Courses, supers withered by drought

By MARK LESLIE

There are 100-year floods and 100-year droughts. For some, this was a 100-year summer. It was dreary, dry weather in Florida and Ohio. There was record-crunching heat and humidity in Pennsylvania. Dew points went through the roof in Minnesota. Everywhere from Delaware to the Midwest, golf courses got scorched. “The only guys happy are west of the Rockies,” said Golf Course Superintendents Association of America President Gary Grigg after a meeting of chapter representatives in Lawrence, Kan. “It’s been drought in the Northeast, heat in the Midwest, rain in the South,” [Director] Paul McGinnis said Arizona had a stretch of 47 days when the temperature was over 110 degrees. “This was the worst summer I’ve ever seen for growing grass,” said Terry Buchen of Double Eagle Club in Galena, Ohio. “We had so much rain, and the heat and humidity was the worst I’ve ever seen. The grass just cooked.”

Cooked so badly that many golf courses closed down so crews could aerate and reseed. People were hitting balls off bare soil at some facilities. “If you had new greens with sand-based construction, generally you were fine,” said Stan Zontek, director of the U.S. Golf Association Green Section (USGA) Mid-Atlantic Region.

Audubon targets public-access at Golf Course Expo

By MARK LESLIE

ORLANDO, Fla. — Sensing that the vast number of public-access golf course officials are not joining the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System because they believe it is cost-prohibitive, the Audubon Society of New York (ASN) will address them in a special session during Golf Course Expo here, Nov. 9-10.

“Our program is not geared towards finding interesting ways for golf courses to spend even more money from an already dwindling budget,” said ASN President Ron Dodson. “But we want superintendents to consider conservation as a mechanism to save money. Generally, our program should be thought of not only as environmental but as cost-efficient as well.”

The ASN is one of several major associations