

Benham's Beat

Can You Spare Five Bucks for the Future of Golf?

By Don Benham

Many golf superintendents have either read or heard about the proposed \$5-a-member grassroots



Don Benham

program for turfgrass research in Florida. The basic idea is to get club members involved by donating \$5 a member once a year. The money is to be used for basic research on products or problems in Florida.

The media repeatedly reports "Golf" as being a huge user of our limited water resources.

Golf is also often accused of polluting drinking water wells within our state. As environmental groups were making accusations without any scientific basis, the university was forced to provide sound research to disprove these accusations.

Counties and cities began passing their own legislation to "protect" their citizens from problems supposedly brought on by golf courses. Politicians began to speak out against this threat to their community. SWFWMD and other water authorities imposed rules on water use even though the golf courses had usage permits. They were told what day and time of day they could water. Finally, after two years of working with the SWFWMD and with research provided by the University of Florida, the water management district will allow golf superintendents to water when they need to if they stay within their permitted amounts.

Golf course ponds have proved to be a great benefit to water birds according to a study recently completed by IFAS. Joel Jackson and I were in a meeting a couple of years ago hosted by the Florida Department of Health, which was widely covered by the media. An outspoken environmental activist referred to golf course ponds as toxic holding ponds. How we

Not all sports require year-round attention to nature...



...for those that do, there's



GreenEdge®

The next generation of slow release organic fertilizers

Environmentally Sound Agronomically Superior
Technologically Advanced

GreenTechnologies, Inc.

Toll Free: 1-877-GREEN30, www.Green-Edge.com

Feed Your Turf a Healthy Diet

Dry Fertilizer
Bulk Liquid Fertilizer

Office: 954-741-4041
Fax: 954-741-4082



GREEN-WAY

Quality Turf Products
We Specialize in Keeping you GREEN

MANGA PLEX PLUS • ULTRA - GREEN • BIO-PLEX

10008 N.W. 53rd Street • Sunrise, Florida 33351

would have liked to have had the results of this study in our hands at that meeting.

There are more requests for funding of research in Florida now than ever before. Each year the FTGA turns down many projects because we don't have the money. The USGA and the GCSAA have helped with many projects in Florida but their funding also has to be spread across the whole United States. Dr. Terri Nell and I have presented the \$5-a-member donation plan at many meetings with very limited success. We had a meeting together yesterday to evaluate our success and failures. Dr. Nell stated that we had never had anyone tell us that they didn't like the program. We have had several general managers and management companies tell us they would just like to send in a check from the club instead of billing the membership. We certainly would welcome their support in this manner.

This year we have received endorsement and permission to use the logo of the FGCSA, the Florida chapter of the Club Managers Association of America and the USGA in our fund-raising campaign. IFAS researchers Drs. Laurie Trenholm, Philip Busey, John Cisar, Lawrence Datnoff, and Robin Giblin-Davis have all written letters of need in support of this program. The club manager's association board of directors has agreed to request donations from their members when dues are billed.

The FTGA has donated \$2 million for research in the last 20 years. You as golf course superintendents could really help the program by talking to your club managers and green committees about sup-

porting this funding program and assuring them that this research money returns far more to the members than the meager \$5 donation. If only half of the private clubs participated, we could achieve in two years what it has taken the FTGA two decades to accomplish. Don't you think \$5 is a worthwhile investment in the future of golf?

GCSAA News

Committee Structure Changes

To Increase Involvement,
Elevate Strategic Focus

Increasing opportunities for meaningful member participation and raising discussions to a more strategic level are key goals in a phased transformation of the association's committee structure.

The transformation will start in 2004 with the creation of two new "umbrella" committees, which will be composed of members and others with relevant expertise and will be chaired by board members.

As needed throughout the year, the committees will convene task groups consisting of two or three members of the umbrella committee (one serving as chairman) plus additional members and other experts in the specific area. Task group assignments may involve commitments as brief as one or two conference calls, or as extensive as multiple in-person meetings over two or three years, which will provide more flexible opportuni-

ties for volunteer service. Once its assignment is complete, the task group will dissolve.

"We think it is critical to have a wide range of perspectives in the room when we are developing strategies," said President Jon D. Maddem, CGCS. "Our aim is to bring members with experience and expertise together with experts in relevant disciplines and our professional staff. This new structure will allow us to take a higher-level, integrated approach overall, with great flexibility in targeting specific issues as they arise.

"We are using a phased approach to implement the system so that we can apply what we learn during 2004 as we implement additional changes."

For 2004, the umbrella committees will be formulated as follows:

- The environmental programs committee and its related task groups will replace and expand upon the current environmental stewardship, government relations and research committees and begin work on the priorities identified during the July 2003 Environmental Institute for Golf strategic planning meeting.
- The strategic communications committee and its related task groups will replace and expand upon the current member communications and Web strategy committees.

As a result of this more flexible form of involvement, it is expected that the environmental programs and strategic communications committees, and their related task groups, will involve at least as many members as the current five and more over time. Other

CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

Thinking about remodeling?

One call can save you Time,
Money and Aggravation.

Hobe Sound Golf Club
Hole 2, Par4, 350 yards
Hobe Sound, Florida
Roy MacDonald, G.C.S.A.A.



John Sanford Jr.,
Member of
American Society of
Golf Course Architects



SANFORD
GOLF DESIGN
866.233.4SGD
WWW.SANFORD-GOLF.COM

DESIGN ~ MASTER PLANNING