When describing bunkers, it depends on who you ask. Golf course superintendents might describe bunkers as “money pits” that consume endless resources. Furthermore, golfers may view bunkers as dangerous areas to be avoided or safe havens that provide easy recovery shots.

However they are perceived, bunkers are areas that receive an inordinate amount of attention at most golf facilities. From their simple origins as hollows on the leeward sides of sand dunes that sheltered livestock from cold sea winds, bunkers have experienced considerable evolution of design, construction, and maintenance over the years. So, too, have golfers' expectations for playability and risk. There are some situations where turf or soil has been removed and a surface of grains or stones has been laid down. Such areas are not bunkers, but should be avoided, especially when dealing with the hazards of ground, often a hollow, from which turf or soil has been removed and a surface of grains or stones has been laid down.