference, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association, the Canadian International Business Conference, and the Golf Course Owners Association of America, among many others.

Straka has led educational courses at Cornell University, Purdue University, the University of Idaho, Delhi State University and The Ohio State University. In addition, he has served as professional advisor at the University of Massachusetts, Lakehead University, and University of Guelph. Having taught environmental golf course design at the university level, he has also served as an expert witness on environmental golf course matters for the U.S. government, speaking authoritatively on such matters around the world.

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