



Presidential Perspective

by Scottie Hines, CGCS

Welcome to spring? Wow! March 21, 2012 there was exactly NO snow pack in the state. Most, if not all courses were open. We had days in the 70's and 80's! March 21, 2013 is a different beast. The entire state is in snow pack. No courses are open or thinking about opening. The temperature in the truck was -4 when I pulled into the shop this morning! Punxsutawney Phil was obviously nipping at the bottle as he slumbered in his hole.

To add some perspective: The average date for the first 50-degree day is March 18. The average date for the first 60-degree day is March 27. One of those dates has passed and I am fairly confident that we will not see even 50 on the other. In fact, to date we have only had one day that reached 40 degrees, and that was it, 40 on the nose. Crazy! I have always said that Mother Nature has a funny way of meeting the average. Here we go with another example of just that.

As we sit here trying to figure out what to do with ourselves as we are looking out the window at the entirely snow covered landscape it is hard to believe that 67% of the state of Minnesota is still listed as in “**extreme to severe**” drought conditions. Unfortunately for us the snow will not do much to alleviate this situation. As the snow melts it typically falls into the run-off category since the ground is still frozen. Therefore we may recover in the realm of lake levels, but not ground water. Reports are we need to exceed our typical March – May rainfall to stem the drought tide. I wonder what Punxsutawney Phil's outlook on this is? By the way, a great website to track local weather and environmental conditions is: www.climate.umn.edu. Check it out it is very good and offers up a ton of

information you can use to relay timely messages to members and boards.

Currently the Environmental Stewardship Committee is working on BMP's for water management and conservation. We will be meeting soon and I plan to discuss stepping up our Crisis Management Plan to hopefully guarantee that we all have the well and surface water we need to irrigate and keep our courses viable. This plan will include a scheduled reduction of irrigation waters depending on drought conditions. The plan would be for a reduction of up to 20% of our typical use. It is very important that we as an association get on board with this. It is also vitally important to have the MN DNR on board with us. We have our work cut out for us!

I don't know about anyone else but I am starting to get a little concerned about the ice cover. However, I am glad I didn't remove any snow or ice. With the sun being as intense as it is open greens, then the single digit to sub-zero temperatures? I think this is a recipe for some turf damage. Of course, not doing anything could be disastrous too. I am sticking with less is more in times like this. It is situations like this that remind me of what a great job we have! One of the hardest things we do is manage many people on a day-to-day basis. We do that quite well. If we could just manage the most important person, Mother Nature, we would really have it good!

It has been a tough winter and there is possibly more snow coming this weekend. I truly wish everyone the best as we eventually emerge into spring. It has to break at some point. Please remember that if you have any difficulties due to the weather, communication to key owners, board members and the golfers in general is key.

Good luck!