

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Lake of the Forest
Wyandotte County, KS

Section number 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 Page 1

Nomination Amendment, 2013
Lake of the Forest – Wyandotte County, Kansas

National Register Approved
January 8, 2014

SEE FILE

Patrick Zollner, Deputy SHPO

Date

Background

The Lake of the Forest was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on January 22, 1996. Commonly owned resources at the Lake of the Forest property were included in the original nomination. An amendment to the nomination was approved by the National Park Service on February 24, 2012 to include six sets of historic stone and concrete steps that were not included in the original nomination. That amendment did not change the nomination boundaries.

This proposed second amendment seeks to expand the boundary to include the most recent acquisition, the property used as the not-for-profit Lake of the Forest “Pasture” Golf Course by those living within the Lake community. This was not included in the original nomination because the Lake of the Forest, Inc. did not own (only leased) the land at the time of nomination. The property’s transfer to Lake of the Forest, Inc. was completed in 1995.

Section 5. Number of Resources within Property

The addition of this one contributing site, one non-contributing building, and one non-contributing structure brings the resource total to 17 contributing resources and two non-contributing resources.

Section 7. Additions to the Inventory of Resources

Golf Course – Contributing Site (KHR# 209-2236)

The Lake of the Forest Pasture Golf Course is a nine-hole pasture course with sand greens developed by amateurs and avid golfers in the early 1920s. The course was created on land used previously for agriculture (presumably for animal grazing, as no evidence of plowing exists). It is located approximately 15 miles southwest of Kansas City between Bonner Springs and Edwardsville on a hill overlooking the Kansas River valley. The course includes rolling hills and undulating fairways lined by trees. It has a yardage of 3,021 and features nine sand greens and one sand bunker.

The entrance is located on the west side, toward the south end of the course, along Lake Forest Drive. The entryway is accentuated by a short stone wall and concrete path. On the north side of the concrete path is a small (non-contributing) shelter with flat roof and steel supports. It rests on a concrete slab. A gravel path proceeds east from the concrete entryway. The gravel tapers out, but the golf cart path is discernible in the grassy fairway, mostly following the topographic ridges (Figures 1 & 2). A small bridge (non-contributing) was erected in recent years over an intermittent north-south drainage in the fairway

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of Hole #6.

The golf course is located in a region that was a formerly glaciated northerly extension of the Osage Plains that covers all of the rest of eastern Kansas. Bedrock in this region is made up of interstratified beds of limestone, shale, and sandstone, covered over by glacial deposits of varying thicknesses. Loess is also present, occurring as a thin upland mantle over most of northeastern Kansas but in thicknesses of up to a hundred feet in the bluffs along the Missouri River.

The topography of the region is directly related to the degree of glaciation. Lake of the Forest, which is located within the heavily glaciated area, has a gently undulating erosional drift-controlled surface. The course is laid out on a generally north-south ridge about one-half mile above the Kansas River. The shape of the green is an amorphous upside-down Y with the centers of the stem and forks being the highest portion of the ridge.

The vegetation of the region consists almost entirely of prairie (mostly big and little bluestem) cut through by narrow ribbons of riverine deciduous forest, containing dense undergrowth and many vines and occasionally interrupted by freshwater marshes. Hackberry (*Celtis spp.*), cottonwood (*Populus deltoids*), willow (*Salix spp.*), and elm (*Ulmus spp.*) are the dominant forest species; although oak (*Quercus spp.*), black walnut (*Juglans nigra*), sycamore (*Platanus spp.*), and other hardwoods can also be found along with smaller tree species. The perimeter of the Lake of the Forest Golf Course consists of dense forest, especially to the east and south. Black walnuts, persimmons, and junipers are evident within the course and have been transplanted from the surrounding wooded area. The ground cover of the golf course is made of a variety of mown grasses, including Bermuda, fescue, zoysia, and crab (no artificial or imported turfs). In addition to one sand bunker on #5, there is a grassy hazard on north part of course, between Holes #5, #7, and #8, comprised of unmown native grasses, possibly **of**/or feather reed grass (*Calamagrostis acutiflora*).¹

The fairways for the nine holes generally follow the perimeter of the course with only one instance of drive-paths crossing (Holes #4 and #8). The topography slopes mildly toward the center of the green and dramatically along the perimeter. A description of each of the nine holes follows (Figure 3).

