

Industry urged: 'Get out of your vacuum'

BY MARK LESLIE

People in every sector of the industry must "get out of their vacuum" and "go public" to change the perception that golf courses harm the environment, according to leaders of the Allied Associations of Golf.

Speaking at the annual conference of the American Society of Golf Course Architects at California's Monterey Peninsula, Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Vice President Steve Cadenelli said, "I can't overemphasize the importance of this public perception."

That sentiment was supported at the March 26 roundtable by Golf Course Builders of America President Perry Dye, ASGCA outgoing President Robert Trent Jones Jr., National Golf Foundation Executive Director Joseph Beditz, United States Golf Association Green Section spokesmen Bill Bengeyfield and Jim Snow, and GCSAA board member Bill Roberts.

Cadenelli said: "In 20 years in golf I have seen such a tremendous change. But one thing that seems not to have changed is the public perception. For one reason or another it is still not overwhelmingly positive about the game of golf. We have to get out of this vacuum of talking to ourselves, and start promoting the game and its positive attributes.

"Golf course superintendents are being forced to not only manage differently, but also to work in a world (that) does not know what golf is all about, does not have the love for the game, and which fully questions whether or not ... a golf course is legitimate use of the land ... especially in terms of the management of the courses, the use of fertilizers and pesticides."

Cadenelli said GCSAA "decided to take a pro-active stance in terms of the environment." The association, he said, believes:

- Golf has the responsibility to be a solid environmental citizen and we believe that can be done.
- There are sites out there that may very often not be environmentally sound for any development.
- There are fragile ecosystems with plant life or animal life that have greater value than a possible development.
- Golf can enhance the existing land use or natural habitat.
- Large areas of land should be addressed as open space and that golf courses themselves should be considered open space.
- And golf can provide the critical balance between man, nature and the environment.

Cadenelli said much research is being done to develop pesticides that are more quickly biodegradable.

"There is no question there has been a tremendous overuse of fertilizer over the years, and we believe very strongly the use of fertilizers can be reduced and still maintain a sound, playable turf," he added.

"The thing we have to realize," said Roberts, "is that the level of (environmental) awareness in the American public is increasing and that is something we have to deal

with."

Roberts cited a recent American Broadcasting Corporation news poll showing 90 percent of the public felt stronger action to clean the air and water should take top priority for the nation's government and business leaders.

Responding to the Endangered Species Act, GCSAA members have begun a nationwide mapping system, tracking species on a county-by-county basis. "There may be some restriction on some materials — pesticides particularly — that can be used on those tracts of land," Roberts said.

Roberts said the GCSAA has es-

tablished a dialogue with various people in the federal government.

"We've had a lot of dialogue with legislators on the Hill, but more specific dialogue with ... the regulators who write the laws and who have responsibility for enforcing them... Those individuals are the ones we need to talk to," he said.

Jones urged further scientific research to persuade lawmakers not to overreact.

"One prefecture (state) in Japan has banned the use of pesticides," Jones said. "That kind of reactive solution is not what we want to see over here."

Snow and Bengeyfield said the

Green Section will soon take a giant step to fill the "gaps in knowledge" about the effects of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers on turf, ground water and the environment.

Bengeyfield, who retired April 1 as national director of the Green Section and was succeeded by Snow, said Spectrum Research Inc. has completed a review of everything known scientifically about these effects.

Snow said the 150-page report will show where the gaps in knowledge are, and "we will fill those gaps."

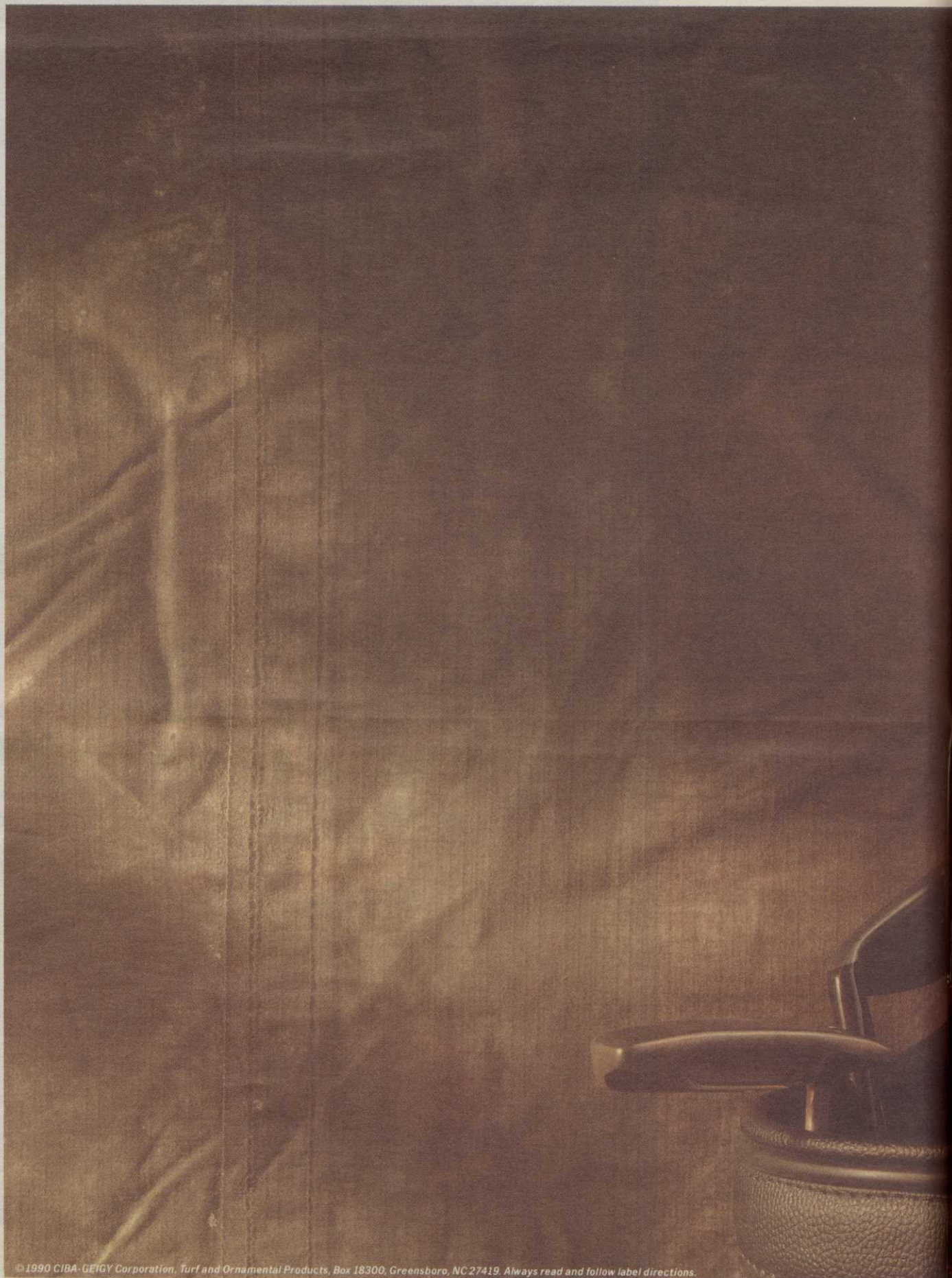
"The current and future of the USGA program is based on the Spectrum study," Snow said, adding that one of the Green Section's first tasks

