

Education and Support are Key to Our Success

by Joel Jackson

Golf Team's Victory Aids Turf Research

This past February, Florida Team No. 2 of Bob Harper, Jason Regan, Jim Torba and Deron Zandt won the Team Gross Competition held at PGA National in Palm Beach Gardens. Besides their trophies, the victory is mostly about bragging rights for the year, but this year was a little different. The Toro Company made a \$500 Golden Tee Club donation to GCSAA's Environmental Institute in recognition of the national gross and net team winners. Congratulations to the team and thanks to Toro for adding this positive incentive and reward for playing the game we love.

From the Beltway to the Fairway

For over a decade now, the FGCSA has partnered with the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association and other commodity groups to sponsor a week-long tour of Florida Agriculture for EPA, Florida DEP, Florida DACS and Water Management District regulators every March. The 25-30 groups arrive in Ft. Myers on a Monday afternoon and are bussed down to the Old Collier Golf Club in Naples for a tour of the course and maintenance facility. Then we all sit down for a barbecue dinner in the crew break room. Host Tim Hiers, CGCS is aided by Ricardo Uriarte, course superintendent and 5 or 6 Everglades GCSA members to drive the multi-passenger golf carts and spread out among the regulators to answer questions and point out features of golf course operations, so the officials can get a real-world picture of golf course management.

Most of these regulatory staffers have a science background, but are not really familiar with how the tees, greens, fairways, roughs, native areas, etc all work together and where the maintenance emphasis lies. We see lots of "Aha moments" as myths and perceptions are clarified. Thanks to Darren Davis, Matt Taylor, Lou Counzelmann, Kyle Sweet and Jan Beljan for acting as guides this year. When

Part of the group at the 2011 UF/IFAS North Central Florida Field Day. Photo courtesy of UF/IFAS.



(l-r) Brian MacCurrach (Bayer) and Greg Pheneger (Johns Island) with the Bayer Blue Pearl Power Pak. This year's auction won by Pheneger netted \$6,500 for the Treasure Coast chapter. Photo by Joel Jackson



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people ask, “where does our money go?” this is one of those government relations and outreach and education line items we feel pays dividends.

Continuing Education and Research

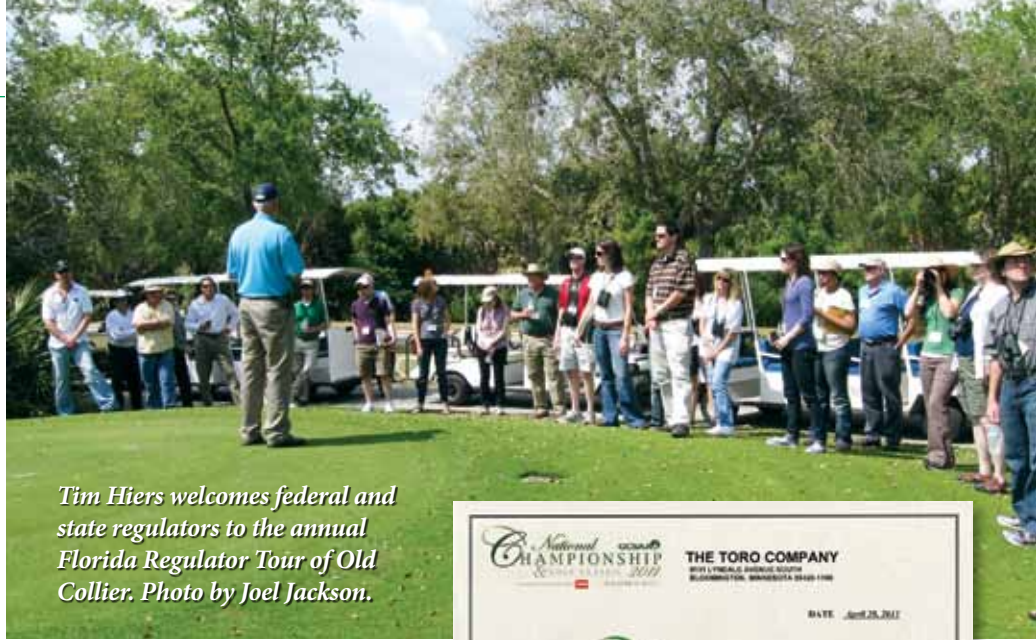
The Everglades Spring Symposium held every April at the Naples Beach Club is day full of continuing education that brings researchers, educators and even regulators to Naples for a day-long session on a variety of topics dealing with golf course management.

This year, part of the program was dedicated to the topic of BMPs as the state gears up for introducing a Golf BMP certification program in concert with the Florida DEP. Drs. Trenholm, Buss and Dukes spoke on nutrient management, insect control and irrigation BMPs.

This emphasis will continue at the Crowfoot Open in August and the FTGA Conference and Show in September.

On the regulatory side, Paul Mitola with FDACS talked about “Surviving an FDACS Inspection.” The short version – perceptions lead to complaints which lead to inspections, so document, document, document. Superintendents always want topics on turf problem-solving so the talks on “Optimizing Turf Performance” by USGA Aronomist Todd Lowe; “Herbicide Options in the Absence of MSMA” by Dr. Scott McElroy from Auburn and “Building a Fungicide Program” by Dr. Steve Kammerer from Syngenta filled the bill.

In May, the University of Florida held its annual North Central Florida Turf Field Day at the Research and Education Center in Citra. This is one of three



Tim Hiers welcomes federal and state regulators to the annual Florida Regulator Tour of Old Collier. Photo by Joel Jackson.

regional UF/IFAS Turf Expos held each year. The others are in Fort Lauderdale (March) and Milton in northwest Florida (June). Research and development doesn't get done without funding and each of these location receives support from industry and our association chapters. Of special interest this year were the drought tolerance and irrigation moisture management projects.

Also receiving a windfall of support this year was Florida Gateway College, formerly Lake City Community College. FGC is the home of one most successful Golf and Landscape programs in the country and many Florida superintendents are alumni. Program Director John Piersol recently shared the news that long-time Florida golf entrepreneur Frances Kayo Bowman left a \$100,000 endowment gift in his will. Combined with a \$12,500 gift from the Lake City Garden Club, the school's Scholarship and Program Enhance Endowment fund has grown to \$1,750,000.



The Toro Company donated \$500 to GCSAA's EIFG in the name of Florida's Golf Team.

While windfalls are wonderful, it is the steady, consistent support from our state and local vendors that keeps the stream of research funds flowing. Just one prime example is the Bayer Power Pak auction held each year at the Treasure Coast's Blue Pearl Tournament. Bayer donates a package of its products and Bayer regional rep Brian MacCurrach holds an auction for the whole bundle.

The money raised in the auction goes to the local chapter for its turf research and charitable programs.

This year Greg Pheneger from the John's Island Club won the bidding with \$6,500.

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