

**Golf course goes green**  
**Lake Country Calendar**  
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It goes without saying that golf courses are green, but not many can claim to be green for the environment. This will be the aim of Michael Hurdzan as he attempts to design an 18-hole course atop the hillside sometimes referred to as Rainbow Ridge.

A principal of Hurdzan-Fry - a golf course design firm based in Columbus, Ohio - Hurdzan was commissioned by 20/20 Properties to take on the Lakestone's 18-hole golf course project three months ago.

He had worked with one of 20/20's business partners on other projects, so he jumped when he saw the opportunity to work on the LakeStone project. Likening the Okanagan to a burgeoning golf Mecca, Hurdzan says, "To be able to come to the Okanagan Valley was the real draw. Part of it is ego. you want to be part of the party."

One of the challenges for Hurdzan will be to negotiate the terrain up on the hilltop - which has its share of rock outcrops and ravines - to design a golf course that will be usable and accessible to the average golfer. Combine that with a lack of topsoil and available water and the task becomes that much more difficult.

Water for the course will be supplied through an existing pump house and Hurdzan says there will be several reservoir ponds onsite to capture surface runoff that can also be used to service the course. He also plans to incorporate a drainage system that will enable the operator to reuse water for irrigation purposes.

Referring to the industry as a whole, Hurdzan says, "One of the places where we still have work to do is to reduce water consumption."

Golf course developers continually research different strains of grass to find ones that require less water and fertilizer to keep healthy. For irrigation systems, Hurdzan says the trend has been to use low pressure, low volume and low angle sprinklers to avoid water loss through evaporation caused by wind. He points out that irrigation would be directed away from natural vegetation to keep it in its natural state.

Hurdzan explains the project will require a balance between working with the contour of the land to avoid disturbing habitat. However, in certain areas it will be necessary to use machinery and blasting to achieve the desired result. "The challenge is trying to fit the golf course in," he says.

As Hurdzan points out, the hilltop isn't pristine habitat. Throughout his tour of the site he recalls finding garbage as well as evidence of pine beetle infestation, logging activity and human caused fires. "It's not like it's a virgin forest in any way," he says. If anything, Hurdzan says the golf course will improve habitat on the hilltop while making it more accessible to residents.

Situated 1,000 feet above Okanagan Lake, the course will offer panoramic views in all directions - orchards, Spion Kop and Kalamalka Lake to the North, Winfield and the valley floor to the east, Duck Lake and Kelowna to the south and Okanagan Lake and the Westside to the west.

The preliminary design sets the course as a par 70 and 6,800 yards long.

"Given the nature of that terrain, they'll be tested," he says. "For the average golfer, it should be a lot of fun to play."

Hurdzan estimates he still has at least six months of planning ahead of him and if things go according to plan, people could be working on their swings by the summer of 2009.

*Length: 587 words*