Sea Trail Resorts
75A Clubhouse Road
Sunset Beach, NC28468

December 9, 2016

Sunset Beach Town Council
700 Sunset Blvd. N
Sunset Beach, NC 28468

Dear Town Council Members,

In accordance to Town Code sections 10.06 & 10.07, this letter is in request for a tree removal permit for one hundred and ninety three, non-heritage trees located in and around various putting greens on Sea Trail's Maples course, which have had a materially negative effect on turf quality; please see attachment 1, "Maples Shade Study" for a detailed tree list.

Over the years, the turf surfaces, most importantly the greens, on the Maples course have continued to degrade due excessive tree shade and tree density which restricts necessary air flow to the surfaces, preventing proper grass growth essential for quality putting surfaces. Due to the poor turf conditions, Sea Trail received multiple complaints and was forced to close the Maples course for twenty five full days and limited play to mornings on thirty five days through August – October due to "unplayable" putting surfaces. The closures had a significant negative financial impact on Sea Trail's golf business.

Sea Trail has contracted with multiple companies to provide tree studies as required by town code, some of which have suggested the removal of seven hundred plus trees; please see attachments 2 – 4. The requested permit for tree removal will only remove trees essential for green turf health and will be in no way shape or form for commercial or residential development.

Please consider the evidence provided in the attachments when considering the approval of the tree removal permit for Sea Trail on the Maples course.

Sincerely,

Michael M. Bersani, CPA
Director of Finance
Sea Trail Resorts

-Attachment #1

Maples Shade study

November 8, 2016

1. Two large pines and two hardwoods left side before green inside cart path. 4 total

2. One Hickory tree left side back of green. 1 total

3. Oak and two pines inside path at right back of green and two large pines behind these trees on the OB side of cart path. 5 total

4. Double Oak right front of green, two other oaks inside path on right (has a cedar growing in it.) seven additional trees on the OB side of cart path 10 total

5. Three oaks behind green left side 3 total

6. Six pines, an oak, a holly and dead hardwood left of green inside the Maples OB stakes. 9 total

#7. Clear

8. Two oaks short and left of green along with another dead oak in the same area. Three oaks even with the center and left side of green. 5 total

9. Four pines and five oaks behind and left of green. One more oak even with towards left side near cart path toward VAC. 10 total

10. Clear

11. Five tall pines left of green and left of cart path and one large pine right of green. 6 total

12. Clear

13. At very minimum 25 pines at the right side behind green toward 14 tee area. 60 total On the left front side of green a minimum of at least 35 pines.

14. Eight pines and 4 oaks behind and left of green. Along left side of cart path ten 22 total pines starting at the pond and ending behind Ron Dumbass house.

15. Five pines left side before green along property line OB stakes after the waste 13 total Bunker and seven pines behind green both sides of the cart path before crossing road to 16 tee.

16. Four pines and four oaks in waste bunker right of green. Two oaks and three 13 total pines behind green.

17. Seven pines on right front side before green between Holes 17 and 11. Eleven pines behind green left side by 18 tee. 19 total

18. Eight oaks and one pine starting at the double trunk oak between maples club house and green. One pine on cart path by the split between entrance to Brassies and path back to cart barn. On the left back side of green two oaks and two pines with azealas around trunk also can be removed. 13 total

Shade study was conducted to reveal morning and evening shade issues on green complexes only. With the goal of enabling a minimum of 8 hours of direct sunlight to turf. None of the identified shade trees are considered specimen trees.

Total tree removal count 193

Attachment # 2

Sea Trail-Maples Course
Tree Removal Needed for Adequate Sunlight to Greens
February 25, 2014

#1 Two large pines front left of green, one hardwood inside path near pines. Four large in same area as other trees of which two of these are across path. Seven trees in total

#2 Large hickory left rear of green across path

#3 Oak and two pines inside path at right rear of green. Two more pines in same area across path. Five trees in total

#4 Double oak right front of green, two other oaks inside path on right (one has cedar tree growing in it), eight other oaks right of path (only a couple are over 12" caliper, just tall and thin. Twelve trees in total Good green for expansion

#5 Three oaks behind and left, those nearest green. Three trees in total Good green for expansion

#6 Six pines, an oak, a holly and a dead hardwood left of green. This is all trees inside the two OB stakes. Removal of two more pines, two oaks and a hickory outside the OB stakes would be good if a deal could be negotiated with the lot owner. Nine trees in total on course property and five more off club property

#7 Clear

#8 Two oaks short and left of green along with another dead oak in that same area. Three oaks even with center of green left of green. Five trees in total

#9 Four pines and five oaks behind and left of green. One more oak even with center of green on left. Ten trees in total

Putting green The end of PG farthest from clubhouse one oak beside green and another across the street toward #9 green. The end of PG closest to clubhouse one oak and a dogwood beside green along with four oaks and two pines across the street toward #9 green. Ten trees in total

#10 Clear for now but keep eye on ones at left rear of green

#11 Five tall pines and a poplar tree near magnolia tree. All these are left of green and left of path. It looks like some trees have been removed in this area before. One large pine even with center of green on right of green. Seven trees in total

#12 Clear Good green for expansion

#13 Beginning with pine between back of green and back tee for #14 remove 25-30 pines at right rear and behind green. In front of green on left starting 50-75 yards short of green remove 35-40 pines and poplars on left side of hole and left of green. BY FAR THE WORST GREEN COMPLEX FOR SHADE. Removal of 65 to 75 trees in total recommended here

#14 Six pines and eight oaks behind and left of green. Beginning between OB stakes just short right of green near buried poles with pelican statuary remove three pines. Progress up right of cart path about three trees deep off path and remove fifteen pines. Nothing is very big in this area. Thirty two trees in total

#15 Fifteen pines and three oaks behind and left of green near street where cart path leads to #16 tees. Eighteen trees in total

#16 After sharp right turn by cart path near green remove all trees in waste bunker right of green but left of cart path. This consists of five pines, one forked oak, a single oak and a triple trunked oak. Ten trees in total

#17 Seven pines on right front of green of which all but one is across cart path. Eleven pines and one oak behind and left of green. Nineteen trees in total

#18 Right of green beginning with triple trunk oak and stopping at light pole near latticed area on clubhouse remove eleven oaks and one pine between green complex and clubhouse. Left of green remove two pines with azaleas planted around bottom and two more oaks just beyond these pines. Eighteen trees in total

RECOMMENDATION IS REMOVAL OF 231 TREES WITH 97 OF THESE COMING AROUND GREENS 13 AND 14. NONE OF THE TREES AROUND THESE TWO GREENS ARE ANYTHING CLOSE TO BEING CONSIDERED A SPECIMEN TREE. FIVE MORE TREES OFF PROPERTY ARE RECOMMENDED FOR REMOVAL LEFT OF #6 GREEN.

Tees 3, 4, 7 and 16 need significant tree removal and even with that a switch to a more shad tolerant turf grass needs to be considered for these tees. There probably are more tees where trees need to be removed but my primary concerns in this shade study were the greens and the green complexes.

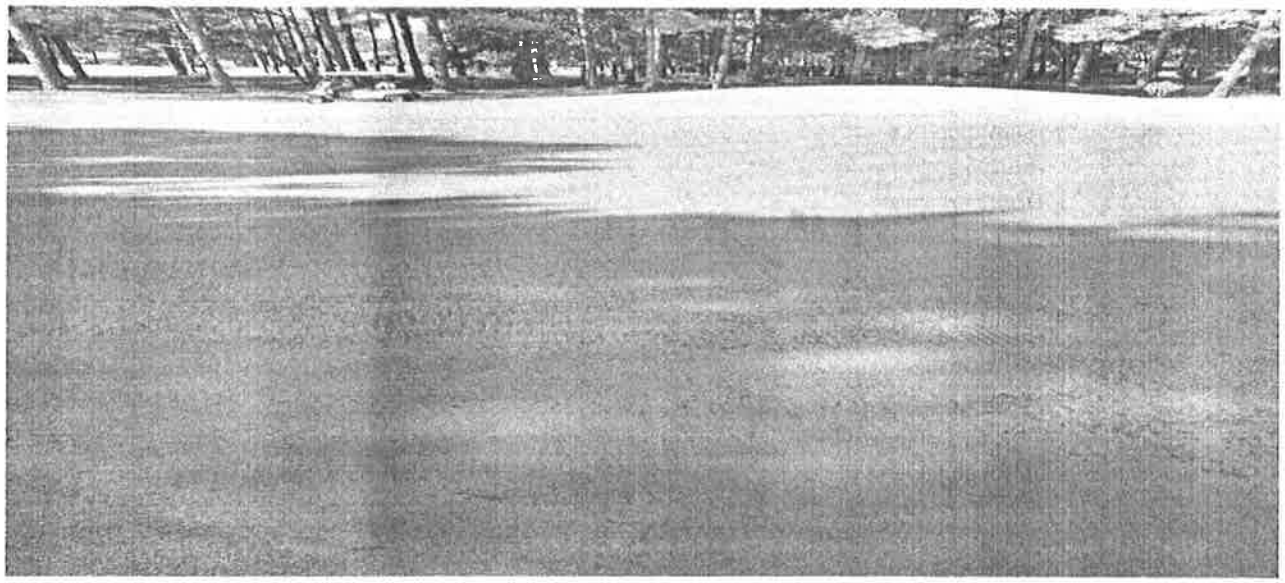
Thank you,
Randy Allen, CGCS
Sales Manager
Modern Turf Inc.

