



Members and guests enjoy the annual golf course “Bird Walk” hosted by the Grand Harbor Audubon Society in the winter of 2006. Photo by Bobby Wallace.

## Communication Can Be a Beautiful Thing

By Shelly Foy

I have been thinking a lot lately about the importance of being able to communicate effectively with others. It seems to be the crux of most problems in the world today and, quite honestly, very few of us do it well. Good communication is difficult at best, and yet it is so very important in everything we do. I encourage each of you to speak out more, write more, reach out more and force yourselves to become better communicators.

The reality is that you can’t just do your job solely on your golf course anymore. Your job has come to be about communicating effectively to those outside of your property about what you do on your golf course and why you do it.

### GRAND HARBOR GOLF & BEACH CLUB, VERO BEACH

Talk about finding an effective way to communicate your message!

In my opinion, Bobby Wallace has hit the mother lode.

Wallace is the golf course superintendent at Grand Harbor Golf & Beach Club in Vero Beach. The property comprises 900 acres, with

140 acres of wetlands, 20 water bodies, 50 acres of surface water, 205 acres of turfgrass and a 45-hole golf course with 800 members. Wallace has been at the club for two and a half years. He came from Hilton Head Island, S.C., where he was the superintendent at Indigo Run Country Club for 18 years.

Grand Harbor was already a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary when Wallace joined the management team. Instead of being satisfied with its status, his love of nature and being outside compelled him to do more. Not too long after he came to Grand Harbor, Wallace had a conversation with a member who mentioned that she knew they were a Certified Audubon Sanctuary, but she felt like they could do so much more. Bobby agreed and they set up a meeting to discuss ideas.

Pretty soon, there were so many people showing up at meetings that they were running out of room. The next thing you know, the members at Grand Harbor had decided to form their own Audubon Society chapter, and the Grand Harbor Audubon Society was born. The group currently has 85 members and their goal – which

they believe will be reached soon – is 200 members.

On Nov. 20, they hosted their annual Audubon Open, and raised \$3,800, which they already are putting to use. Wallace and several members, with the help of the Pelican Island Audubon Society, are in the process of installing seven purple martin houses, two osprey platforms, four screech owl boxes, four wood duck boxes, and four boxes for woodpeckers.

One of the first projects they began was naturalizing an area around holes 6, 7, 9, 13 and 14 of the Harbor Course. They have stopped mowing and spraying out-of-play areas along this corridor (allowing Wallace to re-allocate those resources to other areas of the golf course), and members of their Audubon Society have convinced many of the adjoining homeowners to stop mowing and spraying their areas around this corridor as well.

When I visited Grand Harbor, it was 95 degrees at 3:30 p.m. and the area was teeming with dragonflies, butterflies and too many bird species to count. I can only imagine what this area will be like during the actual birding season.

Wallace and the members of the



*Grand Harbor Audubon Committee: From left: Robert Wallace (director of golf), Virginia Tulluch and Jim Bercaw (in charge of lakes and buffer zones), Deb Fletcher (original organizer) and Neil Stalter (resident bird expert).*

Grand Harbor Audubon Society continually seek new ideas for ways to enhance habitat on the golf courses. Several members made a point of traveling and playing golf on other Certified Audubon Sanctuaries across the country and brought back pictures and ideas of things they wanted to do at Grand Harbor.

Wallace has a shared goal with his membership of enhancing and protecting habitat on their 900 acres. They share e-mails and photos and spend time together making plans and discussing ideas. He is an active member of their Audubon Society, and I am quite sure he is getting more satisfaction from his job now than ever before. Two of his Green Committee members are also members of the Grand Harbor Audubon Society, and this helps garner support for projects on the golf courses. Wallace is quick to give most of the credit for their environmental efforts to his members,

## It's Not Slow Release, It's Better



**AGROTAIN**  
INTERNATIONAL, LLC

You want consistency when it comes to your nitrogen. With *StabilizedNitrogen™* Technology (SNT), more available nitrogen stays in the soil for results that last for weeks. Insist on SNT for:

- Better color & quality
- Increased nitrogen efficiency
- Extended nitrogen availability
- Environmentally sound
- Granular and soluble programs

**UMAXX**  
STABILIZED NITROGEN FERTILIZER

**UFLEXX**  
STABILIZED NITROGEN FERTILIZER

**HYDREXX**  
PROFESSIONAL GOLF COURSE MAINTENANCE



**Insist on it.**

888-547-4140

[www.stabilizednitrogen.com](http://www.stabilizednitrogen.com)

StabilizedNitrogen is a trademark of AGROTAIN International, LLC.

and they have developed quite a kinship in Vero Beach.

