

THE SCARCITY ERA

If you survived the recent economic crisis, then get ready for the next big challenge – water.

If you haven't already, by the end of this decade the chances are good you'll need to answer tough questions about how you're using water at your facility.

In fact, water usage could easily trump all other critical debates. And like always, this industry seems to have a big, red target painted on its back because golf is commonly deemed as non-essential. Unlike the debates that surround golf about land usage and chemical inputs, when push comes to shove and a water scarcity issues surfaces, the golf industry could be left with an empty cup.

But this doesn't have to be the case, says Charles Fishman, the author of "The Big Thirst." Fishman takes an engaging look at the challenges of smart water management today and into the future. Check out my interview with Fishman on page 64.

The future is only grim for



Mike Zawacki
Editor

colleagues about best practices and frugal water management. It'll also come from exploring what other industries— such as agriculture and manufacturing – have been doing successfully to stretch their water.

"Getting out in front of it is smart strategically," Fishman says. "Reaching out to the community and understanding how other users are achieving efficiency and smart water management. Build the connections that will allow you to manage water smartly and give you insight into the politics of water in your community so that when scarcity comes you're in a better position to handle it."

By devoting an entire issue to water issues,

GCI wants to help bridge the gap about what's working for others throughout the industry. For starters, we partnered with Trone Brand Energy to conduct research on water-usage trends throughout the golf industry (see page 14). In addition, there are article and case studies about how superintendents are taking steps to

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those courses – including those surrounded by seemingly unlimited water resources – unprepared for the eventuality of operating with less, Fishman says. Suppose you arrive for work one day to find an official letter stating that your access to water has been cut by 20 percent – effective immediately. What would you do? What's your contingency plan?

Water is a widespread problem, but it's also chiefly a local problem, Fishman says. This is good for the golf industry. Not only because local problems have local solutions, but because superintendents are great problem solvers. Fishman suggests superintendents need to be out front of this issue – not only with players and members, but also their communities. Success in a water-restricted world will not only stem from learning from

successfully reduce their water needs without compromising playing conditions.

Without a doubt, superintendents do a great job when it comes to managing resources including water. However, it's clear that this is an issue that must be taken seriously. Fishman proposes those courses lacking a clear water-reduction contingency plan will not survive the decade.

Stay ahead of this curve. Communicate with your players, members and community the steps you've taken and the plans on the books to use your water more effectively. Impress them with a plan to reduce water needs by 5 percent this year, 8 percent next year, and even 10 percent in the coming years. Let everyone know you're not all wet when it comes to water conservation. GCI

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