

In an effort to lead, *Golf Digest* muddles the message

For months now, the staff here has tried to pin down and report details on an environmental summit first proposed by the Pebble Beach Co. and Denver-based Center for Research Management (CRM) in late 1993. The idea for such a meeting was first surfaced in January of this year and reported in *GCN's* February edition. But try as we might, we couldn't get further information about the conference from either party. We couldn't even get a date.

Now I know why: *Golf Digest* has emerged as the summit's co-sponsor and the magazine wanted to do the announcing. Fair enough.

For the record, *Golf Digest* and the National Wildlife Federation are co-sponsoring the event, subtitled "Charting a Sustainable Future" and

scheduled for Jan. 15-18, 1995, at the Inn at Spanish Bay. CRM Director Terry Minger will facilitate the meeting, designed to create an open forum at which golf industry members and environmentalists will communicate their concerns and desires, face to face.

We at *Golf Course News* support the upcoming summit and the ideals that prompted it. However, the golf course industry needn't attend this conference on the environmental defensive, something *Golf Digest* assumes it will.

In the magazine's September edition, Executive Editor Roger Schiffman weighs in on why the conference is necessary, offering several examples of alleged on-course agronomic



Hal Phillips,
editor

and developmental abuse. For instance, he notes that three courses in the Tampa, Fla. area consume 560,000 gallons of water per day, enough to "meet the daily water needs of more than 5,000 Tampa

residents." I doubt very much that Tampa residents would want 25 percent of those 560,000 gallons because they're reclaimed and non-potable.

And for the sake of perspective, something with which Schiffman wasn't overly concerned, Florida golf courses use 600 million gallons of water per day — most of which is returned to the water table and reused. Commercial users in Florida use 30 billion (yes, with a "B") gallons of water per day, only a small portion of which is

reused. Non-profit institutions in Florida — government agencies, schools, etc. — use an additional 25 billion gallons per day.

In the words of Bob Yount, executive director of the Florida Turfgrass Association, water use on golf courses in Florida is "a pimple on the backside."

Schiffman also quotes a Cornell University study that says, "A newly established site with limited turf cover appears to have the greatest potential for pesticide leaching." Of course, dirt does provide an ideal atmosphere for leaching, whereas turfgrass is one of nature's optimum filters. Funny that we should be worrying about pesticide use in situations where turf is absent...

In his attempt to be even-handed, Schiffman goes on to

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Does the golf course industry need an attitude adjustment?

You've heard about **Attitude Adjustment**. I go through an Attitude Adjustment daily when I look back and repent for how I've messed up. But I've got a couple more Adjustments to enter into The Equation of The American Experience: Aptitude, Latitude, Platitude and Aptitude.

• It's time for an **Aptitude Adjustment**: You know how the Army makes mechanical dummies into mechanics and turns people who want to be firefighters into security personnel? Same as what's happened in politics. In fact, maybe it has the right idea. Even the peanut farmers and school teachers whom we have elected to the presidency didn't do as poorly as the career politician now in office.

When Major League

Baseball's Ozzie Gullen is in a slump he puts eye drops on the bat. Some people all of the time — and all people some of the time — just can't see where their problems really lie. They just need an Aptitude Adjustment.

• Then there's the **Latitude Adjustment**. That is, adjusting how much latitude you give people when their statements are way out and whacky. If it's no big deal, or if nobody is listening to them anyway, or if knowing the truth won't set them free, you can adjust your latitude and let it pass.

Sometimes, though, you must narrow your latitude. A case in point? Those dear folks who stand up at public meetings and spout environmental platitudes



Mark Leslie,
managing editor

that have no basis in truth. The golf industry should give them, and their platitudes, less latitude.

• For that matter, how about **Platitude Adjustment**? A platitude is "a flat, dull, or trite remark,

especially one uttered as if it were fresh and profound," says the American College Dictionary. Some live on platitudes, but should the rest of the world continue to roll along living by them, too? I say, No!

• And last, though these are all equal in The Equation, is **Altitude Adjustment**. With so much hot air coming from the environmental movement, let's stick a pin in the balloon: a truckload of the facts coming out of real scientists' real research.

Combine these four — Aptitude, Latitude, Platitude and Altitude — and you get true Attitude Adjustment.

Does the golf industry as a whole need an Attitude Adjustment? Probably. Most of us do individually, as well as corporately. But there's the Good News and the good news. Both can do the trick. The latest good news is the results U.S. Golf Association Green Section-supported environmental research (see story page 1). Three years of extensive investigation have yielded a truckload of dynamite for the golf industry to use in an assault against environmental scareism. This information will be like giving superintendents, architects, builders and developers heat-seeking missiles to take into battle.

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Letters

CONNOLLY: THERE'S MORE TO FIGHTING ALGAE THAN AERATION ALONE

To the Editor:

I would like to comment on the product feature article on pond and lake management in the May '94 issue of *Golf Course News*.

I have a background in natural resource management and have written several articles on water quality and pond management. Every time I see an advertisement for aerifiers being a solution to poor water quality, I cringe. Oxygen levels in bodies of water are a critical part of the ecosystem, but must not be addressed as a single component of water quality.

Aerators, according to the EPA test results, improve water quality in less than 50 percent of the applications!

In the article you published, Mr. Steve Brown, president of Air Lake Aeration Inc., says, "We're seeing more and more algae growth on tees and greens. It's usually caused by bad irrigation water coming out of the ponds." This is a questionable statement.

The major reason for algae forming on greens is because the turfgrass is under some sort of

stress, resulting in turfgrass thinning allowing algae to bloom. Algae is a natural component of most soils. However, algae is not a competitor with turfgrass under normal conditions. There is no substantiation for the statement that algae is pumped onto greens or tees causing algae blooms.

I'm not sure if this article was an advertisement or a technical write-up. However, it is important to review some of the claims by advertisers before you publish them, because some of them are half-truths.

I hope you don't consider my comments harsh or criticizing. The subject of water-quality management is very complex, and I feel that aeration companies are taking advantage of golf course superintendents who are not informed in this area. Many of the statements and articles considering aerators would not be approved by experts in the aquatic management business or the more specialized industry of domestic water quality management (limnology).

Jim Connolly
Sr. Technical Agronomist
JacklinGolf
Post Falls, Idaho

THANKS FROM WFSP-TV

To the Editor:

I want to thank you for the kind words you said last spring about the WSFP-TV production, "Building a Golf Course" [GCN March '93]. So far the series has been broadcast in southwest Florida on Southwest Florida Public Television. Over the coming year, we are looking to distribute the series either via cable television or through public broadcasting.

The nine holes have turned into Hurricane no. 3, no. 4, no. 5, no. 6, and no. 7; Seminole no. 5 and no. 6; and Panther no. 3 and no. 4. The new holes maintain the high quality of the original 27 holes offering golfers many interesting challenges.

Once again, thank you for your kind article in *Golf Course News*.

Kirk Lehtomaa
Station Manager
WSFP-TV
Bonita Springs, Fla.

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