



Thousand Acres Golf Club *on Deep Creek Lake*



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Photography by: **Deen Kaplan**

Thousand Acres is located on a peninsula that juts into the southern end of Deep Creek Lake. In addition to its many lakefront homes, the community features a golf course. Until recently, the course was limited to nine holes. It has now been expanded to eighteen holes, as originally envisioned.

Deep Creek Lake, originally created by damming Deep Creek in the 1920s, was built to produce electricity. In the 1950s and 1960s the utility Penelec (Pennsylvania Electric Company) retained the lake and a buffer zone but sold much of the land around the lake for private use. One of the major purchasers was Fulcher P. Smith; his name lives on today in a local conservation area.

Fulcher eventually allocated the various properties he owned to his children; his daughter Connie and her husband General Joe Franklin developed the Thousand Acres property over several decades. Joe Franklin was an avid golfer, so while





most Thousand Acres' lakefront lots sold for homes, it was natural that a generous portion of the interior acreage was earmarked for a golf course.

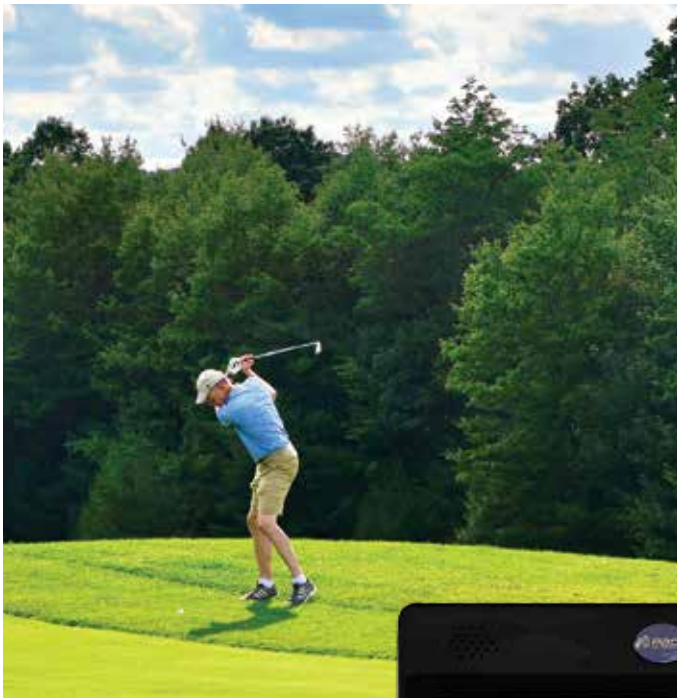
A full eighteen-hole golf course was planned from the beginning; however, construction was done in stages. Course architect Craig Schreiner, from Myrtle Beach, designed the course with his trademark attention to environmental sensitivity and ease of maintenance. The front nine holes were built in 2008-2009 by Bret Winegardner of Lakefront Enterprises. The course opened for business in 2010 as a semi-private club that both members and non-members could enjoy.

The front nine were well-received. Much of the original woodland has been preserved, and wildlife abounds throughout Thousand Acres. The course is carefully maintained with ample golf cart tracks and paved roads. A small cabin serves as a golf shop stocked with golf apparel, snacks, and beverages. The quality of the course, the skilled landscaping, and the natural beauty of the surroundings immediately made Thousand Acres Golf Club an important addition to the golfing options in the area.

Autumn provides gorgeous colors on the golf course and hiking trails throughout the development.

When it came time to add the back nine, Bob Raley, manager, knew the club had “a good stretch of golf” in its existing front nine. “We needed the back nine to complement what we already had.” Bob had a great team on the job. He credits designer and shaper Bob Holcomb for knowing what features would fit most naturally into the new section of the course, and Bret Winegardner for again overseeing the construction with skill and speed. Bob Raley is proud of the accomplishment. “We’ve *finally* completed the project.”

This new part of the course opened in May of 2023. On hand to celebrate the grand opening and offer their congratulations to owners Albert “Bud” Hawk and Cindy Stark were Connor Norman, Business Development Specialist and Chair of the Garrett County Diplomats; Delegate Jim Hinebaugh; County Commissioners Paul Edwards and Ryan Savage; Judge Justin Gregory; Garrett County Chamber of Commerce Interim President Andrew Fike;



Golf Cart Positioning Systems enable golfers to navigate the course with ease providing a personalized experience tailored to their needs. Maps offer accurate real-time distance measurement and information about location on the course.

Above: Bob Raley, manager, is proud of Thousand Acres' championship-caliber 18-hole golf course and looking toward the future for additional recreation offerings and continual golf course improvements.

Below: Wildlife abounds throughout Thousand Acres.

and Chamber Board Chair Steve Stuck. Garrett County Diplomats Steve Bortz, Jessica Dijak, Leah Diehl, David Jochynek, Leah Knicely, Julie Mead, and Emily Tobin assisted in the official ribbon cutting.

The result is a championship-caliber golf course of just over 7200 yards. Notable holes include the (par 3) 17th hole, with an elevated tee and a long view of both the 10th and 18th fairways. Another standout is the (par 4)

11th hole with its elevated tee shot over one of the largest wetlands in the Deep Creek Lake basin. Bob notes that about an acre of wetland was added to enhance this hole.

Even though the golf course now boasts eighteen holes, there is still work to be done. Thousand Acres intends to significantly enhance its recreational offerings. For golfers, indoor golf simulators will be available. Outdoor golf practice areas will be improved, with mats for use in the





Thousand Acres Golf Course is located on a peninsula on the southern end of Deep Creek Lake. PHOTO BY LANCE BELL



fringes of the season when the grounds may not be optimal, a chipping green, and practice bunkers. Naturally, attention will be paid to the continual improvement of the course itself.

Additionally, Thousand Acres at Deep Creek Lake will provide passive lake access with a dock for swimming and non-motorized boating such as kayaks, canoes, and paddleboards. Cross country skiing will make winter use of the golf course. Hiking trails throughout the development, and sports courts for pickle ball and tennis are also anticipated.

A clubhouse, slated for construction in 2024, will serve all these recreational enthusiasts. It will include a full-scale restaurant and bar, the first of its kind on the southern end of the lake.

Building lots are still available within the golf community, but you don't have to live there to play. Thousand Acres Golf Club is located at 500 Lakeside Drive in Swanton, Maryland, 21561. For more information, check the website (thousandacresgolf.com), or contact the office at **301-387-0387**.