



## Lake Therapy

By Mike McCullough, NCGA Agronomist

**T**ourist Attractions: Locations or destinations that draw tourists by the droves for a variety of entertainment or recreation activities. California boasts numerous areas that can be labeled tourist attractions: Palm Springs, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Napa Valley, Yosemite and Lake Tahoe just to name a few. As we all know, golf is one of the reasons people flock to these various locales.

The Lake Tahoe region is a special area known for the bright blue water of the lake and the wonderful skiing opportunities in the winter. The area also boasts some outstanding golf facilities that challenge players during the magnificent summer months.

While on a rest and relaxation visit, I thought it would be in my best interest to interact with the individuals who are in charge of the golf course maintenance operations.

My first appointment was at the Lake Tahoe Golf Course to meet Superintendent John Stanowski. John has been employed at Lake Tahoe for almost 30 years and has seen his share of ups and downs over the years.

One example of this is the severe temperature swings that occur there on a regular basis. They can be as much as 56-58 degrees in one day with 50 a common number. Frequently during the summer, the morning low can be in the high 20's with frost on many areas of the course. The high temperature can then be in the low 80's and the course packed with golfers who are oblivious to a frost delay earlier that morning.

The course does have its share of challenges. Vandalism has increased over the past few

years, a recent example involving vandals digging holes in greens and pouring used oil on them. Carts are allowed on the fairways, leading to excessive compaction in certain areas. Poor original construction methods left thousands of "birdbaths" throughout the golf course. Hundreds of the "birdbaths" have been repaired, but the remaining depressions routinely hold water and create problems when trying to mow and promote a uniform playing surface.

John and his staff consider the Lake Tahoe Golf Course an environmental model. The course is located on California State Park property. State agencies demand that their cultural practices be environmentally friendly. They always consider the pristine environment first when making their turf management decisions.

Lake Tahoe generally hosts a substantial 45,000 rounds a year, with the bulk of the play occurring in the summer. During peak weeks it is not uncommon to have 380-plus rounds in a day with the record day at 427. This unusually high demand creates plenty of challenges for the crew to encounter throughout the season.

Right up the road and on the other side of the state line is one of the more publicized courses in the area, Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course. Each July the course is host to the nationally televised Celebrity Golf Championship. The extensive media coverage of the event the last few years has made Superintendent Steve Seibel's job even more demanding.

The golf course has undergone some major renovations recently, led by one of Tom

Fazio's lead architects Andy Banfield. Design considerations that receive top priority are improving wild life habitat, establishing native grasses in out of play areas and maintaining high standards of water quality. These projects for the 25,000-round facility are started in mid-October when play is suspended for the season, and will continue until snow makes work impossible. When the weather breaks in the spring, work resumes and the projects are and finished up prior to a mid-May opening.

Everyday maintenance problems at Edgewood include localized dry spots on greens, tees and fairways as well as an ever-increasing population of Canada Geese. A four-man irrigation crew devotes most of their time to hand watering these problem areas. Edgewood has tried every known remedy to man in attempts to keep geese off the golf course. Examples of tried and not true remedies include noisemaker's, sprays

and physical barriers just to name a few. Now, one crew member dubbed "Goose Man," spends his entire eight-hour shift traveling the golf course persuading the geese to find a better rest area.

Off-season or ski season for us visitors finds a crew of only five at Edgewood. Overhauling, repairing and painting equipment consumes most of the down time each winter. Preventative fungicide applications prior to the snowfall help keep Pink Snow Mold in check. In the spring, Steve and staff will use a core aerifer with solid tines to break up the two-to-six-inch thick layer of ice that forms on the putting surface.

So next time the tourist bug gets you and Lake Tahoe is the destination, remember turf grows very well up there during the summer months. They cut the grass the same way you do, however, in the winter skis are the preferred mode of transportation. /

## Boardroom Briefs

By Bob Lopic

- ◆ President Bob Costa, CGCS, in his opening remarks to the new Board, asked that all members who have an interest in helping the association be included in the process. President Costa would like all of the members of our chapter to be ready to participate and be involved in the association.
- ◆ Goals of the 2001 Board are to identify what members want, find more meaningful research projects, recognize individual member's contributions, and increase general participation in the association.
- ◆ Association Manager Barbara Mikel is working to make a new service available

for our members. Members will soon be able to register for meetings and pay fees on the Internet. Watch for details on this new service in the very near future.

◆ The Salary survey that many of you participated in is almost ready for distribution to all A and B members. Thank you to Jeff Shafer and Barbara Mikel for formatting and tabulating this comprehensive survey. The survey lists all the courses by geographic zones to help make this a meaningful document. The Board wished to thank everyone whom took the time to complete and return the survey. /