



Creating Destiny

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Editor

Ever wonder why one side in a flying 'V' of a goose formation in flight is longer than the other?

We take our irrigation supplies for granted here in the "Land of Ten Thousand Lakes." Each year we fill out our water use forms and send them into the Department of Natural Resources for their review and compilation. A few years ago a fee for usage was added, a very small fee when compared to other areas of our country. Water is cheap and plentiful...in our eyes perhaps, but not at the State Capitol.

For the past two years I have been following with interest the movement of legislation intended to track water quality and appropriation in our state. At Senate Committee hearings I learned that there are several, no many, groups doing their own evaluations of the water resources in our state and across the United States. Groups such as the Alliance for Water Stewardship, the American Groundwater Trust, the Environmental Defense Fund, the Minnesota Ground Water Association, the Ocean Project, the Water Education Foundation and the Fresh Water Society have organized and are helping to set the agendas for new legislation.

regulator of water in Minnesota. It enforces federal and state law including the administration of the federal Clean Water Act's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). The PCA also issues water quality certifications under §401 of the Clean Water Act. As mentioned in a previous President's Column a new fee system will be mandated upon those in the 11 county metropolitan area whom draw their water from non-stressed aquifers. These monies are to be directly applied to monitoring the quality and quantity in the underground reservoirs.

Our "stressed state aquifer," the Mt. Simon-Hinckley aquifer, has its own special mandates if approved beginning this year: MS 103G.271, Subd. 4a. Mt. Simon-Hinckley aquifer: (a) The commissioner may not issue new water use for the Mt. Simon-Hinckley aquifer unless the appropriation is for domestic water use, there are no feasible or practical alternatives to this source, and a water conservation plan is incorporated with the permit. Domestic water uses include water used for general household purposes for essential human needs such as cooking, cleaning, drinking, washing, and waste disposal. (b) The com-

State agencies that have a role in water regulation and management are the BWSR, DNR, EQB, MDA, MDH, and PCA. The PCA is the largest single

missioner may not issue new water use permits for the Mt. Simon-Hinckley aquifer for non-domestic uses unless the volume of water is less than 100 million gallons per year, there are no feasible or practical alternatives to this source, and a water conservation plan is incorporated with the permit. This paragraph does not apply within a metropolitan county, as defined in section 473.121, subdivision 4.

No, we are not losing our access to water, but that concept isn't too far out of the realm of possibilities. If it were allowed by those who oppose our industries' use of this valuable resource we wouldn't be irrigating at all!

So what are we doing about it? As responsible golf course managers we understand the value of our water and don't intentionally abuse our resources. Throughout our country we use roughly .05 percent of all water consumed yet the perception is that we are mass users of this unique chemical combination. Yet currently we attempt to maintain a profile under the radar to limit our exposure.

So what are we doing about it? If I may be so bold I request the Minnesota Golf Course Superintendents' Association take a very proactive stand and, as stewards of our natural resources develop a plan supported by allied golf associations, educate our foes, partner with our legislatures and the state water management agencies to develop a Best Management Program to assure our access to this life blood of our industry. While we are at it, take it a step further and craft BMP's for nutrient management and proper chemical use. Of course we know what we are doing, but does everyone else?

Wow, that was much easier said than I am sure it will be to get done. Yes, it will cost some money as no volunteer has the time to do the job that is necessary to maintain our access to water and in the long run nutrients and plant protection chemistries. Yes, it will take some time to implement. But won't it be worth it in the long term to have a plan in place and ratified by legitimate partners to enhance the viability of our industry?

But by working with our allies I am positive the MGCSA can and will create a living document acceptable to all parties involved. Across our country state golf associations are creating their own destiny by working with their representatives. It is high time we do as well or we will suffer the consequences of more and higher fees and limited access to water, the liquid that equates to life.

If we don't create our own destiny then somebody else will!



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