New wetlands regs could stifle development

By MARK LESLIE
WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is implementing a new cadre of wetlands regulations in early 2000 that is expected to impact a far greater number of residential and commercial developments, including golf courses.

Public comment on the proposed Nation Wide Permits (NWPs) expires Oct. 6, making the way for the new rules which affect jurisdictional waters of the United States—wetlands, streams, lakes, etc.

Although the new NWPs have not been officially confirmed, experts in the field anticipate few changes before the

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Assistants often underappreciated

By PETER BLAIS

While head superintendents are seeking increased recognition and money for themselves, they are also encouraging course owners and members to upgrade the salaries and benefits of their assistants.

Nationally, the mean salary paid superintendents is $53,205, almost double the $27,981 average salary of assistants, according to 1998 figures provided by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA). Why pay assistants more?

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Machine takes overseeding to next level

By A. OVERBECK

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Turf Solutions has developed the Dry Sprayer, a machine using new overseeding technology that dramatically increases the speed, accuracy and germination time over standard overseeding techniques. Adapting air-blast technology commonly found in agricultural equipment, the Dry Sprayer blows seed directly into the turf canopy.

"We have modified this air-based small crop machine into one suitable for

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Assistant superintendents’ salaries

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“They are very important in the operation of the golf course and deserve the recognition for their role in assisting the superintendent,” said Gerry White, head superintendent at Point Sebago Golf Club in Naples, Maine, and president of the Maine Golf Course Superintendents Association.

“I also look at it as an insurance policy. Heaven forbid I’m driving down the road and a tractor trailer hits me, the operation won’t fall apart because I have a quality assistant. If I leave in the middle of the season or a family emergency arises, it’s the same thing. I’ve explained this to the owners. I’ve also explained the need for two [well-compensated] assistants. I’m losing my first assistant this year and my second assistant will step up.”

White knows opportunities exist for well-trained assistants to move on, even in Maine, where the mean superintendent’s salary ($46,932) is near the bottom in the country and the average assistant’s salary ($20,400) is dead last nationwide, according to GCSAA figures.

“What I’m trying to get them to do,” White said, “when they leave here is to take jobs that are at or above the average pay scale in this state. That way they help elevate the salaries of superintendents in the entire state. Both of my assistants who have left here have accepted salaries above the average. Superintendents need to educate their assistants to only take superintendent salaries that are worthy of their skills.”

By not settling for less than Continued on page 20

Mapping expands

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as well as most other digital map data — can be integrated directly into the GIS.

“An important advantage of GIS is that you can put a lot of your existing course information right into it,” said Jason Bass, president of Point Forestry Customized Inventory & Imaging Inc. of Minneapolis, developer of a forest management package now customized for golf course use.

Adding Other Mapping Techniques

GroundLinkx uses the same digitizing technique to make the GIS map from the orthophoto as from the standard air photo, but the orthophoto allows the company to take advantage of another digital mapping capability called photogrammetry.

“Photogrammetry improves the resolution of the photos four to six times,” said Platt.

When IntraSearch acquires the aerial photograph of the course, it also shoots two overlapping photos from opposing viewpoints, called “stereo” photos. IntraSearch applies advanced digital processing routines to these stereo photos so they can be viewed in three dimensions.

Three-dimensional viewing means that GroundLinkx technicians can map much smaller objects into the GIS such as pins, utility boxes, and signs during the digitizing process,” said Platt. “Those small objects would just appear as smudges on a two-dimensional photo and would be impossible to map into the GIS.”

This type of photogrammetric mapping is offered as an optional service to GroundLinkx clients. IntraSearch also offers a digital topographic map of the course, which is a derivative of the orthorectification process and can be integrated directly into the GroundLinkx program. Most owners purchase the topographic contours layer to use in planning new construction and to determine surface water drainage patterns on their courses.

When the GIS program is in use, the superintendent can stack various data feature layers on top of the basemap on screen. The superintendent has two display options for the basemap — either a colored line map of the course or the orthorectified air photo underlay.

“Most clients use the photo as their basemap because the photograph contains so much more visual information than a simple line drawing,” said Mikesh. “Superintendents are quickly learning that digital GIS mapping offers many useful tools and benefits previously unavailable for course management and maintenance.”

Next month: Real-life applications of GIS and its future.
Assistant supers' wages

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they deserve when they move up the career ladder, assistant superintendents are helping the entire profession, White said.

White said convincing his owners to pay his assistants adequately has not been a problem as long as he keeps his total personnel budget in check.

New York is on the opposite end of the spectrum from low-paying Maine. The average $34,914 paid assistants is second only to Hawaii nationwide, while the mean $59,721 superintendents receive places it eighth in the United States.

"I don't know a superintendent in the metropolitan (New York City) area who's making $60,000," said Stephen Rinzetti, director of golf at Wykagyl Golf Club in New Rochelle, N.Y. "That's not even the starting figure. The assistant's salary is pretty much on the money, though.

"The assistant's role has evolved in the past few years to include a lot more responsibility. The assistant is an extension of the head superintendent. And if the head superintendent is putting a lot of the things he was once responsible for in the hands of the assistant, you better have the best guy out there you possibly can. My success and failure is due in large part to the ability of the assistant who is helping me. If I don't get on the golf course for a day, a lot can happen in that single day. The assistant is keeping me abreast of what's happening out there. And if you want to attract good people, you have to pay good people."

"The increases head superintendents have made in recent years have generally exceeded those of assistants, Rinzetti said. Part of the reason is the large number of qualified assistants in the marketplace.

"Rinzetti, likewise, encouraged assistants to seek no less than "current market value" in pay when moving from an assistant to a head superintendent post. "They shouldn't sell themselves short," he said. "Clubs are being shortsighted in hiring someone in at a low rate because they'll only end up with someone who is unhappy who, once he finds out what the market rate really is, will start looking for a new position. Clubs should pay current market value and applicants should expect it. A lot of the clubs in the Met area that are hiring quality assistants as head superintendents are paying close to market value, more so than they did five or six years ago."

"Right in the middle of the assistant's pay scale is Florida, where the mean salary of $27,843 is within $160 of the national average. Florida is one of the best states for assistants to work, Rinzetti said. Part of the reason is the large number of qualified assistants in the marketplace. If you want to attract good people, you have to pay good people."..."