

Karelia Golf

Executive summary (English & local language)

The course located in the middle eastern Finland, nearby the city of Joensuu. The greater area includes other sport facilities including an internationally acknowledged biathlon arena.

The course has no water hazards. And the nearest open water is about 300 metres away. The area is natural ground water accumulation environment, yet not as registered and/or protected one.

The site operations are well in line with the requirements and needs of protecting the nature. The challenge is in sharing the good work done and in setting long term development goals.

The course has well established itself as part of the local society, having over twenty years of history. Improving communications proactively may though become more important, as the greater area is under major changes, as the local army unit is being relocated and the municipality is starting to develop the site.

Kareliagolf on jo perinteitä omaava kenttä, jonka yhtenä erityispiirteenä on vesiesteiden puuttuminen kentältä. Kentän työskentely ympäristön näkökulmasta on hyvällä tasolla. Haasteena ja kriittisenä kehityskohteena on tiedottamisen kehittäminen.

Tämä saattaa aivan lähitulevaisuudessa nousta vielä merkittävämpään asemaan, kun kunta lähtee kehittämään vanhan varuskunnan aluetta. Kehitystyön tuloksena alueelle saattaa tulla uusia toimijoita, joille golfkentän toiminta ja toimintaan liittyvät riskit eivät ole tuttuja.

Nature

General Observations

There are no species or location that would require special attention. The site is in good shape, no significant signs of erosion or pollution were seen. Turf as well as the surrounding nature are in good shape. The gravel base of the soil ensures that water never stays long on the surface, which supports healthy growing of the turf.

Specific Observations

Consultations & Surveys

There has been a nature and landscape study done. No other studies of the nature have been carried out. The results of the nature and landscape study are not shared or actively presented to the green keeping personnel. Sharing the key findings and actions based on those should be done.

Habitats & Designations

Littleleaf linden is growing in the area. They have been addressed in the nature so, that both personnel and players can take them in consideration as they play.

The course report identifies a national park to be. The park boundaries or the special rules should be addressed to players at the site.

There are no other identified habitats or designation addressed at the site or in the material.

Turfgrass Species

Species have been chosen taking in consideration the climate and the features of the site. The core elements guiding the choices have been low irrigation need, good resistance to diseases and good resistance or wearing out.

Conservation & Enhancement Activities

There is an area that is decided to be protected by the course. This still needs signs so that all parties can identify it and act accordingly. The maintenance of the course allows visual impairment as long as the playability is not harmed. Some dry standing trees are allowed in the forest area to provide living environments for different species.

Actions Required

Description (if 'pending' only)

Evidence (if 'pending' only)

Continual Improvement

Sharing the Nature and landscape survey and the brief summary (which is shared with the personnel) openly should be carried out in the very near future.

There are several options for continual improvement. And several steps have been taken. Documenting the past and scheduling the future are the first steps to take. Also sharing the commitment and guidelines ie. through publishing environmental policy is the way

forward.

Water

General Observations

Water scarcity is no issue on this site. It may not be an issue, but this does not mean anyone should disregard consumption. Cost savings alone from reduced consumption can be very significant. Site scarcity is not necessarily the actual sustainability issue (especially in Finland), rather efficiency, minimizing consumption and diversifying to renewable sources are far more important. Irrigation water is coming from the lake, other from municipal supply. As there are no waterhazards, there is no problems with them.

The lake evaporates on a hot sunny day more than what is the annual consumption of the course. I think this is not really relevant information and impossible to quantify. The course has no way to impact the quality of the water.

There is also no measurement in place to see how nutrients or pesticides could transfer to the lake. Do you mean there is no risk to any water body, or the club disregards this area? An important distinction. The ground water system is far too big and complex for any measurement. Never the less, the fact that the course is on a gravel area, which allows water transfer from soilwater to groundwater, should be kept in mind.

Specific Observations

Sources & Levels of Consumption

Irrigation from the lake and other from the municipal system. Water consumption on irrigation is a bit higher than normally for a course this size. That is most likely due to the soil structure, which allows higher water flow.

There are no limitations to water usage. The lake water quality is monitored by the local authorities according to swimming shore regulations.

Irrigation & Efficiency

Irrigation efficiency is monitored through the turf quality (visually) and the soil moisture. Irrigation decision are impacted also on the base of weather forecasts and precipitation.

The system has been updated 2013 for better efficiency and productivity.

Wider Activities to reduce water consumption

Irrigation is aimed on areas with need. Service facilities have WC's updated to low water usage ones. Toilets on the course are composting ones, which use no water at all.

