

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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**Kohler Co. Announces Golf Course Modifications
And Minimalist Design that Respects the Land**

***Revised plan will impact fewer wetlands and less state parkland
while removing invasive species and protecting the natural environs***

KOHLER, Wis. – Kohler Co. today announced that it has made important modifications on its proposed golf course design in the Town of Wilson so that it sharply reduces impacts to wetlands, significantly decreases the amount of property needed for an easement on state land, and does not impact state property west of the Black River.

Jim Richerson, Group Director of Golf for Kohler Co.'s Hospitality and Real Estate Group, said the revised plan will have a minimalist design that will allow the land to breathe and protect more wetlands. The modifications also limit the easement to state land now used for maintenance operations and not routinely accessed by the public.

"Over the past several months, our plans have evolved based on community feedback and our due diligence and field work. We made a concerted effort to avoid, minimize or mitigate the potential environmental impact," Richerson added. "This balanced approach sharply reduces encroachment on wetlands acreage, significantly cuts the use of state parkland and removes invasive species."

Richerson said the company is preparing an extensive environmental report that is part of the approval process for the golf course project, which would be constructed on private property that Kohler Co. has owned for more than 75 years and would open scenic lands to the public.

"After listening to the community and studying the land, we have developed a minimalist approach that accentuates the existing natural environs and provides better protection for plants and wildlife," Richerson said.

Richerson said the revised plan would include:

- **Expanded public access:** For decades, only a limited number of area residents had permission to access the property with no cost or taxes to themselves. Among the most vocal opponents of the project are some of those residents who apparently prefer that the land be maintained for their private use. But, like Kohler's four other award-winning golf courses, this course would transform Kohler's private property into a public golf course with a realistic chance of it being considered among the top 50 in the world.
- **Preservation of more wetlands:** Scaled-back plans, including a modified course layout, a rerouted entrance and a minimalist design, will reduce impacted wetlands to less than five acres from more than 25 acres originally estimated. Kohler would mitigate the wetlands impact by following the state's mitigation program that allows the company to preserve additional wetlands (preferably in Sheboygan County) or contribute to the Wisconsin Wetland Conservation Trust, resulting in a net increase of wetland habitat.
- **Reduced impact to state land:** The revised proposal would affect approximately four acres of state land for an entry road and maintenance building in an area already used by the state park for a maintenance facility and operations. This area of the state park is not normally accessed by the public, and the easement would follow a route similar to the one approved for a previous development proposal. The original plan impacted approximately 33 acres of state land for additional golf course use, a maintenance building and an access road that crossed park trails. The original plan also required a new river crossing impacting wetlands to the west of the proposed golf course. By utilizing and enhancing the state park's existing entrance, public areas of the state park are not impacted.
- **Adoption of green building standards:** Clubhouse plans call for environmentally sensitive design standards to achieve eligibility for LEED green building certification.
- **Natural methods preferred:** The course will be designed to require minimal maintenance, and the company will use natural methods for controlling invasive species whenever possible. Kohler has a proven record of employing the best management practices regarding use of approved pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers on its golf courses and its courses have never been cited with an environmental violation.
- **Removal of invasive species:** Sound land management principles will feature the removal of invasive species, including the predominant Japanese barberry – a thorny tangle that makes portions of this land impenetrable and whose removal will allow the land to breathe.

“Kohler Co. has always believed that good business practice and sound environmental policy must work together, and this low-impact approach reflects the company’s commitment to sustainability, responsibility, innovation, quality and high standards,” Richerson said. “Our intention is to create a public golf course whose minimalist design and sustainable approach captures the property’s natural character. It will solidify Sheboygan County’s reputation as a top 10, world-class golf destination.”

A February economic impact analysis by SB Friedman Development Advisors of Chicago found that when fully operational, the project will create the equivalent of 227 new, full-time jobs, generate an annual \$20.6 million economic impact for Sheboygan County and boost the local tax base of the Town, school system and Sheboygan County. Construction-related activity would bring an additional boost for the County, with construction alone estimated to create the equivalent of 95 full-time jobs and generate \$12.5 million annually over the three-year duration of the project.

More information on the proposed golf course, a revised course map and a report on its economic impact can be found at www.ProposedGolfCourse.com.

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