Red tape in Minnesota... Weenies on parade

Several times during the course of writing my story on GCA project in Bloomingdale, Minn. (see page 1), I fell into deeper, more broad conversations with various people involved in the erstwhile development. More than once they posed the question, "Geez, from now on, do you think every project in Minnesota will be so fiercely opposed?"

Invariably, the long-delayed Homestead project came up and the same question was asked about in reference to Michigan.

It’s important, I believe, to consider these examples of bogged down projects on a larger scale. One may ask: Are larger trends — positive or negative — relating to golf course development.

More even important is making the separation between the reality of politics and actual opposition.

I again thought about Mr. James who writes a column each week in Maine who writes a column each week entitled "Politics and Other Mistakes." Readers would be wise to remember that politics sits at the core of nearly all such disputes, whereas the fates of various endangered marigolds and ladybugs usually show up once the battle has been joined.

On the surface, the Biwabik project looks to be a large-scale hoo-hah over rare strawberries, pesticide fates and the decline of Minnesota’s song bird population. But after a few calls to the half-dozen people driving each side of the controversy, the political struggle comes shining through.

To wit: The course was approved by the St. Louis County Planning Commission. Bigwigs at the state Department of Natural Resources, miffed they were not consulted thoroughly, motioned for an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) prior to construction.

Again, this doesn’t seem unusual. However, in Minnesota, never has a golf course project been subjected to the scrutiny of the Natural Resources Commission, so we are very critical of the EIS. We are very critical of what little is seen on us and the Verti-Drain. Obviously not their own research. They seem unaware of the timeliness and appropriateness of the use of large-scale equipment in a small project.

To the editor:

I have been in the golf business as a course owner for 15 years. I have always tried to keep up with golf course equipment, chemicals and environmental developments. I have never has a golf course project been subjected to the scrutiny of the Natural Resources Commission, so we are very critical of the EIS. We are very critical of what little is seen on us and the Verti-Drain. Obviously not their own research. They seem unaware of the timeliness and appropriateness of the use of large-scale equipment in a small project.

I have not personally applied any chemicals to my golf course. I have always tried to keep up with golf course equipment, chemicals and environmental developments. I have never has a golf course project been subjected to the scrutiny of the Natural Resources Commission, so we are very critical of the EIS. We are very critical of what little is seen on us and the Verti-Drain. Obviously not their own research. They seem unaware of the timeliness and appropriateness of the use of large-scale equipment in a small project.

I have a question for you. Can you please direct me to companies, universities, associations, environmental groups and/or individuals who may be interested in participating in such a project?

Incidentally, I read every copy of Golf Course News almost cover-to-cover.

Dan James
Foster City, Calif.

Ed. If readers have ideas on where Mr. James should look for answers, contact the Golf Course News office.

VERTI-DRAIN PRESIDENT ADDRESSES ATTACHMENT

To the editor:

As a long-time reader and advertiser in Golf Course News, we have always had respect for the timeliness and appropriateness of the articles that appear in your publication.

However, we would like to clarify some points regarding an article that appeared in your April issue. Patent O’Brien [director of the USGA Green Section, Southeast Section] entitled "Burns’ invention greatly increases deep aeration." Mr. Burns developed an attachment that fits on our Verti-Drain and has had great success with it; we applaud his initiative. We have numerous other accounts of satisfied customers who have adapted the Verti-Drain to unusual applications and developed special attachments. Not all of these case studies have been as successful as Mr. Burns’ case seems to be.

To be clear to our other customers and to our many distributors around the country, we must state that we have never been consulted or physically seen Mr. Burns’ invention. Therefore, we cannot, with certainty, attest to its results or its compatibility with our machines.

As you can well imagine, the tolerances for a machine that drives tines deep into the soil, and then pitches (heaves) the tines forward is very critical. Therefore it is our policy to field test and have our engineering staff review all attachments so that we can stand behind our products with confidence.

Of course, we would be happy to test Mr. Burns’ invention for approval, but until that time it cannot be officially endorsed or authorized as a factory-approved product attachment.

As you can imagine, many superintendent rely on our machines to relieve severe turf problems, so we are very critical of ourselves because we know hundreds of customers are depending on our Verti-Drain.

Thanks for your understanding of our position on this issue.

Charles J. Otto, president Enzyme, Inc., North American Representatives for Verti-Drain

BOAT M issed on LEGENDS GROUP STORY?

To the editor:

Before I chastise you for what I believe to be major omissions in an extremely important story, I want you to know that I have been a big fan of Golf Course News for quite a while, and will continue to be.

My concern is that your writer, Peter Blais, and you really missed the boat in reporting the announcement by The Legends Group of Myrtle Beach, S.C., that they are starting construction on, not one, but two golf courses in Williamsburg, Va. (Golf Course News, June 1994). Furthermore, they went on to say that they will continue to build golf courses there, until they have been built as many as seven new courses.

With the continued sad state of golf course financing and new starts for golf courses, especially resort courses, this story should have been a front-page feature article, with editorial support. It didn’t turn out that way.

Mr. Blais did include the basic facts of the story, and he obviously made an attempt at interviewing the principals. There are... Continued on page 36

Bravo! Browner and EPA tackle muddled peer-review process

It is said that Oliver Wendell Holmes once led President Lincoln, through the battle lines, and the President exposed himself to enemy fire and Holmes shouted, “Get down, you fool!”

Now, I don’t think Holmes was disrespectful of the President. He was responding to the dangerous situation. In the same way, for years scientists have been saying to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): “Get down, you fools!”

Now, it appears, EPA has finally “gotten down,” as EPA Administrator Carol Browner has, in fact, declared that science peer-review procedures (until now non-existent) will be in effect Sept. 30 (See story, page 1). She has apparently asked for a thorough and direct section of all EPA’s peer review processes to the original 1992 report on the subject by the General Accounting Office. For instance, declared that science peer-review procedures (until now non-existent) will be in effect Sept. 30 (See story, page 1). She has apparently asked for a thorough and direct section of all EPA’s peer review processes to the original 1992 report on the subject by the General Accounting Office. For instance, declared that science peer-review procedures (until now non-existent) will be in effect Sept. 30 (See story, page 1).

Obviously not their own research. They seem unaware of the timeliness and appropriateness of the use of large-scale equipment in a small project.

Remember the Alar scare? The dioxin misinformation? The 2,4,5-T controversy, the dioxin misinformation? The 2,4,5-T