Attachment #3

Shade & Tree Removal Study for the Dan Maple's Course at Sea Trail Plantation October 2—4, 2013

Thanks to Sea Trail Plantation for allowing GMS the opportunity to do this Shade and Tree Removal study. As per our proposal we looked at the shade on the greens and tees then marked the trees that we feel should be removed. We also marked trees that are damaging the cart paths. Trees were marked that are restricting access to the cart paths or producing excessive shade affecting the turf's ability to handle the traffic in the roughs and fairways.

Sunlight is critical for plants to grow. The greens on the Maple's course is A-1 Bentgrass and have for years struggled to produce the putting surfaces needed to be successful in the Myrtle Beach Marketplace. The reason for the study was to determine the impact of the shade on the bentgrass but also in preparation for possible to conversion to an ultradwarf bermudagrass. Shade is very detrimental to both Bentgrass and Bermudagrass being grown under the regime needed to produce quality putting surfaces. Duration of the sunlight and the angle of incidence of the suns rays to the surface of the green are the two key factors. When the turf has limited sunlight it requires more inputs of fertilizers and plant protectants to try and force growth. If weather is mild and the turf is not stressed the management might work. When growing bentgrass or bermudagrass under greens management , just the mowing height alone can be a stress factor. Combine the height of cut with shade, traffic, disease, insects, heat, etc., and this picture below of the rear of #14 green is what can occur. The bentgrass suffers the most in the summer as the soil warms up. The heat combined with the shade can help to cause this type of damage. Bermudagrass may look good in the summer but due to the shade the same damage can occur in the winter.



In this report are pictures of each green starting at sunrise and progressing to the late afternoon. You can see where the shade impacts each of the greens. The best green this summer was 7 and it clearly shows in the pictures to have the best sunlight. But even it has shade early in the morning and again late in the day. In the morning from the Oaks and Magnolias that were planted the right and rear. At some point in the next 10 years they will become an issue. Late in the day the shade is from the trees across the pond. Trees do not have to be close to the green to produce the shade.

On each hole we also looked at the slopes of the greens and the directions the slopes face. North facing slopes of greens do not get the full effects of the sun while South facing slopes get the full effect. When in full sunlight this angle of incidence is not a big factor but when shade is part of the equation it can become a factor.

We are attaching an article from Golf Course Management magazine about a research project that is ongoing about sunlight requirements for bermudagrass greens at Clemson University. Basically the research states 8 hours of full sunlight is the minimum requirement to successfully grow bermudagrass greens.

Hole # 1

GREEN

- Green is only in full sunlight for 5 hours.
- Removal of 12 trees to the southeast of the green will improve the sunlight to 8 hours
- The slopes of the greens are primarily to the East and South which improves the angle the sun impacts the green

TEES

- The tees are well positioned for good sunlight.
- There are 4 trees to be removed to improve the duration of sunlight

Fairways & Roughs

- Removal of 9 trees will improve the quality of the turf on the fairways and roughs

Cart Path

- There are 9 trees that are damaging the cart path

Total Trees to be Removed

- 34

Hole # 2

GREEN

- Green is only in full sunlight for 5 hours.
- Removal of 14 trees to the southeast of the green will improve the sunlight to 8 hours
- The slopes of the greens are primarily to the East and West which improves the angle the sun impacts the green

TEES

- The tees are well positioned for good sunlight.
- There are 4 trees to be removed to improve the duration of sunlight in the morning
- Good afternoon sun

Fairways & Roughs

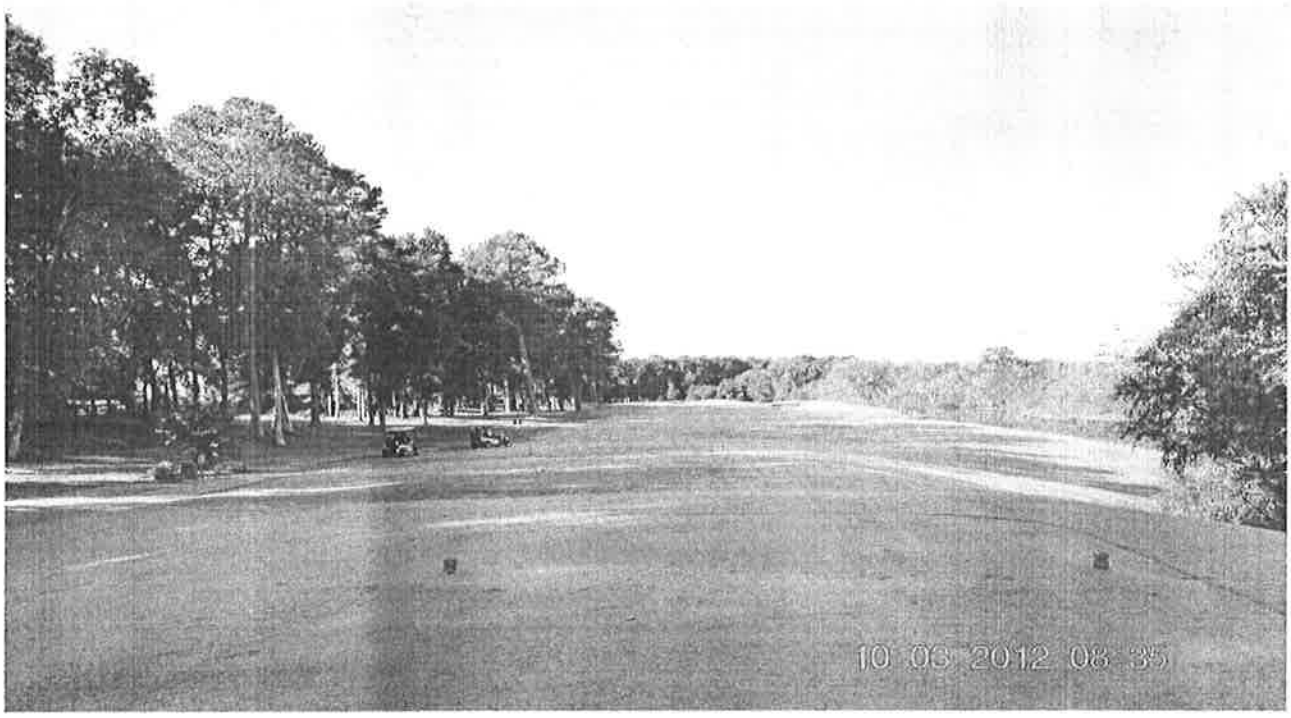
- Removal of 5 trees will improve the quality of the turf on the fairways and roughs

Cart Path

- There are 11 trees that are damaging the cart path

Total Trees Removed

- 34



Morning shade on entire hole. Many trees off golf course property.

Hole # 3

GREEN

- Green is only in full sunlight for 4.5 hours.
- Trees to the southeast of the green that are impacting the green are on a vacant lot or on neighbors property. However the vacant lot appears to have trees marked for removal for a new house.
- The slopes of the greens are primarily to the West which improves the angle the sun impacts the green

TEES

- The tees are in heavy shade and in poor condition
- Removal of 7 tree at the Forward tees
- Removal of 10 trees at the Regular tees

Fairways & Roughs

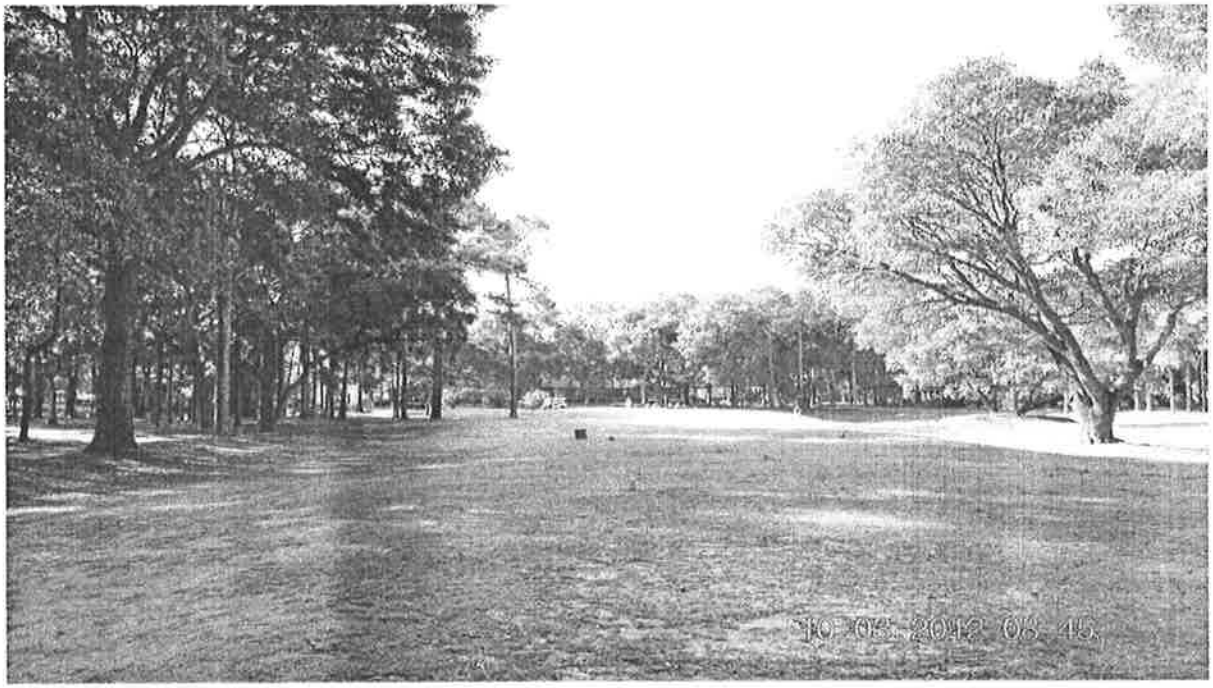
- 2 trees in the waste area are being damaged by tent caterpillars
- The Oak in the center of the waste area should be removed.

