

BY MARGARET HEPP

## Wild blue yonder

In a green-obsessed industry, estate manager Scott Resetich has learned there's no green without blue

Pond management is a chore for many golf course superintendents, but for Scott Resetich, estate manager at Rich Harvest Farms in Sugar Grove, Ill., it's become a passion.

Resetich was in charge of all aspects of course maintenance when he started at ground zero at the 18-hole, 1,820-acre course 20 years ago. Since then, the facility has hired two turf managers, Jason Funderburg and Jeff VerCautren, allowing Resetich, who officially oversees horticulture and grounds activity, to make water quality his priority.

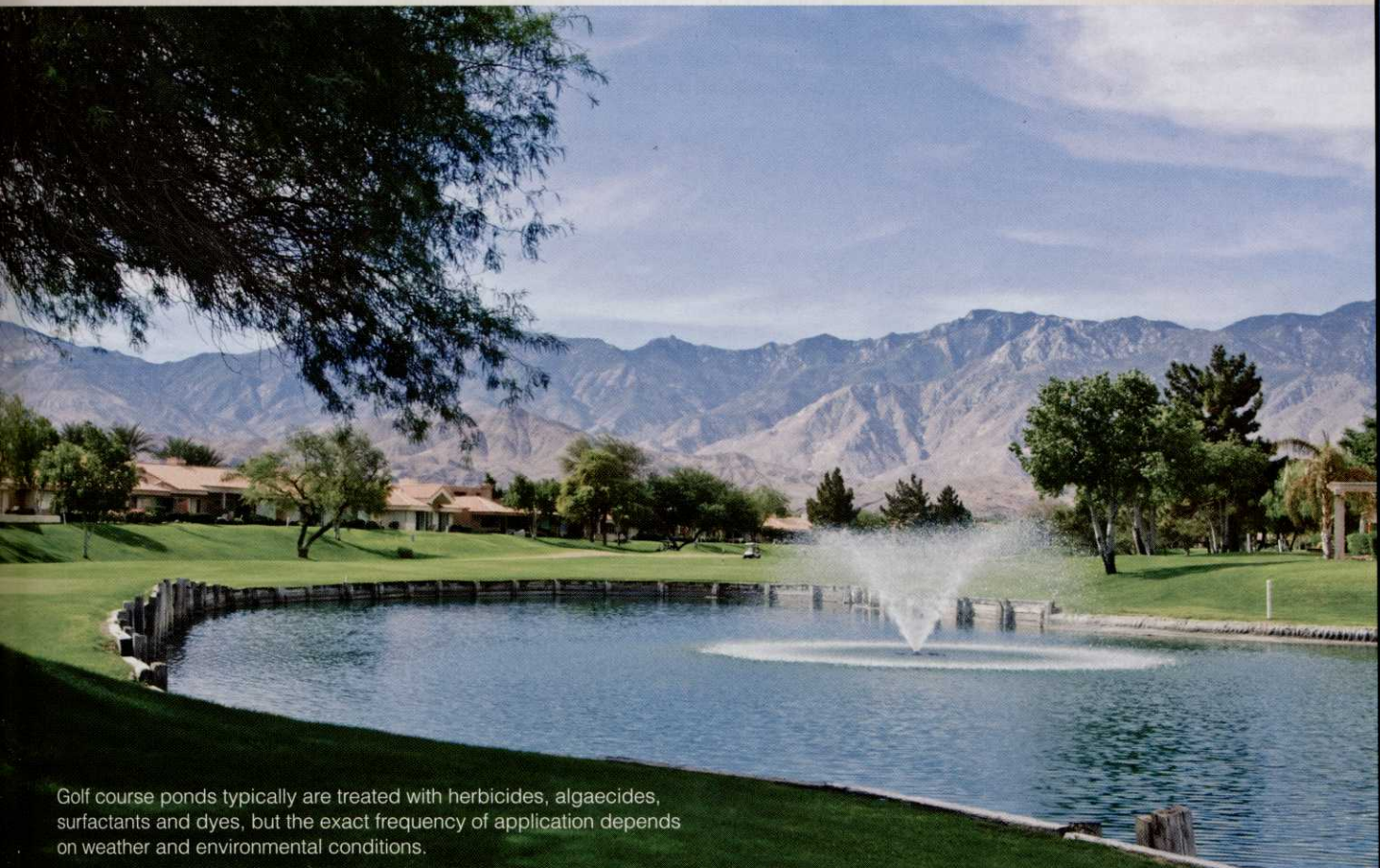
When you're new to pond management, practice makes perfect – and with 7 acres of on-course water under his care, Resetich gets plenty of practice. The course has three treatable lakes: Clyde, Katherine and the course's irrigation source, Rainbow. Resetich treats them about every 10 to 14

days with herbicides, algaecides, surfactants and dye. The exact frequency of application depends on the weather and environmental conditions.

