

**I**s it ever going to rain again in Florida? We have experienced droughts in Florida before but this year just may be the most devastating from our industry's view. The effects are being felt everywhere and will likely continue.

It has been known for several years that our population growth alone will put severe pressure on our potable water supply. With that growth the use of water we have become accustomed to will change. Our industry will be

facing some tough situations and, without question, tightening of the existing water rules and laws are on the horizon.

Each area of Florida will have its specific challenges due to the diversity of water supply resources in each district. We can no longer sit back and hope that someone will look out for our water needs. I think we would all agree that a dependable source of irrigation supply is

paramount for our success as turfgrass managers. There are many things we can do to help improve our chances of survival. Believe me, survival may just be what is in the near future if we don't get some relief on many of our golf courses.

I have just heard a frightening story at our national convention. As I understood it, a water management district in New Jersey determined to respond to a drought condition by making an example of the golf courses. They decided it would be a good political move to drastically reduce the amount of water they would allow golf courses. Golf courses are very visible and the district felt it needed to make a statement, and of course everyone knows they must be using all the water.

In reality it was discovered all the green industries were only using .1 percent of the water and golf courses specifically were only using .003 percent of the total water consumed in the state!

Now I ask you, how fair is that and what good would that really do to conserve the water supply? Is that scenario too far-fetched for us in Florida? I don't think so if we are not involved in our water management districts decision making process.

Some of our members have realized the need to be involved; one is Stuart Bozeman in the Seven Rivers Chapter. Stuart has been attending the SWFWMD meetings on a regular basis, letting management officials know that we are smart managers of water and we follow sound scientific and agronomic irrigation practices. The equipment we use to apply the required irrigation is state of the art and many courses even have weather stations on their property to help determine the irrigation needs.

Stuart has suggested the district consider changing the way it restricts golf course water usage. He suggested instead of restricting us to days of the week that a percentage reduction from the annual permitted amount would make more sense. For example under a phase-one restriction the user would be required to reduce 10 percent; under phase two, a reduction of 15 percent from the permitted amount. This allows the superintendent to determine where and when to apply the irrigation to best suit the needs of the turf.

He brought this idea to the FGCSA Board of Directors and we felt this does make a lot of sense. I sent a letter recommending and supporting this concept to the governing board at SWFWMD. The letter has already received their attention as I have received phone calls from SWFWMD to discuss our proposals. They have questions on how much more could we cut if the drought worsens and about the timing of implementation. These are valid questions, but it is through our involvement that we can make a difference and help them make informed decisions instead of radical regulations.

I thank Mr. Bozeman and applaud his efforts to get involved. He has made a difference. I ask all of you to think about this and help us. Get involved. Get informed and make a difference.

## Less Water, More Control

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Cary N. Lewis, CGCS