During my visit we were stopped by a couple of his members who wanted to talk about the Egyptian Swans that are now living on the golf course, and where they were last seen. We toured the corridor area they are currently enhancing, and we talked about the plans they have for creating educational signs around several areas of the courses. He even shared his favorite spot along No. 14 on the River Course, which runs parallel to the Intracoastal Waterway. This is where he sometimes escapes to have a few minutes of quiet time to gather his thoughts before he heads off to a meeting.

We talked about the Bald Eagles that nested close by this past year and who raised a fledgling around hole No. 4 of the Harbor Course. Wallace recently told me that the eagles are already back this year. We talked about the manatees and the dolphins and even the bull sharks that have been seen around the property. We came around corners where rabbits were munching on grass and did not seem bothered by our presence. They have even installed an escape ramp for turtles to use when the water levels are too low in the effluent irrigation pond.

If you have ever spoken to Wallace you know immediately that he is a good communicator. You hear the tone in his voice, the excitement about programs, and the mention of all of the people helping him to spread his message. As I left Grand Harbor late that afternoon, I couldn't help but think, "How can I bottle some of this up and share it with the rest of the world?"

Wallace has used the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program as an effective communication tool and it has worked beautifully for him and for the Grand Harbor membership. I encourage everyone who has not yet made the decision to enroll their golf course in this program to take the time to do so. You can enroll online at [www.auduboninternational.org](http://www.auduboninternational.org).



*Simply Brilliant*



**Diamond Zoysia is a fine textured, vegetatively propagated, warm season variety with excellent tolerance to low light conditions, salty soils and high traffic. Diamond is best maintained at a very low mowing height and has outstanding recuperative abilities making it a logical choice for golf course tees, collars, as well as putting surfaces. Diamond has better fall color retention than most other zoysiagrass varieties and has an early spring green-up.**



Shipyard Golf Club



Atlanta Athletic Club  
Tees & Fairways

**Features and Benefits**



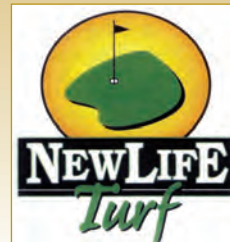
- Color** ~ Brilliant Green
- Texture** ~ Very Fine
- Performance:**
  - Wear Tolerance ~ better than hybrid bermuda.
  - Excellent shade tolerance (can maintain high quality in 60% shade)
  - Tolerant of close mowing.
  - Excellent salt tolerance.
- Climate** ~ Thrives in warm to hot climates, USDA zones 7 to 11.
- Maintenance** ~ Moderate to High
- Mowing** ~ 1/8" to 1/2"

- GREENS
  - SOD
  - SPRIGS
- Greens from sprigs in 70-90 days*

**BERMUDA - TIF EAGLE - TIF DWARF  
ZOYSIA (CAVALIER - PALISADES)**

**Diamond Zoysia is available in the southeast exclusively from:**

2024 Willow Swamp Road  
P.O. Box 212  
Norway, SC 29113-0212  
Phone 803.263.4231  
Fax 803.263.4886  
Email:  
[newlifeturf@sc.tds.net](mailto:newlifeturf@sc.tds.net)



**RHYNE'S  
SELECT TURF**  
306 4th Street  
Benton, AL 36785  
Phone 334.875.3288  
Contact: John Mays  
[jmays@rhyneselectturf.com](mailto:jmays@rhyneselectturf.com)

**[www.newlifeturf.com](http://www.newlifeturf.com)**

*For Sports Fields, Golf Courses and Sophisticated Landscapes.*

# It's All About the Water

## Less Irrigation is Better for Golf, the Turf, and the Environment

By Matt Nelson

**Editors Note:** As the various Florida Water Management Districts implement tighter water restrictions on golf courses and discuss future water conservation measures this article might just as well have been written today as it was four years ago. Clip and post in the clubhouse for your customers because we are now entering our traditional dry season and our courses likely won't be as green as usual.

