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doesn't scalp. Fewer light topdressings result in consistently sharp reels providing better cuts and healthier grass. Control of thatch and organic matter buildup seems to be better under this program than my older, more conventional program.

While the concept behind dark topdressing makes sense, I have only used one load with inconclusive results. My warmer location on the water may reduce the need for or significance of the dark topdressing.

We do not have the luxury of using dry bagged or silo-stored sand for topdressing. When topdressing during times of play we make sure to apply rates low enough where the sand can be incorporated with light irrigation, a greens roller or by dragging with a cocoa mat.

### Ricky Reeves, Miami Beach Golf Club

At Miami Beach GC we use a 304 Max-and/Humate blend for divot filling and straight 304 Maxand for light topdressing.

Regarding colored sand: The way I see it all sand will layer unless needle tine or some other sort of incorporation is done with the application. I do not like seeing a

layer of green sand in my greens.

For regular seasonal aerifications we use 304 Maxand to help hold moisture. Down south we don't worry about cold too much. I don't like the dark color for top dressing.

We don't use special dried sands. When doing light topdressings, we just get out in front of play and keep a good pace and water in if possible.

Due to budget restraints I may be forced to use different sand from what my greens were built with. It's a city-owned course and government seems not to understand the science, just the dollars. There are times I will use a different sand like a DOT 329 for better drainage and air movement when too many fines have settled in the upper 1-3-inch root zone.

### Eric Ruha, Shadow Wood CC

We fill our members' cart sand buckets with green dyed sand of the 90/10 mix (the cart staff does it). We also use this sand on the par 3 tees and practice area divots.

We do not use green-dyed sand for broadcast applications on greens in the

winter. We use Davenport or 150-mesh sand that is neutral in color, applied with a Widespin topdresser pulled by a small Kubota tractor. By applying it lightly two or three times a month, the neutral color does not make people say, "Wow, you used white sand!"

We also pencil-tine in the winter as weather and conditions allow. Topdressing lightly before this process is standard and then we roll-brush the sand in with a Salsco roller. We usually roll the next day without greens mower brush kit. We do not mow the next day. During aerification in the summer we use 180-mesh straight sand to fill holes. We typically aerify greens 3-4 times per course with 3/4" or 3/8" hollow tines to 4" depth.

If we have stressed areas in the winter, (usually greens perimeter-cut areas or high traffic areas on specific greens with limited entry and exit points), we use dried, bagged green sand mixed with Profile®. This is applied very lightly with a rotary walk spreader. We have just purchased Maxand (sand) that is supposed to have coatings that provide plant benefits but we have not used it yet. ■

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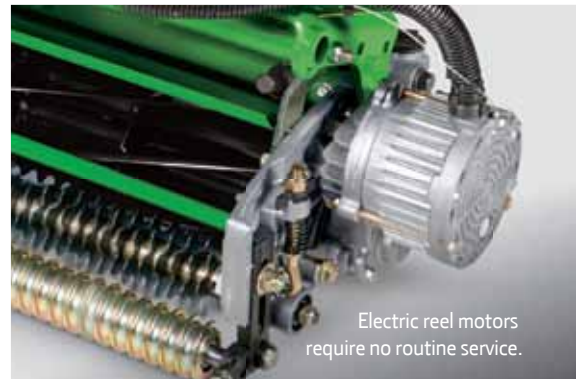
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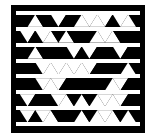
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# Manage Cart Traffic Proactively

*Proactive traffic control can protect turf during the slow-growth winter season. Photo by Joel Jackson.*

By Todd Lowe

USGA Senior Agronomist, Florida Region

A recent cold front came through our region and brought Chamber of Commerce weather conditions in most areas. While it is still considered warm for some migrating snowbirds, year-round Florida residents have appreciated the break from cool weather. Many golf facilities report that play has nearly doubled in the past week and this trend will continue as snowfall in northern states pushes the annual migration of golfers southward.