Actions Required

Description (if 'pending' only)

Evidence (if 'pending' only)

Continual Improvement

Water usage monitoring aligned with fertiliser and pesticide usage monitoring would produce knowledge for better and lower usage of resources. Is this enough to start them reducing from now? Do you have any example guidance figures for them to compare against? Specific things to do to help them reduce?

We would be interested in collaborating with you on national criteria – additional specific standards for Finland to go alongside the GEO standards.

Energy

General Observations

Energy usage is on about the same level as equal courses in Finland. Action to mitigate energy usage have been taken. Electricity comes from renewable and non-renewable sources. There are also preliminary plans on actions to reduce energy consumption and/or to convert the sources to more environmentally friendly ones.

Specific Observations

Sources & Levels of Consumption

Electricity comes from renewable and non-renewable sources. The total consumption shows a decreasing trend. Fossil fuels usage has been depending on the seasonal variations. Fossil fuel consumption has not shown decrease so far.

Diversifying energy supply

Possibilities to diversify energy sources are limited. Thermal (air / ground) heating has been installed, so there is not much more to do.

The one long term option is to see how the biodiesel gets along and as

the machinery is updated, that option could be taken in consideration. NLG (what's this – liquid gas?) is not available for this site. Solar power is also something that as the technology evolves, could be an option.

Activities undertaken to reduce energy and fuel consumption

Instalment of air heating pumps. Planning of maintenance in order to mitigate driving.

Actions Required

Description (if 'pending' only)

Evidence (if 'pending' only)

Continual Improvement

Energy usage and cost is an ongoing issue and opportunity. Better monitoring of water and fertiliser usage could help reduce energy consumption as mowing patterns can be adjusted. Increased awareness of the players could reduce energy usage at the clubhouse. The preliminary thinking of solar energy usage is a future way to go.

Supply Chain

General Observations

Purchasing is done on need to bases and on part of materials there are not that many options for suppliers. The restaurant uses local suppliers where feasible. Also some suppliers are chosen based on their other connections (ie. being players) to the course.

Waste management is done according to the local authorities. Reducing waste is the goal.

The warehousing facilites are good and safe. Also fertilisers are stored inhouse. The refueling station is good model that could be adopted by other sites too.

Specific Observations

Purchasing policies

There are guidelines for purchasing, but clear policy is still to be written.

Supply chain / economic multiplier

As the option for suppliers are limited, the economic multiplier is not so easily achieved. The reversed effect could though be implemented;

as the course drives environmentally sustainable way of operating, the pressure for suppliers for following the agenda could be implemented.

Turfgrass inputs

The species have been chosen of the ones being successful and environmentally good on this site.

Fertiliser usage has been going down (note; the table has wrong total figures) and the volume is about the same or less than of other courses of this size in Finland.

Pesticide usage is, even not being very high, is still on the high end of courses of this size. Specially taking in consideration the soil type, this might indicate that some adjustments in greenkeeping procedures might help to reduce resource usage and hence costs.

Waste minimization, reuse and recycling

Waste minimisation is done through sorting, recycling and composting organic particles. Local authorities have given guidance on how and what to do with waste.

Some waste is not possible to recycle, even it normal operating procedure in capitol areas. Major emphasis is on re-use of materials, which is the second best option.

Actions Required

Description (if 'pending' only)

Evidence (if 'pending' only)

Continual Improvement

The local possibilities for waste treatment are in use for the best part. There are actions planned for future improvement. Waste minimisation and further segmentation of waste is the way to go.

Purchasing policy to be drafted and shared with suppliers and subcontractors.

The next level would then be involving suppliers to waste minimisation through mitigating packaging and getting to suppliers to collect the packaging waste.

Pollution Control

General Observations

The usage of fertilisers, fuels and oils hasn't changed very much. As

the site is not in direct contact with open waters, accidents won't have such an immediate and irreversible impact. Operations are carried out in a way, which mitigates the risks involved. Hazardous materials are treated properly. The general outlook of the site shows that work is done in good and sustainable manner

Specific Observations

Water Quality Analysis

Not done – local authorities?. As the site gets the water either from the lake or from municipal system, there is no true need for analysis. Is this really a good message?

Waste water disposal

Sewage is collected according to the local permit and legislation. Septic tanks are in place. Oil separator is in use for wash pad.

Handling hazardous materials

Hazardous materials are stored and disposed according to the legislation. Better logbooks help to make the good work transparent to third parties.

