

Greenward

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

Forum brings feds, golf industry heads together for confab

Senior golf industry officials heard the latest information concerning government relations at a GCSAA-sponsored environmental forum June 24. "Golf Course Management, Government Relations and the Future," was developed and organized by GCSAA's government relations staff and board liaisons.

"By bringing the regulated and the regulators together, our industry stands a better chance of being involved when these agencies are making the rules we must live by," said Charles T. Passios, CGCS, GCSAA director in charge of government relations.

"More communication exchange means more opportunities to be represented in the rule-making process now and in the future."

Eight regulatory officials and a U.S. congressman briefed those attending on the current and proposed regulations and legislation that affect golf. Lewis Crampton, associate administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, urged the golf industry to continue its environmental efforts.

"Golf courses have to be environmentally friendly places if the industry wants to continue to grow," Crampton said. "Golf is doing a number of positive things in the environmental area. Those in-

clude pesticide reduction, better environmentally designed courses, and underground storage tank replacement."

Cathy Kronopolus, of EPA's Environmental Fate and Effects Branch, said that EPA is getting agency-wide input in developing the new pesticides and groundwater strategy. The strategy will focus on giving the states a substantial role in protecting groundwater supplies.

"The prevention strategy includes promoting the use of 'safer' chemicals, non-chemical pest control alternatives, and environmentally sound agricultural practices," Kronopolus said. She said the end user will continue to be responsible for the implications of pesticide use in the field.

Dr. Larry Turner, project manager for the Endangered Species Program, told the forum audience the program is "pretty much in concrete."

The program will rely on county bulletins that feature maps showing areas where an endangered species is present and outline the restrictions on chemical use in and around those areas. Chemical labels will remind applicators that they must consult the bulletins and abide by their restrictions.

Turner, a zoologist, noted that only three of the 600 listed endangered species have been sighted on golf courses. They are: 1) the dwarf wedge mus-

sel (Northeast), 2) Mojave tuichub fish (California) and 3) the red cockaded woodpecker (Southeast, in older pine-wooded areas). Turner cautioned that there are probably "dozens and dozens more" on golf courses that have not yet been documented.

Melody Sands, an enforcement official for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, clarified some rules of the Hazard Communication Standard.

She explained that material safety data sheets (MSDSs), for instance, are not required to be kept in any certain form. They may be kept in a notebook or on a computer as long as all employees have ready access to them.

Sands referred to recent appellate court decisions on the subject of MSDS accessibility. In some emergency situations, "15 minutes may be too long for an employee not to have access to a material safety data sheet," Sands said.

Although it is not a requirement, she said, translating MSDSs into different languages is recommended because employers should communicate the hazards of the workplace in the employee's language.

She said the most frequently found violation of the HazCom Standard is an inadequate written program while a training program deficiency was the second most commonly found violation.

A more complete report on the environmental forum is printed in the August issue of *Golf Course Management*.

— Don Bretthauer, GCSAA
Government Relations Manager

Supreme Court decision approves chemical ban laws by local ordinances

The Supreme Court decision involving the Town of Casey, Wis. vs. Mortier has sent lawn-care and turf associations scrambling for answers and ways to deal with the repercussions.

The key to the decision was that FIFRA legislative amendments inadequately spell out federal pre-emption of local ordinances.

The court asserted that FIFRA plainly authorizes states to regulate pesticides, but is silent in reference to local governments.

This ruling apparently upholds the authority of cities and towns to control and even ban the use of pesticides through permitting schemes, licensing, notification and other usage requirements.

Several interest groups that serve turf and lawn-care professionals are expected to initiate federal and/or state legislative amendments that spell out pre-emptive measures.

Cities can be expected to fight these legislative efforts to maintain regulatory authority.

Public education on the use of pesticides and the environmental and societal value of well-maintained turf, coupled with a willingness to initiate public protection measures, are the best ways to improve the position of golf courses with community decisions makers.