As an agronomist in the golf industry, it often amazes me how obsessed American golfers are with the color green. Preparing good golf conditions sometimes seems secondary to prepping the course for a beauty pageant. Players commonly react with worry, disdain, and disapproval at the first signs of any off-color turf. Panic develops when the dreaded “brown spot” occurs. What gives within the ranks of our great game?

National drought surveys indicate that nearly half of the U.S. is currently experiencing drought, and water restrictions have been mandated at golf courses across the United States. The fairways may get a little firm and lose some color, but with traffic control and prudent cultural programs, much of the turf can survive without water for extended periods. Every lie might not be perfect, but isn't this part of what makes golf such a great game? When the course gets dry during the summer months, then use those conditions for more roll and to play different types



Panic often develops when the dreaded brown spot occurs. Photo courtesy of the USGA.

of golf shots. More bounce and roll presents risk and reward at some holes, different shots into greens throughout the year, and a greater premium on accuracy.

The golf industry has invested millions of dollars over the past two decades investigating the environmental impacts of golf course management. Our greatest challenge, however, will likely rest with irrigation. Water availability and quality will become the greatest issue facing golf courses throughout much of the country, if it isn't already.

Players may have no choice but to tolerate changing golf course conditions throughout the year, and they may even

learn to appreciate the many wonderful shades of brown.

But will it have to take water-use mandates to change current golfer attitudes? Sadly, this is probably true. In drought-stricken states this season, where both voluntary and mandatory water restrictions were in force, I observed golf shop staff manually turning on sprinkler heads after the maintenance department had left for the day, resort managers demanding that golf course superintendents increase the watering, and an adamant group of golfers complaining directly to the mayor about the lack of watering at their municipal golf course. The golf shop staff killed most of a green, play at

the resort was up even though several greens had been badly vandalized and closed, and late summer rains allowed the turf at the municipal course to resume normal growth and appearance.

Oh ye of little faith. The turf doesn't have to be green and soft to survive or provide a playable surface.

Those doing the most complaining typically are at golf courses with circa-1970 irrigation technology while expecting Y2K conditioning. Forget about it. The margin for error with respect to turfgrass water management has become increasingly thin with ever-faster greens and lower heights of cut. Drought conditions quickly highlight the deficiencies in the watering system, and simply cranking up the run times to make up for poor distribution uniformity invariably results in soft, muddy spots where embedded lies, mud on the ball, and no roll are the norm - all in the midst of a drought. This inefficient use of water results in a blatant waste of our most precious resource.

If course operators and players truly are concerned about uniformity and consistency on the golf course, then the irrigation system is the place to start. Modern irrigation control capability, components, and design have greatly improved the ability of golf course superintendents to accurately meet the variable turf water demands. Improved control and coverage also will result in significantly reduced water use over the year. Oh, can't afford to replace your 29-year-old irrigation system? Buck up and find a way to finance replacement of the golf course's most valuable infrastructure item or quit whining and hit the ball. Golf was invented prior to irrigation and has survived most of its life without it. Many would argue it was a better game without it, too.

The USGA is committed to funding research that investigates turfgrass breeding and selection, and management practices that enable reduced water use. We will continue to seek out every alternative to reduce water use and be better stewards, but it

will be much easier if golfers come to support this endeavor. So, this is a plea to the American golfer. Firm and dry conditions promote better and more exciting golf. Brown is beautiful, too!

Listen closely - it's all about the water.

*Matt Nelson is an agronomist in the USGA Green Section 5 Northwest Region. Reprinted with permission from: USGA Green Section Record, January-February 2003 issue.*

## Turf Management in a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary

By Bobby Wallace

At the Grand Harbor golf courses, we approach pest management with the concept of protecting the environment while keeping a top-grade playing surface for our golfers. We do not treat with preventive applications, only curative. Our policy is to spot-treat affected areas rather than apply to large portions of the course. We use the lowest curative rate and the least problematic chemicals for any particular pest.