Cart Path

- There are 28 trees that are damaging the cart path

Total Trees to be Removed

- 60



Ladies Tee

Hole # 4

GREEN

- Green is only in full sunlight for 4.5 hours.
- Removal of 5 trees to the southeast of the green will improve the sunlight to 8 hours
- The slopes of the greens are primarily to the North and South. If this green can be rebuilt to reduce the amount of green that slopes to the North this will improve the turf quality

TEES

- The tees are not well positioned for good sunlight. Trees are big and several are impacting the tee. Moving the tees to the right would be very beneficial and save some big Oak tree.
- 4 Trees are having most of the impact

Fairways & Roughs

- Removal of 9 trees will improve the quality of the turf on the fairways and roughs
- One tree could possibly be moved at beginning of right side of fairway

Cart Path

- There are 52 trees that are damaging the cart path
- At the tee if all trees that impact path at the tee are removed tee would improve

Total Trees to be Removed

- 70

Hole # 5

GREEN

- Green is only in full sunlight for 6 hours.
- Removal of 8 trees to the southeast and south west of the green will improve the sunlight to 8 hours
- The slopes of the greens are primarily to the East and West which improves the angle the sun impacts the green

TEES

- The tees are well positioned for good sunlight.
- There are 0 trees to be removed to improve the duration of sunlight the Oak can be trimmed to improve the sunlight

Fairways & Roughs

- Removal of 0 trees will improve the quality of the turf on the fairways and roughs

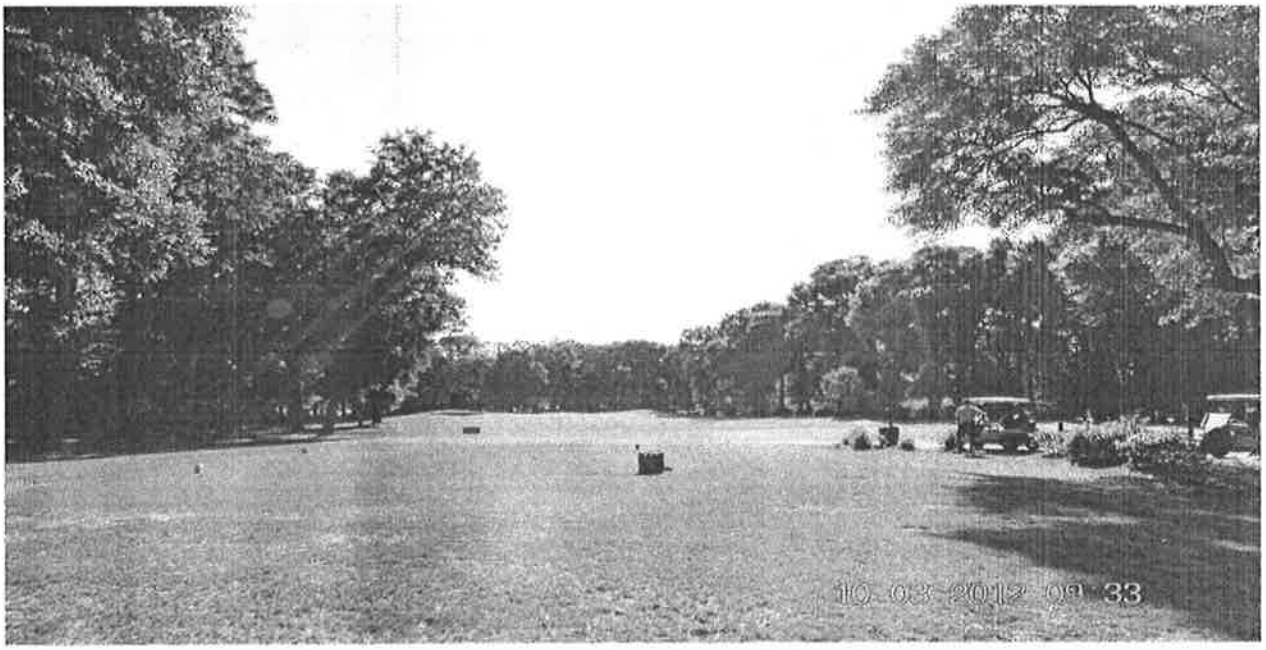
Cart Path

- There are 7 trees that are damaging the cart path

Total Trees to be Removed

- 15

Tree need trimming on flight line to hole and oak to right of tee



Trees need trimming on flight line to hole and oak to right of tee

Hole # 6

GREEN

- Green is only in full sunlight for 5 hours.
- Removal of 9 trees to the southeast of the green will improve the sunlight to 8 hours
- The slopes of the greens are to the North and South. If this green could be slope entirely to the south and west it would improve turf quality

TEES

- The tees are well positioned for good sunlight.

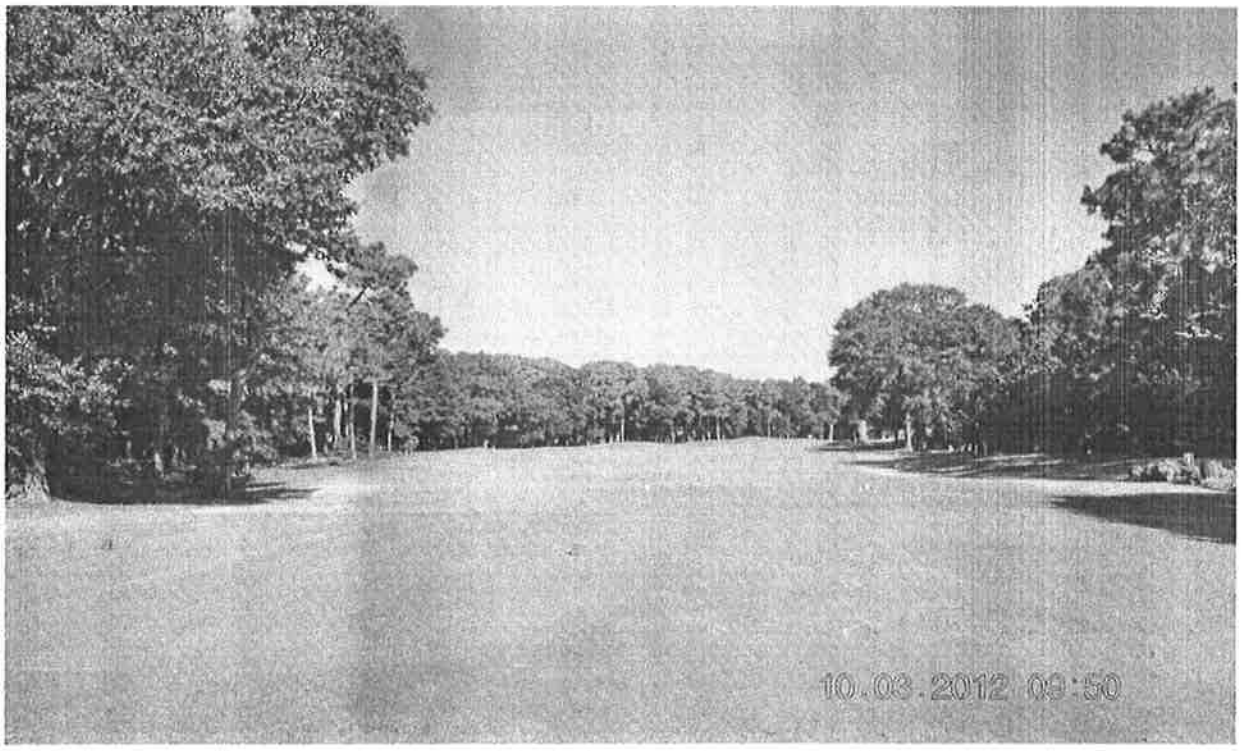
Fairways & Roughs

Cart Path

- There are 37 trees that are damaging the cart path that also will aid the fairways and roughs

