

SAVE FALLBROOK GOLF COURSE!

BREAKING NEWS: Fallbrook Golf Course to stay open...for now.



Aerial view of the back nine, Fallbrook Golf Course. *Photo: Ken Seals, February 8, 2016*

This past week, SaveFallbrookGolfCourse.com helped reporters generate four articles. *The San Diego Union Tribune's* [Bob Pickard](#) and the *Village News's* [Tom Ferrall](#) covered the announced March 14 closure of the course. When the owner back-tracked and cancelled the closure, *San Diego Reader's* Ken Leighton [reported](#) Jack Lamberson saying, "his long-term plans are to eventually divide the property and sell the back nine for mitigation and sell the front nine to a residential developer."

March 15th, *San Diego Union Tribune* readers opened the Sports Section to golf writer Tod

Leonard's headline, "Negligent Fallbrook course owner is betraying the public's trust."

Says Leonard:

"I visited the 56-year-old course on Thursday after several years of not seeing it and was shocked by the dire conditions. Fallbrook was a layout I enjoyed immensely because of its bucolic setting and distinctive routing. The front nine has always been open and fun; the tight, tree-lined back nine was a bear. The pictures on the course's own website stoke my memories of how good and green it was. They are a heartbreaking reminder now."

Leonard's lengthy article states, "If there is not yet a manual for how to run a good and beloved golf course into the ground, the owner of Fallbrook Golf Club is writing it -- one strange, sad chapter at a time.... [T]his is less about a tough economy or difficult water conditions. It's about an owner who was never qualified nor ever seemed interested in running a successful golf course."

Overextended golf course owners such as Jack Lamberson, upside down on mortgages, are trying to get that monkey off their backs. Many homeowners know what it's like to be underwater, so one can sympathize. However, neighbors are right to be concerned since mitigation land banking (such as seen at the fallowed San Luis Rey Downs Golf Course) and residential or commercial development are all on the table and worried banks are watching.

Mitigation land bankers eyeing the golf course for revenue via the Clean Water Act need it subdivided so they can buy just the Live Oak Creek section running along the back nine. Add that process to a land use change and a new owner is looking at a decade or more, possibly an impossible venture.

Housing developers visiting Gird Valley look around, view the small lots lining the course and start counting dollars. What they need to understand is that the current San Diego County General Plan, finalized after the Gird Valley houses were built, "reduces housing capacity by 15% and shifts 20% of future growth from eastern back country areas to western communities." It does this by requiring large lots in eastern Fallbrook, 4, 8 or 16 acres depending on the slope in areas designated as semi-rural. "Potential development and residential densities will typically be reduced where land is not already subdivided," states the County's General Plan.

The difficulties and costs associated with pursuing a variance to the General Plan, in addition to a zoning and land use changes, make development on the course financially prohibitive

to a zoning and land use changes, make development on the course financially prohibitive. Former Fallbrook Golf Course owner Stacey Hart learned this lesson the hard way when he purchased 40 acres in Gird Valley intending to build 23 houses, only to discover he was legally entitled to build only 11 -- if he could complete the long and expensive permitting process!

Mr. Hart abandoned the project.

Buyers doing their due diligence are uncovering these facts. First National Bank Denver, which carries the loan on this course, visited the Fallbrook Golf Course last week and is discovering what we now believe to be the case: it is unlikely that any housing development or mitigation land bank deal on Fallbrook Golf Course will ever close escrow.

Jack Lamberson states, "I could sell the front nine right now to a very solid developer for \$3.5 million. (But) before I give it away for someone else to make money on, I would develop it myself."

Golf reporter Tod Leonard admonished him: "Lamberson needs to come to his senses and realize this isn't a parking lot or warehouse he owns. It's a public entity that has provided pleasure to thousands for more than half a century. There is a legacy to be had here, and right now his is as crusty and forlorn as his fairways."

Fallbrook Golf Course is a golf course, a much-loved golf course. There is great value in that.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TODAY TO SAVE FALLBROOK GOLF COURSE: Visit the four articles and add your online comments. Keep the discussion going. SaveFallbrookGolfCourse.com.

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It's not just about golfing and fun at the Clubhouse. Just a few years ago, Fallbrook Golf Course was a Southern California gem. With your help, it can be again! SaveFallbrookGolfCourse.com Photo: Teresa Platt, 2012

Thank you for your support and spread the word!

www.SaveFallbrookGolfCourse.com