Cooler temperatures have slowed turf growth in Florida. This has had a positive impact in reducing mowing frequency and clipping production, as the turf is not growing as aggressively as it was several weeks ago. Prolonged low soil temperatures will eventually cause

turf growth to cease and bring with it unsightly conditions, especially in high-traffic areas.

The turf on most golf courses is still quite green and healthy at this time

**Preventing turf damage is much more effective at maintaining good turf quality than trying to encourage turf recovery once it becomes damaged from cart traffic.**

of year, but it is important to pay close attention to traffic patterns and be proactive in traffic diversion with ropes and stakes to maintain good golf course aesthetics. Preventing turf damage is much more effective at maintaining good turf quality than trying to encourage turf recovery once

it becomes damaged from cart traffic.

In addition to ropes and stakes, a rotating “resting hole” program has been effective at reducing turf wear from cart traffic. With this program,

holes Nos. 1 and 10 are deemed “cart path only” on week one, holes Nos. 2 and 11 on week two and so on. Proper signage and enforcement are necessary to make this policy effective.

At the end of the day, we must realize that sometimes we are our own worst enemy when it comes to turf damage from traffic. Just like we need traffic lights and stop signs, so too are traffic protocols needed on golf courses.

For more information contact: Todd Lowe, [tlowe@usga.org](mailto:tlowe@usga.org) or 941-828-2625



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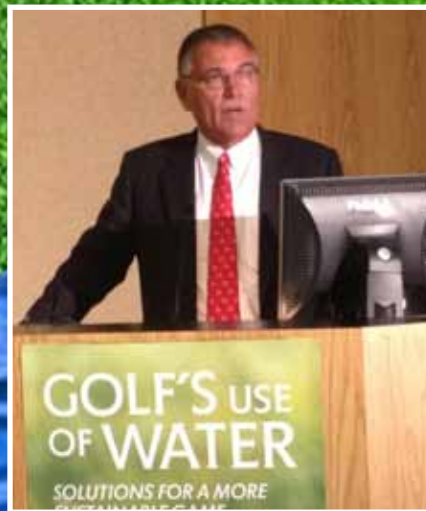
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# Golf's Use of Water - Solutions for a More Sustainable Game



*Tim Hiers, CGCS from the Old Collier GC discussed irrigating with brackish water.*



*Bob Farren discussed the restoration of Pinehurst No. 2 to the original single-row irrigation design.*



*Mark Esoda from Georgia talked about the positive results from working with water regulators.*

*By Joel Jackson,  
FGCSA Executive Director*

We have been dealing with water-quality issues in Florida the past few years in the form of fertilizer ordinances, but there is a larger, more sinister, threat looming for our industry in the form of availability of water for our needs. We think of Florida as having an abundant water supply – and we do, compared to some regions. However, the demands on easy, inexpensive water are growing and we need to make sure

we are doing everything possible to minimize our use and maximize our water conservation.

I had the privilege of representing the Florida GCSA at the USGA's Water Summit meeting Nov. 6-7 in Dallas. Water is the most critical resource in managing a golf course. A roster of 18 speakers from across the country addressed more than 100 attendees representing the golf industry and water regulatory agencies. I wanted to share some of their comments to spur you to start thinking very seriously about how to effectively manage your

water resources to keep your course viable and your job secure.

Let's start with the opening statement from Mike Davis, executive director of the USGA.

*... Water is an extraordinarily valuable resource, and the pressures on water supplies are increasing in many areas. The drought conditions experienced by much of the country over the past few years have further heightened the visibility of these conditions.* (Ed. Note – Trends out west have a history of moving east, so as California, Nevada and Arizona go,

so often goes the rest of the country).

