Behold, the very principles you've been waiting for

The second conference on Golf & The Environment, held at Pinehurst in mid-March, was not the unprecedented meeting of minds the first incarnation was. From all accounts (the press was not invited to last year's conference at Pebble Beach), the inaugural Golf & The Environment seminar was no less than an epiphany, whereby golf industry types and environmental activists realized they had far more in common than previously believed. In the 14 months since the Pebble Beach event, select attendees seized upon their newfound commonality by hammering out the "Environmental Principles for Golf Courses in the United States," written testimony to these shared beliefs. Because this year's was built on the groundwork relationships established last year, the Pinehurst meeting was more love-in than summit. However, this year's meeting was significant because it marked the unveiling of these much-anticipated principles, the bulk of which appear on page 16. Read them. Study them. Copy and distribute them to members of your staff.

It's important to remember these principles are a work in progress. They will change over time, so don't be timid in offering feedback. To further encourage you, I humbly offer a few opinions on the principles.

• I suspect they were, especially those regarding superintendents and their work. It's my feeling a goodly portion of course managers already abide by most of the ideals spelled out in the maintenance section. Of course, the principles weren't designed to be specific and limiting (note how many times the document uses the word "should").

Letters

PUBLIC COURSE OWNER RESPONDS TO NICKLAUS

To the Editor:

Title: "Nicklaus: Public-access now driving the market, as golf comes full circle" [GCN Feb. 1996, Guest Commentary]

1. This golf rush exposed a void between the upscale private golf clubs, the "caviar classes" with 18 green fees and $8 a round.

2. As designers or developers, we are able to do golf courses which are contemporary or dark ages, $10,000 and $8 dark ages of public golf.

3. Public course golfers are insisting on value. Today's players will pay $25, even $200, to play quality golf. "Average" player who plays 10 times a year can become financially unviable! Gun Ridge Golf Course Hasting, Mich.

ON THE SUBJECT OF ALGAE

To the Editor:

I received the March issue of Golf Courses News today, and read with great interest your article on page 23, "Case makes his case for inventive algae care" [GCN March 1996].

But never ceases to amaze me how publications will validate crankpot, and technically ineffective or often dangerous "alternative" remedies for turf care, while overlooking the science developed for that care, and simultaneouly overlooking the science of algae treating.

In reading the article, Mr. Case was clear that this method (using a fan to dry algae) can be dangerous, and must be manned at all times by a maintenance worker, and can take up to three hours per green. Mr. Case doesn't say, or perhaps doesn't know, that blowing air over algae may temporarily dry it out, but doesn't necessarily kill the algal organism. To accomplish that, turn to page 32 in the same issue of GCN, and you'll find an advertisement for BPI Gordon's product "AlgaeMac," which is EPA-registered, University-validated and a field-proven cure for algal pathogens on turf. Additionally, based on the time necessary for Mr. Case to accomplish his task, a maintenance worker in attendance, the cost of using "AlgaeMac" would be one-seventh of the cost of having a maintenance worker standing around to "watch carefully" so that no damage is done by the fan.

I agree that it's occasionally nice to hear of "natural alternatives" to some things in the industry, but for heaven sakes, please research it a little better. There are the formulators for BPI Gordon, "AlgaeMac," as well as the Scotts Co.'s product "Algaemec," so we know from whence we speak.

Ray Kimmel, President Parkway Research Corp. Houston, Texas

Golf Course News Ed. — Our "On the Green" column aspires to provide maintenance ideas with superintendents. Mr. Kimmel refers to an article spelling out how to control algae by using a fan to dry it, along with some cultural techniques to address the problems leading to the disease. Our intent was to show another tool, not the one definitive tool or single answer to algae. Indeed, U.S. Golf Association Mid-Continent Region Director Jim Moore said: "I haven't seen a surefire cure for algae. Like any disease, weed or insect, there is no chemical or technique that will permanently get rid of algae unless the conditions for their growth are corrected as well."

Sometimes you get a very small area where it is difficult to eliminate algae, and it can be easier to tackle that spot with a fan. Just as chemical control is usually a stop-gap measure rather than a cure, so too is this fan. The fun changes the microclimate that algae are growing in. You also have to correct other problems that have led to that area being too wet for too long.

GCSAA SETS RECORD STRAIGHT

To the Editor:

I would like to point out several inaccuracies contained in the February Golf Course News article about Golf Asia (GCN Feb. 1996) written by Rob Glucksman. The unfortunate thing about these inaccuracies is that they could have been prevented with one investigative phone call to the GCSAA headquarters by Mr. Glucksman or you. Instead, false information

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According to Sharon New, some of the National Wildlife Federation's principles are not meant to be instructions, but rather more like a "road map." A good piece of advice from Jay Feldman, head of the National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides (Geez, never thought I'd be quoting him in that context): "Keep records of your chemical use," Feldman urged those gathered in Pinehurst. "Good records don't exist with regard to golf course usage, and it's hard to debate usage without them. Your community wants to know. Besides, record-keeping is part of IPM (integrated pest management.) Embrace it. Use it to further the dialogue."

Hard to argue with that.

The Pinehurst meeting was part presentation, part interactive group discussion. My particular table spent a good deal of time talking about how the industry can convince the playing public to stop judging golf courses on the "Lush Augusta look." How can we convince golfers the occasional brown patch is acceptable, even environmentally responsible?

This month's front-page story, by Peter Blais, on a recent National Golf Foundation study shows how far we have to go in this area (see page 1).

My opinion? Television and its on-air personalities must take the lead. The chief executive of a major mower manufacturer passed on the following tidbit to me: "The folks down at Augusta National have stopped cross-striping their fairways, opting instead for a single phalanx of mowers cutting the fairways in huge swaths. Apparently, golfers have already started badgering superintendents to abandon striping in favor of the "new" Augusta look.

This is how impressionable golfers (especially private club members) can be. There's no way to reach them and make a real impact without consistent, repeated input from Johnny Miller, Ken Venturi, Jack Nicklaus and son Jack, Jr., designed the two golf courses.