

Course Review: Meadow Lakes Golf Course

We won't hold you in suspense here, given the prominent photo on the right. Thankfully, we did not see any rattlers during our round at Meadow Lakes Golf Course in Prineville. But when you are greeted at the clubhouse door by such a warning, the thought was never far from our minds.

Central Oregon is one of two true golf meccas in our state — you've heard of that other one on the South Coast — and is blessed with a number of fantastic courses. Of those, we believe Meadow Lakes may be the most underrated. Maybe because it's in Prineville, a little out from the Bend/Redmond hub. Maybe because it's a municipal course amongst a series of high-end private or privately owned, public play resort tracks. Or maybe just because there's a sign warning of rattlesnakes as you enter the pro shop! Whatever the reason, Meadow Lakes does not get the "props" it deserves.

The course has an interesting history. In 1988, the City of Prineville was facing fines of up to \$25,000 per day if it did not find a way to dispose of the wastewater that was being dumped into the Crooked River. Since the city did not have enough money to build a new water-treatment center, the EPA suggested spraying the wastewater over a 400 acre alfalfa field. The city leadership decided to build a golf course that would dispose of the wastewater, and funded much of the construction costs through EPA grant money.

The resulting Meadow Lakes Golf Course is now a fully functional 18-hole championship golf course *and* waste-water disposal site. The water is disposed of through irrigation and the 10 evaporation ponds that double as water hazards for golfers.



Meadow Lakes has been featured in many national publications, and received the inaugural *Golf Digest* Environmental Leaders Golf Award.

Meadow Lakes is set on beautiful desert highlands amidst sparkling blue ponds, rock-rimmed buttes and green meadows. We played there as part of our Golf Week 2013, along with friends Dave Cadd and Mitch Nosack. Meadow Lakes came in the afternoon after a delightful morning nine at the Prineville Country Club and, to Don's delight (and insistence), lunch at the Prineville Arctic Circle.

Needless to say, with 10 ponds scattered throughout the course, *water* is the primary hazard. Literally, you *could* get wet on every hole at Meadow Lakes. Heck, even the driving range is ringed by a stream. There are a few trees, and there are numerous bunkers, but if you can navigate around the water successfully, you can score well at Meadow Lakes. By and large, in fact, our foursome did just that.

Meadow Lakes also features a perfectly sized, very functional clubhouse with a nice pro shop and an excellent restaurant. Local golfers and non-golfers alike flock to the restaurant for lunch, and insiders will tell you that back in its infancy, it was a rare day that Les Schwab wasn't there for lunch. Yes, *that* Les Schwab, the late Oregon tire king whose headquarters sits just a few blocks from Meadow Lakes.