

Greenward

A compendium of news and opinions about government, golf and the environment

The following items have been excerpted from GCSAA Government Relations Briefing, Oct. 91, for Greenward section of Florida Green

Wetlands revisions and definitions proposed

Proposed revisions to the 1989 Federal Manual for Identifying and Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands were published by EPA in the Federal Register of Aug. 14. Wetlands protection continues to be an important issue in golf course management, especially in the management of construction and renovation projects.

The following information summarizes the document that EPA provided to GCSAA. The information may be dry (pardon the pun), but a basic understanding of wetlands determination and characteristics is important for today's golf course superintendent.

Definition

Wetlands are areas where land and water meet. In general, they are lands that are either inundated with surface water or saturated by groundwater long enough during the growing season to make it necessary for the vegetation to adapt to growing in saturated soil conditions. The periodic or permanent wetness is the fundamental factor that make wetlands differ-

ent from uplands. In certain seasons, many ecologically important wetlands may be dry or lack signs of plant life. Wetlands can range in size from tens of thousands of acres, to as small as a table top.

Proposed changes

The major changes would serve to increase the burden of proof required to identify and delineate a wetland. Clarifying and restricting the manner in which field indicators are used to determine whether the three criteria (See "Three Criteria" below) are met should simplify wetlands delineation.

Except in limited specified circumstances, demonstration of all three parameters (wetland hydrology, hydrophytic vegetation and hydric soils) would be required for delineating vegetated wetlands. The exceptions to this rule would apply to a disturbed wetland area or an area specifically listed in the proposed Federal Manual.

Wetland types that are widely recognized as valuable, but may fail to meet one or more of the three criteria during all or some part of the year, are listed as exceptions. These include such areas as a playa lake, prairie pothole and vernal pools.

Another proposed change would lengthen the periods of inundation to 15 days and of saturation to 21 days dur-

ing the growing season. (The 1989 manual required only seven days of inundation or saturation during the growing season.) The changes would also require saturation all the way to the soil surface. Localized differences in the growing season would also be considered.

The revised hydric soils criterion would specifically state that hydric soils must be field-verified. Hydric soils maps would no longer be sufficient evidence that hydric soil exists in a potential wetland area.

—Don Bretthauer, GCSAA Government Relations Manager.

Three criteria for identifying wetlands

Wetland Hydrology — The presence of water is what makes a wetland a wetland. Unless specifically addressed in the proposed revised Federal Manual as exceptions or disturbed areas, areas without any of the hydrologic indicators provided in the proposed Federal Manual are considered non-wetland areas.

Hydrophytic Vegetation — The term refers to plants that live in "wet" conditions. However, the majority of plant species growing in wetland areas also grow in non-wetlands or in upland areas. Thus, plants alone cannot be used to identify and delineate wetlands. If a plant species found in an area primarily occurs in wetlands (in a particular region), this fact is a consideration for wetland determination.

Hydric Soil — The National Technical Committee for hydric soils has developed

criteria for what constitutes this soil type and has developed a list of these soils for the nation. "Hydric" is defined as "relating to or requiring considerable moisture." Wetlands typically possess hydric soils but the presence of hydric soil indicators does not necessarily mean that the area is a wetland.

In most cases, all three of the above characteristics must be met in order for a geographic area to be considered a wetland.

Audubon program recognizes course

The Honors Course in Ooltewah, Tenn. has been chosen as the first golf course to be recognized for its conservation and preservation efforts under the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program.

Superintendent David Stone, an avid naturalist, has instituted several programs to help identify, monitor and encourage a variety of wildlife species at The Honors Course.

Stone and Rod Dodson, executive director of the Audubon Society of New York, will serve as instructors for a new seminar scheduled Feb. 12, at the International Golf Course Conference and Show in New Orleans. "Wildlife Management and Habitat Conservation" will offer information on ways superintendents can identify and encourage wildlife habitation at their courses.

The Honors Course, which hosted the 1991 U.S. Ama-

teur Championship, was constructed in harmony with the existing site topography, thereby minimizing the negative impact of excessive soil disturbance. Naturalized tall grasses are encouraged to grow in areas between greens, tees and landing areas, while native shrubs and tall grasses border the roughs, streams and pond shorelines. Nest boxes for birds are located throughout the course.

