Rain Bird’s Intelligent Use of Water Summit shares smart-water practices that work, and encourages the golf industry to take a leadership position in innovative water management practices.

Brown doesn’t have to be the new green if the industry better manages its available water resources and applies practices that more efficiently and effectively keeps turf green. That was the resounding message of Rain Bird’s 2013 Intelligent Use of Water Summit, which took place last month at Michigan State University.

The conference on stewardship of water resources in the golf industry and featured a lineup of water experts and golf course superintendents who described the programs and efforts in practice to conserve and better utilize available water.

Keynote speaker and author of “The Big Thirst” Charles Fishman says there is no “global” water crisis. Rather, all water issues are local issues that need to be solved at the local level.

Fishman argues that, as a resource, water is too cheap, and with such a low price point it contributes to waste and inhibits the development of new ways to use and conserve it.

“Free is the wrong price for water. When a resource as important as water is free it’s misused .... There is no incentive to use it correctly .... Water is so cheap it’s starved of innovation .... We could solve all of our water problems by charging just a little bit more. No one is immune to water problems.”

Many of the tools and technology needed to use water more efficiently already exist, Fishman says. Instead, they’re just not being used.

“We have the tools we need (for smart water use),” he says. “What we need is the leadership (to use them).” He adds

the golf industry can play that leadership role and serve as a benchmark for innovative, smart-water use in their respective communities. Examples are readily available among superintendents who have overcome water challenges. Fishman adds that smart water practices bring added benefits, as well.

“You save a little on water and then there’s a cascade of savings that goes along with it," he says, adding smart-water practices also reduce energy and material costs. “You start saving on water and other good things happen.”

Here are some other key points that came up during the various panel discussions.

U of Calif’s Dr. Ali Harivandi: “Drought has become a part of our life ... because of that we have to look at other sources of water if you want to survive in (the turf) industry .... (Solutions are) expensive, but we can do it. Especially in areas where we don’t have access to water.... We can all start praying for rain ... but we can also use the science and knowledge that is out there.”

Desert Mountain Club’s Shawn Emerson: “Brown is the new green? Where did they get that from? I’m about growing green grass. In saying that, I want to be more efficient and more educated (about water use) ... and we have the tools today to do this (grow green turf efficiently). Emerson also added that, when it comes to irrigating efficiently and smart water use, knowing your numbers is job security. Superintendents need to take their technical skills and run with them, but they should never stop learning and improving.

Atlanta Athletic Club’s Ken Mangum offers some great advice: “Your two eyes are the most important tools you have as a superintendent .... Be observant. See and notice things (on your course) before they become obvious to others.”

Rutgers turfgrass researcher Stacy Bonos reports on ongoing research and developments to breed bentgrass and fescue that is both salt tolerant and drought resistant ... they have breeds that are solid (stay green) for each individual stress, the challenge is a single breed that remains green when exposed to both criteria.
From THE FEED

The new GCI app went live, and readers took a spin with the January issue. Naturally, redefining how magazines can be read made quite a splash in social media. Here's what readers have been saying.

Campbell Chemicals @campbellturf
Showed new @GCImagazine iPad app to our turf committee today. Let's just say they were very impressed.

Michael Benkusky @benkuskygolf
Awesome new iPad app by @GCImagazine. Come back and wipe your fingerprints off my screen!

Jeff Ryan @jeffryan
Great re-tooling of the app. It's a quantum leap forward. Now about the face of the organization.....

Gary Deters @gdeters_turf
Just downloaded the App. It is ridiculously good. All that info in my phone. Thanks.

Andrew Hardy @pheasantturf
Thank you for scaring the crap out of me on the iPad app. Almost made my son cry. haha

iTurfapps @iturfapps
About time someone harnesses the ability and power of an iPad for multimedia delivery! Great job @GCImagazine on new app!

Bob Porter@hiawathaturf
Best thing I noticed right away. It downloads the issue for reading offline, like most other magazine apps. Nice!

David Beanblossom@DBeanblossom
love, love, love the new iPad app. It's going to take me days instead of hours to read each magazine now. awesome, fantastic

Join the conversation on Twitter @GCIMagazine!

Recycling rewarded

Remember a few months ago when we took notice of Royal Oaks Country Club's new GreenDrop Recycling Stations throughout the course, making it easy for players to self-sort recyclables on the fly? It turns out the GCI team wasn't the only group paying attention. The Vancouver, Wash., course was named Facility of the Year by the Oregon Golf Association for its efforts, as well as in recognition of hosting annual events raising funds for local non-profit organizations. Marcia LaFond, club manager, received the award at the 2012 OGA annual awards meeting.

While the stations have shown up around the country, Royal Oaks is the first golf facility to place them on the course.

GOLF.COMEDY

Golf has been a centerpiece of famous comedy for years, from the wit of Bob Hope to the ineffable Caddyshack. It was really only a matter of time before a new platform for comics went back to the course. Comedian Paul Rodriguez is at the head of the brand new web series "Comics Open," featured on ClickOnGolf.TV. Rodriguez plays a course owner who changes his clubhouse to a comedy club just for the chance to be his own emcee; he also imports a Russian mail-order bride (Maria Zyrianova) to be his new golf partner.

Agronomics might not be at the forefront of the jokes, since the first season has Rodriguez chipping a shot out of an open grave and an army tank trekking across the fairway. But River Bend Golf Links outside Jacksonville, Fla., owned by Stephen Joost and Scott Gladysz, provided a fitting home for the slapstick, being a former U.S. Navy-owned course.

"Golf has hundreds of jokes that have been told over the years," says Paul Madden, the show's producer. "We'll mine those, and mix in a few new ones. I don't think that well will ever run dry."

GCI GOES NATIVE

If you're reading this page digitally and nothing is moving – stop everything and go download our new app right now. Just search for "GCI" in the iTunes store and you'll snag our new native app edition. The new issue will load within the app, taking you on to what the future of magazines looks like. Both the iPad and iPhone versions will be available in time for the Golf Industry Show.

Head to bit.ly/GClapp13 to pick up the new native app and prepare to be amazed!