Total Trees to be Removed

- 46



Good Sunlight = Good Turf

Hole # 7

GREEN

- Green is in full sunlight for over 8 hours
- The trees to the right and rear will have more significant impacts in the future. They could possibly be moved to the left and rear of the green and small trees planted in their place (Crepe Myrtles)
- The slopes of the greens are primarily South & East which improves the angle the sun impacts the green

TEES

- There are 15 trees to be removed to improve the duration of sunlight
- Morning and late afternoon shade impacts

Fairways & Roughs

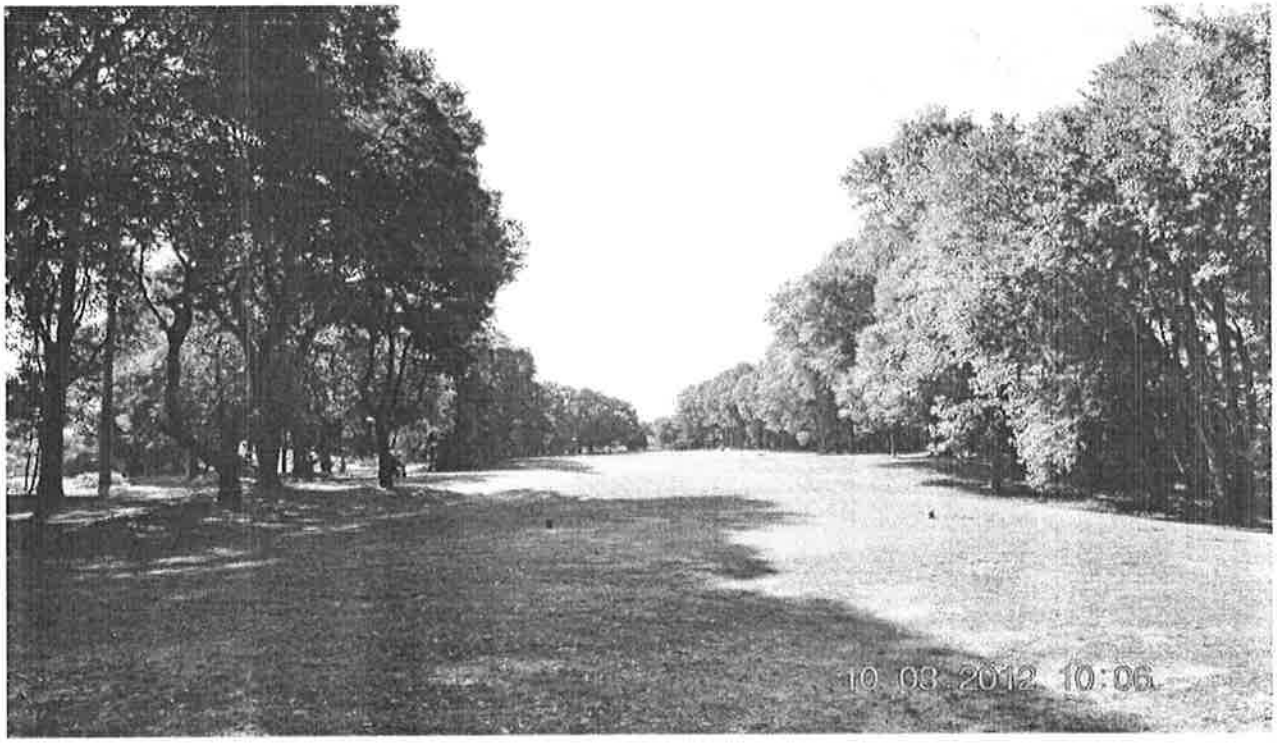
- Removal of 6 trees will improve the quality of the turf on the fairways and roughs
- There are trees in the waste areas...should these be removed?

Cart Path

- There are 39 trees that are damaging the cart path

Total Trees to be Removed

- 60 Immediately and 4 possibly moved



Tees further forward better turf

Hole # 8

GREEN

- Green is only in full sunlight for 5 hours.
- Removal of 20 trees to the southeast of the green will improve the sunlight to 8 hours
- The slopes of the greens are primarily to the East. If this green could become more oriented to the South and West it would help

TEES

- The tees are well positioned for good sunlight.

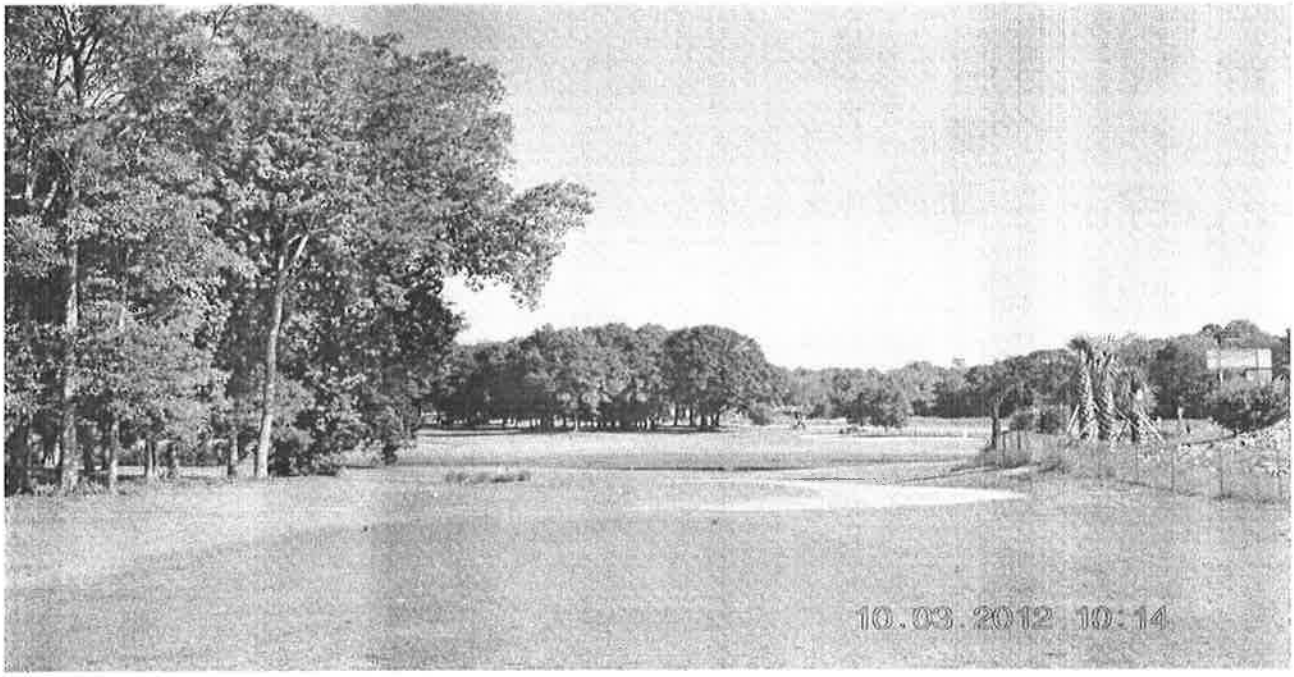
Fairways & Roughs

Cart Path

- There are 2 trees that are damaging the cart path

Total Trees to be Removed

- 22



Good Sunlight = Good Turf

Hole # 9

GREEN

- Green is only in full sunlight for 5 hours.
- Removal of 4 trees to the southeast of the green will improve the sunlight to 8 hours
- The slopes of the greens are primarily to the East and South which improves the angle the sun impacts the green

TEES

- Most of the tees are well positioned for good sunlight.
- There are 8 trees to be removed to improve the duration of sunlight

Fairways & Roughs

- Removal of 4 trees will improve the quality of the turf on the fairways and roughs

Cart Path

- There are 19 trees that are damaging the cart path

Total Trees to be Removed

- 35

Sunlight Impact Primarily on Back Tee

Hole # 10

GREEN

- Green is in full sunlight for 8 hours.
- Removal of 7 trees to the southeast of the green will improve sunlight duration
- The slopes of the greens are primarily to the East and South which improves the angle the sun impacts the green

TEES

- The tees are well positioned for good sunlight.
- There are 2 trees to be removed to improve the duration of sunlight

