

Wishing you and yours a Happy New Year from the Lake Omigosh Golf Club here in central Florida. This is always a time

to reflect on our past challenges and accomplishments, but, more importantly, it's a time to rejuvenate and prepare to face the coming year with cautious or abundant optimism — depending on your view of the world.

To illustrate my point, I've been scribbling out the rough draft for this column in the club's 19th Hole and Whine Bar while alternately drinking diet sodas and vodka tonics. On the one hand, I'm all set to make some sacrifices to improve my health and well-being. On the other hand, I'm dreading the battle with the Environmental Protection Agency over its national WaterSense policy and a pending "Florida only" pilot program to dictate nutrient limits in our state's waterways.

The genesis of the nutrient policy is part of a settlement of a lawsuit against EPA by some environmental groups that think turfgrass, in general, is an unnecessary nuisance and who want to restrict the use of fertilizers in the state. The big problem is EPA isn't even considering the past 10 years of work done at the state level by our Department of Environmental Protection to engage the agriculture and green industries in best management practices to reduce potentially negative environmental inputs. Once again, scientific evidence is trumped by political expediency.

The EPA is coming up with basically arbitrary numbers that will spell disaster not only for the green industries, but also for the county and city governments that don't meet those magic numbers. Who knows more about Florida weather, soils, crops, water tables, rainfall patterns and watersheds — Washington bureaucrats or Floridians?

Remember, this is a pilot program, and you're next. But we all get to share the burden of the WaterSense program where EPA will dictate your turfgrass use and irrigation frequency. So whatever you do, don't have a

Never a Better Time to Stand United

BY JOEL JACKSON



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drought in your area. Washington knows best when to water from Seattle to St. Petersburg, right?

So, my brothers and sisters across the land, it's time to unite and make a stand. Time to join and to volunteer. Time to work harder to save your career. You must participate, write letters and vent. If not, you'll wonder where your industry went. You know the agronomic A-B-C's, so why not join Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary program and use BMPs.

While brown is not beautiful, it's tolerable. And we *can* learn to do more while using less. Also, nature means healthy and green, which is the best way to keep our waters clean.

All of golf needs to take up the struggle, and there are too many issues for just the superintendents to juggle. United we stand, divided we fall. The entire golf industry must heed the call. Get it together and make it all for one. If you don't, my friends, golf as we know it just may be done.

Get out that blank piece of paper and make some resolutions. Promise to be not part of the problems, but rather the solutions. Ask others to help and pick up the phone. Recruit your crew and golfers — you don't have to go it alone. Support your local and national associations. Working together we can find a way.

So long from Lake Omigosh, where the superintendent renewed his membership and has resolved to attend more meetings in 2010; the crew is working on a list of ways to improve efficiency; and the members are beginning to attend local county commissioner meetings and write letters to their local, state and national legislators about the issues affecting golf.

Certified Superintendent Joel Jackson is Executive Director of the Florida GCSA.