### BUFFER ZONES FOR LAKE EDGES

We have a protective buffer zone around lake edges where no pesticide spraying or fertilizer application is permitted. Primo, a growth retardant with no water soluble properties, is used to help keep a 5 foot no-mow area that not only achieves a transition zone with a natural look to our lake edges, but helps to absorb any chemicals that might possibly leach towards the water. In addition, we are installing littoral-zone plantings that will filter contaminants, and add wildlife cover, feeding and nesting areas for water birds and small animals such as otters.

### FERTILIZATION

Our fertilization program concentrates on slow-release fertilizers and foliar feeding to maximize

Tom Burrows, Consulting  
Agronomist/Turfgrass Specialist  
Independent Consulting using  
"Brookside Laboratory"

### Greens Reconstruction

- ◆ Soil Physical Analysis
- ◆ USGA Approved Testing
- ◆ Analytical Service
- ◆ Recommendations
- ◆ Specifications for Contractor Bidding

### Soil Testing

- ◆ Greens, Tees, Fairways
- ◆ Analytical Report and Soil Fertility Recommendations

### Water Testing

- ◆ Report & Recommendations

*In the business 40 years*

Jensen Beach, Florida  
772-692-1221 cell: 772-215-1819

**Laserturf.**  
*Setting the Standard*

Laser Controlled Leveling  
and Topdressing For:

**Golf Tees**  
**Sports Fields**  
**Tennis & Croquet**  
**Courts**

- Ron Butler  
Central Florida
- Ken Schilling  
Central Florida
- Tom Mackanos  
Southeast Coast
- Joe Peters  
Northern Florida

**772-225-3771**  
10040 Oak Quarry Dr.  
Orlando, FL 32832  
email: laserturf1@aol.com

nutrient retention and drastically reduce the possibility of any leaching to any water source.

**WATER-USE CONSERVATION**

The Grand Harbor site was conceived with a large, scenic, interconnected storm-water lake system. This engineered retention services a high percentage of our irrigation water needs for both the golf courses and the residential areas of our development. We also receive re-use water from Indian River County which is the only supplemental water source besides the lake system for one 18-hole course. Overseeding has been reduced to “tees only” as winter ryegrass uses large amounts of water. We minimize our water use by monitoring soil moisture content and setting our irrigation program accordingly. There is also much hand watering of hot spots and use of wetting agents for mounds and other features which are historically troublesome.

**Turf Management in a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary**

Our pest-management goal is to protect the environment while keeping a top-grade playing surface. We do not treat with preventive applications, only curative. Our policy is to spot-treat affected areas rather than apply to large portions of the course. We use the lowest curative rate and the least problematic chemicals for any particular pest.

**BUFFER ZONES FOR LAKE EDGES**

We have a buffer zone around lake edges where no pesticide or fertilizer application is permitted. Primo, a growth retardant with no water-soluble properties, is used to help keep a 5-foot no-mow area that not only achieves a natural looking transition zone, but helps to absorb any chemicals that might possibly leach towards the water. In addition, we are installing littoral-zone plantings that will filter contaminants, and add wildlife cover, feeding and nesting areas for water birds and small animals such as otters.

**FERTILIZATION**

We concentrate on slow-release fertilizers and foliar feeding to maximize nutrient retention and drastically reduce the possibility of leaching to any water source. We also monitor the weather and postpone product spread any time there is a probability of rain. We comply with the “Best Practices” standards in all formulations and applications.

- Bobby Wallace



**A New Face on the Names You Trust**

Since 1953, Brandt has been the company the industry always trusted for quality, reliability and technology. Today, Brandt is a multifaceted forward thinking company with many segments that serve the “Green Industry”, and we’re excited to say now they’ll all be known as Brandt.

**Brandt . . . Now more than ever!**

- Manni-Plex® Foliar Chemistry
- Greens Fertilizers
- Sustainable Botanical Controls
- Colorants and Adjuvants



**Brandt Consolidated, Inc.**  
 2935 South Koke Mill Road  
 Springfield, Illinois 62711  
[www.brandtconsolidated.com](http://www.brandtconsolidated.com)  
 800 300 6559