Fairways & Roughs

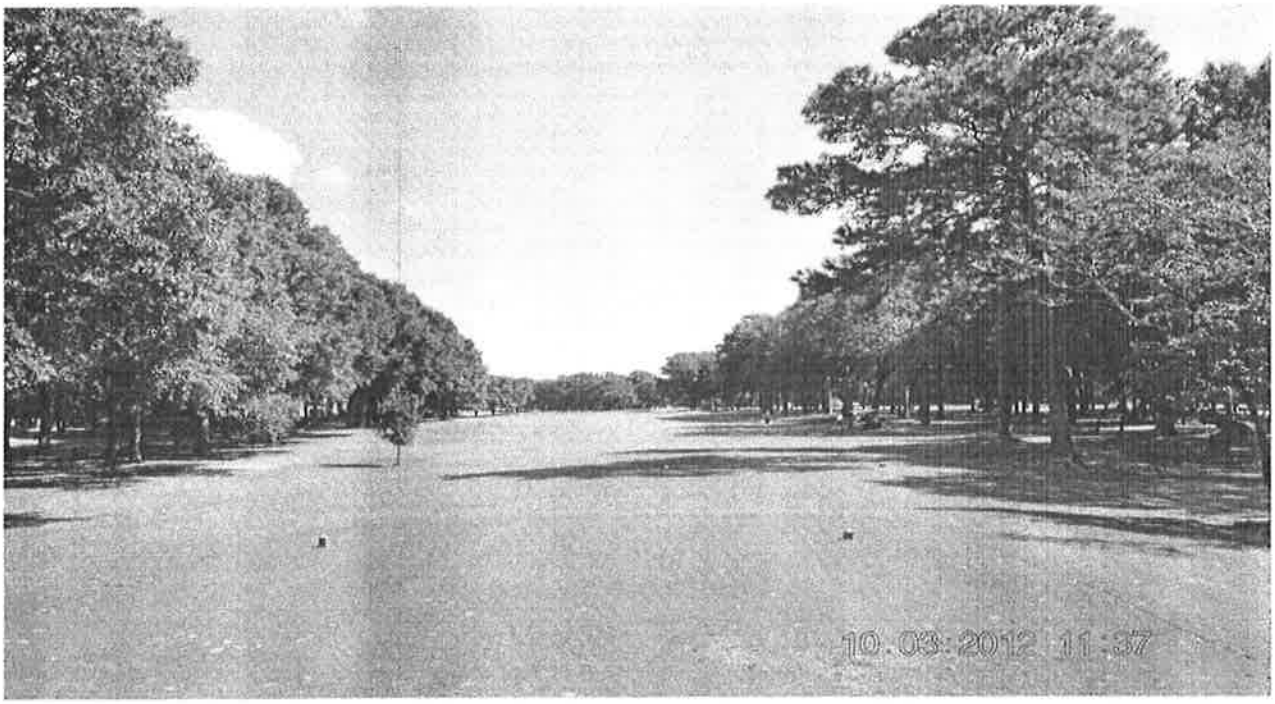
- Removal of 10 trees will improve the quality of the turf on the fairways and roughs

Cart Path

- There are 19 trees that are damaging the cart path

Total Trees to be Removed

- 38



Small Tree to Left Should be Moved

Hole # 11

GREEN

- Green is only in full sunlight for 5 hours.
- Removal of 12 trees to the southeast & southwest of the green will improve the sunlight to 8 hours
- The slopes of the greens are primarily to the South which improves the angle the sun impacts the green

TEES

- The tees are in a dense area of trees.
- There are 15 trees to be removed to improve the duration of sunlight

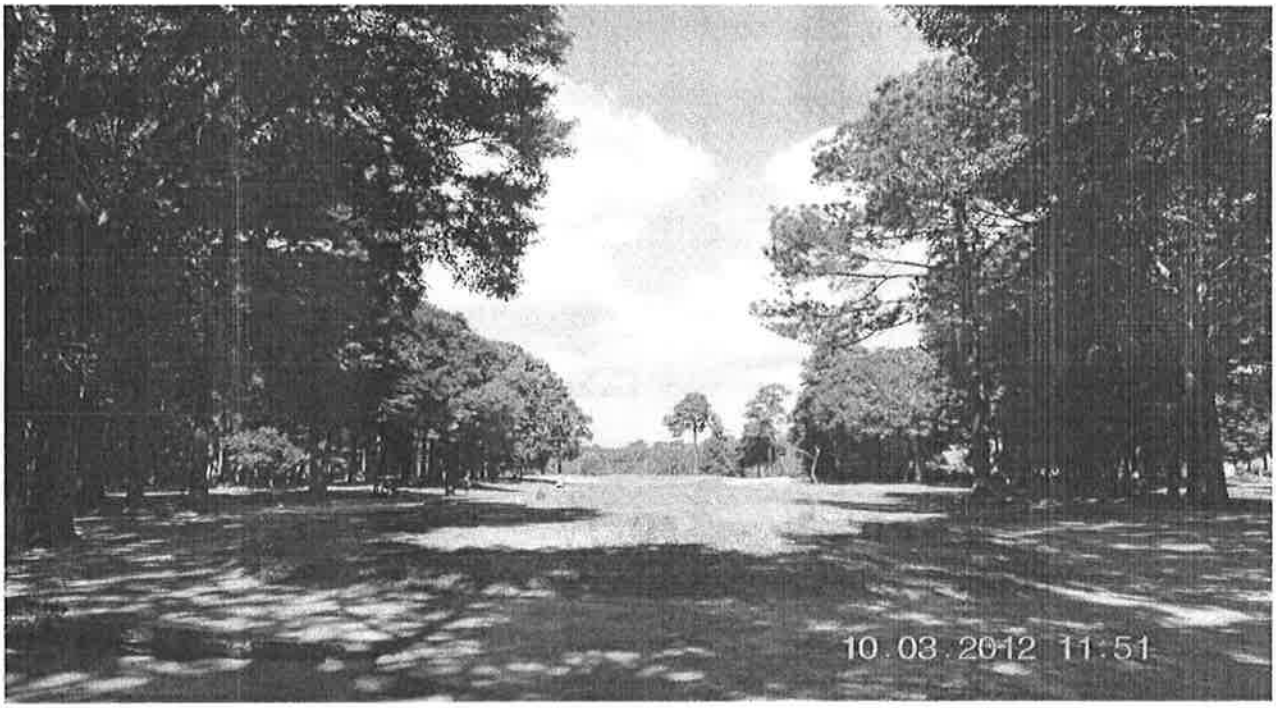
Fairways & Roughs

Cart Path

- There are 21 trees that are damaging the cart path
- Should all trees in waste areas be removed?

Total Trees to be Removed

- 48



As tees move forward sunlight improves

Hole # 12

GREEN

- Green is in full sunlight for 7 hours.
- The slopes of the greens are primarily to the West which improves the angle the sun impacts the green
- Trees causing morning shade are off Sea Trail property
- Green could be repositioned to gain the additional light

TEES

- The tees are well positioned for good sunlight.
- There are 2 trees to be removed to improve the duration of sunlight

Fairways & Roughs

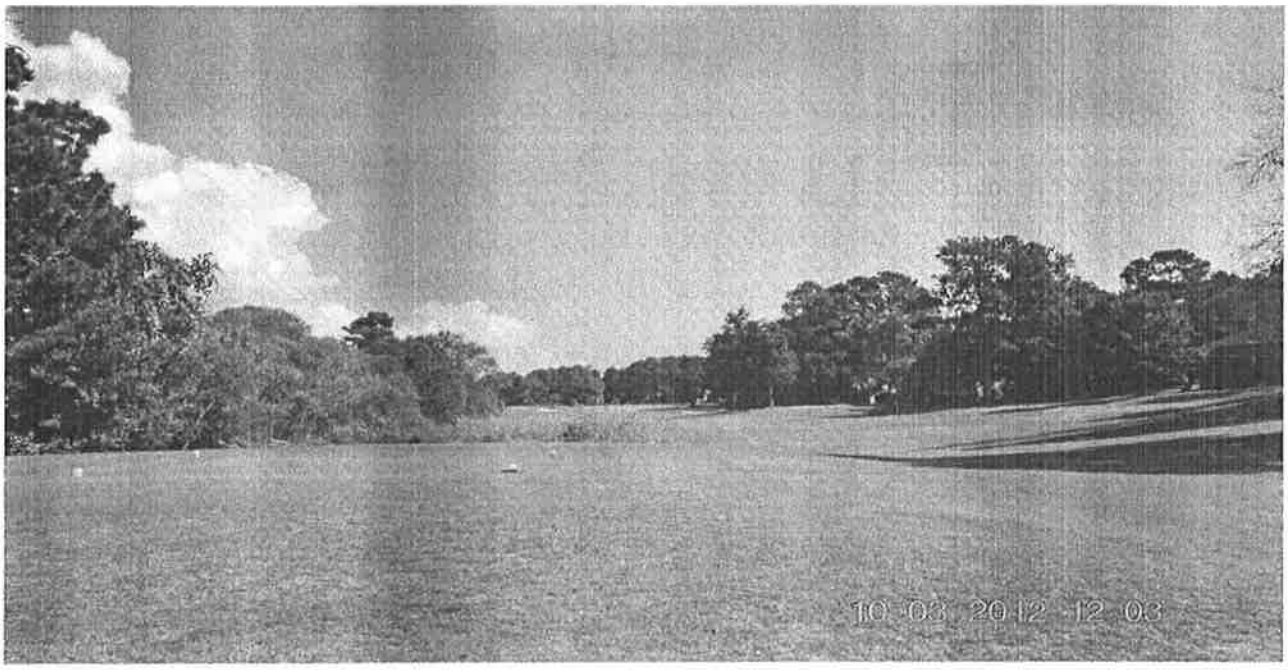
- Removal of 11 trees will improve the quality of the turf on the fairways and roughs

