

Wisp Resort - Fantasy Valley Golf Course
McHenry, Maryland



“The entire team of Aspen did an excellent job with regard to quality (10 out of 10), bar none the best I’ve ever seen,” says architect Todd Schoeder. “As a golf architect and former construction manager and shaper for Wadsworth, I recognize high-quality work and Aspen is the best finishing company in the industry and this was clearly evident on this project. They are true team players, collaborators and innovators in the golf industry. They will always be on my bid list.”



A Fantasy Becomes Reality

Wisp Resort - Winner, 2009 Golf Course Industry Affinity Award

Location:	McHenry, Md.
Type of project:	Renovation
Cost:	More than \$1.5 million
Construction started:	July 2006
Course opened:	June 2008
Architect:	Todd Schroeder, Design Workshop
Builder:	Aspen Corporation
Course Superintendent:	Scott McMillion
Owner Representatives:	Steve Richards, DC Development, LLC

At Wisp, Aspen constructed four new holes, integrating them into the existing 18-hole course while taking four holes out of play for real estate development. In addition to installing an extensive erosion and sediment plan prepared by the project engineer and approved by the Maryland Department of Environmental Protection, Aspen and Design Workshop architect Todd Schoeder were able to make additional improvements to protect one of the most sensitive trout streams in Maryland.

PROJECT GOALS

- Construct four new holes integrated with existing 18-hole course.
- Protect Hoyes Run Creek, located adjacent to the golf holes. Hoyes Run is one of Maryland's few Class Tier II trout streams and one of the most sensitive streams in the entire state.

PROJECT CHALLENGES/SOLUTIONS

- This was the first golf course work to be applied for and permitted in Garrett County, MD with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The whole process was new to Garrett County and this resulted in some delays and an abundance of E&S measures.

Over 22 sediment basins were built on four golf holes; many were placed in landing areas. Extensive super silt fence was also installed.

- Many of the sediment basins and diversion ditches were expected by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to function at finished sub-grade. This created situations where the E&S controls would not function until the earth work was done.

Aspen worked with the MDE and the owner to arrive at a workable solution that would satisfy compliance and function. This often required installing and adjusting grades on sediment basins multiple times.

- Several permits were delayed that extended the project. Multiple regulatory agencies were involved in the permit process. For example, a year was required to receive a permit to remove a pond from the property.
- The site has several wetland areas that required protection.

The wetland areas received special care during the project. Bridges had to be installed in a manner to avoid negative impact to the area by using freespan bridges and having them at an elevation that would not harm the wetland. Clearing required a lot of hand work and special equipment that could remove the woody materials without the equip-

ment encroaching on the actual wetland.

- During construction and through grassing, the area had record rain falls; at some times, as much as 4-5 inches could fall in 20 minutes.

Aspen performed extensive re-working of features, additional E&S controls, and more sod to counter effects of rain. As architect Todd Schoeder explains, *"Heavy and frequent rains hammered the project site making it even more difficult for Aspen. However, they never complained or asked for schedule extensions and cheerfully completed the project on time."*

- The site had previously been used as a theme town called "German Village at Fantasy Valley." The developer purchased the property and the project included coordination of removal of all of the cottages and structures, overhead utilities, and existing infrastructure was necessary before construction could begin. Some underground septic tanks were discovered during construction which required proper pumping and disposal of contents before removal.

Aspen worked closely on coordination with the developer and sub-contractor which was critical as utilities were being installed that crossed almost every hole. Not only that, but there were some properties on-site that needed to retain utilities, so it was a matter of coordinating removal of some, but not all, of

the overhead utilities until new service could be extended to the affected properties.

PROJECT RESULTS

Owner Steve Richards says Aspen's president, Donnie Adkins, is one of the most practical people he's ever met. *"The sequencing on this job was just tremendous," he said. "Between all the regulatory agencies and permits for E&S, plus coordinating with all the utilities (remember, you can't control the power company!), it was stunning to me that Aspen brought the project in on time. But they did."*

- Aspen met every deadline established and in conjunction with the golf course superintendent, had the golf course in great condition for the grand opening.
- Aspen made suggestions for the amount and type of buffer next to the trout stream in order to provide a vegetative buffer strip to treat stormwater runoff before it reached the stream. As a result, runoff is reaching the stream in a clean state.
- A Spring House had been erected on the property to protect a natural spring. Rather than capping and piping the natural spring to another location, the design team, along with Aspen, decided to incorporate the Spring House into the strategy of the new golf hole.

Rather than completely removing the house, Aspen suggested to demolish it to make it appear as an old abandoned farm structure left on the property—and that's exactly what was done. Aspen took great care to protect the spring during construction activities and as such, the water still flows from this source with the same water quality it originally had.

Aspen is currently working again with architect Todd Schoeder and Design Workshop to construct a new \$12M, 18-hole course at Wisp Resort, along with designer Hale Irwin. This project requires the same type of extensive erosion and sediment plan received by the Fantasy Valley project.

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