

Golf Course Is Fined for Discharges

By SEEMA MEHTA, L.A. Times Staff Writer

Pelican Hill Golf Course in Newport Beach was fined \$148,000 Friday for illegally discharging recycled water into the ocean off Crystal Cove, state water officials said.

"Environmentally, it probably didn't have that much effect, but it's very serious due to the magnitude of the discharges, the fact they weren't reported and they were repeated," said Kurt Berchtold, assistant executive officer of the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Prompted by a letter from Orange County CoastKeeper, investigators learned that course operator Western Golf Properties had eight unauthorized discharges of nearly 16 million gallons of recycled water between August 1999 and January. Similar discharges occurred in 1996.

Irrigation water overflowed from two ponds into the ocean off Crystal Cove State Park, which is designated an "area of special biological significance" and protected under the 1997 California Ocean Plan.

"Certainly, we'd like to put it behind us, and we regret that it happened," said Joe Black, president of Western Golf Properties, based in Scottsdale, Arizona. "By the same token, that's a lot of money."

Black said he is not sure whether his company will appeal the fine. He said safety measures have been added since the latest incident: New valves and an alarm system have been installed, the lake level has been lowered and policies outlining proper response have been implemented.

CoastKeeper, an environmental group based in Newport Beach, filed a notice in January of intent to sue the course operator, as well as the Irvine Co., the course's owner, and the Irvine Ranch Water District, the provider of recycled water that is used to irrigate the course under the federal Clean Water Act.

Berchtold said no fines were levied against the developer or the water district because investigators believe it was the operator who was negligent.

Garry Brown of CoastKeeper said the group has not sued and is in talks with Irvine Co. officials.

As for the fine, he said: "Well, it's about time. As far as the money, it's almost a moot point. It doesn't bring back the damage it caused. . . . [But] there's been an acknowledgment."

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Dursban Remains Labeled For Golf Course Applications

Dow AgroSciences LLC announced an agreement with the US EPA that will allow the continued use of Dursban insecticide (chlorpyrifos) on golf courses. Chlorpyrifos products were among the first scrutinized under new standards resulting from the passage of the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996 (FQPA).

"We're pleased that golf course superintendents will continue to realize the benefits of this product," said Bruce Miehle, general manager for Turf and Ornamental Products at Dow. "Dursban products have been on the market for more than 30 years. More than 3,600 studies and reports have been conducted examining critical aspects of chlorpyrifos products as they relate to health and safety. No other insect control product has been more researched more thoroughly."

The agreement that Dow announced includes a voluntary cancellation of most in-and-around the home uses of chlorpyrifos in the U.S., including use of the product as a full-barrier termiticide treatment in existing residential structures.

Free Compost-Quality Publication Available

Not quite sure how to evaluate the quality of compost? Check out the California Integrated Waste Management Board's new publication "Compost: Matching Performance needs with Product Characteristics." This document helps you to evaluate compost based on your specific needs and guides you in the types of questions you should ask compost producers. The publication is available free of charge. Contact Bertie Mora at (916) 255-2708 or send your request via email to bmora@ciwmb.ca.gov. You may also locate suppliers of compost on the *Organics Outlook* web site at www.ciwmb.ca.gov/organics/farming.

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Quick Quotes

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— Clement Attlee —

"The Future is something which everyone reaches at the rate of sixty minutes an hour, whatever he does, whoever he is."

— C. S. Lewis —