

NGF FIELD STAFF NOTES SECTION

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CHICAGO AREA PARKS TO RESEARCH USE OF WASTEWATER ON LOCAL TURFGRASSES

By Lorraine Abbott
Great Lakes Region Director

The February Golf Market Report carried an article entitled, "Federal Funding Spurs Wastewater Irrigation for Recreational Turf." The article told of a recently escalated funding program by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to assist sewage treatment plants in their disposal of wastewater utilizing land sources instead of natural waterways.

Focus was made on benefits which could be realized where municipalities and area golf courses collaborated in arranging for wastewater, or "effluent", to be properly managed and carried for use in golf course irrigation. The words, "properly managed" implied that **careful local research** should precede any attempt to implement such an arrangement for irrigation, to insure that contents of the wastewater are compatible with the nutrient needs and tolerances of local turfgrasses, and that the unpleasantness of odor are eliminated (all of which previous research studies have indicated can, through special treatment, be achieved).

Such local research is being carried on now in the Chicagoland area where, due to international restrictions on Lake Michigan water usage and the continual drop of well water levels, fresh or potable water sources are becoming increasingly scarce and expensive.

At a recent Greens Seminar sponsored by the Chicago District Golf Association, area superintendents' representative, Bob Williams of Bob O'Link Golf Club, declared that, "I foresee within the next two or three decades, that most of our courses will be forced to use effluent wastewater for their irrigation supply. With this kind of handwriting on the wall we should be getting involved in learning how to use effluent. We are planning just that in conjunction with the North Shore Sanitary District and their filtration plant in Highland Park."

Williams related that the plant was currently discharging from 12 to 20 million gallons of treated wastewater into the Skokie River, which ultimately feeds into the Gulf of Mexico, **every day**. "That's enough to irrigate an 18-hole golf course for an entire season," he said. "The NSSD is already working on a plan to pipe wastewater along their existing easements to reach a number of golf clubs in the Skokie Valley." At least eight courses would be able to take advantage of this supply.

Aware of the EPA funding program, the Sanitary District contacted the state and federal agencies for funds to install a line and pump station. Due to a shortage of funds and other restrictions at the time, the district was denied but told to resubmit its application at a later date.

Notwithstanding the EPA denial, the timing was obviously right for local research to determine the effects which NSSD wastewater, in its various stages of treatment, would have on turfgrasses particular to those courses that could benefit from its supply. If successful, the project could lead other sanitary districts toward considering similar water recycling operations, benefitting virtually every golf course in the Chicagoland area.

Specifics of the project were outlined at the CDGA Greens Seminar, held March 22, by Onwensia Club superintendent, Wolfgang Mueller. Mueller first pointed out the tremendous cooperation surrounding the project, which had been conceptualized by a three-man team comprised of Dr. Al Turgeon of the University of Illinois, Aurora Country Club superintendent Carl Hophan, and Mueller himself. He remarked that its implementation **would be possible** through the Chicago District Golf Charities, the University of Illinois, the North Shore Sanitary District and the Northmoor Country Club.

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS AVAILABLE

In November 1978, a significant conference took place in Arlington Heights, Illinois. It was the first conference jointly sponsored by four national golf organizations. It was also the first national conference which addressed itself solely to the topic of wastewater for recreational use, a topic of vital importance to golf course management.

Because of the increasing demand on present water supply and possible future restriction in recreational use, it is important to investigate sources of supply other than potable water. Wastewater potentially has great value for irrigating turf. Speakers from throughout the nation assembled to lend their research and experience in use of wastewater on land treatment.

Proceedings covering this two-day conference are now available. It is 200 pages... cost \$10.00 per copy and should prove to be an important part of every golf course turfgrass management library. Place your order with any of the following organizations.

American Society of Golf
Course Architects Foundation
221 North LaSalle Street
Chicago, IL 60601

Golf Course Superintendents
Association of America
1617 St. Andrews Drive
Lawrence, KS 66044

National Golf Foundation
200 Castlewood Drive
North Palm Beach, FL 33408

United States Golf Association
Golf House
Far Hills, NJ 07931

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