

FIELD OBSERVATIONS



*By Ralph K. Dain Jr.,
GCSAA Regional Representative Florida*

About 30 minutes and 50 failed starting sentences have passed since I first sat down in front of the screen to write this update. Thank goodness I am not still typing this on my Smith-Corona SD300 from my college days. Don't even ask what model Joel used back in his day! I would have gone through a whole ream of paper and a couple of bottles of white-out.

Anyway, it's great to be back with my third installment of Field Observations. I am happy to report from my travels that more than a few members have relayed to me that golf rounds at their facilities have started out strong this season. I am also thrilled to report that water levels in course lakes in Southwest Florida have returned to the confines of

their typical shorelines.

Switching to government relations, I want to highlight a few key components from the NPDES (National Pollution Discharge Elimination System) pesticide general permit that has been officially adopted by the Florida DEP. I have had a number of correspondences with superintendents around the state and realize there remains some ambiguity on how NPDES impacts operations at your facility.

Overall, the Florida DEP has attempted to keep the permitting burden to a minimum for pesticide applicators. The good news is golf course superintendents will NOT be required to file a Notice of Intent (NOI) to make aquatic applications, pay the permit fee (\$500 for 5 years), or complete a pesticide management discharge plan. Superintendents will be covered automatically under this plan and do not have to apply for the permit. Also, you will likely not receive any correspondence from the DEP regarding the NPDES General Permit.

During my chapter visits around the state, I have frequently mentioned our concern over the term "applied near water" in the permitting language and this impacted applications to turf adjacent to bodies of water. Fortunately the permit in Florida does not impact any terrestrial pesticide applications.

However, there are clearly outlined procedures in the Florida permit that need to be adhered to in the event that

there is an adverse incident that impacts a body of water. I strongly advise you to familiarize yourself with these requirements. I have included a link to the NPDES Permit in Florida: http://www.dep.state.fl.us/water/wastewater/iw/docs/62-621.300_8e.pdf.

Again, overall the Florida DEP has done a nice job of keeping the impact of the NPDES permitting to a minimum. This has not been the case in other states as superintendents are required to submit an NOI to apply pesticides, produce a pesticide management discharge plan and pay the permitting fee. GCSAA continues to push for passage of HR 872 bill in the Senate which provides a legislative fix for NPDES permitting. We encourage you to utilize our Take Action resource on our website to reach out to your elected officials on this matter.

Unfortunately, in Florida the NPDES permitting does make it easier for individuals to file lawsuits claiming pesticide applications have been improperly discharged. There will most likely be challenges by environmental activist groups and the NPDES permitting process could lead down uncertain paths in the future.

For more information you may call me at 785-424-4306 or email to rdain@gcsaa.org.

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**GREEN SIDE UP
BY JOEL JACKSON**

As the new year begins and I look back on 2011, it is obvious to me that the progress we made was due to the participation of our members who volunteered to serve on state and local chapter boards and committees, and to the companies new and old that sponsored and supported our programs, publications and events. Given the tough times all sectors of the golf industry have faced the past few years,

I'm even more impressed by the progress we continue to make.

If we're smart, we will continue to maximize our working relationships and work together as much as possible so we can all take turns blazing the trail and make our journeys as enjoyable as possible for all. The most important factor is that we all participate in the process, and not hang back and make just a few do all the work all of the time.

The golf boom is over and it's a new world out there. We all must manage our resources as efficiently as possible and that's true for individual golf clubs, superintendents, vendors and associations. To that end we need to involve new members and new sponsors and make sure our programs are effectively meeting and respecting everyone's needs.

I'd like to thank personally all our current advertisers and Industry Partners for their support of this magazine and our FGCSA events. They help make our communication, government

relations and public relations efforts possible. In addition their support is essential for the success of our local chapters' charitable, social and research fund raising events. In return, I urge our members to return the favor by making sure they fully support all of those vendors. The loyalty the vendors have shown over years of sponsoring our events needs to be returned by doing our business with them.

Just as we need to bring new members into our chapters and to our meetings, we also need to encourage new vendors and supporters to the table. We invite you to share the names and contact information of suppliers you might do business with that have not been active supporters of your chapter or the industry. We have several programs that can help them get the word out about their businesses and we'd love to send them our materials so they can join a stronger two-way partnership. In the coming year I will be looking for stories to share in the Industry News section that will include the people and

businesses that have helped to make our chapters and associations successful.

One last area of participation I'd like to mention is our efforts in building and maintaining good working relationships with regulatory agencies at the state and county level. Evidence of some of that success can be seen in the letter concerning our current Golf BMP certification program and previous efforts in voluntary environmental stewardship efforts from DEP Secretary Vinyard in the Stewardship section of this issue. Across the state, local chapters have engaged their water management districts in discussions on water-use permitting and water-shortage restrictions. This interaction has had a positive effect in our favor on how restrictions are managed.

To make continued progress in the operation, effectiveness and financial future of our associations, we need participation by everyone from all sectors of the industry. Happy New Year to one and all.



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