

# RANCHO LA QUINTA COUNTRY CLUB

79301 CASCADAS CIRCLE, LA QUINTA, CA 92253

INITIAL REVIEW OF EXISTING GOLF COURSE CONDITIONS



Submitted by:  
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*Cover Photo – Number 18, Jones Course, Rancho La Quinta Country Club*

## Purpose and Introduction

The purpose of this study is to initially review the 36-holes and practice facilities specific to existing conditions, based on industry averages for like private clubs in the Coachella Valley, California geographic area. Areas, components and features included in this initial investigational review includes:

Greens and Tees	Irrigation System
Sand Bunkers	Equipment
Fairways and Rough	Water and Water Features
Cart Paths	

I have had the opportunity to meet with:

- James Duff, Member, Board of Directors, Master Association for Rancho La Quinta
- Nena T. Rutherford-Milward, General Manager, Master Association for Rancho La Quinta
- Mike Magnani / Golf Course Superintendent, Jones Golf Course
- Scot Sandels / Golf Course Superintendent, Pate Golf Course
- John Cummings / General Manager, Rancho La Quinta Country Club

I reviewed the golf course, hole-by-hole and assessed the major components as to the condition and to the extent possible that appropriate care and maintenance are being implemented. I have ascertained that the Rancho La Quinta golf courses should be considered as being within the top 25% of courses in the Coachella Valley area.

This cursory inspection is presented as follows:

## General Condition

It appeared to me that both courses need an executable plan of action for near-term maintenance and long-term capital to establish the desired standards Rancho La Quinta members strive to attain and sustain.

A standard of maintenance is essential to communicate to all stakeholders what is expected in all golf course maintenance and conditioning during seasonal changes and should be considered the “backbone” of your golf course business.

*General Conditions (continued)*

It is important to note that a simple one-day visit will not discover or uncover all critical attributes, components and/or features at the practice facility and 36-hole golf facility at Rancho La Quinta. But the visit was sufficient to provide an opinion on what a future owner may experience in maintenance and capital costs in the near future:

## GREENS and TEES

- Greens and tees appear in good condition consistent with the age of the asset. However, a deeper evaluation would be needed to conclude the entire condition and viability of the greens assets into the foreseeable future.
- Pate Course renovated greens in 2016 with TifDwarf Bermuda turf.
- Jones Course greens were renovated in 2010 and planted with TifDwarf Bermuda turf. Average life of dwarf type Bermuda greens is highly dependent of care and maintenance, but with proper maintenance should last 20 years. Therefore, we do not see an extraordinary expense in this area prior to 2023.



Photo 1 renovation of #15 green side bunker, Jones Course

## SAND BUNKERS

- Sand bunkers throughout the two courses require renovation due to sand soil contamination and poorly defined hazard edges. Several renovations are being completed, methods appear to be in keeping with best practices, illustrated in Photo 1.
- It was mentioned that 6 sand bunkers are scheduled for in-house renovation this off-season. Renovation costs may range from approximately \$9.50 to \$12.00 per square foot. We estimate an approximate total of \$1,300,000 for the Jones Course and \$1,550,000 for the Pate course if a qualified golf course contractor is used to complete a total renovation. Under the current approach the Club will allocate a cost of approximately \$25,000 per year for at least 10 years. For quality reasons, the members may want to do a total upgrade sooner. Using a reputable golf course architect and golf course construction contractor is recommended. There is a total of 79 sand bunkers on the two courses. To arrive at an exact cost, a golf course architect and contractor should be consulted.

General Conditions (continued)

## FAIRWAYS and ROUGH



Photo 2 Turfgrass voids, #3 fairway, Jones Course

- Photo 2 illustrates a predominantly dead turfgrass patch on a fairway. I believe during the past, repairs were made, and the new turf apparently did not survive the winter overseed process. These voided areas, mostly on fairways and rough, are consistent throughout the two courses.
- If the desire is to focus fully on the in-season (winter) play conditions these summertime conditions are relatively inconsequential. I can only surmise with a minimum community population of 50% year-round residents, it may be advantageous to market and prepare the club for golf events throughout the year.

