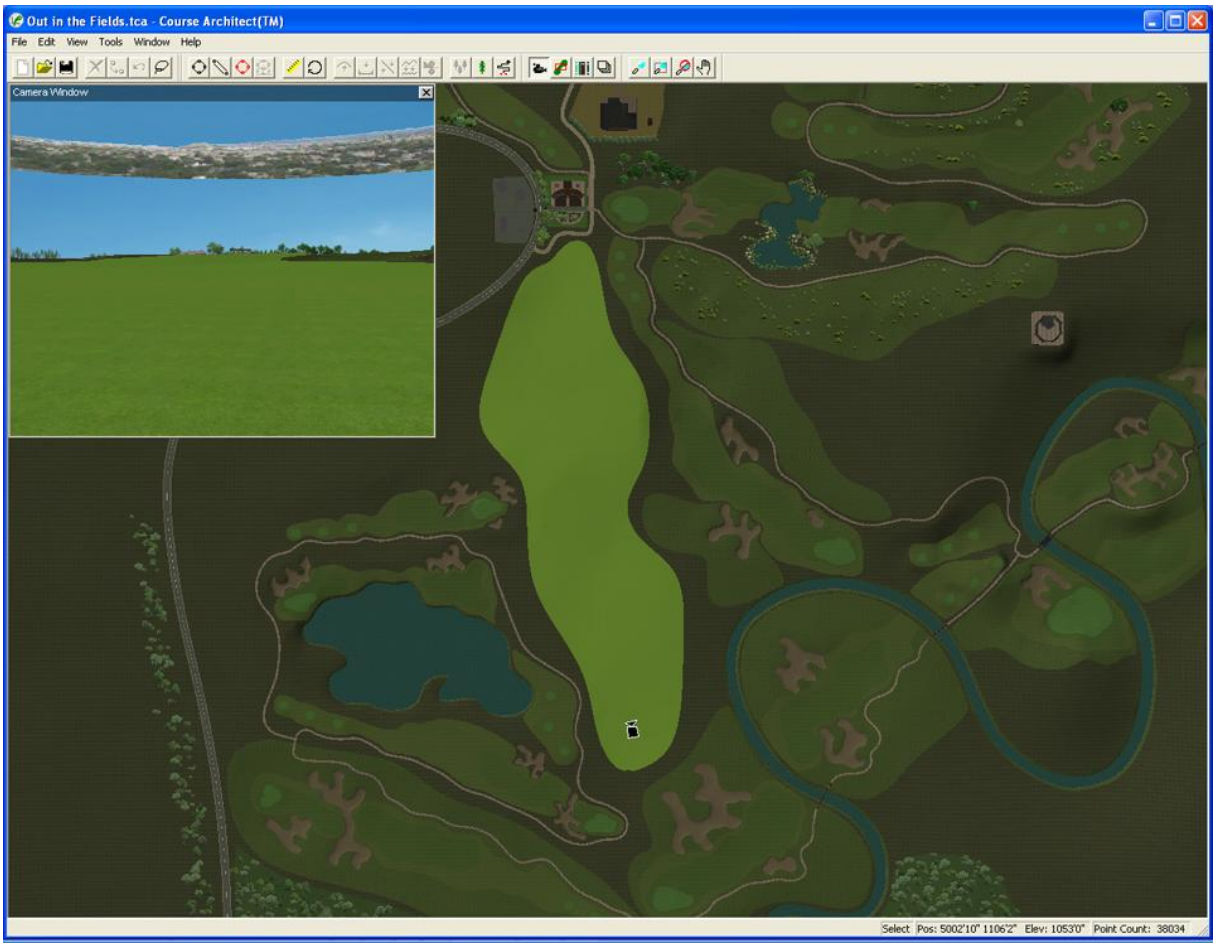
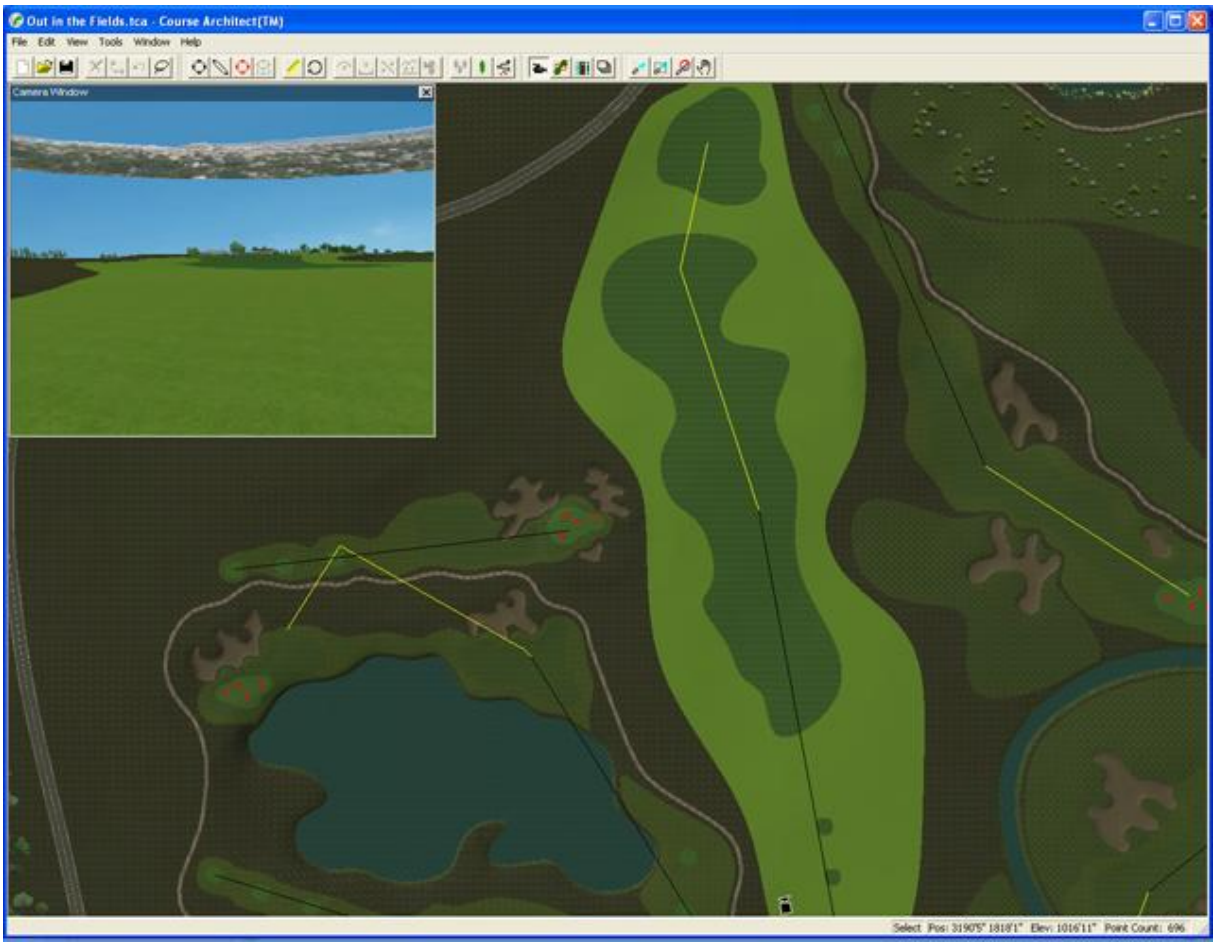
Basic Hole Elevation Tutorial

