

April 21, 2014

I am writing this as a witness to a place that has meant so much to so many and has inspired me personally. I am also writing this as a witness to the reactions of so many to a change they believe will greatly affect a part of their lives that they are passionate about.

As a summer employee of Highland Links Golf Course for many years, I have seen great camaraderie among many groups of people which has culminated into a truly interactive community separate from the “real” world. These people are from Truro, Provincetown and Wellfleet and beyond. They are year-rounders, second home-owners, natives and regular and occasional visitors. They are people of all ages and all walks of life, many who have played golf at Highland Links their whole lives. It is a recreational place and a social place. This all occurs in a beautiful place rich in history.

Highland Links is special not only because of the people, but because of the golf course itself. Its history dates from 1892. It is a “links,” a special type of golf course, one of only three “true” links style courses in the United States. It has been run and maintained by the Town of Truro and its employees for decades. It is in conservation land. Natural areas and native vegetation have been fiercely protected. Major invasive species are controlled. Just this past fall, golf course and other town employees invested great amounts of time and money to obliterate problem conditions on the course that affected its historic and links status. These actions also helped to improve sightlines, safety and the proper character for this type of golf course. Cape Cod and its visitors have been catered to, the links operations balanced and streamlined to offer the best possible experiences for its pass holders, players and visitors based on years and years of experience with them.

On April 14, after opening and preparing the tees, greens and fairways for the season, we were notified that operations of Highland Links by the Town of Truro would be ending very soon, as operations privileges were awarded to a company from off Cape. Even though the transfer has not yet occurred and I am one who comes into contact with every player and visitor to the golf course, I have already heard nearly unanimous concern by the clientele that things will change drastically, away from the flavor that has been so thoughtfully and carefully crafted over so many years by management, greens staff, the golf course board, and the PGA affiliation. Everything from the conditions of the course to the brand of juice served in the snack bar has always been taken into consideration.

These golfers that I have grown to know so well are sad, upset and some are angry. Intelligent, worldly, golf-experienced people feel devastated. They are concerned and worried that their ideal social, recreational, community paradise that they have helped shape, with the cooperation of management, staff, board members and town officials, will suffer. Most of these management, board and townspeople will no longer participate. We don't know how over the course of years or even months things will change, but I hope that all the patrons and all who have made Highland Links what it is, including how it has been preserved and improved, will demand that it be kept as a golf course that is known world-wide for its special merits and conditions.

Kenneth Hawkey  
North Truro