"In 2007, we did quite a few applications throughout the season – the most ever," Resetich says. "It was rainy, and we didn't adjust water levels on two of our lakes."

Resetich sprays approximately equivalent concentrations to the 3.75-acre Lake Clyde and 1-acre Lake Katherine, but the 1.5-acre irrigation lake receives special treatment. For pesticide applications to Lake Rainbow, he reduces the concentration of Reward (diquat dibromide) and restricts other herbicides.

You have to be attentive to maintain a delicate balance, Resetich says, and you can't overdo it with pesticides, es-



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pecially when you're committed to Audubon standards. He stocks a thriving fish population in each pond, including large-mouth bass and trout in Lake Rainbow, plus hybrid bluegill, catfish, walleye, northern pike and muskie, so fish populations are another consideration when it comes to pesticide applications.

Consequently, Resetich has reduced aquatic pesticide quantities, using about 2 pints of the surfactant Aqua-Prep and between 48 and 64 ounces of Reward per lake application.

"Reward is a little more effective from a contact standpoint, and it works well on rooted vegetation," he says.

Curly leaf pondweed mainly affects the waters at Rich Harvest Farms, as do algae varieties hydrodictyone, photophora and spirogyra. Cutrine Plus (elemental copper) is systemic and works well to keep algae at bay, Resetich says. He uses an average of 3 gallons of the algicide per lake application.

After each pesticide application, Resetich sprays Precision Laboratories' True Blue, a dye he switched to from Aqua Shade (acid blue 9, acid yellow 23) almost seven years ago. Resetich was happy with the Aqua Shade dye but wanted to build on his relationship with his water management product distributor, Scott Armstrong of agriculture cooperative Conserv

FS in Tinley Park, Ill.

"Scott carries all the other pesticide products, so it was really a matter of convenience," he says. "I can call right now and place an order, and they'll drop it off this afternoon. It's service oriented. I can't beat that."

Precision recommends applying at least a gallon of dye per 4 acre/feet. Resetich applies as much as 2 gallons to Lake Rainbow and another 2 gallons to Lake Katherine. Lake Clyde receives 3 to 4 gallons of dye.

"Sometimes, I have to consider how high the water level is," he says. "I want as much of the shade as possible to ward off that algae growth."

Fluctuating water levels can affect the amount of algae in a lake at any given time, causing it to produce at even double the rate, Resetich says. Usually he can keep up with water management on his own, but when rapid growth requires more time than he can commit, he's able to reach out to a local aquatic management contractor, Marine Biochemists. Based in nearby Elburn, the company has sent a marine biochemist out to the facility for two treatments the past month.

"I can actually do my own in-house applications," Resetich says. "I've been handling pond management pretty much on my own for the last 20 years, but with all my priorities, I've had

contractors fill in for me periodically."

With such large lakes, water treatment can be quite an elaborate set-up, Resetich says. He goes out with another crewman in a 14-foot john boat with an 8-horsepower Johnson motor and a 4-horsepower chemical injector.

"It's a good four to six hours by the time you get your logging done and your cleanup finished," he says.

Maintaining the lakes on property is almost a full-time job, so in addition to Resetich and the two turf managers on staff, the facility keeps a 38-man, on-season staff during growing season. Labor is included in the facility's maintenance budget, which is about \$1 million.

Water management products also are part of the maintenance budget. The price of Reward increased recently to \$136 per gallon. Cutrine Plus costs about \$30 per gallon and True Blue is about \$39 per gallon.

"I get a small discount on aquatic products," he says. "But service is what's important to me. If I've got to pay a little more to have service at my fingertips, so be it."

Quality, not quantity, then, is Resetich's primary concern about pond management, and it's a mantra that's propelled the course through the Audubon certification process. The facility has one more project to complete before it's a Certified Sanctuary. The estate manager says he'll focus on this during the winter and then prepare for his next big project: hosting the PGA Solheim Cup in August 2009.

"During tournament prep, aesthetics become so important from a management standpoint," he says. "Medinah Country Club practically had a management team on site waiting to stay on top of algae in lakes, just for appearance, during the PGA Championship in 2006. We might be at the same point just to stay on top of it. Frequency will vary a little bit then. It'll probably stay about the same up until two weeks before, and then we'll watch it a little closer."

Resetich estimates 95 percent of golf courses with any kind of algae problems or vegetation will hire water-quality control out to contractors, and with the amount of effort involved, it's easy to see why. But Resetich only wishes he had more time to devote to his passion.

"If it was my choice, as a grounds manager, I'd prefer to do water quality – from stocking to algae control to overall aeration – over any of the other specialties, turf management or horticulture," he says. **GCI**



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