

BENHAM'S BEAT

Other Shoe Drops: IFAS Budget Cuts Go Deeper

By Donald Benham



The University of Florida has been told to cut another \$2 million after already cutting its budget by \$2.1 million. Dr. Mike Martin, vice president for agriculture and natural resources, has sent a letter outlining the new reductions. In other words, the other shoe has dropped. Several of these reductions will

have direct, immediate effect on all of us. For example the closing of three RECs, restructuring of two more, closures and restructuring of selected campus research programs. To quote Dr. Martin "Be forewarned, we will have to reduce or eliminate programs, if we are to keep our commitment to excellence and some very productive, loyal and long-serving staff members will be laid off."

Did you know that Ft. Lauderdale REC is part of the group being looked at for restructuring or closure? What can we do about it? Obviously writing, E-mailing or faxing your local legislator lets them know how you feel. Talk to your board of directors and general manager. You probably have

**DONALD R. BENHAM, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC RELATIONS
FLORIDA TURFGRASS ASSOCIATION
7309 LINKS COURT
SARASOTA, FL 33813
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Dear Donald:

At the recommendation of Jan Beljan, Associate Designer with Fazio Golf Course Designers, you are invited to join Jonathan's Landing Golf Club to officially open our newly redesigned "Village Course". During this event the members of Jonathan's Landing would like to present a check in the amount of \$6,500 to benefit the Florida Turfgrass Association.

The membership at Jonathan's Landing is appreciative of the dedication shown by the organization in developing superior products to better the game of golf. Through your efforts and those affiliated around the country, the continued research improving turf conditions has greatly assisted our industry.

We would appreciate your attendance.
Sincerely,
Peter H. Young, CCM
General Manager/COO

some very influential members in your club.

There is a third way: encouraging your board of directors and general manager to have your membership join "Golfers for a Better Environment." To refresh your memory, the \$5-a-member program is jointly promoted by the University of Florida and the FTGA. We cannot replace the large monetary reduction caused by state budget cuts, but by encouraging your club to join the \$5-a-member program for turfgrass research, we can accomplish two things: First we obviously gain more research money for needed projects with the faculty of the University of Florida. Secondly, and we gain political clout to go to the Legislature for matching funds.

If 25 clubs with an average membership of 500 were to join this spring, 12,500 voting members would be contributing. Take it a step further. If only 25 clubs from each coast joined for a total of 50 clubs, that is 25,000 registered voters supporting turfgrass research in Florida. I am not saying we could save a particular REC. like Ft. Lauderdale, but I am saying we might gain support in the Legislature to promote our turf research with a line item to do it. Politicians listen to numbers of voters. Think about it - only 25 clubs on each coast.

On a happier note, I just returned this morning from a wonderful day at Jonathan's Landing on Friday, Nov. 30. Thanks to General Manager Peter Young, Club President Paul Moore, the board of directors and Michael J. Perham, GCCS director of course maintenance, Jonathan's Landing presented FTGA President R. Alan Puckett and me with a \$6,500.00 check representing \$10 a member from 650 members.

The presentation was made at the official opening of the redesigned "Village" course at the recommendation of Jan Beljan, associate designer of Fazio Golf. I was invited to play the opening round tournament with the club president and general manager. There was a lot of friendly protest when we won the tournament. The FTGA was enthusiastically thanked for its promotion of this grassroots member program. Please see the enclosed letter from the club.

Dr. Terril Nell of the University of Florida and I would be happy to come to your club and explain the program to your club officials.

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USGA UPDATE

Gabrielle Dumps 18 Inches, Unites Members & Staff

Another hurricane season has come to an end in Florida, and golf courses along coastal regions can breathe a sigh of relief. This region has witnessed a year of extremes in weather conditions (especially rain). Even though some areas are still under drought restrictions, many regions experienced more than 40 - 60 inches of rain from June

through September.

September was especially harsh for parts of West Florida as Tropical Storm Gabrielle brought near-hurricane strength wind and rain. Some golf courses only received elevated rainfall while others experienced major wind damage. One such golf course (El Conquistador Country Club) in Bradenton was located near the eye of the storm and received nearly 18 inches of rain and strong winds, which destroyed more than 80 trees and damaged 50 additional trees.

Nearly 50 members came together to help the staff clean the debris from the golf course and get it ready for play. The course was closed for an entire week and the golf course superintendent, Mr. Stephen Wood, CGCS, was overjoyed for their assistance. "With the members' help, we never fell behind on the day-to-day maintenance that sometimes requires several weeks to catch up on", added Mr. Wood. When the entire project was complete, 83 truckloads (25 cubic yards per truck load) were required to haul away the debris caused by Gabrielle. Also, at the end of the week the members took up a collection of more than \$800 for the maintenance staff. We hear of how the nation has been brought together during these trying times, but it's nice to see it on a local level as well.

Todd Lowe

NEW DISEASE IMPACTING POA TRIVIALIS OVERSEEDING

A new patch disease has been making its presence known these days in the SE Region on overseeded bermudagrass putting greens. Dr. Bruce Martin has identified two known cases at the Clemson-Pee Dee Research Station. The new disease has been identified as belonging to the chytridomycete fungal group. Dr. Larry Stowell www.pacepri.com/PTRI/Documents/Diseases/0111. PDF of PACE Consulting originally diagnosed the disease on the West Coast in 1995 at golf courses in Nevada and Arizona. USGA agronomists have seen the disease at Carolina coastal golf courses over the past few years, but never knew the cause of the problem.

The disease impacts Poa trivialis, Poa annua, and perennial ryegrass. It really wipes out Poa trivialis, by far the most popular overseeded turf now on putting greens in the SE Region. The disease resembles the pythium fungus as the turf looks water soaked prior to death along with dime-size spots. The disease tracks along with the mowers and can attack in the both the fall and spring. It is spread by zoospores like Pythium, but the organisms live inside the leaf cells, which is one reason why it has been so tough to identify in the past.

The common denominator at sites with this new disease problem has been poor water and soil quality. The disease operates best with soil or water conditions of high EC, high salinity, and high bicarbonates. It is especially prevalent during droughts (just like we are experiencing now) and at sites without an aggressive soil amendment and flushing program.

From what is known, every variety of Poa trivialis is impacted. Ryegrass is affected as