

BMP's – More Important Now Than Ever Before

By Todd Lowe

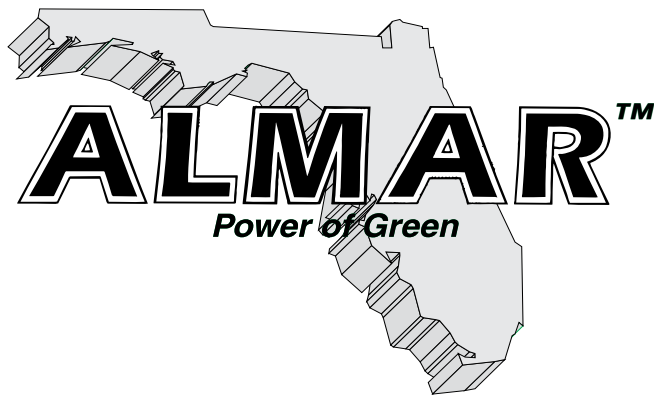
Best Management Practices have been created for many industries. For golf courses, BMP's provide a framework of practices for turf health and good playing conditions while decreasing the use of natural resources. BMP's have become more important for Florida golf courses, with several counties having become pressured by environmental activists to implement erroneous practices like fertilizer blackouts during rainy summer months. Such practices may ultimately damage the turf and have a negative impact on environmental quality, and in most cases, regulators have fallen back on the BMP's as guidelines for golf courses.

The manual *Best Management Practices for the Enhancement of Environmental Quality on Florida Golf Courses* was created in 2007 with the support of University of Florida personnel and various allied associations, and funded by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. It highlights sound principles for proper golf course construction, turfgrass cultural practices, fertilization, irrigation, and chemical handling/

application for Florida golf courses. So far, there is no certification process for golf courses, but the BMP manual is a valuable resource and includes a checklist that highlights important practices.

The checklist is an easy-to-follow outline of do's and don'ts for each chapter of the manual. Since fertilizer use is currently an important topic with local governments, this might be a good time for golf course superintendents to run through the fertilizer storage and handling section and make sure there are no issues at your course. The checklist includes:

- Are pesticides and fertilizers stored in separate buildings, or with a concrete firewall maintaining separation?
- Is bagged ammonium nitrate stored at least three feet away from any building wall?
- Are ammonium nitrate and other strongly oxidizing materials stored away from sludge products or organic materials?
- Are all unloading and loading points for fertilizers/raw materials designed to minimize accidental release and allow for easy cleanup?
- Are dry fertilizers and raw materials covered from the elements?



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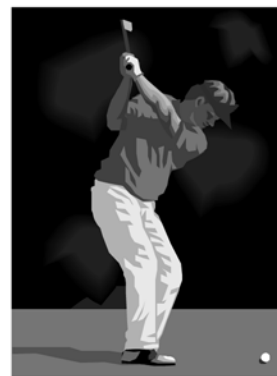
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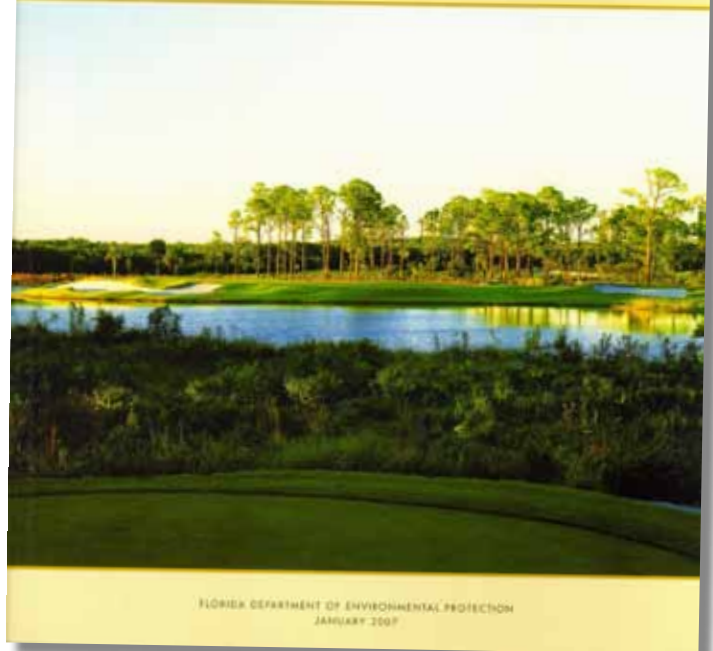
*Best Management Practices
for the
Enhancement of Environmental Quality
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Florida Golf Courses*

- Are unloading, loading and other critical control points swept after use to further control dust and spills?
- Are all fertilizers loaded over impervious areas or over a tarp or other temporary barriers to contain spills?

The manual includes nearly 140 checklist items that cover various golf course management topics, and while no governmental agency or municipality can require adherence to them, they are certainly good principles to follow, especially if some type of pollution is detected downstream from your location.

Visit <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/WATER/nonpoint/docs/nonpoint/gfbmp07.pdf> to download the manual, or call the Nonpoint Source Management Program at 850-245-7508 for a hard copy.

The Florida GCSA in cooperation with regulators and scientisted created the Golf BMP manual published in 2007. Photo by Joel Jackson



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