



# Perfection to the Finish

New grading solution dramatically transforms Gulf Coast contractor's operation



At Bayshore Ranch, a residential development in North Ft. Myers, Florida, Backwoods Land Services is subcontracting to Lee Mar Construction to provide finished-grade support. In addition to general site grading, creating swales for drainage, etc., they are also tasked with finishing grade for the roads, which, in the past, would have been a time-consuming effort involving a motor grader and a whole lot of manual grade checking. According to John "Bubba" Shearer, Backwoods' founder and owner, all that changed by maximizing the functionality of their compact equipment.

"Our small machines – specifically our John Deere 333G compact track loaders – do the bulk of the grading work on projects like the one at

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#### Company

Backwoods Land Services  
Alva, Florida

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#### Project

Bayshore Ranch  
North Ft. Myers, Florida

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#### Topcon Products

Topcon MC-Mobile, LN-150 3D Laser

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#### Topcon Dealer

Lengemann of Florida  
Altoona, Fla.

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**John "Bubba" Shearer**



Bayshore," he said. "One of those machines is dedicated to doing manual grading work and the other has a Level Best box blade with a grading system that, until recently, was running a 2D grading system. That previous solution, which utilized a laser to determine elevation and slope, took us to the next level, bettering existing grading times by more than 25%."

Shearer added that it also improved accuracy and onsite efficiency, letting them tackle more – and larger – projects. At the same time, it allowed them to imagine the possibilities that a 3D system might provide. That imagining was realized with the recent addition of an MC-Mobile solution, which brought true 3D functionality to the operation.

Contractors like Shearer have long wished for a 3D grading solution that could bring large-machine 3D results to their compact fleet – and do so without having to cobble together a solution or pay a large-scale machine price. Shearer will quickly attest that MC-Mobile is the answer they've waited for.

"When we were first considering the move to 3D, the sales rep from Lengemann, our Topcon dealer, assured us we'd see a nice uptick in speed, accuracy and quality – and we've seen all of that," he said. "Right now, it's making me do things at Bayshore with small equipment I couldn't do before – or, at the very least, making it far easier to do them."

An actual ranch when purchased, Bayshore's developers are trying to maintain that ranch-like feel through the incorporation of big swales, roads without curbs, culverts in the driveways, etc. That open approach really allowed Shearer and his CTL to excel.

"What we've been able to accomplish has been impressive," he said. "The older solution was productive, but we'd set up and then have to re-set every time anything changed. Not so with the LN-150 [3D Laser] robot – essentially the 'brains' of the 3D solution for us. It's easy to set up and doesn't need to be touched again. We are beating the already decent grading time we had with the 2D system by 50%."

Productive as the 3D solution was at Bayshore, Shearer said it paled in comparison to work he'd just completed at an adjacent development called Stonehill.

"At Stonehill, the area being developed was literally surrounded by existing homes," he said. "To deal with drainage issues, engineers designed a surface that called for us to sculpt a swale around the outside of the site, then a second swale to which water from those houses could drain and get carried to the lakes onsite."



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Without MC-Mobile and the 3D solution, that slope-intensive design would have been a nightmare. Instead, it bordered on just another job. I had people out here look at what we were doing and say: 'I didn't know that was possible with that machine.' The Topcon system didn't just make it possible, it made it easy."

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