The two-segmented drive to Hole #1 is a little over 400 yards. The tee is located just south of the main (west) entrance to the course from Lake Forest Drive. Beginning at an elevation of approximately 946 feet, the drive heads east, parallel with the tree line forming the southern boundary of the green. Continuing in a southeasterly direction along the tree line, the drive ends at the first hole at an elevation of approximately 968 feet, the highest elevation of the course.

The single-path drive to Hole #2 is approximately 140 yards. The tee is located to the south of the sand green for Hole #1. The drive heads east-northeast, downhill and generally paralleling the tree line, to end at an elevation of approximately 944 feet.

The drive to Hole #3 is approximately 345 yards. The tee is located a few feet north of Hole #2's sand green. This single-path drive trends northwesterly and parallels the tree line to the northeast for two-thirds of its path. The sand green is in the center of the course at an elevation of approximately 952 feet.

¹ Three sand bunkers were removed in 2012 and 2013.

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Hole #4 is located to the north-northwest of Hole #3. The tee is on the east side of Hole #3's sand green. The single-path drive is centered within the course and is approximately 265 yards, and the hole is at an approximate elevation of 925 feet.

The approximate 275-yard, single-path drive to Hole #5 trends in a northerly direction. The tee is located just to the northeast of the sand green for Hole #4; the sand green is located at an approximate elevation of 935 feet.

The drive to Hole #6 is a single path of approximately 175 yards. The path heads due west from the tee located on the north side of Hole #5's sand green, through a dense copse of trees half-way to Hole #6, and ends in an open area at an elevation of approximately 920 feet. The fairway slopes dramatically down toward a small north-south creek in the center of the copse of trees.

The tee for Hole #7 is located about 115 feet due north of the sand green at Hole #6. The roughly 390-yard drive trends due east to the north of the copse of trees and a native grass hazard and parallel to the tree line along the northern boundary of the course. The tee is located at an approximate elevation of 920 feet; the sand green is at an approximate elevation of 936 feet. The topography of the fairway, however, undulates greatly, from 908 feet to 952 feet, before ending at the hole.

The drive to Hole #8 begins at an elevation of 934 feet at the tee to the southeast of Hole #7. The single-path drive trends southwesterly for about 390 yards, crossing the fairway for Hole #5 and ending at an elevation of approximately 924 feet on the east side of a small copse of trees. The sand green is located about 75 feet northwest of Hole #4.

The drive to Hole #9 is segmented into paths. The tee is located a few feet to the southwest of Hole #8. The drive trends south-southeast along the tree line to the west and turns sharply to the southwest to continue paralleling the tree line. The sand green is located at an elevation of approximately 955 feet, a few hundred feet to the north-northeast of the tee for Hole #1.

The site continues to function as a private club golf course, but also serves as the lake community's green space. There is no lighting or irrigation on the course. Additionally, the community residents use this property as follows: flying kites, camping out under the stars, summer movie festivals, Easter egg hunts, and watching red tail hawks.

Golf Course Shelter – Non-contributing building (built ca. 1960-1970)

An open-air shelter is located near the first tee on the north side of the concrete path. The shelter has a flat roof, steel supports, and rests on a concrete slab. A pro-shop once stood in this general vicinity of the shelter, but it burned in the 1950s. Since it is used for staging Easter egg hunts, movies under the stars, kite-flying contests, picnicking, bag races, etc., it affords shelter for many events.

Golf Course Bridge – Non-contributing structure

There is a small modern wood bridge located near Hole #6 for pedestrian and golf cart use.

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Section 8. Additions to the Statement of Significance & Historic Context

The original nomination lists **entertainment/recreation** as one area of significance, and this also is applicable to this golf course amendment.

The original nomination lists the **period of significance** as circa 1888 to circa 1934, which also encompasses the years during which the golf course developed. Of course residents and members have continued to use the course through the 20th century up to the present.