Cart Path

- There are 9 trees that are damaging the cart path

Total Trees to be Removed

- 22



Wet Areas to the front and rear of tees should be cut down

Hole # 13

GREEN

- Green is only in full sunlight for 5 hours.
- Removal of 20 trees to the southeast & southwest of the green will improve the sunlight to 8 hours
- The slopes of the greens are primarily to the West and North.
- If green slopes could move more to the South and West it would improve the impacts of the Sun
- The wooded are to the East of the greens could have several additional trees removed to help with as well

TEES

- The tees are well positioned for good sunlight.
- There are 5 trees to be removed to improve the duration of sunlight

Fairways & Roughs

Cart Path

- There are 27 trees that are damaging the cart path

Total Trees to be Removed

- 52

Wet area could be cut down and back to left of hole to improve golfer comfort on tee

Hole # 14

GREEN

- Green is only in full sunlight for 4 hours.
- Removal of 17 trees to the southeast & southwest of the green will improve the sunlight to 8 hours
- The slopes of the greens are primarily to the East and North.
- Trees will help the East slope but the North slope should be eliminated to help improve the angle of the Sun

TEES

- The tees are well positioned for good sunlight.
- There are 3 trees to be removed to improve the duration of sunlight

Fairways & Roughs

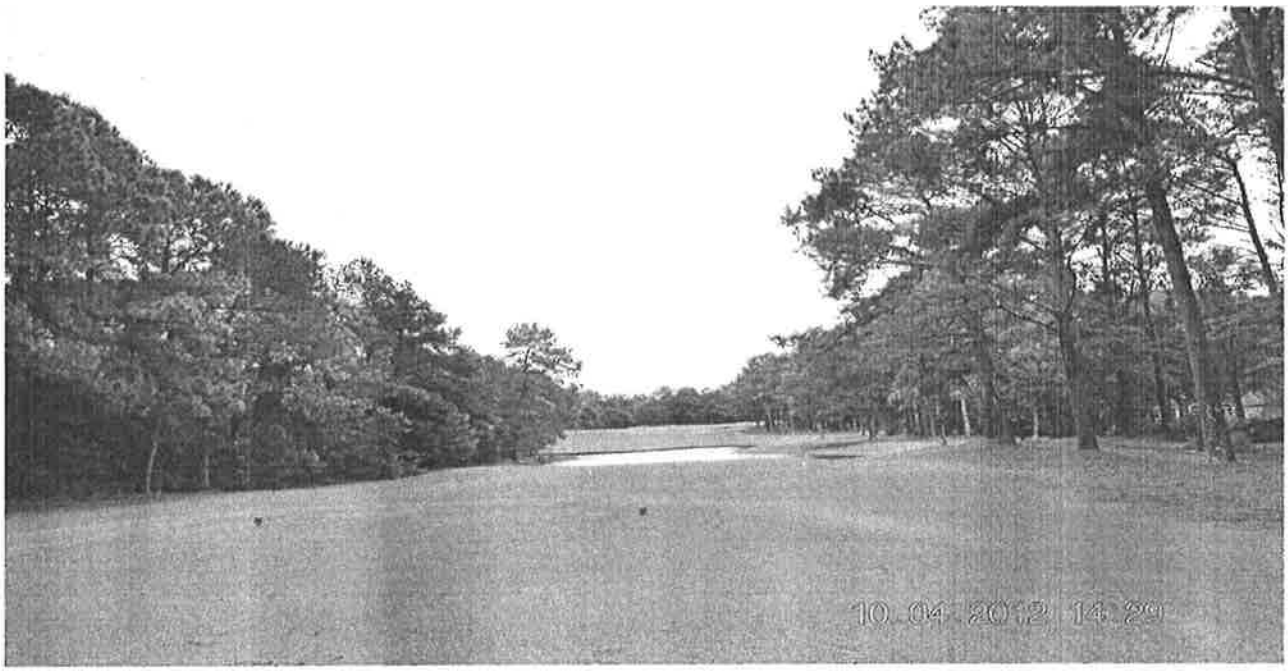
- Removal of 8 trees will improve the quality of the turf on the fairways and roughs

Cart Path

- There are 17 trees that are damaging the cart path

Total Trees to be Removed

- 45



Tree near pond on left and right could be removed to improve corridor width

Hole # 15

GREEN

- Green is only in full sunlight for 5 hours.
- Removal of 10 trees to the southeast & southwest of the green will improve the sunlight to 8 hours
- The slopes of the greens are primarily to the East and West which improves the angle the sun impacts the green

TEES

- The tees are well positioned for good sunlight.
- There are 4 trees to be removed to improve the duration of sunlight

Fairways & Roughs

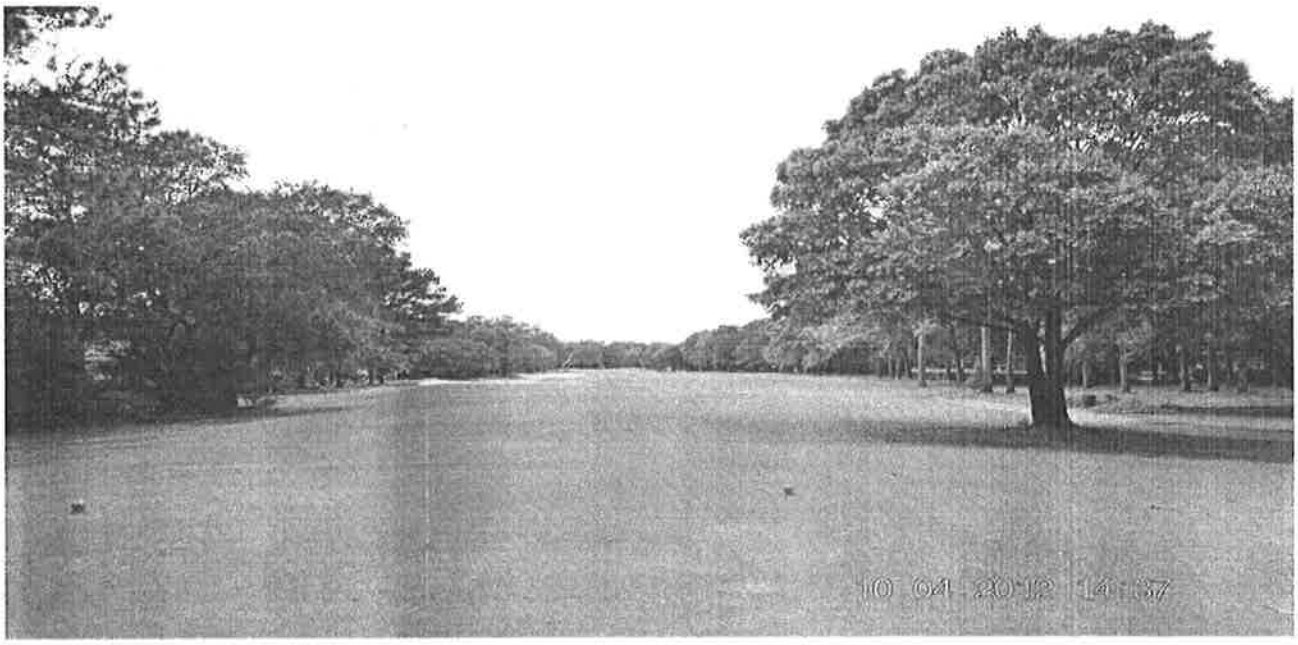
- Removal of 1 tree will improve the quality of the turf on the fairways and roughs

Cart Path

- There are 36 trees that are damaging the cart path
- These trees are primarily in the waste area and on the property line.
- Cart path will likely have to be altered to avoid some of the root damage from trees that will need to stay to protect homes and from trees not on Sea Trail property

Total Trees to be removed

- 51



Tree to right and left need trimming to improve width of corridor

Hole # 16

GREEN

- Green is only in full sunlight for 6 hours.
- Removal of 5 trees to the southeast of the green will improve the sunlight to 8 hours as well as trees removed for #10 green
- The slopes of the greens are primarily to the West and North. Eliminating the North slope in the future would improve impacts of the Sun

TEES

- The tees are well positioned for good sunlight.
- There are 9 trees to be removed to improve the duration of sunlight