- Sod or sprig repairs on fairways and rough should occur during early summer.
- Fairway sprig renovation using 419 Bermuda turf is approximately \$3,000 per acre, if work is accomplished by an outside contractor. I recommend a three-year program to re-establish these sprigs as required in thin areas. Certain areas common to this type of renovation will not yield satisfactory results in one season due to pressure from the overseed process. Multiple renovation may be required.

## CART PATHS

- Cart paths are in reasonably good condition. It should be noted that many clubs fund an amount dedicated for annual cart path repair, normally to a percentage of the whole value of the asset. Estimated average annual expenses for each course should be between \$8,000 and \$10,000.

General Conditions (continued)

## IRRIGATION SYSTEM

- A cursory inspection of the irrigation system revealed several problems. In Photo 3, the pump head (blue cast iron) is not attached to the deck plate like the other pump head, that's just adjacent (green cast iron, red circle, bolted to deck plate). It is my belief that these vertical turbine pump heads should be attached to a firm metal deck plate. Unfortunately, the metal deck plate on this pump station is rusted, nearly completely through in several areas. As the metal pump deck plate loses its integrity the components and employees are in jeopardy of falling into the wet well.

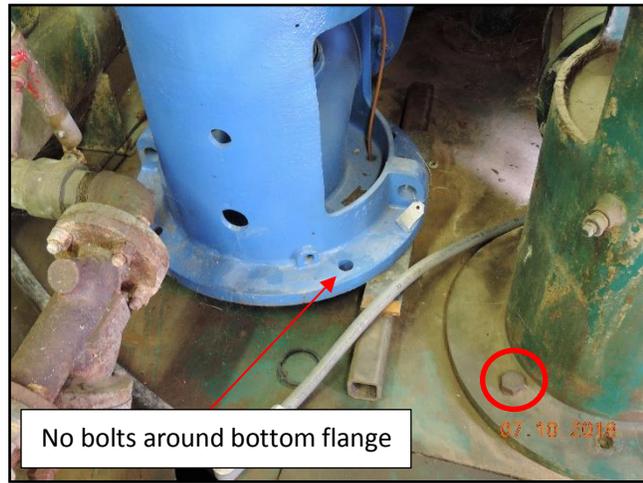


Photo 3 Pump station well heads on Jones Course

- It should be noted that the golf course pump stations are a very critical part of the irrigation system for the entire property, as it is the only pumping system supplying water to all irrigated areas.
- Irrigation head (sprinkler) patterns are somewhat erratic in distribution. Tell-tale signs of this problem are circles, donut patterns or dead or stressed turf normally within several feet of an irrigation head. An irrigation audit will uncover the deficiencies in distribution.
- Generally, an irrigation system has a life of between 20 and 25 years. The system at the Jones Course is near the typical end of its useful life, at 25 years. Replacement of the Jones Course irrigation system should occur within the next 5 years at an approximate cost of \$2,500,000. Currently there exists two different central control systems for the Jones and Pate courses. It is highly recommended that one central control system be used for both courses. Even though sprinkler heads have been replaced, pipe, wire, pumping systems and control systems have reached the end of the serviceable life.
- The Pate course irrigation system should be replaced on or shortly after 2025 for \$2,750,000. There is very little salvage value of any irrigation system components.
- Both pump stations have suffered from deferred maintenance and are in less than average condition for the vintage. A repair-when-broke philosophy has been standard operating procedure in the past. A pre-engineered pump station replacement with comparable components is valued at approximately \$250,000 each.

General Conditions (continued)

## EQUIPMENT



Photo 4 Equipment at storage area at maintenance facility

for both courses.

