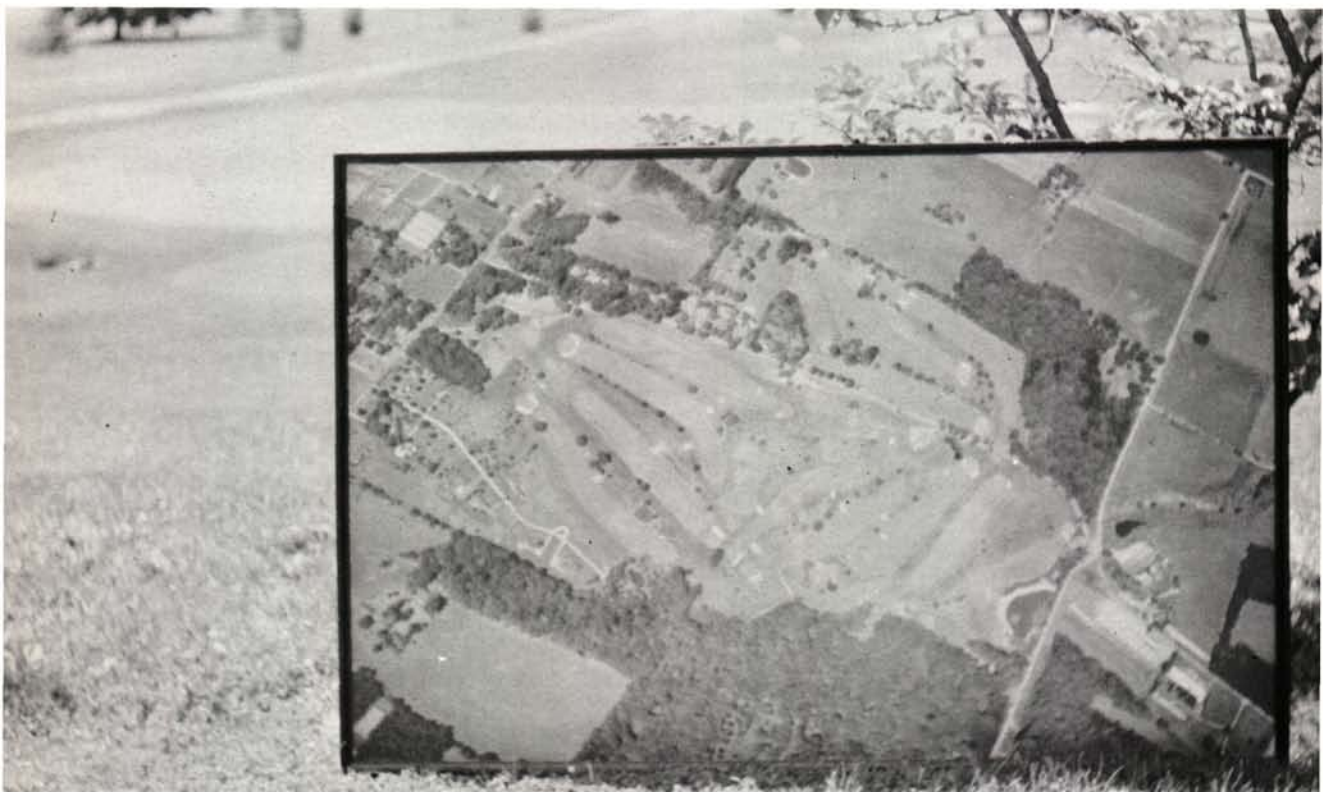


PLAN AHEAD



Long range plans made from aerial photographs pay big dividends.

by **HOLMAN M. GRIFFIN**, Agronomist, USGA Green Section

Barring luck, no one makes much forward progress today unless he has a plan. Planning is an integral part of modern existence. It implies mental formulation of ideas and sometimes graphic representation of these ideas. It is often the difference between success and failure and without it, a project may never come into existence.

Accurate anticipation of need is what planning is all about. Attention to detail enhances the value of plans and thorough organization streamlines the operation.

There are all kinds of plans used on golf courses and each type has a specific function. First, there is a job plan of very limited scope which deals with a single job. Next a work plan

which covers all the necessary jobs on the golf course. Work plans are timely and may cover from one day to several months in scope. Beyond one year we begin to formulate long-range plans which will effect our progress in the years to come.

Long-range plans may be formulated for 5, 10, 20 or more years and when properly made and followed, will insure both stability and progress.

Long-range plans should definitely be positive in nature and not just a ruse used to avoid getting things done. Often I have heard the phrase, "That's in the long-range plans," when what is really meant is, "We realize the need and certainly hope the next generation will do something about it."

Essentially, long-range plans are concerned with new projects for improvement not covered by the routine budget; improvements which must be done in stages over a period of years and the changes required to maintain the "status quo" of the club.

