

# AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY AIDS IN COURSE MANAGEMENT

**SUPERINTENDENT USES AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY TO SOLVE PROBLEMS IN MAINTAINING COURSE**

BY DOUG MEYER

**U**sing aerial photography has given me a better overall view or perspective of the Cedarbrook Golf and Country Club course and has been a great tool for planning maintenance. It has also proved an excellent means of spotting problem areas on the course.

To do a proper job in utilizing aerial photography, the superintendent will have to make some investment in photographic equipment, or have access to good equipment. I use two 35mm cameras. One is fitted with an 80 to 210mm zooms lens which allows me to zero in on a problem area. I can get a better close up view with this lens, since there are limits as to how low the plane can fly safely. I use an ASA 100 film in both cameras and have found after some trial and error that this is the best for aerial shooting.

## **EXPERIENCE HELPFUL**

It is important to gain some experience in photography so you can get



*Aerial photography provides Meyer with an excellent overview of the course.*



*Infrared aerial shots show up trouble areas on the course.*



*Helicopter is expensive but productive.*

the best lighting and angles for your pictures. I have found that 3:00 pm in the summer months, for example, is a good time to get optimum lighting for aerial photography.

The services of a plane such as a Cessna or a helicopter can be found at a local airport. The rates for a plane generally range from between \$50 to \$100 for one half hour. Helicopter rates are higher at about \$300. You can accomplish a lot with aerial

photography in a short timeframe however. Using the aerial photography system does require however a pilot who has a cooperative attitude.

## USEFUL IN MANY WAYS

There are a number of important uses I have found for aerial photography. Assessing spring ice damage and examining drainage problems are examples. Because ice damage generally occurs in low lying areas with poor drainage, I try to fly after a heavy rainstorm to get pictures of areas on the fairways that have water accumulation. These photographs then help provide support for drainage projects when you meet with your board of directors.

It is also an excellent tool for assessing turf disease. Disease problems that appear endless can be outlined or delineated from the air. In recent years I have been experimenting with infrared photography which provides a good indication of areas that are under stress.

Photography is a good tool for spotting irrigation problems because weaknesses in irrigation spacing can be seen clearly from the air during a period of drought.

Aerial photography can play an important role in acting as a map for course reconstruction and design changes. Examples are tree planting and cart path and bunker replacement.

Course design can benefit from aerial photography as well. The aerial photographs of an area can be an excellent tool in designing a new course through providing an accurate view of the overall layout.

In addition to aerial photography being a great procedure for our business, I find that the actual flying during the photography is relaxing and fun.

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