Pasture Golf Courses

Natural or pasture golf courses exhibit minimal formal design and generally conform to the natural topography, vegetation, and climate of the area. Although there are many pasture courses in Kansas, they are not a regional phenomenon and can be found throughout North America. The common attribute found in all examples is the use of the natural landscape and vegetation, with minimal alteration. As author Mal Elliott suggests, "Many golf course in the early days were nothing more than mown pastures, homemade links often laid out by locals who were just learning the game."² Some of the earliest courses laid out in the United States were natural, and well-known examples include Oakhurst Golf Links in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, and Megunticook Golf Club in Rockport, Maine.³

There are several pasture golf courses in Kansas, and unlike the Lake of the Forest property, many are municipally owned and publically accessible. They include, but are not limited to, the 9-hole city-owned Lindsborg Golf Course; a 9-hole course at Cottonwood Falls Country Club; the 9-hole Palco Golf Course; a newer 18-hole course near Abilene called Great Life Golf and Fitness at Chisholm Trail; the newer 18-hole Luray Golf Course; and courses near Leonardville, Dighton, Haddam, Geneseo, and LaCrosse.

Golf in the United States and Kansas

Though there is evidence that golf was played in the United States in the late 18th century, the game was not firmly established in this country until the 1880s. There are multiple clubs and courses claiming to be the country's oldest, and several were in operation by the late 1880s and early 1890s, including Oakhurst Links in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia; Quogue Field Club in Quogue, New York; Foxburg Country Club in Foxburg, Pennsylvania; Kebo Valley Golf Club in Bar Harbor, Maine; and Town and Country Club in St. Paul, Minnesota. In 1894, several clubs joined to form the United States Golf Association. This same year, according to Kansas City golf historian Kenneth Krakauer, the Kenwood Golf Links was established in what is now the Central Hyde Park neighborhood in Kansas City, Missouri. The course, which was minimally maintained, was quickly abandoned for the Hyde Park Club.⁴ A few years later in 1897, a professor at Wichita's Fairmount College, Clifford P. Clark, developed a six-hole course south of the campus. This led to the formation of the Braeburn Golf Club; Braeburn Golf Course is now a public course on the campus of Wichita State University.⁵

² Mal Elliott, *100 Years of Kansas Golf* (Wichita: ELFCO, 1996), 36.

³ The Cultural Landscape Foundation website, accessed 27 December 2012 online at <http://tclf.org>.

⁴ Kenneth Krakauer, *When Golf Came to Kansas City* (Kansas City, MO: Adler's Inc., 1986), 6.

⁵ Elliott, 8-9.

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Kansas' golf pioneers include Harry Robb, Sr. of Montrose, Scotland, and James Dalglish of Berkshire, England. Robb worked four years in Hutchinson, helped layout courses in Great Bend, Dodge City, and Iola, and became the first head pro at the respected Milburn Country Club in Kansas City in 1917.⁶ Dalglish worked much closer to home – Kansas City – than Robb. Krakauer dubbed Dalglish “the father of Kansas City golf” in his book *When Golf Came to Kansas City*. Other key names in Kansas golf history include Dewey Longworth, Robb's successor in Hutchinson, and course designers Bob Dunning of Emporia and Floyd Farley of Kansas City.

Author Kenneth Krakauer calls the 1920s “the golden years of Kansas City golf” when “courses were being opened at a rate of two or three a year. He suggests that Crestwood Country Club at Lake of the Forest opened in 1922, the same year two other Kansas City-area courses opened – the Ivanhoe Country Club opened at 86th and Holmes and the Community Golf Links opened at 62nd and Indian Lane. Courses in Leavenworth, Olathe, and Independence opened that same year.⁷ Current Lake of the Forest residents have heard that the club had a pro during the 1920s, but only one source has turned up any leads, which has not been confirmed by other sources. Thomas Pringle Dickson, a native of North Berwick, Scotland, is noted on a website about North Berwick's golf heritage as having been “appointed head pro at Crestwood Golf and Country Club, Kansas City (1924-26).”⁸

Lake of the Forest Golf Course

The first mention of golf at Lake of the Forest dates to 1910 shortly after the property transitioned from an ice-producing plant into a seasonal retreat. The *Bonner Springs Chieftain* noted the addition of several “attractions” at the lake property, including “a golf course at the north end of the lake.”⁹ During this period the property was accessible to the public free of charge, but the newspaper suggested new management would soon be converting the property to a private club. Indeed, the newly formed Lake of the Forest Club purchased the 810 acres in December 1910. Soon after the purchase, stone walls were added, and a gate house, caretaker's house, entrance structure, and stone staircases were constructed.¹⁰ A 1912 brochure touts the availability of golf at Lake of the Forest, and club members likely continued to use the course located north of the lake.

