

# Using Water **Intelligently** on the Course

**T**oday, more people around the world are aware of the urgent need to use water wisely. It's true that we still have a long road ahead of us, but the efforts of many businesses, organizations and individuals have significantly heightened our society's overall level of consciousness about the importance of water conservation.

Each of us can make our own individual efforts to use less water — turning off the faucet while we brush our teeth, using more efficient appliances or installing a low-flow shower head, just to name a few. These types of choices are typically personal in nature; we may be the only ones who know we're making them. But for the people who manage the day-to-day operations of a golf course, their choices are very public ones, out there for all to see.

In the worldwide quest to conserve water, the lush, emerald-green fairways of golf courses are often easy targets for criticism. The truth of the matter is that many golf course superintendents and managers are leading the charge toward developing water-use strategies that keep courses in beautiful condition with less water than ever before. In fact, an author contributing to this installment of *Golfdom's* Water Wise Series is a prime example of a superintendent who's truly taken the challenge of using water wisely to heart — Christopher S. Gray Sr.

Gray, golf course superintendent and general manager of



Marvel Golf Club in Benton, Ky., was the recipient of Rain Bird's 2008 Intelligent Use of Water Award. Gray's efforts to find innovative ways to keep his course in top condition while using as little fresh water as possible are truly setting a new standard for other golf course managers and superintendents worldwide.

Under Gray's direction, Marvel Golf Club collects wastewater from houses in a nearby subdivision and uses it to water the golf course. The club also harvests rainwater during storm events and collects it for use in the irrigation system as well. In addition to saving water, Gray's course saves countless dollars in energy costs by not having to pump water from its ponds for irrigation purposes.

Gray has said that above all else, he considers himself a steward of the environment. He doesn't use water wisely just for the purposes of his golf course, but because he believes it's the right thing to do

— for his children's future and for the future of his community. Gray is providing an example for others to follow, and superintendents from courses across America have contacted him for suggestions on how to make their courses more water-efficient.

Gray has shown those of us who work in the golf industry how some hard work and dedication can make a huge difference. And that's what The Intelligent Use of Water is all about — each of us making choices at home, at school or at work that can have a cumulative, positive impact on our environment. As a provider of irrigation systems around the world, Rain Bird applauds Gray and others like him who have taken on this challenge, providing an inspiration for others to do the same. ■

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