*“At the same time, golf course irrigation is a necessity, which means golf courses must use water in the most responsible manner possible. When done so, the game contributes not only to the enjoyment and well being of participants, but also to the economic and environmental health of local communities.*

*“In addition to helping courses adjust to their areas’ specific environmental conditions and challenges through the Turf Advisory Service, the USGA has invested in scientific research to develop grasses that require less water. Moving forward, we are committed to continuing to help courses efficiently utilize every drop of water that is available for irrigation.*

*“Part of that mission is this summit, which has convened experts in water resource management, golf course management and scientific research. Working together, we can identify innovative solutions to preserve the game’s sustainability...*

Here are some comments from the regulatory and activist side of the issue:

Veronica Blette, chief of the Water Sense Branch, EPA:

*The EPA and other federal agencies and businesses are looking at potential risks associated with water shortages and lack of access to clean and safe supplies of water. It is exciting to see the golf industry take the issue*

*seriously. Golfers expect lush and green conditions and homeowners want their yards to look green too. We all need to shift our focus to be more sustainable as the primary goal.*

Ann Dickinson is president and CEO of the Alliance for Water Efficiency (AEF). She has an impressive resume of work in the water conservation field, so it was a bit of a surprise to me how astonished she was when Greg Lyman from the GCSAA was showing a national Golf Water Use pie chart which indicated that golf’s use of public potable water supply nationally is 19 percent; the figure she had assumed or used was 45 percent. In Florida, only courses on some of the barrier islands used city water. It’s too darn expensive. Most coastal courses are using reclaimed or brackish water for irrigation.

From the superintendent ranks, our own Tim Hiers, CGCS from the Old Collier Club in Naples described the mandated use of brackish water for his course. There was no access granted to fresh water sources, so Hiers has become an “expert” in managing seashore paspalum turfgrass on a salt water diet. He’s also had to learn ecosystem management and find salt-tolerant landscape plants (halophytes) to use around the course perimeter. The FGCSA, with Hiers as the host, hosts a stop on the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association’s

week-long annual Spring Regulator Tour of EPA, DEP, DACS and Water Management regulators every March. This kind of outreach is essential to educate regulators about real world situations.

Bob Farren, director of golf courses and grounds maintenance at Pinehurst gave an interesting account of the Bill Coore/Ben Crenshaw restoration of the historic Pinehurst No. 2 to its original design and irrigation coverage. Farren said, “We reduced the total number of irrigated turf acres from 90 to 50 and the number of heads on the course from 1150 to 450. The ‘old school’ centerline irrigation in the fairways now determines the strategic lines of the course.”

This was an extreme case of “naturalizing” areas of the golf course, but it is a fact that, by removing turf from out-of-play areas and creating naturalized areas, you can conserve water resources, and reduce water and pumping costs and all the other fertilizer, pesticide and labor costs. Those are good things for the shaky bottom line these days.

Next Mark Esoda, CGCS from the Atlanta Athletic Club told the story of the Georgia Golf Course Superintendents campaign to incorporate BMPs into the state’s water regulations. At the time, Georgia had banned all irrigation of fairways and restricted greens and

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**“Golf also has a public perception problem. ‘What can we do to help conserve water that will prove we are good managers/stewards of the resource?’**

tees to just a few days a week.

“Regulators want help doing their jobs,” Esoda said. “Golf also has a public perception problem. In Georgia, we had to ask the hard question: ‘What can we do to help conserve water that will prove we are good managers/stewards of the resource?’ Change is difficult, but the golf industry stepped up to prove the world wrong (by) using a self-policing BMP program, stepping up to work with agencies on various committees and introducing educational pieces. The result is increased positive

awareness and improved water conservation.”

In Florida, we have to work with five water-management districts and we are, to varying degrees of success. Overall we have partnered with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to create a Golf BMP Manual, which covers all phases of golf course management including a chapter on irrigation. Your challenge is to practice those BMPs and improve your irrigation management program and document it so we can show our proactivity in water conservation. One step would be to take the new

voluntary Golf BMP certification exam to document your commitment to environmental stewardship.