It was not until the early 1920s when the Lake of the Forest Club partnered with the newly formed Crestwood Golf and Country Club to expand and enhance golfing opportunities to attract members. Crestwood entered into a ten-year “Lease-and-Option-to-Purchase Agreement” with the owners of the property adjacent to Lake of the Forest (John A. Thompson and D.S. Haines). The agreement involved 153 acres in the northwest quarter of Section 26, Township 11 South, Range 23 East, and allowed Crestwood to develop a golf course, but limited their abilities to cut green or growing timber.¹¹ This

⁶ Elliott, 24. Also, “History of Milburn,” Millburn Country Club website. Available from <<http://milburn.org/milburn-history>> [24 September 2013].

⁷ Krakauer, 72.

⁸ Douglas C. Seaton, “North Berwick – Club Makers, Professionals and Course Designers.” Copyright 2012. Accessed online 28 December 2012 <<http://www.northberwick.org.uk/clubmakers.html>>

⁹ “Attractions at Forest Lake,” *Bonner Springs Chieftain*, 28 April 1910.

¹⁰ Michele M. Risdal, “Lake of the Forest Historic District” National Register of Historic Places nomination (Topeka: Kansas Historical Society, 1996), section 7, page 1.

¹¹ Lease-to-Purchase Agreement registered with Wyandotte County, 26 June 1922. Copy filed in National

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property was located immediately east of the Lake of the Forest property. A precise date of construction for the golf course has not been determined, but it likely was laid out in 1922 or 1923.¹²

The *Bonner Springs Chieftain* reported on the progress of the formation of a golf club at Lake of the Forest in early 1922:

Members of the golf club committee of the Chamber of Commerce tomorrow will start following letters sent yesterday inviting 100 Kansas City men to affiliate with the proposed Lake of the Forest Golf Club...The price of membership is \$100, with \$75 a year dues, the dues to start when the ground is in playable condition.¹³

This same newspaper article noted that the "Lake of the Forest Club has no golf course," but that it had "leased ground sufficient to lay out a nine or eighteen-hole course." In actuality, the Lake Club had partnered with Crestwood, which had leased the adjacent grounds for a golf course. By 1925, the Lake of the Forest Club totaled 150 members. The annual dues were \$100 a year, which included access to the 9-hole golf course, tennis courts, hiking and riding paths, and baseball diamond.¹⁴

The partnership between Crestwood and the Lake of the Forest Club allowed members of both organizations to take advantage each other's facilities. A newspaper article in the *Bonner Springs Chieftain* noted, the "Club's part in the proposed new golf course will be to donate the use of its club house, locker rooms, basement, water, interurban landing, and the like."¹⁵ It is not known how long this agreement remained in place, but by 1929 Crestwood was having difficulty keeping up on its payments to the Lake Club.

A letter from the Lake Club's Board of Directors to the members explained that Crestwood was "unable to keep up the payment to the Lake Club as called for in the contract," and that "the almost unanimous opinion seems to be that we should insist upon the golf Club paying their debt to the Lake Club and living up to the contract now in force, without modification, or upon their failure or refusal to do this, the Lake Club should refuse to allow them privileges of our club and not allow their members to come through our grounds."¹⁶ A review of the minutes of the meetings of the Lake Club board throughout the 1920s and 1930s reveals several golf-related payments, such as property rental, taxes, products, and services, beginning in 1929. These payments suggest that the Lake Club took over Crestwood's contract with the property owner to maintain the golf course.

Despite these tumultuous beginnings, the Lake Club managed to use and maintain the golf course continuously throughout the 20th and early 21st centuries. Enthusiasm for golf apparently remained high

Register research file, Cultural Resources Division, Kansas Historical Society.

¹² Authors Kenneth Krakauer and Mal Elliott list different dates for the construction of the course – 1922 and 1923, respectively. Kenneth Krakauer, *When Golf Came to Kansas City* (Kansas City, MO: Adler's Inc., 1986), 94; Mal Elliott, *100 Years of Kansas Golf* (Wichita: ELFCO, 1996), 36.

¹³ "Golf Club at Lake Forest," *Bonner Springs Chieftain*, 2 March 1922.

¹⁴ Michele M. Risdal, "Lake of the Forest Historic District" National Register of Historic Places nomination (Topeka: Kansas Historical Society, 1996), section 8, page 5.

¹⁵ "Golf Club at Lake Forest," *Bonner Springs Chieftain*, 2 March 1922.