Fairways & Roughs

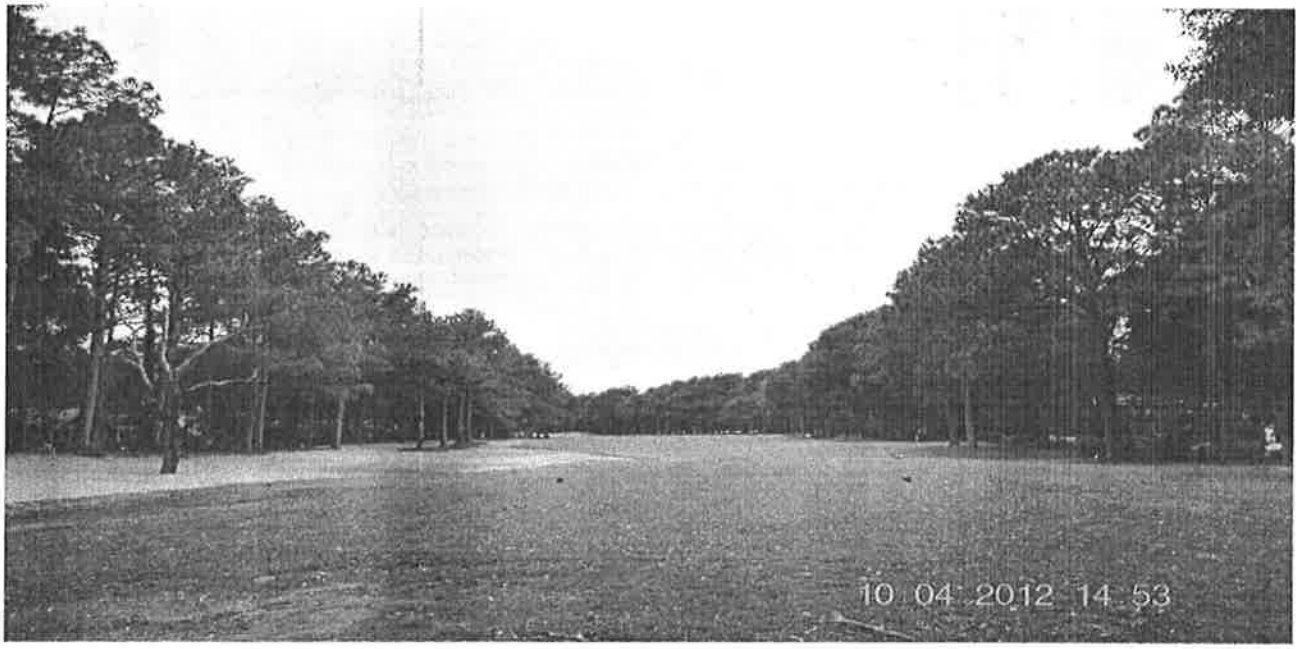
- Removal of 13 trees will improve the quality of the turf on the fairways and roughs
- Should trees be removed from the waste areas

Cart Path

- There are 22 trees that are damaging the cart path

Total Trees to be Removed

- 49



Improved sunlight will help tee slopes as well as tees

Hole # 17

GREEN

- Green is only in full sunlight for 5.5 hours.
- Removal of 17 trees to the southeast & southwest of the green will improve the sunlight to 8 hours
- The slopes of the greens are primarily to the West which improves the angle the sun impacts the green

TEES

- The rear tees are in dense shade. The forward tees are better positioned
- There are 22 trees to be removed to improve the duration of sunlight

Fairways & Roughs

- Removal of 4 trees will improve the quality of the turf on the fairways and roughs
- There are trees off Sea Trail property that if removed could improve sunlight duration

Cart Path

- There are 4 trees that are damaging the cart path
- Trees impacting the green help the path as well

Total Trees to be Removed

- 47

Roots impact turf as well as shade

Hole # 18

GREEN

- Green is only in full sunlight for 5 hours.
- Removal of 11 trees to the southeast & southwest of the green will improve the sunlight. There are trees close to clubhouse that impact this green as well. These should be pruned extensively if it is desired they remain If they remain then moving green should be considered
- The slopes of the greens are primarily to the West and North.
- Eliminating the North slopes would improve the impact of the Sun

TEES

- The tees are well positioned for good sunlight except for the back tee
- There are 10 trees to be removed to improve the duration of sunlight

Fairways & Roughs

Cart Path

- There are 16 trees that are damaging the cart path

Total Trees to be Removed

- 37

Rear tee impacted more from shade

Putting Green

GREEN

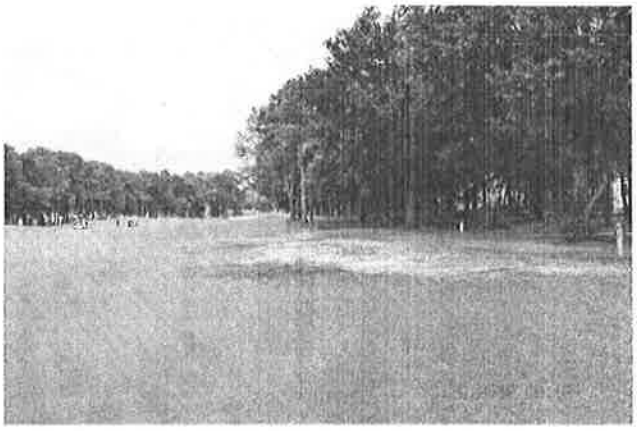
- Green is only in full sunlight for 3 hours.
- Removal of 2 trees to the southeast of the green will improve the sunlight to 8 hours
- The green has little slope which improves the impact of the Sun

SUMMARY

- Shade impacts the turf's ability to be healthy
- More inputs of fertilizers and pesticides are required to try and "force" the turf to grow
- Bentgrass and Bermudagrass both need full sunlight to be healthy
- Slopes of greens towards the sun is important to help improve the impacts of the sun
- Roots of trees severely damage the cart paths causing more wear on carts
- Some of the damage to the paths is a safety issue
- Many of the pine trees that are marked for removal have thinning canopies and dead branches
- There are roots very visible and not visible in the waste areas. These can be a safety issue to the golfers
- Pine straw and leaf litter in the waste areas cause more maintenance of these areas
- Healthy turf is a critical factor in the turf's ability to help clean storm water

Total Count of Trees to be Removed 767

Typical Cart Path Damage



High Traffic Area from Fairway to Path

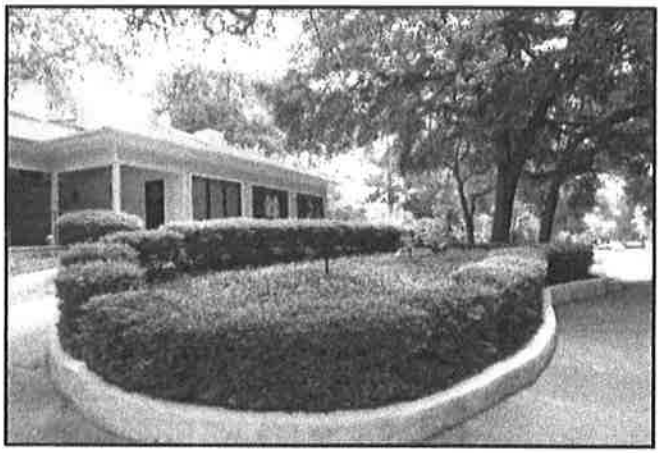
If you have any questions or need clarifications please let us know. Again thank you for this opportunity to serve Sea Trail Plantation

Attachment #4

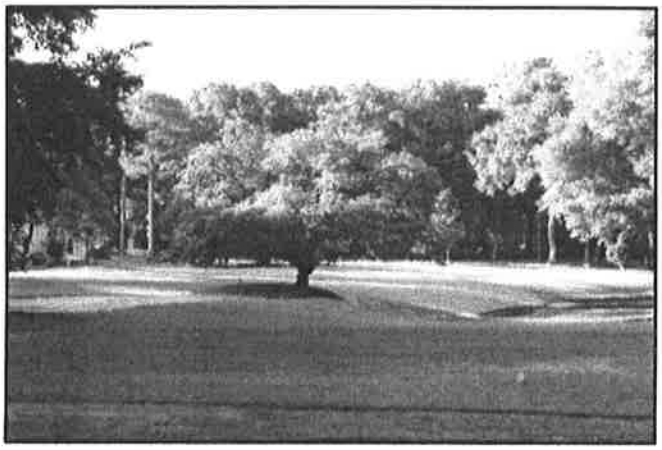
Aspire Golf

Landscaping and Secondary Plantings

One of the benefits of playing golf is the opportunity to be part of an outdoor environment of trees, ornamentals, and green spaces. However, there is much more care to these areas than most people understand. Along with the visual aspects of each structure are numerous underlying items that are needed to provide the proper presentation of the landscaped sections of the resort.



- All plantings require sufficient irrigation to remain healthy and alive.
- Placement of landscaped areas and the plantings within should be properly selected and spaced for efficient growth and care.
- Ongoing pruning, clean-up, chemical applications, and replacement for dead and decaying material requires time, effort and proper labor to make a great first impressions for golfers and guests of the resort.
- This first impression should include the front entrances to the resort, which are dated and under maintained due to lack of staffing and equipment.



Tree Survey and Analysis

Aesthetically, the overriding objective of trees is to make the golf course look natural in its surroundings and to develop and sustain a connection to the environment. The golf course landscape (trees) should contribute to the playing experience. However, trees and their growth characteristics negatively impact turf grass quality and eventually, playing enjoyment and challenge.