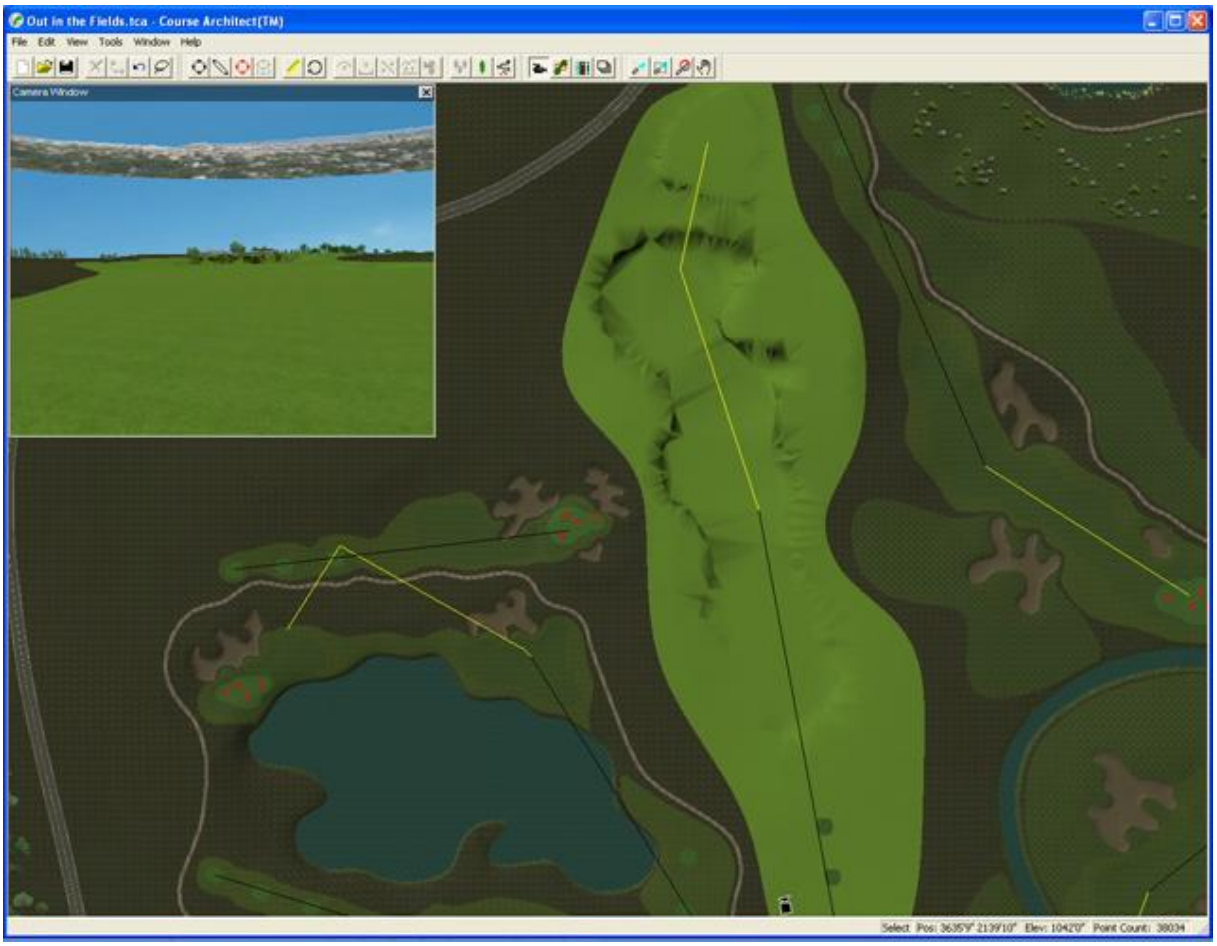
Here's a little tutorial on one possible way to quickly create a realistic looking hole on an existing plot. This is the buffer shape for the 18th hole on the course I am presently working on. As you can see from the overhead and the camera view in the CA, the terrain looks pretty flat. That is because I set the CA to 'slight undulations' when I first created the plot.