Florida is not immune to the coming real or perceived shortages of water supplies. We do have access to more water than some regions in the country. In southern Nevada, Doug Bennett, conservation manager of the Southern Nevada Water Authority, says the annual rainfall averages one to four inches per year, and the average annual water bill for courses out there is around \$1 million a year! Forced by those kinds of numbers and the



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inception of the recent droughts, courses have converted more than 40 million square feet of non-essential turfgrass to water-efficient landscape designs. Collectively, these conversions are saving more than 2.2 billion gallons of water annually.

I leave you with this challenge: Make 2013 the year you begin to take water conservation very seriously. Make sure your club has a water conservation plan from the clubhouse to maintenance facility. Consider creating a drought plan for the course. Experiment with voluntary cutbacks in run times and map the course to show where you can easily and regularly cut back the amount of water used to keep the course in acceptable playing condition. You'll save money and water, which are both critical these days.



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# FIELD OBSERVATIONS

## Membership Success with Recruitment and Retention



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

Just a little over four years ago, I was invited to GCSAA headquarters to audition for the part of Regional Representative for Florida. Some in this region may say I am still auditioning or that I must be the understudy!! My assignment was to make a presentation on the topic of member recruitment and retention.

Well, here I am, and the issue is still front and center for all of us. In preparing for this article, I looked over what I used in my interview. Interestingly enough, I am employing a good bit of the theories I proposed and have put them to work out in the field. Some have been met with success. Some are yet to be determined.

The number-one successful strategy for retention is to communicate what is going on with the chapter. Those chapters that prepare a seasonal calendar seem to have better superintendent attendance at meetings. I equate it to a superintendent at his facility. One would not just decide to

aerate their greens a couple of weeks out and surprise their pros or their golfing members without fearing for their livelihood. In the same fashion, chapters need to avoid finalizing meeting details at the last minute. I have seen the success the Everglades GCSA has enjoyed in meeting attendance due to the fact that they provide their yearly events calendar at their annual meeting. I believe they averaged 88 attendees at their 2012 functions. Their event attendance has actually grown over the past four years, as has their membership. The proportion of superintendents to vendors is also at a healthy ratio where their vendor supporters see the value in their participation. I have seen both scenarios and the lack of advanced preparation should cause chapter leaders some angst.

With regard to recruitment, we have had some success by conducting visits with members and non-members at their facilities. Several of the Florida chapters have really engaged with me in this process and we have seen a number of positive outcomes.

The chapters, with whom I have worked, asked their board of directors to identify 10 individuals who are members that are not very engaged with the chapter, non-members who have never been members, or non-members who have dropped their membership. In a perfect world, we will have identified 90 individuals that we can hope to visit over the course of a calendar year. We usually undertake five meetings that can be completed in half of a business day. This allows a local board director to be present at the facility as well.

By conducting these visits in the superintendent's office, the superintendent feels much more relaxed and tends to be

more forthright in our conversation. The conversation is intended to demonstrate the value of both the local and national associations and create an awareness of our benefits.

In the case where the superintendent used to be a member or is just not very active as a current member, we have been able to determine the root cause and soften their stance enough to have them attend a later meeting. Often times an invitation to pick them up for the next meeting followed by a personal phone call works wonders!!

I was at a recent Florida West Coast GCSA meeting where there were more than a few faces I recognized from these visits. The West Coast Chapter was the first Florida chapter to participate in this exercise, and I can see how some of the individuals we have engaged are now participating at their events. In the same fashion they have gathered intelligence that the board has been able to utilize moving forward. The chapter is very active in pursuing meetings with surrounding chapters and creating a greater sense of community over a larger area. This has boosted superintendent-to-vendor ratio and has again enhanced the value for their members.

I know none of this is earthshattering information, Heck, even I, the understudy, thought of this! Getting back to good old-fashioned business practices can go a long way when trying to keep your members engaged or becoming more attractive to superintendents and assistant superintendents who aren't currently members.

Until next time,  
Ralph Dain – GCSAA Regional Representative (FL)

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