Tree plantings, regardless of age, should accomplish the following:

- Provide definition and contrast
- Screen out disruptive features such as buildings and highways
- Decorate the landscape
- Influence traffic flow on the golf course, whether in playing or maintaining

Tree plantings, regardless of age, should NOT:

- Add to the decline in turf grass quality due to shade, root competition
- Contribute to the decline of golf course facilities, such as cart paths
- Add to the cost of the maintenance budget through clean-up, removal, and damage to turf equipment and golf carts

- Compete with turf grass for water, nutrients, and soil oxygen

As reviewed, the impact of the current stands of trees across all three golf course are negatively impacting the present and future operations of the Resort. All involved parties know there is a concern. However, there is doubt as how to proceed in reducing the percentage of vegetation to benefit the goals of upward movement within the area's golf community.

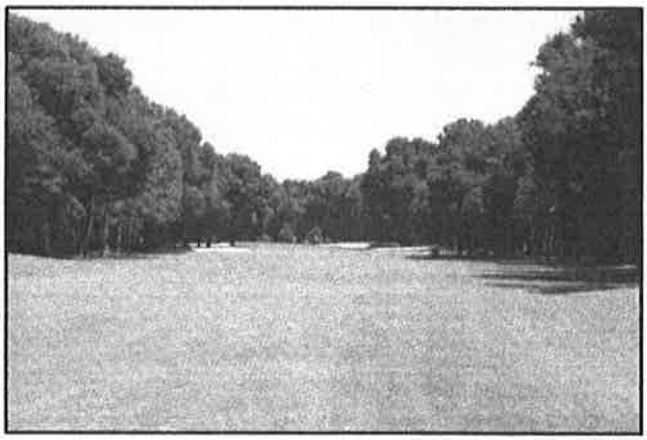
Consider the following:

- Implement a tree survey and evaluation for each course and identify those trees in need of removal based on their impact to the golf courses
- Through a competitive bidding process, identify and employ a tree service company and create a long-term agreement based on volume of removals
- The tree survey should group tree removal into the following categories: architectural, agronomic, non-indigenous, dead/decaying, and liability issues

- Create and begin a systematic removal sequence based on funds available
- Review all community, city, or country permitting requirements prior to removal

GOLF COURSE REVIEW

MAPLE GOLF COURSE



The Maples Golf Course presents a traditional North Carolina Sandhill's design with many distinguishing features seen throughout the layout. It creates an easy flow for play and allows all levels of golfers enjoy the course and its routing, which is a wonderful use of the local terrain. This course provides a solid third option for golfers, whether on a daily playing schedule, for Resort guests or convention attendee.

To remove or close this course would be a tremendous waste of a resource, which may cost ownership more to close than to keep it open. Year-to-date the Maples Course has received 14, 541 rounds of golf. Ownership must determine the amount of golf required for the Maple Course to be successful and profitable to Sea Trail Resort, based on operational costs and necessary updates.

Positives of Maples to Remain Open

- Receptive layout to accommodate all levels of ability and tourist-level play.
- Provides a "**member**" golf course opportunity for those who reside within the community
- Delivers a "country club" feel by combining the pool, activity center, and clubhouse at a specific price point
- Allows income to be generated while waiting on building permits and city approvals for development

Negatives of Maples to Close Permanently

- The cost of maintaining a non-productive property

- Criticisms of the local golf community
- Loss of daily "member" revenue and daily fee opportunities
- Ongoing infrastructure maintenance
- Cost of removing infrastructure

Of the three courses reviewed by ASPIRE Golf, Maples will require the majority of work to create an acceptable golf environment, but should be placed **after** upgrades and improvements to the Jones and Byrd Courses.

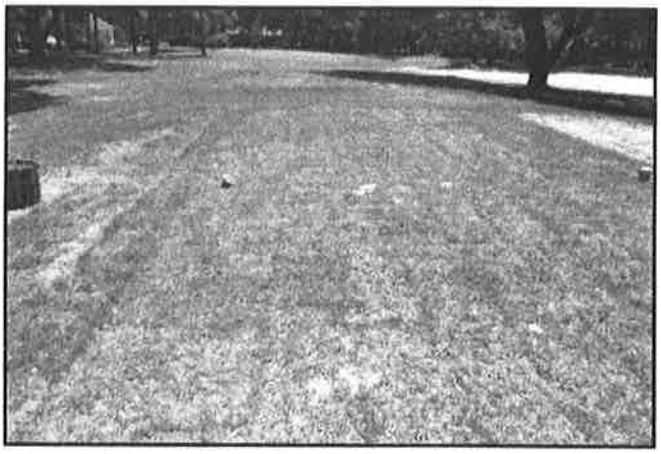
Two of the more expensive enhancement or infrastructure upgrades – irrigation system and tree reduction -- are contained at the Maples Course. To improve irrigation system efficiency and allow the radio- activated remote control system to work effectively, tree reduction must occur. This will allow for the wireless to operate without adding repeater stations.

Tree reduction will require the following items to be successful:

- A hole-by-hole tree survey to identify those architecturally, agronomically, and liability trees impacting the golf course
- Working with city officials for the necessary permitting to remove the large native oak trees
- Acquiring the necessary competitive bid proposals from local tree companies
- Purchasing the equipment for ongoing Resort tree maintenance, including a bucket truck, mobile lift unit for canopy pruning, and root pruning equipment
- A three- to five-year plan with a minimum of 25 **($1,000-$2500 per tree**) trees per season to be removed
- Ongoing relationships with home owners and their home/property depreciation concerns for re-sale value

From an agronomic perspective, tree intrusion continues to negatively affect turf quality and maintenance operations costing the Resort considerable money. To improve the playing quality and to upgrade to a higher tier level, turf quality must improve.

Examples of tree intrusion affecting quality turf grass conditions can be witnessed on all playing surfaces.



Teeing Grounds
Par-3 tees encounter damaging traffic from players, tee shots, and small surfaces. Their turf quality is declining due to surrounding vegetation limiting sunlight penetration and air flow to enhance turf quality.

Fairways/Primary Rough Grass
Golf cart traffic, root intrusion, and shade diminish turf quality and playing conditions. A combination of tree pruning and increased fertility will aid in assisting turf health.

Putting Greens
Completely surrounding a green will decrease turf quality and playing enjoyment. 50% of a round of golf is contested on the putting surface.

Sand Bunkers
Tree root intrusion impacting drain lines creates extra work for the limited grounds staff. Debris, wet areas, and the potential for player injury is increased.

Irrigation Requirements
The current system is ineffective due to trees and houses interfering with the electronic signal sent across the property when irrigation is needed.

- If the hand-held control option is in the wrong place due to tree overgrowth, no signal is received and the irrigation staff is unable to operate the system. The wireless airways are blocked due to the density of trees.
- For better operations signal repeaters are required to boost signals across the property
- All controllers are in need of upgraded programming
- Consider an irrigation audit to properly diagnose the issues

MAPLES COURSE UPGRADES

Following is an overview of the proposed golf course upgrades to enhance the playing enjoyment of the Maples Course.

Labor Needs
Increasing labor to adequately maintain acceptable playing quality should a priority. The GCSAA suggests that a standard 18-hole golf course have a minimum of 12 staff members. Providing two additional staff people would be a decent improvement. Identifying and acquiring dependable, affordable labor is a national concern for the golf industry, not just Sea Trail Resort.

Sand Bunker Hazards
Compared to the Jones and Byrd Courses bunker maintenance is of lesser quality at the Maple Course, due, in part, to their design. To enhance visual quality, basic edging, weed control, and daily raking would enhance this feature. The concerns for play are sea shell contamination, root intrusion, and poor quality sand, which could lead to player injury when a broken shell catches a player in the eye.

Turf Grass Quality

Overall turf quality is less than desirable due to a decline in cultural practices, which is directly related to insufficient labor and lack of budget funding. A combination of basic agronomic cultural practices, such as fairway slicing and seasonal applications of a slow release fertilizer applied spring and fall, would boost playing quality.

- The bent grass putting greens should remain for now. Re-grassing to hybrid bermudagrass will not be successful due to the significant amount of shade cast by the large trees surrounding the south and east sides of the majority of putting surfaces.
- Fairway quality and playing enjoyment can be upgraded by extending the fairway height-of-cut for as much of the playing corridor as possible. This practice was reviewed during our visit.
- Teeing grounds need sunlight and to be expanded in order to handle play volume.

Perennial Rye Grass Over Seeding

It is understood the "green" playing environment attracts winter play and allows Sea Trail to compete with its neighbors for business. However, over seeding is a huge expense for the Resort. It is suggested until staff, equipment, and budget reach acceptable levels **this practice be suspended for two seasons** to improve bermudagrass playing quality. Also, factor in:

- Cost of closing the course for seeding.
- Cost of seed, seed applications, irrigation, fertilization/chemical applications, mowing, and labor which add to the cost of course maintenance.
- Spring transition back to bermudagrass hurts the Bermuda turf quality and playing conditions

Replacing and Re-Positioning of Cart Paths

The greatest impact to the enjoyment of playing the Maples Course is the declining condition of the cart paths. There is not a smooth portion of a path throughout the entire journey across the course. This is annoying to the golfer and depreciates the operating effectiveness of turf equipment and golf carts.

- Combine cart path replacement with tree removal, similar to the suggested Jones Course effort.
- Remove paths where not needed and use native sand as a surface and path.