

# USGA

## Murkey Water

By Pat Gross

At the recent California State Superintendent's Meeting, Dr. Ali Harivandi gave a great presentation on evaluating water quality. This is a topic all California Superintendents need to be aware of since it is arguably the most important factor influencing the health and vigor of your turfgrass. As Dr. Harivandi Pointed out, many golf courses are being forced to use less water, and the water is often lower in quality. While many superintendents do a good job of evaluating the chemical properties of the water, what about the physical properties (suspended solids) in your irrigation source?

This point came to mind a couple of weeks ago when my partner, Mike Huck, made a visit to a golf course in

Arizona that was using canal water for an irrigation source. As he was sampling the greens, he noticed a small but distinct layer of silt near the surface. It appeared that the silt was coming from the irrigation water and sealing off the greens.

Many water tests include a measurement of suspended solids, but how does that effect your turf and how do you demonstrate this point to your members or management? You can take the academic approach and spend an afternoon with your calculator trying to crunch the numbers, or you can take a simpler approach suggested by Jim Moore, Director of the Mid-Continent Region. Jim advises buying one of those very large rain gauges from K Mart

(about 2' high and 3" to 4" across). If you catch the "blue light special" you can get one for about \$15.00. Collect enough water out of your irrigation supply (or from the sprinkler) to fill the

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gauge to the number of inches you apply to your greens in a year. For most courses, it's probably close to 20" or 30". (If the gauge doesn't hold that much, just fill it to half your amount and multiply by two.) Be sure the gauge is not tapered and has as flat a bottom as possible. After letting your experiment sit for a week, you may be shocked to find out much crud is in the bottom of the gauge. If there is a 1/8"

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## Naumann's Norcal News

Todd Cook has accepted the superintendent's position at Poppy Ridge GC in Livermore. Poppy Ridge is the new 27 hole golf complex owned by the NCGA. Landscapes Unlimited is constructing the project. Todd was the assistant at the Olympic Club prior to his move.

Forrest Arthur is the new superintendent at Spanish Bay Golf Links in Pebble Beach. Forrest was the assistant at Pebble Beach Golf Links prior to his move.

Tim Greenwald, superintendent at Rancho Canada GC has been extremely busy lately.

With the three storms of March he lost one bridge and three others were damaged. As a result, no golfers could get to the other side of the course. Luckily they have 36 holes and were able to make 18 playable holes on the high side while they repaired bridges, removed damaged trees and washed off two feet of silt. All 36 holes should be open in June.

John Allen is the new superintendent at Wolpers Vineyard Knolls Golf Course in Napa. John is replacing Ron Forsyth.

## Murky Water (Cont'd)

layer on the bottom of the gauge, that tells you in a year's time you are placing the same 1/8" of crud on top of your greens.

Obviously, this is a rough test. Water quality can vary a great deal from day to day depending on the source. This test does give some indication that suspended solids might be causing problems in new and old greens in the sneakiest of ways. After all, what do you put on your greens in greater amounts than water? Also, the heavy winter rains and runoff this season can be a potential source of higher suspended solids in your irrigation supply.

The point of the story is this. Have your water tested frequently, not only chemically, but for suspended solids. The little experiment I just described is another good way to demonstrate this occurrence to your membership and gives you a chance to head off a problem before it causes failure of your greens.

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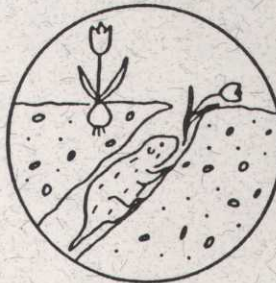
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