Communication with city and county government authorities is more important now than ever before.

Federal bill would ban minors from handling pesticides

A newly-proposed U.S. House of Representatives bill would amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 regarding the employment of minors.

Reps. Pease (D-Ohio), Schumer (D-N.Y.) and Lantos (D-Calif.) are co-sponsors of the legislation which, if passed, would prohibit minors from handling pesticide products.

The bill would also require employers to report any lost-time accident or illness that occurs to a working minor.

The bill's language would require minor employees to obtain a work certificate that would include permission guarantees by the child's parents and school officials (school permission is required if the child is working during the school year).

When school is in session, minors age 14 and 15 could work a maximum of 15 hours per week and those between 16 and 18 could work a maximum of 25 hours per week. Some states already have provisions similar to these.

GCSAA plans to submit formal comments on the bill to the Subcommittee on Labor Standards.

Senate bill would tighten pesticide regulations

A new Senate bill entitled "The Pesticide Health and Safety Act of 1991" would amend several sections of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act.

If enacted the bill would require some pesticide labels to include the statement, "EPA registration is not a guarantee of safety. It is a product registration process and not a safety determination."

The bill would also require professional pesticide applicators to be trained in alternative pest management methods and both professional and private applicators to keep records of the date and time of all pesticide applications.

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Jax golf course provides green space in heart of industrial park

Windsor Parke GC in Jacksonville has been cited by Tom Clark, president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, as a prime example of a new breed of golf course — those built in conjunction with industrial and commercial development.

The public course, which opened in May 1990, is built in an area featuring several commercial plots currently being marketed.

"Windsor Parke is an exceptional 18-hole course that will offer commercial occupants an outstanding environment for business and golf," said ASGCA member Art Hills, who designed the course. "We developed the master plan to blend the golf course and commercial space into a single cohesive project."

"Golfers can practice their

driving and putting at lunchtime and play a quick nine holes after work," added Clark. "Many commercial courses operate golf schools which are available to tenants and the public."

Clark recently developed a master plan for a course in Norfolk, Va., that will house offices for the city. "Any mayor or city administrator would appreciate the benefits of an office overlooking a public course, especially one that brings revenue to the city," Clark said.

A brochure on master planning is available from the ASGCA at 221 N. LaSalle St., Chicago, IL 60601.

In addition to making a property more attractive, industry studies show a golf course's open space absorbs noise, while trees produce oxygen, which can be especially beneficial to industrial and commercial developments.

"Some courses have even been built over landfills, thereby eliminating an eyesore to the community and possibly reducing further environmental risks," said Clark. "Our research shows that golf courses will benefit commercial and industrial developments in the next decade in the same way they have generated sales in residential developments the past 10 years."

The ASGCA has formed task forces to work with governmental agencies to expedite the permitting process and identify unique financing sources and programs, Clark said.

"Developing sound environmental and financing programs continues to be critical to not only ASGCA members,

but to the entire golf industry," he said.

The organization will distribute a document providing information on all facets of golf course development and maintenance from groundwater to wildlife. The information will be made available to federal, state and local agencies involved in the permitting procedure.

"Providing this information up front reduces the need for governmental agencies to query architects on a case-by-case basis," said Clark. "We are hoping to ease some of the concerns of these agencies, thereby speeding the application process."

"For example, if the agency knows we follow strict guidelines with nitrates, pesticides and herbicides, they can work with us on other areas, such as wildlife. We have been working with the GCSAA, NGF and USGA to collect and distribute this information."

The ASGCA also has developed an environmental database to provide architects with critical information.

"For example, if one of our members has dealt with woodpeckers or desert tortoises, he can provide that information to another member facing a similar situation," Clark said.

"More architects are getting back to the basics of good architecture and design, specifically concerning how courses are groomed. The water crisis may mean that there will be more brown courses, which is perfectly acceptable. We can't continue to groom every course like it's Augusta National."