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Environmental Case Study: The Old Collier Golf Club - Preserving Habitat and Water Quality

[Jan Bel Jan](#), ASGCA designed the [The Old Collier Golf Club](#) in Naples, Florida during her time working with Fazio Golf Course Designers. Her goal was to maintain an "Old Florida" aesthetic. Only ¼ of a mile from the Gulf of Mexico, this private 18-hole, par 72 course plays at 7,069 yards and sits on 267 acres of land bounded by the Cocohatchee River to the north.

The challenge for Bel Jan was twofold. First, she needed to ensure that state mandates would be met and that no degradation would be made to the water quality of the Cocohatchee River, designated an Outstanding Florida Water (OFW) by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Second, because there was no surface or underground water available on site, nor was there a practical source of treated effluent, Bel Jan needed to find a suitable water source for the course's irrigation system.



The Old Collier Golf Club in Naples, FL

Bel Jan's plans ultimately required one million cubic yards of excavated soil to create her vision for the course's layout, one that melded with the land's natural surroundings and included various uphill, downhill and side hill shots, as well as sand bunkers that mimicked the visual characteristics of the native upland scrubs. To prevent potentially damaging runoff to the Cocohatchee River, Bel Jan's design called for the installation of protective berms. She also planned for eleven additional water management lakes to further control rainfall and drainage. To overcome the irrigation hurdle, Bel Jan decided to use Seashore Paspalum for the course, a turf that could be irrigated with the brackish water of the Cocohatchee River.

The Old Collier Golf Club is the first golf course in the world to irrigate with brackish water. By investing in state-of-the-art irrigation system with a 25-28 year life expectancy and taking advantage of off-peak usage rates, the course is also saving more than \$6,000 a year in electrical costs. W, Collier Enterprises was able to create a course that met all the necessary permitting requirements and maintained that "Old Florida" charm.

To read more about Jan Bel Jan's work on The Old Collier Golf Club, read this [PDF excerpt](#) taken from the book [An Environmental Approach to Golf Course Development](#) by Bill Love, ASGCA.

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