Long Island, N.Y., golf courses have united in an attempt to preserve the Peconic Estuary and other local waters. Challenged by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 30 of the 34 golf courses on the east end of Long Island agreed to reduce their use of fertilizers. The voluntary pact is unprecedented among courses from one geographic area in the United States, according to the EPA.

In May 2003, EPA teamed up with the United States Golf Association (USGA), Cornell University, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), the Suffolk County Health Department, the Peconic Estuary Program’s Citizen’s Advisory Committee and the East End Golf Course Superintendents to create the East End Nitrogen Management Challenge for Golf Courses.

“This is the first time that a large segment of the golf industry in one area has voluntarily come together to reduce fertilizer use and the nitrogen it produces to protect the future of our estuaries,” said EPA Regional Administrator Jane M. Kenny. “The protection and restoration of coastal waters requires everyone to do his or her part, and the golf courses of eastern Long Island are certainly setting a laudable example.”

Each participating course aims to limit its contribution of nitrogen to ground water to 2 milligrams per liter of total nitrogen — less than half the level resulting from typical residential development. To date, the courses that have agreed to participate are: Atlantic Golf Club, Bridgehampton Club Calverton Links, Cedars Golf Club, East Hampton Golf Club, Fox Hill Golf Club, Friar’s Head, Gardeners Bay Country Club, Goat Hill at Shelter Island, Gardiners Bay Golf Club, Hurlbutt Castle, Indian Bank Golf Club, Laurel Dunes Country Club, Maidstone Golf Club, Montauk Country Club, Napeague Golf Club, North Haven Golf Club, Old Field Country Club, Quail Hollow Golf Club, Quogue Country Club, Sag Harbor Yacht Club, Shinnecock Hills Golf Club, Tobacco Road, Timon Castle Golf Club, To筠-Conquet Golf Club, Turnberry Golf Club, Union Colony Golf Club, Upton Country Club, Westhampton Beach Golf Club, Westhampton Dunes Golf Club, Wildcat Golf Club, Younger Club, and Zachary Golf Club.

“The thing I try to teach people is to get into a rhythm and rhyme of your maintenance — from oil changes and greasing to lapping and grinding,” Rehr said.

The street-savvy Rehr answered many listeners’ questions and also offered sound advice on a variety of issues, from communication with their general managers to using food-grade grease on equipment. It’s not easy for superintendents and mechanics to convince general managers to pump money into maintenance facilities, Rehr said. “Maintenance facilities are often viewed as black holes,” he added.

Rehr noted that most general managers are probably “number crunchers.” Hence, superintendents and mechanics must show them through examples — not just verbalize to them — how they can save their golf courses money in the long-term by making investments now in certain maintenance endeavors.

“[General managers] love to see formulas where you’re giving money back to them.”

JAY REHR
PRESIDENT,
TURF EQUIPMENT
CONSULTING

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Jake has new look

Jacobsen has undergone a facelift. The Charlotte, N.C.-based company has redesigned its logo and brand identity to reflect its corporate philosophy. Jacobsen's new slogan is, "Do more than mow." The company says the words and its updated brand identity represent the culmination of research, logo evolution and a more aggressive corporate philosophy. The initiative, spearheaded by the company's president, Jon Carlson, includes a new logo, dealer support materials, and a Web site redesign that all convey the brand's heritage and innovation in turf equipment, as well as its financial services and customer support.

Greif joins Rain Bird

Chuck Greif is the new business development manager for Rain Bird's golf irrigation business unit. Greif joins Rain Bird after working with John Deere & Co. in various marketing, sales, and manufacturing positions. Most recently, Greif was a vice president for Alfred Karcher, USA.

Tensar acquires N.A. Green

The Tensar Corp. of Atlanta acquired North American Green, an Evansville, Ind.-based manufacturer of rolled erosion-control products. Tensar manufactures foundation systems that provide site development soil reinforcement.

"We are excited about the opportunities being part of a larger company will create for North American Green and our distributors," said Jim Niemeier, president of North American Green.

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Rehr also stressed that maintenance facilities would be wise to switch to food-grade grease for their equipment because it won't kill turf.

Karl Danneberger, Geoff Shackelford and Joe Vargas also spoke at the event. Danneberger, professor of turfgrass science at The Ohio State University, spoke on "Poa Annua Management." Shackelford, a noted golf course architecture historian and author of several books and writings on the subject, talked on the "Art & Science of Bunker Design & Renovation." Vargas, a professor of plant pathology at Michigan State University, spoke on "New Disease Trends."

Danneberger, Golfdom's science editor, said if superintendents say they're going to manage Poa annua, then they need to commit wholeheartedly to doing so.

"People screw up with Poa annua when they know they should be maintaining it, but in the back of their minds they think they should get rid of it," he said.

Shackelford, a contributing editor and columnist for Golfdom, told the audience that bunker renovations shouldn't be about making golf courses more difficult. They should be about making golf courses more maintenance-friendly and attractive visually.

"The best reason to renovate bunkers is because they've become tired-looking," Shackelford added.

Vargas spoke about cultural management techniques for several turf diseases. He called crown-rotting anthracnose the "disease of the year," and told superintendents they can manage the disease mainly by not overwatering turf. He also said that low nitrogen fertility and low mowing heights contribute to crown-rotting anthracnose.

Golfdom Publisher Pat Jones hosted the event. Jones also gave a talk on "Career Survival Skills for Today's Superintendent."

Couch Was a Friend and Mentor to Many

In case you hadn't heard the unfortunate news, Houston Couch, professor of plant pathology at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Va., died in September. I won't even attempt to spell out his earthly accomplishments here, but suffice it to say that, nearing his 80th year, Couch had touched thousands of lives in this business over the course of more than four decades as a leading voice for sensible plant management at Virginia Tech.

More importantly, he was a mentor to many. He never lacked for an opinion or for the time to help a student or superintendent who needed support.

Recently, Couch was awarded the 2003 United States Golf Association Green Section Award for "distinguished service to golf through work with turfgrass," and the 2002 National Distinguished Service Award from the GCSAA for "outstanding contributions to the advancement of the golf course superintendents profession."

— Pat Jones, Publisher