will be publishing a manual for superintendents, club officials, architects and others in the industry. "Then we will put out media reports to improve the public's perception of golf courses."

Snow said the report will also point the way for the fate of pesticides in a turfgrass environment.

"There have been a lot of studies, but nothing of a mass-balance approach. We want to justify with certainty the use of fertilizers," he said. "We will develop a manual for pesticide programs. We will investigate new methods to ultimately eliminate pesticide use on golf courses."

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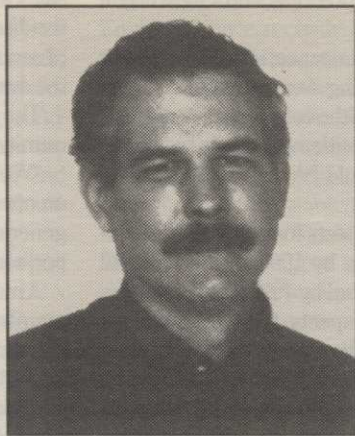
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Species-finders endangering projects

BY MARK LESLIE

Opponents of proposed golf courses are hiring scientists for the sole purpose of finding threatened or endangered species that can nix projects, according to environmental experts.

"There are people who come out of our academic or regulatory systems that purposefully go out and try and find a threatened or endangered species on a site and therefore stop the project," said Gary Anderson, director of the Williamsburg, Va.-environmental consulting firm Espey, Huston & Associates, at the annual meeting of the American Society of Golf Course Architects.



Gary Anderson

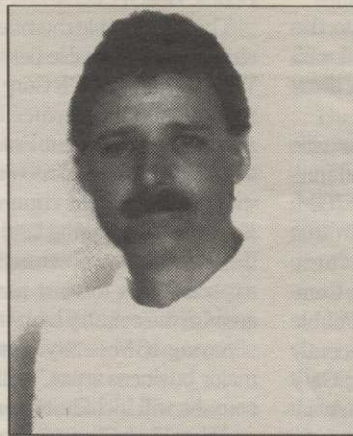
Finding a threatened species "doesn't necessarily represent a fatal

flaw that would end a project," Anderson said. But it can cause a developer to "rack up hundreds of thousands of dollars in costs almost overnight."

While topography and planning restrictions are important, environmental considerations "are fast becoming the dominant forces influencing the design of a modern golf course," said Anderson.

Espey, Huston & Associates staff engineer Ronald Boyd said findings that sites are environmentally or culturally sensitive are not a "fatal flaw." But a poor water supply may very well be a "fatal blow."

"Irrigation supply and water availa-



Ron Boyd

bility: That alone can pose a fatal blow to a golf course," Boyd said.

"Once you start dealing with huge volumes, it becomes an issue of can you get that water. Is it managed by the state or local government? In the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic states, water used to be there for the taking. Now they're talking about water rights. And in the Southwest you need water rights permits."

Boyd said once a developer determines water is available, "you're not done with the situation. You have to look at the demands of the course to determine the size of the distribution system and the size of the ponds where you'll store the irrigation water."

Ponds are sometimes difficult to place. "But generally," Boyd said, "we like to locate ponds in depression areas where there is a natural spring flow. We will also be looking at synthetic liners for the pond if the geology requires it. The easiest supply is an aquifer."

He said that since limitations on ground water approval are severe, developers should look in detail at ground water supplies, and how many aquifers must be tapped.

"The quality of ground water is usually better than surface water. It is more reliable and steadier. But you can generally remove a lot of pollutants from surface water."

The industry may have to look at options to ground or surface water, such as treated effluent and desalinated water, Boyd said.

Effluent can be troublesome. "Golf courses' needs are sporadic," Boyd said. "Plus it requires much research into what communities will allow."

As for desalination, "The cost de-
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