As of early September, more than 175 golf courses had registered to participate in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program. The program is sponsored by the USGA and administered by the Audubon Society of New York State.

Congressman lauds GCSAA environmental efforts

U.S. Congressman Jim Slattery of Kansas' Second District praised GCSAA's recent environmental efforts in a speech delivered at the association's headquarters dedication and 65th anniversary ceremony Sept. 7 in Lawrence, Kan.

"As a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee of the U.S. Congress that has jurisdiction over this nation's environmental laws, I am particularly grateful for the leadership that this organization has demonstrated in environmental areas," Slattery said.

The five-term congressman commended the association's new environmental management program, the recent development of a public service an-

nouncement to educate homeowners about the proper use of pesticides and the environmental research that GCSAA cosponsors with the USGA.

FIFRA amendments bill to be introduced

Rep. Charles Rose (D-N.C.) is expected to introduce a FIFRA amendments bill in the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill will likely contain language addressing a fast-track registration process for "safer" pesticides. This "fast track" would allow biologicals and environmentally friendly pesticides to receive registration approval more quickly.

The bill would also allow companies to have exclusive use of such new discoveries.

In addition, the bill would define re-registration and establish a cutoff date for registrants to comply with data requirements. EPA would not be allowed to change the cutoff date or to add data requirements after the cutoff date had been established.

The bill is not expected to spell out federal and state pre-emption of local governments on pesticide issues.

EPA must say if used oil is hazardous

The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia has set a deadline for EPA to decide whether used oil should be listed as a hazardous waste.

The agency reached a settlement in a suit filed by the Natural Resources De-

fense Council, the Hazardous Waste Treatment Council and the Association of Petroleum Refiners. Under the terms of the agreement, EPA issued a statement on Sept. 3, outlining the options that EPA is considering. These options are: 1) listing all used oil as hazardous waste, 2) listing used motor oils as hazardous but exempting industrial oils, 3) not listing any used oils as hazardous, but instead issuing management standards and good business procedures, 4) listing only residuals from oil burning operations as hazardous.

EPA has until May 1, 1992, to make a final determination. If EPA decides to list used motor oils as hazardous waste, superintendents who hold used oil for more than 90 days may be considered a small-quantity generator. States differ on the maximum amount of hazardous waste a facility may store before that facility is considered a small-quantity generator.

Du Pont cancels ornamental uses for two fungicides

Du Pont has announced plans to voluntarily cancel all ornamental uses for the products Benlate WP and Tersan WP. A spokesperson for Du Pont said that the cancellation was an economic decision, explaining that sales of the products were not significant enough to warrant continued ornamental labeling.

In March, Du Pont recalled its Benlate 50DF, Benlate 1991 DF and Tersan 1991 DF fungicides to possible atrazine contamination. While the

March recall was not the primary reason for the Benlate WP and Tersan WP cancellations, the associated costs were a factor. If you have questions about the cancellation of these products, you may call Du Pont at 800-441-7515.

Bureaucrat: make golf courses pay

The Florida Golf Summit, a gathering of golf course owners, superintendents, and industry suppliers heard a Florida bureaucrat say he favored forcing the state's golf courses to take treated effluent from municipal sewage treatment plants.

Golf courses should also be required to pay for the installation of distribution lines to get the effluent and should pay a per gallon fee as well, David York said. York is the director of re-use for the state Department of Environmental Regulation.

York's position was challenged by FGCSA President Tom Benefield, who told the gathering that "Society creates the problem, yet we in the golf business are expected to carry the lion's share of the expense in recycling it.

"If golf courses weren't available to take this effluent, it would have to be sent to the ocean or deep-well injected into the ground..."

"Golf courses provide a tremendous service to society, yet we're expected to pay for it all," Benefield said.

Sponsored by the Florida Golf Council, the Florida Golf Summit took place Oct. 3-4 in Tampa at the Hyatt Regency hotel, coinciding with the 16th annual Water Management Conference.