¹⁶ Board of Directors, Lake of the Forest, to Members, Lake of the Forest, undated, Copy filed in National Register research file, Cultural Resources Division, Kansas Historical Society.

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in the early 1930s as the board's meeting minutes reflect discussion about possibly adding nine holes.¹⁷ Women's golf groups are known to have been active at Lake of the Forest as early as 1939.¹⁸ Women golfers partnered with women from other clubs to host and participate in events. Once such example was in 1941 when the Victory Hills Women's Golf Association invited the women of Lake of the Forest to participate in a golf and bridge luncheon.¹⁹ The club newsletter notes that activity on the golf course declined in the late 1950s to the point that the club's golf director, Frank Jones, asked the membership if the cost of maintaining the course is worth it. In his note to the membership, Jones said, "...there has been little use of the Golf Course the past few years. Less than a dozen people played the Course last year...The cost of keeping and maintaining the course is around two thousand dollars per year."²⁰ Whatever the discussion, the course remained open and future newsletters note the hosting of golf tournaments for the community in the 1960s.

The golf course property was reappraised in 1987, at which time the membership considered (but narrowly defeated) an effort to purchase the property. The Lake Club agreed to continue paying taxes on the property, and the Lake of the Forest Golf Association formed to pay rent and maintain the property. The Club and Association revisited the possibility of purchasing the course in the early 1990s. Lake of the Forest, Inc. purchased the golf course land 25 January 1995. Property purchased included "all of the Northwest Quarter of Section 26, Township 11 South, Range 23 East, lying West and South of the County Road in Wyandotte County, Kansas, less the part taken for road purposes."²¹

Since its initial development in the early 1920s, the Lake of the Forest golf course has been used for multiple purposes and is a vast green space. The Lake community, which now owns the 153-acre tract, has a vested interest in preserving it as such. This golf course amendment fits within the original nomination's period of significance (1888 to 1934) and area of significance (entertainment/recreation).

¹⁷ Meeting Minutes, Lake of the Forest Board of Directors, 5 November 1931. Copy filed in National Register research file, Cultural Resources Division, Kansas Historical Society.

¹⁸ Former Lake resident Louise Rundle began noting golf activities at Lake of the Forest in her weekly column in the *Kansas City Kansan*.

¹⁹ Louise Rundle, "Forest Lake News," *Kansas City Kansan*, 29 June 1941.

²⁰ Letter to Membership from Golf Director Frank Jones, *Lake of the Forest Breeze*, March 1959. Copy filed in National Register research file, Cultural Resources Division, Kansas Historical Society.

²¹ Warranty deeds registered with Wyandotte County, 25 January 1995. Copies filed in National Register research file, Cultural Resources Division, Kansas Historical Society.

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Section 9. Bibliography

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Unified Government

Lease-to-Purchase Agreement registered with Wyandotte County, 26 June 1922. Copy filed in National Register research file, Cultural Resources Division, Kansas Historical Society.

Warranty deeds registered with Wyandotte County, 25 January 1995. Copies filed in National Register research file, Cultural Resources Division, Kansas Historical Society.

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Section 10. Geographic Information

Boundary Description

This additional nominated area includes 152 acres described as follows: All of the NW ¼ of Section 26, Township 11 South, Range 23 East, lying West and South of the County Road (now known as Edwardsville Drive) in Wyandotte County, Kansas.

Boundary Justification

The above-referenced boundary includes the entire tract that has been associated with the golf course since its development in the 1920s.

Additional Documentation

Photograph Log

Lake of the Forest
Wyandotte County, Kansas
Date of Photographs: September 22, 2011
Taken by Sarah Martin

- 1 of 10 Golf Course Shelter (NC) at entrance to course, camera facing NE
- 2 of 10 Entrance to golf course, camera facing E
- 3 of 10 Path leading away from tee at Hole #1 toward Hole #2, camera facing SE
- 4 of 10 Sand green at Hole #1, camera facing N
- 5 of 10 Between Holes #3 and #4, looking toward Hole #4 (and #8 just beyond), camera facing NW
- 6 of 10 Sand green at Hole #5, facing S
- 7 of 10 Bridge (NC) between Holes #5 and #6, camera facing E
- 8 of 10 Near tee of Hole #6, with Hole #5 sand green in background at left, camera facing SE
- 9 of 10 Native grass hazard near Hole #7, camera facing S
- 10 of 10 Course between Holes #8 and #9, camera facing N

