New wetlands regs impact development

By MARK LESLIE

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has changed a wetlands permitting regulation that will affect commercial and residential developers across the board.

Ten percent of golf course projects built over the last few years would have been affected by the new parameters had they been in effect, according to Dr. Stuart Cohen, president of Environmental & Turf Services, Inc. of Wheaton, Md.

The regulation is Nation Wide Permit (NWP) 26, which is routinely re-issued every few years. In recent years, it has allowed projects affecting 1 to 10 acres of isolated wetlands or stream headwaters. People could impact as much as 1 acre of wetlands without seeking permits. Under the new parameters, which went into effect in December, the 10-acre maximum of wetlands that a development can affect has been reduced to 3 acres and the 1 “free” acre

Continued on page 61

Pesticide-free courses not in the cards?

By MARK LESLIE

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Faced with the rigors of foot traffic and golfer demands for low cutting heights, consistent ball lie and roll, superintendents’ attempts to be pesticide-free are futile, according to a panel of scientists.

Speaking here at the Ohio Turfgrass Foundation Show & Conference, Drs. Dave Shetlar and Joe Rimelspach of Ohio State University and Dr. Stuart Cohen of Environmental & Turf Services concluded that, with a handful of exceptions, no golf course is pesticide-free.

Continued on page 22

Newly capitalized Troon Golf targets upscale daily-fee market

By PETER BLAIS

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Formation of a new partnership between Scottsdale-based Troon Golf Management and Starwood Capital Group LLC of Greenwich, Conn., should help Troon expand its golf course management portfolio and acquire additional properties.

“We’re looking at the East and Midwest,” said Troon Golf President and Chief Executive Officer Dana Garmann. “We’ll probably double our size to about 20 properties in the next 12 months.”

Troon Golf’s new partner, Starwood, is a 50-50 joint venture that was formed by Starwood Capital Group and Goldman Sachs in 2010. The investment firm has about $25 billion in assets under management and plans to spend about $3 billion to $4 billion on acquisitions per year.

Continued on page 51

McGinnis: Supers need more credit, support

By PETER BLAIS

PEORIA, Ariz. — Getting course owners and club members to appreciate the contributions of their superintendents will be the primary goal of new Golf Course Superintendents Association of America President Paul McGinnis.

“Superintendents simply don’t receive the support and credit they deserve,” said the head superintendent at Moon Valley Country Club here, who will assume the GCSCA presidency at the association’s annual meeting in Las Vegas this February.

“We have quotes from Ben Crenshaw, Tom Watson and Rees Jones testifying to the superintendent’s importance. But the word hasn’t gotten out enough, yet. We’re planning educational seminars for owners and green chairmen at both the annual meeting and at regional seminars around the country.

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