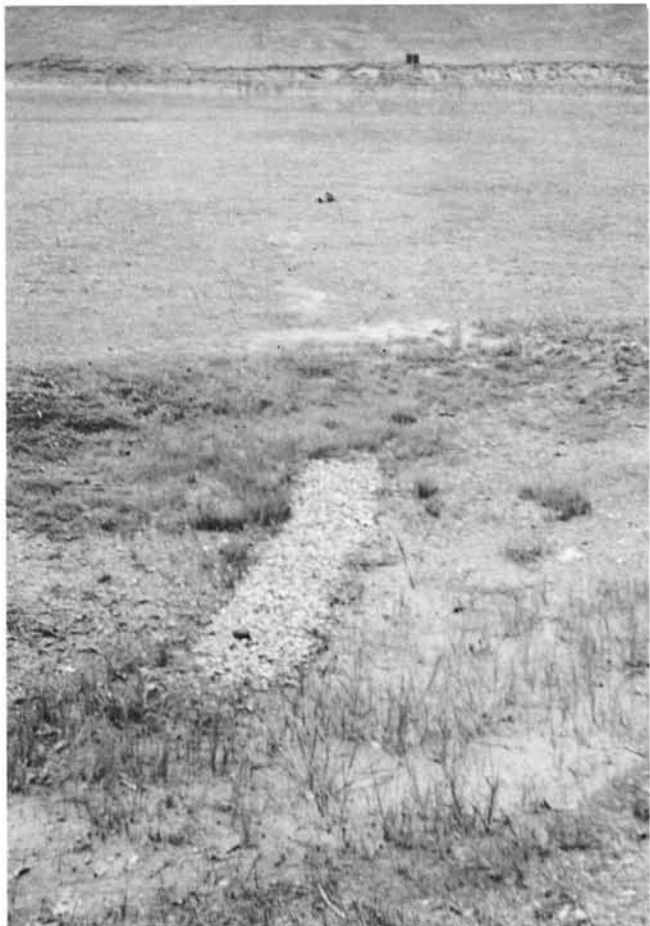
Progress means change, but a good long-range plan will lessen the chances of making unwise moves which may not be in the best interest of the club. This sort of planning gives a club both a goal to reach and the direction of progress toward that goal. Without a goal there can be no progress, and without direction, progress is always slower with the end result more dubious.

Design changes take place at many clubs every few years, and there are some instances of clubs going through many expensive changes only to return to the original design as their final effort. Clubs which do this are very much like the man who resets his watch every time he sees a timepiece which does not agree with his. There has never been an 18-hole course built that would please everybody, even though a vast majority of courses are well designed.

If plans for a new course are not well received by the majority of the people who pay the bills, then construction should never be started until an acceptable design is found. Once the course is completed it may be improved upon by correction of construction flaws or addition of new features which enhance the value of the property, but basic design changes are seldom advisable unless requested by a majority of the members.

In all cases, an architect should be consulted and the changes should be a part of the long-range plan. Major design changes are never urgent and the time between conception and implementation should be at least a year which by definition makes them a part of long-range planning.

Long-range planning lends continuity to the



Planning of any kind would have prevented the designer to the center of the new green (right),

management program of any course. Green Chairman, Green Committees, Board Members and Superintendents come and go, and more often than not, continuity is sadly lacking. The formulation of long-range plans does not imply that the first green committee the club has should make a rigid 30-year program and everyone from there on must stick to it. Long-range planning must be flexible to meet changing situations, but not flexible to the point that a new committee can take over and in one or two years change the course in chameleon fashion. The fact that some of the world's outstanding courses are old courses which have undergone only minor changes during the years would, in itself, lend credence to the practice of making long-range plans.

You may be thinking that not every golf course is a truly great one and that your own club needs some modernization and needs it now. Maybe you are faced with the seeming crisis of a new "super course" in your area competing for members. Long-range planning will be even more of an asset to you in these situations.

If your basic design is poor to start with, a



from installing a drain from the center of the bunker (left) where the first rain caused a blowout.

quick refurbishing can be extremely costly and probably won't help much on the long pull. What the course may need is complete redesign and rebuilding. If the committee in charge of planning has been on the ball, they will have recognized the inherent problems on the course and will have anticipated the possible danger of competition. A long-range plan should have been formulated to eliminate any severe consequences to your club.

If your basic design is good, a long-range plan will show your membership where you are going and they will appreciate the fact that long-range plans will make the changes less of an inconvenience and certainly less costly than a crash program.

Long-range planning should take into account that new and better grasses are being developed and that traffic is not only increasing, but also changing in type. Your long-range plans need not specify the type of grass to which you wish to change, but you can be almost certain that from now on there will be an improved turf variety for some area of your course when you are ready. The new variety probably won't be the ultimate, but it should be better than

the one you have now. Honestly, now, think of all areas of your course—greens, tees, fairways, roughs, clubhouse lawn, etc.—and I feel sure you can picture at least one or more of these areas which could be made more desirable by switching to an improved variety of turf.

Increased traffic of all kinds has influenced golf course design tremendously in the last 10 years or so. Superintendents find it almost impossible to maintain turf on small, poorly constructed greens with limited cupping space. If this is your problem you have two alternatives: you can either restrict play, or you can build new greens.

The second solution seems much more advisable and should be a part of long-range planning. You might also get some relief from foot traffic on greens by instituting an educational program which advises the membership of the problem and encourages them to wear golf shoes of the type with the spike shoulder recessed in the shoe sole. This won't lessen the traffic, but it may reduce the wear on turf by 50 per cent, which in turn makes playing conditions better, gives the golfer a good excuse to buy a new pair of shoes, and makes the golf professional's cash register ring. This will be a long-range plan if you arrange it at all.

Golf carts and service vehicles constitute another type of traffic which is becoming increasingly difficult to deal with. Many clubs, realizing the need for cart paths and service roads, have begun to install these on a long-range basis because of the expense of putting all the necessary roads in at one time. Long-range planning will also allow you to decide better where they are needed, how successful the design will be, what width to make them to best serve your purposes, and a number of other things which may be overlooked on a short-term installation.

The scope of long-range plans should include, but not be limited to, land acquisition for additional holes or a new site which would offer the golfers better facilities than they have now. Tree planting for replacement of older trees or additional trees. Beautification to make the course and grounds more appealing. Improved drainage to make the course more playable and easier to maintain. New or additional supplies of irrigation water from wells and for storage tanks and ponds. Better irrigation systems to improve the turf and save manhours.

The list of ideas for long-range plans on the golf course is infinite, as is the value of such plans. Generally speaking, the happiest people are those who make things happen, and no one can make things happen without a plan.