

NBGC's Future – *The Road Ahead*

Neskowin Beach Golf Course (NBGC) has a rich history that stretches back 90 years. From its beginnings in the early 1930s it has been an iconic destination for local residents, tourists and golf enthusiasts from throughout the Northwest. It serves as a welcoming community gathering place for people to recreate and socialize. NBGC is proud of its heritage and is intent on continuing its central role in Neskowin for generations to come. NBGC has been community supported for the last eight years, and while much has been accomplished with this milestone, there is much more to be done. Funds have been raised to pay off the golf course debt from its purchase, and the course will soon be owned outright. We want to celebrate this huge accomplishment with a big THANK YOU to all those who have made this possible! Now we must embrace the present challenge of saving the golf course. We need to be intentional in moving forward to renew the golf course, with a focus on effectively addressing water management issues. Our goal is to improve the quality of the golf course and extend the length of the golf season. NBGC looks forward to engaging its members and others within the community to meet this challenge. Together we can create a promising future for “The Jewel of the Oregon Coast”.

Why is the golf course inundated with water and unplayable at times when it has been open in the past? This year was one of the wettest Springs on record, and amplifies the water management challenges NBGC has been facing for some time now. In 2020 the full golf course was open for 7 weeks. In 2021, a year of record low Spring and Summer rainfall and stream flows, the full golf course was open for 11 weeks. The full course has yet to open this year. We as the Board recognize the current situation is disappointing, and it is as unacceptable to us as it is to NBGC's members. While we are doing what we can to open the full course as soon as practical, it is equally important that we begin to discuss the future of the golf course.

One reason the golf course season is so short is that the middle of the course has subsided (or sunk) over the years and the amount of water on the course during the off season has steadily increased. Another reason is the traditional avenues for water to leave the course (Butte Creek and the Ditch running north to south through the course) have silted up, narrowed in places, and are overgrown with vegetation. As a result, they are less effective in moving water through the course than in the past, with the water largely stagnant (the Ditch), or overflowing its banks onto the golf course (Butte Creek).

What can be done to improve the situation and get NBGC back to a viable golf course?

NBGC's Board has recognized for some time that the future of the golf course is uncertain, and we have been exploring what can be done. The good news is NBGC can have a robust future if there is the commitment and support to pursue it. We have identified a path forward to revitalize and renew NBGC, and continue to move forward on this path. Our objective is to initiate a number of actions that restore NBGC's season to five months on average (mid-May

through mid-October). The actions we are considering include increasing the golf course elevation in areas where it has subsided (with “fill”), improving Butte Creek channel capacity (removing silt, restoring its width), and resume maintaining the Ditch (dredging, grading). We are also considering changes to the course that enhance wetland areas and potentially improve fish passage and habitat.

This sounds like a lot. What will it take to do all of this? It is a lot, it is nothing short of a revitalization, a renewal of the golf course. It will take NBGC’s members and the community pulling together just as we did to purchase the golf course in the first place. We first need to complete due diligence on our plans for the golf course of the future, and then will need to obtain regulatory approval (a permit). And we will need to raise the capital to follow through with renewing the course. As we move further along this road, we look forward to engaging our members to share what we learn and further discuss what our future can be.

Why is regulatory approval and a permit needed to revitalize and renew the golf course?

Although NBGC was originally built on sand (as was most of the community), much of the course is now designated as wetlands, and a permit is required when action is taken that impacts wetlands. In addition, Butte Creek is designated as essential salmon habitat, and a permit is needed if action is taken that impacts the stream. Our intent is to co-exist with the wetlands, and while some of the actions we are proposing will impact the wetlands (fill), other actions can enhance wetland areas, and celebrate them as a natural part of the golf course.

How can I help? Thank you for your interest and support! There will be plenty of opportunity to provide assistance and to support renewal of the golf course as we move forward. For now, we ask you to “stay tuned” as we complete due diligence on our plans. We look forward to sharing what we learn and further discussing NBGC’s future soon.

