

Good management guards against nitrate contamination

Cornell University study lists recommendations for golf course superintendents

Golf courses can protect their ground water from nitrate contamination through good management practices, according to a recent study by Dr. A. Martin Petrovic of Cornell University.

To avoid contamination, Petrovic recommended that golf course managers take certain measures, such as:

- Apply frequent, light rates of nitrogen or use slow-release nitrogen sources.
- Avoid fertilizing when turfgrass is naturally slow-growing,

especially during cool weather.

- Conservatively irrigate the course to save water and reduce leaching.

Managers can also help themselves by reducing the scope of the heavily managed areas of the course and by using less energy-demanding plants wherever possible.

To reduce possible nitrate leaching, superintendents can grow grasses and other plants that have a low nitrogen requirement; collect, treat or

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recycle runoff or drainage water; and amend soils to retain nitrogen.

A well-designed irrigation system, which can be adjusted according to rainfall and plant water needs, will also help solve any leaching problems, Petrovic said.

Petrovic's research on greens-type sites containing high amounts of sand does not support the conclusion that golf courses are prone to heavy nitrate leaching, especially with today's trend toward lower nitrogen use rates and the use of slow release sources.

Also, findings from sites with less sandy soils — more typically found in fairways, older greens and tees, roughs and general turfgrass sites — further support the conclusion that golf courses do not contaminate ground water with

high levels of nitrates.

Robert Trent Jones Jr., president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, said Petrovic's study "underscores the fact that golf courses have a positive environmental impact.

It also stresses the need for architects and superintendents to work more closely together to formulate a specific fertilizing program for each golf course, analyzing the site's topography, soil composition and irrigation system."

Old Marsh partnership retires debt

Old Marsh Partners, developers of Old Marsh Golf Club in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., have retired the community's bank debt, in what is termed an "expression of unbridled confidence."

Managing partner Robert B. Whitley, president of the North Palm Beach-based Prominent Properties, Inc., said the partners have paid the outstanding balances of \$10.25 million to NCNB National Bank and \$4.4 million to Hollywood Federal Savings & Loan Association.

"Based on an independent economic analysis we commissioned earlier this year, the projected sellout of Old Marsh — in remaining home sites and equity club memberships — was found to be three times the outstanding bank debt," Whitley said. "It seemed sensible for the partners to retire the commercial loans at this time."

He said the payoffs reflect the partners' "unbridled enthusiasm and confidence in the future prospects for Old Marsh Golf Club."

The equity-membership club, which opened in December 1987, features a 6,900-yard course designed by Pete Dye.

One-half of the club memberships, currently priced at \$50,000, and more than half of the half-acre-plus residential sites, priced from the \$160,000s to \$250,000, have been sold, Whitley said.

Seminar canceled

The golf management seminar planned by the National Golf Foundation and Golf Shop Operations magazine on Nov. 5-7 has been canceled.

An NGF spokesman said no plans have yet been made to reschedule the seminar, which was to have been held in Palm Beach, Fla.

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