Golf, government, environmental forces gather

A future looks brighter for golf courses exists following a meeting between the Golf Course Water Conservation Group in San Diego and developers, governmental agencies and environmental forces, according to a spokesman for the golf association.

“It's a win-win situation for existing and future golf courses in San Diego County,” said John Moore of Hydro-Scape Products and vice president of the water conservation group.

“We have been able to bring together builders and developers with the Municipal Water District people to share information about how golf courses are operated and the methods used for water conservation.

As a result of our joint cooperation, we were able to achieve greens from the Stage 4 water rationing laws that are now on the books.”

Water auditors have now been done on more than 70 golf courses by Marguerite Engles, program director of Large Turf Water Audit Programs in San Diego. She reported: “Generally, we've found them to be over 80 percent efficient in their water usage.”

Moore added that golf courses achieve this high rating partly because they are one of the few businesses that employ full-time irrigation managers.

Although many golf courses still use potable water for irrigation, the majority use runoff, efficient, recycled, or well water, he said.

Water audits are available free of charge to all golf courses who want to assess their water usage. Moore said the water conservation group also arranged for discussions between developers and environmental groups, such as the Sierra Club.

Talks revealed that both parties were trying to accomplish the same thing for the land. “Golf courses are very pure environments,” said Moore. “They provide a wildlife habitat, a sanctuary for migratory waterfowl, clean cool air, abundant plant life and water sources.

“Golf courses use very few pesticides and what is used are fungicides and fertilizers. And, tests have shown that these chemicals do not find their way into the ground water.”

The Golf Course Water Conservation Group predicts that golf course construction will continue in San Diego. “We all want the same things for the environment,” said Moore. “We just weren’t aware of it.”

The group hopes to include the Audubon Society and the Native Plant Society into future meetings.

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