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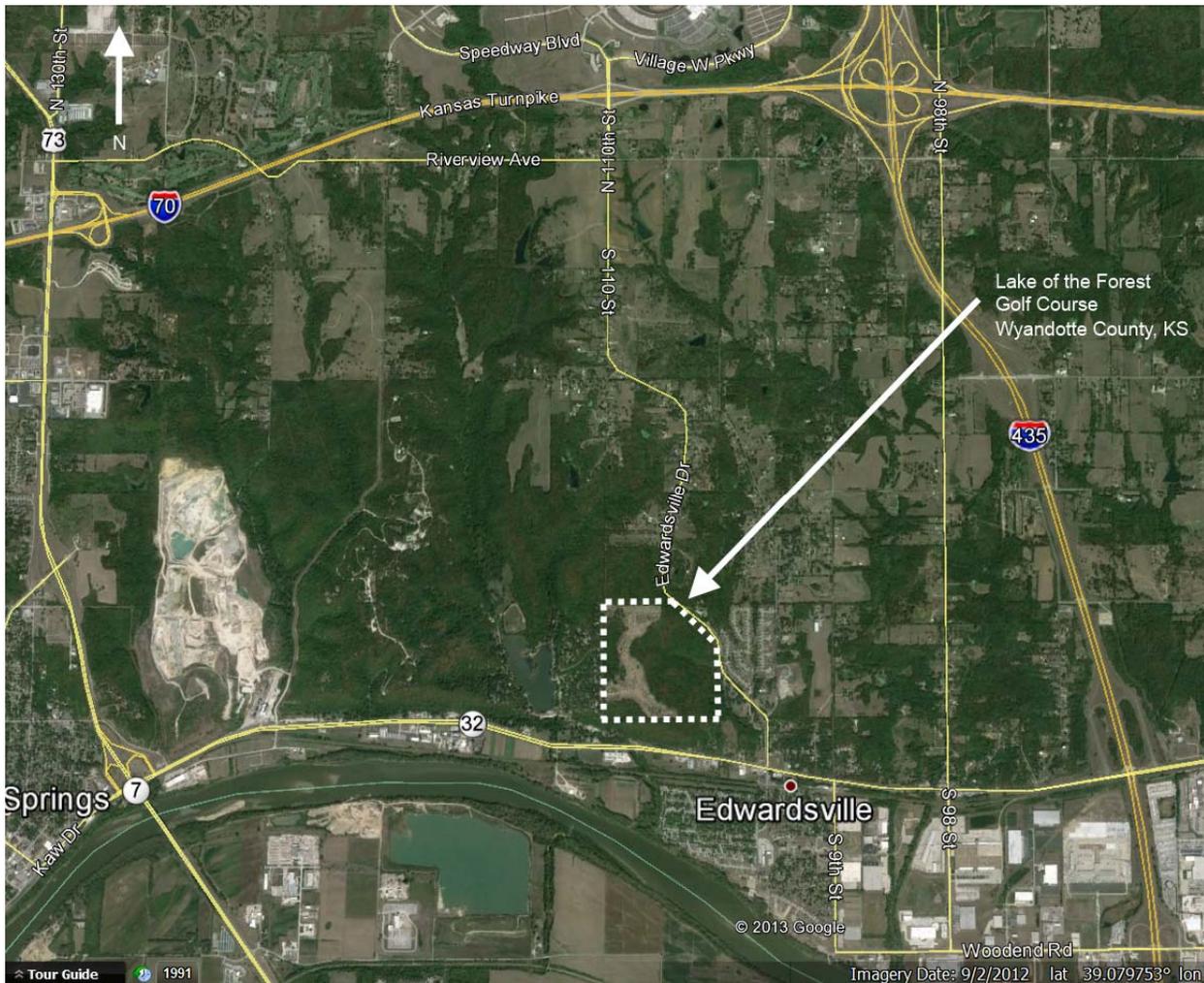
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Figure 1.



Contextual aerial image. Google Earth, 2013.

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Figure 2.



2010 orthophotography (Unified Government GIS). The white dotted line represents the 153-acre tract included in this amendment. A portion of the Kansas River is visible in the bottom left of the image.

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Figure 3.



Golf course hole marcations.