

## MIDWEST BREEZES

Charles Anfield, CGCS, Heritage Bluffs Golf Course



### BOARD REPORT January 2011

As we move into the New Year and begin to make plans for the upcoming season, it's a normal part of the planning process to look back on the previous year and assess what worked, what didn't work, and what will be the future challenges in managing the golf course turf.

In retrospect, we now know that the weather in 2010 was one of the most difficult years to grow cool season turf in quite some time. Not only was it extremely difficult in the greater Chicago area, but also in many other areas throughout the country.

Granted, not all areas on all golf courses had problems last year. I believe a lot of it had to do with two main components: Location and Preparation.

**Location:** Location had a lot to do with turf loss in 2010. The accumulated soil moisture from the heavy rains in the spring predisposed the turf to be shallow rooted and in peril if the weather became very hot and humid, which it did. In addition, the thunderstorm and tornado events were so isolated and severe that what may have rained heavily in one area, may not have rained at all in another. The difference of 3-4" of rain on a 90 degree summer night became the "deal breaker". Turf loss was the result. Microclimate locations that compromised air movement and sun exposure were also predisposed to fail.

**Preparation:** The challenge for the 2011 season is to assess what changes we need to make so that we can learn from some of the problems we had last year and move forward. We know this: Courses that did their due diligence in maintaining thatch accumulations, had long term programs designed to promote bentgrass and promote overall turfgrass rooting, survived better.

Our primary goal is to ensure that the turf quality is as good as it can be for our patrons. They are the ones who support the course and deserve nothing less. A good agronomic program or "Action Plan" will be critical. Your support of these programs and practices is vital to our overall success.

Included in your January Board Report is the **2011 Action Plan**. This is the "blueprint" of our agronomic program to help keep you informed of our practices that will help prevent/and or reduce potential problems as observed in 2010. The Action Plan is specific to our course nuances and designed to provide broad range solutions that can adapt to the endless variable and unpredictable weather and golf conditions.

Along with the Action Plan and throughout the course of the coming year, we want to keep you informed with timely information and knowledge so that you know what we are trying to accomplish agronomically on any given day.

The golf course is our number one asset. When it comes to sustaining viable turf growth, preparation is our greatest weapon in promoting high quality conditions. A Golf Maintenance budget is an expensive undertaking and we want to reassure you, we are spending money wisely. **-OC**

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