Pollution prevention at the clubhouse & maintenance area

The site has good storage facilities. Workspaces are in general in good condition. Improving tidyness at the workshop helps to reduce accident risk, both for the personnel and for the environment.

Pollution prevention on the golf course

The site is not very vulnerable, no direct links to open waters etc. Pollution control is taken care of. Future developments include (but are not limited to) evaluation of ways to mitigate pesticide control measures

Actions Required

Description (if 'pending' only)

Evidence (if 'pending' only)

Continual Improvement

Tidying up the workshop is an easy step. Evaluating and developing green keeping practices to cut down pesticide usage is an other continual improvement point, but this needs long term work and planning (going from investigating turf species, nutrient usage, irrigation to pesticide choices and level of course condition required).

Undertake some form of groundwater and lake (perhaps collaborate with local authority) testing annually to demonstrate that it's not affected by golf operations

Community

General Observations

The golf course is in good symbiosis with the local community. Just aside of the course is a nature path. Environmental programmes and achievement could be made more public and shared within the golf community and the local people. One should keep in mind, that a lot of things that are "business as usual" are not that clear to people around.

Sharing information, making achievements transparent improves the image and at the same time increases the commitment and proud the course personnel. Proactive information reduces rumours and harms to the course.

Specific Observations

Employment & Education

Employees are mostly local. The work is very seasonal, and as such providing also opportunities for students to get their first touch with working life. Basic training of the personnel is carried out.

Sustainability working group

Sustainability is more in the daily work than it is in the meeting logs. The work can be seen in how the course is managed and in the awareness of people. Nevertheless there is need for further improvement and making sustainable working visible.

Community relations

The course has close links to the local community. The land is on lease from the municipality and active collaboration on the area management takes place. There are no special actions or special interest groups that would be in disagreement / dispute with the course.

Land use and cultural heritage

Land usage is proper and respect the natures normal features. There is special cultural heritage that would require actions. The historical monument is to identify the action, not to locate the farm.

Legal disputes (if none leave blank)

Internal communications

Internal communications are on normal level. Improvements are always welcome and reminders of sustainable actions could be implemented both to address the employees and the players.

External communications

The course has open information sharing through the website. Sustainable issues could have their own place and there should also policies made visible. The community is in general so small, that a lot of information sharing takes place informally. As good as it is, this includes the risk, that communication is not under control and that information loopholes may exist.

Actions Required

Description (if 'pending' only)

Evidence (if 'pending' only)

Continual Improvement

Primary act is to publish environmental policy. The next level is to lay out a schedule of sustainable issue communication (ie. in each magazine, information boards etc). Better training logs (as part of introductions to different machinery and tasks) would both ensure that employer requirements are met and that employees better understand their responsibilities.

Documentation Reviewed

Action Plans and Project Proposals

Awareness Raising Materials

Certification Report

Emergency Incident Plan

Environmental Data

Environmental Management Plan

Environmental Policy

External Surveys and Reports

Internal Reports

Minutes of Meetings

Newsletters

Register of Accidents

Training Log

Conclusion

I see that the course meets the requirements of certified golf course. I therefore propose admitting certificate to the course.

Certification Highlights

The warehouse facilities are very good and very well kept. Things are on their places, there is a place for each machine and floors are tidy.

Press Release Quote

Karelia golf on kehittänyt kentän toimintaa vastuullisesti, noudattaen kestävän kehityksen periaatteita. Kentän toimintaa on arvioitu ja analysoitu ja sen on todetty täyttävän kansainväliset kriteerit. Kareliassa, kuten useimmilla suomalaisilla kentillä, ujous on suurin vastuullisen toiminnan näkyväksi tekemisen este. Se, mikä kentällä tuntuu arkiselta, on usein vastuullista toimintaa. Kentän merkittävin ympäristöasioiden hoitoon liittyvä kehitystarve onkin tiedottamisen parantaminen. Olipa sitten kyse suunnitelmista kestävän kehityksen nimissä tai tehdyistä toteutuksista.

Tänään päättyneen auditointiprosessin tuloksena kentälle esitetään kansainvälisesti tunnustettua GEO-sertifikaattia. GEO – järjestelmä on kehitetty vastaamaan sekä yhteiskunnan, että kenttien tarpeisiin suhteessa kestäväan kehitykseen. GEO on käytössä Euroopassa, Aasiassa, Afrikassa ja Pohjois-Amerikassa.

Recommendation

award