



Submitted photo

The first hole at Black Butte Ranch's Glaze Meadow course. The photo was taken in September, nearly one month before renovations for the course began.

A clearing vision



Rob Kerr / The Bulletin

A dumptruck sits near the location of the first green on a widened first fairway as seen from the first tee Monday at Black Butte Ranch's Glaze Meadow course near Sisters. The 30-year-old golf course is undergoing a major renovation after an irrigation upgrade prompted the consideration of other improvements.

It is early in the renovation, but already Black Butte Ranch's Glaze Meadow is beginning to show off its natural attributes

NBLACK BUTTE RANCH — ever could the small lake be seen from the first tee of Black Butte Ranch's Glaze Meadow course.

But there it is, sparkling in the October sun. The site of the water is beautiful, but even more than that, it is surprising.

Though the basic routing of the hole is the same as it has been since 1980 when Glaze Meadow opened, seeing anything other than ponder-



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osa pines and the turf of the fairway in the distance was a rarity.

Since the course opened, Glaze Meadow had become a claustrophobic collection of trees and turf.

Those trees prompted Black Butte Ranch and its homeowners to earlier this year approve a \$3.75 million renovation project of Glaze Meadow.

That renovation began last week, mostly work to clear some of those trees and move some of the turf on the front nine of the golf course.

Calling this project a renovation is like calling 6,436-foot Black Butte a molehill.

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Vision

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In just a week's time it is obvious that the work going on at Black Butte Ranch is less a renovation of Glaze Meadow and more the construction of a brand new golf course.

"Every single green is getting rebuilt, and every single tee box is being rebuilt," says Charles Kingsbaker, Black Butte Ranch's director of sales and marketing and my personal guide for a tour through Glaze Meadow earlier this week. "It's a whole new golf course.

"It's not just taking a couple of tee boxes out here and a couple there."

John Fought, the well-regarded course architect who in the 1990s helped Bob Cupp design Crosswater Club at Sunriver Resort and Pumpkin Ridge Golf Club near Portland, was hired to rebuild Glaze Meadow.

The project includes installing a new irrigation system, clearing of trees, and stretching the course to roughly 7,100 yards from the back tees — or about 700 yards longer than its previous measure.

Fought's plan is to create a course that is a throwback to the Donald Ross 1920s and '30s designs made famous by courses such as Pinehurst No. 2 in North Carolina.

Fought, who lives in Arizona, has been in and out of Central Oregon twice since the work at Black Butte Ranch began. He talks about the course's future like a proud father about to whisk his kid off to college for the first time.

"I am absolutely thrilled," says Fought, whose brother Jeff is Black Butte Ranch's director of golf. "I know it's shocking to a lot of people, the difference of just getting the tree cover back to its normal limits. But it's just fabulous."

Shocking? When the work just began a week ago?



Rob Kerr / The Bulletin

Piles of logs and construction equipment lay on the third and fourth holes Monday at Black Butte Ranch's Glaze Meadow course near Sisters. The 30-year-old golf course is undergoing a major renovation after an irrigation upgrade prompted the consideration of other improvements, according to Charles Kingsbaker, director of sales and marketing at Black Butte Ranch.

Fought is not exaggerating. Looking from the new first tee, a hole that will be turned from a twisting par 5 into a par 4, the lake behind what will eventually be the green is obvious.

The outline of fairway is much wider and more fair to golfers.

"It's shocking, isn't it?" Fought says of the first hole. "That's probably one of the places where we really needed to (renovate) as much as anywhere. There were trees in the middle of the fairway. There were trees all over the place.

"And players have a hard time playing through all that. You can see now how people can play the golf course."

The first tee is just the first sign that Fought's plans are to open mountain views and better use the course's natural attributes.

For instance, the course's namesake meadow — which barely came into play on the third, fourth and, fifth holes — will now take a starring role on four of the first five holes.

Trees, which had grown rapidly due in large part to the course's irrigation and fertilization, had obscured the meadow's lake in the 30 years since the course opened.

Fought wanted to bring the natural beauty back to Glaze Meadow.

"I have done this many times," says Fought, who compares Glaze Meadow's renovation to his renovations of Ross' Pine Needles Lodge & Golf Club in North Carolina. "But I think Glaze is the most overgrown golf course I had seen in many, many years. I think there is the oppor-

tunity there to create something spectacularly beautiful."

Plenty of work remains.

The renovation of Glaze Meadow will continue through mid-December if weather permits. Shaping the course will begin next spring, and then Ross' influence will begin to take hold. Seeding will then follow.

If all goes according to plan, the course will reopen in spring 2012. But Fought's vision is already apparent.

"It's amazing what's going on there," says Fought. "I am very confident we are going to be able to create something that is spectacular there. I mean REALLY spectacular."

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