

Florida water tax would help make more H₂O available

Continued from page 1

would conserve potable water by encouraging golf courses to use effluent.

Golf courses are already the major users of effluent and would like to use more, Brantley said. The problem is availability and cost.

Some courses are located far from a reclaimed water facility, making it impossible or economically impractical to build pipelines needed to carry effluent to the course.

"Is it fair to charge courses more for potable water if reclaimed water

isn't available?" Brantley asked.

Industry officials also fear effluent prices could skyrocket since suppliers are not regulated by state government and are free to raise prices as they see fit. The effluent supplier for one Florida course recently quadrupled its price from 10 cents per 1,000 gallons to 40 cents, Brantley said.

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The Legislature heads back to Tallahassee in January to discuss reapportionment. It could also work on the water tax or wait until the regular session begins in February, Brantley said.

But debate will continue between now and then, he assured. Industrial, agricultural and recreational users must obtain the consumptive use permits upon which the proposed tax is based.

Brantley said agriculture is likely to receive a tax exemption or some type of tax credit because most of the water it uses, agriculture supporters argue, is returned to the water table. Golf courses do the same thing "and the water returned to the water table is usually much cleaner," he added.

But golf is considered a recreational use.

"When the debate comes around to where water needs to be conserved," Brantley said, "there will probably be a tendency to lean toward recreational use. It's generally considered the most frivolous and viewed as the best place to make cuts.

"Golf has an image problem that the industry needs to address. It's going to be an uphill battle to convince the Legislature of the environmental and economic benefits of golf that we all know exist."

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Pebble Beach memberships question in air until July 2

MONTEREY, Calif. — Who will play Pebble Beach National Club, the scheduled new name of famed Pebble Beach Golf Links, has been the subject of speculation for months.

The answer to that puzzler, and when the first swing will take place, should be clear early in July.

The owner, Pebble Beach Co., said it will wait until July 2 for the Monterey Board of Supervisors to study plans for semi-privatization of the oceanside course.

The study, according to board Chairman Sam Karas, will determine if the sale of memberships constitutes development as defined by Monterey County.

If so, the permitting process and a public hearing will be required before selling memberships.

The owner plan calls for two hours of tee times a day for members, and guarantees an extra 30 minutes daily for public play.

Member price has been pegged in the \$750,000 range, high tariff by American standards.

That fancy figure apparently is considered more realistic than exorbitant by Minoru Isutani of Tokyo, Japan, owner of Ben Hogan Property, which owns Pebble Beach Co.

Isutani and his Cosmos World Corp. executives are "very much concerned" about local residents' opposition to future residential development in Pebble Beach.

To market the memberships, two companies reportedly would be created: "Pebble Beach Japan" and "Pebble Beach USA."

The Board of Supervisors and the State Coastal Commission declared that any change in the use of any of the golf courses within Del Monte Forest, including creation of a membership program, requires a coastal permit.

A Tokyo source said September is the earliest Cosmos World would sell memberships in Japan.