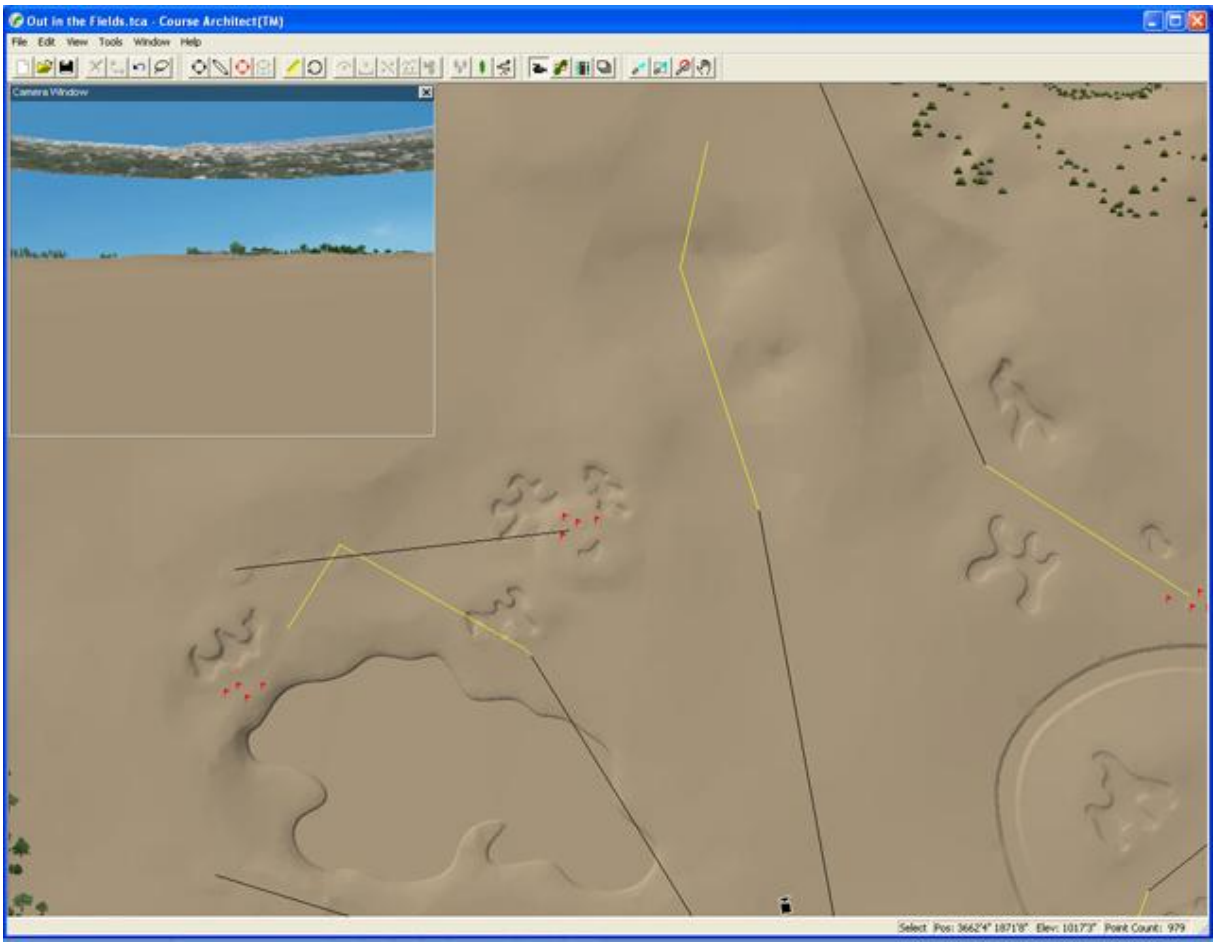
I want the hole to stand out in the surrounding terrain so what I do next is draw buffer shapes around the areas where I expect the fairway and green to go:



Now I select those shapes, enlarge them by 1' and flatten the fairway area to minimum height and the green area to maximum height. Next I delete both the fairway and green buffer shapes and optimize the remaing buffer area twice at the 3rd click. (Don't overoptimize, as it will ruin your elevation and smoothing work.)



Now for the tedious part. I select my buffer shape, enlarge it by 6’ (this is to prevent towering spikes at the edge of the texture) and start smoothing *at the **lowest** setting.* This may take a while. Depending on the severity of the elevation changes in the base terrain it can take from 50 up to more than 100 clicks. Fortunately you don’t have to wait for every click to finish. Just give it a couple of dozen of clicks and go make a sandwich or something. Keep at it until it looks nice and smooth. The best way to check this is by doing your smoothing in the ‘modeling clay’ (Shift+M). Here’s how it looks in the MC after I gave it about 50 clicks and optimized twice at the 3rd click:



I now have the basic terrain for my hole prepared. There's a a slightly lowered area where the fairway is going to go, with some soft mounds on either side which are perfect to carve some bunkers into. My green area is raised about 26' compared to the main fairway area, but the slope is nice and gentle.

So much for the main landscaping of a hole. This whole process doesn't take much more than 30 minutes, so it's pretty fast.

Of course everybody has their own way, but I have found that this method allows for pretty realistic landscaping, which in my humble opinion is an essential, but often sadly overlooked part of cyber golf design.

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