



//ON TOUR

Taking the Florida spring regulator tour

➔ For the past 16 years, the Florida GCSA has partnered with the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association (FFVA) to be the first stop on its annual spring tour. On the tour, federal and state regulators of south-west Florida's agricultural and green industries visit Tim Hier's Old Collier Golf Club in north Naples, as well as nurseries, sod farms, cattle ranches and more.

Thanks to tighter budgets, only 20 regulators made the trip this year. And whereas superintendents on hand usually mix and mingle with the regulators and answer questions on the tour, the trip around the course was cancelled this year due to heavy rain showers. Consequently, this year's tour was reduced to a two-hour Q & A session centered on pesticide use and safety issues.

I gave the basic breakdown of average turf acreage in terms of greens, tees, fairways and roughs, while superintendents in the room explained their insect, weed and disease programs, the products they use and their turf treatments. Kyle Sweet, who runs The Sanctuary Golf Club on Sanibel Island, talked about his programs and products, which have to be approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Dept.

George McBath, a retired ornithologist who works with area courses to

install nest boxes, told regulators he was skeptical of golf courses during his early years as an ecology instructor but after doing bird counts on golf courses he realized what great habitats they are.

He also explained how the large eastern blue bird population in the Naples area allowed the Fish and Wildlife folks to harvest young bluebirds to repopulate Everglades National Park, whose own bluebird population was declining from years of inbreeding. The new influx of birds from Naples now is restoring the native population.

One of the state regulators on the tour specifically mentioned getting "numerous" complaints about spray drift. Some of it was the typical reaction when an adjacent property homeowner sees the spray rig at work and assumes the worst.

Fortunately, the rain stopped toward the end of the tour, and the group was able to see Old Collier's immaculate pesticide and fertilizer storage rooms and mix/load pad. But we regretted not having the chance to show them the modern course design — complete with wildlife corridors and natural areas. As they say, "Seeing is believing."

Joel Jackson, CGCS-Ret., is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.

Starter

BY THE NUMBERS

129

DEGREES

The temperature in Death Valley, Calif., on June 30

//END OF AN ERA

SMITHCO FOUNDER PASSES AWAY AT AGE 98

Smithco founder Ted Smith passed away June 10 at age 98, the company has reported.

Smith launched Smithco in 1967 with just one product—the Red Rider utility truck. More than 45 years later, Red Riders continue to be used on golf courses and athletic fields worldwide.

The Red Rider was followed by the creation of the first riding bunker rake in the industry, a labor-saving idea that replaced hand raking.

Smithco has grown considerably larger and more diverse over the years, becoming a multimillion-dollar manufacturing, engineering and marketing organization with worldwide distribution.

"Smithco continues to operate as the family business Ted founded, with the values that were always so important to him," the family stated.

//PERSONNEL MATTERS

NEW VP OF DESIGN AT STAPLES GOLF

Staples Golf Resource Group, LLC and Andy Staples, ASGCA Associate, have named Doug Long Vice President of Design and Management at Staples Golf. Long will assist in servicing the company's current design projects across the U.S. and play an increased role in the management of the firm's expanding energy and water conservation projects.

Long is a 35-year veteran of the golf industry and a recipient of the GCBAA's Builder of the Year Award.