- Equipment accounts for a large part of the courses capital assets. It was mentioned, with exception of a turf sprayer, that the current fleet is at least 8 years old (no replacements since 2010).
- Normally, golf businesses have a staggered equipment replacement schedule based on age, hours of service and expense to keep in service.
- Although the equipment fleet is 8 years or older the condition appears to be better than average for the age (Photo 4).
- An annual amount based on fleet size and retirement of equipment in an orderly manner should be estimated at \$175,000

## WATER and WATER FEATURES

- Water quality in ponds look to be in good condition, free of high populations of weeds and algae.
- Pond lake liners should be monitored closely. Unless replaced within the past 5 years, the useful life of these liners may be near the end. Rapidly lowering pond levels should be investigated for liner failure.
- A massive amount of infrastructure is dedicated to water features. We were unable to assess conditions in these areas but expect there is some substantial catch-up maintenance cost present in these systems. A comprehensive long-range plan and maintenance program should be developed to insure these components operate to specifications throughout their useful life.

## CONCLUSION

I have discovered many fine features and components on the Jones and Pate Golf Courses. I have also discovered areas of poor or insufficient planning and/or execution of a golf property plan. I would rate the situation as average to slightly below average for this vintage of assets. New owners should expect to spend well-above past levels and must plan to address the irrigation system on the Jones course prior to 2023.

Also, it is my opinion that a substantial amount of capital resources will be needed to repair or replace many items that have been deferred or repaired incorrectly (yellow highlighted, Table 1).

Estimated Expenditures to Renew or Renovate Current Golf Course Assets					
FEATURE / COMPONENT	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Irrigation System Jones				\$ 2,500,000	
Annual Equipment Expenditures, Both Courses	\$ 175,000	\$ 175,000	\$ 175,000	\$ 175,000	\$ 175,000
Sand Bunkers Renovation, Jones Course	\$ 1,300,000				
Sand Bunkers Renovation, Pate Courses	\$ 1,550,000				
Fairway Renovation, Both Courses (419 Bermuda sprigs)	\$ 150,000	\$ 150,000	\$ 150,000		
New Irrigation System Pump Station Only Jones (Urgent)	\$ 250,000				
New Irrigation System Pump Station Only Pate (Urgent)	\$ 250,000				
Water Feature Infrastructure (motors, pumps and controls)		\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 3,675,000</b>	<b>\$ 355,000</b>	<b>\$ 355,000</b>	<b>\$ 2,675,000</b>	<b>\$ 175,000</b>

Average Wear	\$ 3,435,000
Excessive Wear	\$ 3,800,000
<b>Total Capital</b>	<b>\$ 7,235,000</b>

Table 1 Estimated 5-year capital plan for Jones and Pate Courses

It has been reported that the annual maintenance budget is \$4,600,000, which exceeds industry averages by nearly 17% for a high-end private 36-hole course in the desert southwest. Low hanging fruit appears to be labor at \$2,853,564. It should be noted, that comparing annual golf course maintenance expenditures with other golf courses should be approached with caution, as each golf course has unique challenges. Only by establishing a standard of maintenance can a club realize an appropriate amount to fund maintenance, based on tasks and goals vital to the membership.

A deeper investigation will identify and recommend future investments and plans to operate the golf courses in a manner that adheres to best management practices for modern golf course maintenance and capital planning.

Cost estimates are from:

Pump Station – Watertronics Corporation, 525 Industrial Dr, Hartland, WI 53029

Equipment – Toro Equipment Price Sheet, 2017

All other Features and Components – Golf Course Construction & Renovation Costing, v.6, Golf Course Builders Association of America

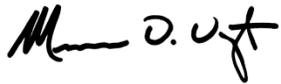
Budget Estimates – GCSAA 2018 Budget Survey, Golf Course Superintendents Association of America

*Conclusion (continued)*

Thank you for your hospitality during my visit to your Club.

Please feel free to contact me at your convenience with any questions or concerns.

Respectfully Submitted,



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-END OF REPORT-