



ENVIRONMENTALISTS

By Mike Vogt

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mike Vogt is the golf course superintendent at the Illini Country Club in Springfield, Illinois. He is the current president of the Illinois Turfgrass Foundation.

Mike's activities in professional associations are considerable. He is past president of the Central Illinois Golf Course Superintendents Association and is the long time and successful editor of their association journal, "The Ballmark". Mike has served on numerous GCSAA committees. In his free time you'll find him wind surfing on some lake, working on one of his BMWs or off to some far land for a downhill ski trip.

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Have you considered just how fast the laws of our land are changing? Perhaps you do keep pace with new laws and the effects they will have on our livelihood. The newly-passed federal clean air act moved through Congress like a steamroller. There are not many politicians in their right mind that will vote against an environmental bill. Don't get me wrong. I am for a clean and healthy environment, but it seems to me we are now at the mercy of what I call "ENVIRONMENTALISTS." Webster's dictionary does not have a

definition for this group of people, so let me try to give you my best shot at a definition.

en•vi•ron•mo•tion•al•ist (en-vi-ron-mo-shan'-al'-ist) *n.* 1. A person who seeks to protect the environment without being informed of the facts. 2. A person running for public office that uses environmental issues to give the illusion that he or she will save the world for future generations. 3. Those in the news media that always report bad news and half truths for the purpose of increasing public fear of the unknown.

I guess if given a couple more pages I could further elaborate, but by now I'm sure you get my meaning. This knee-jerk group will, if left uneducated, make fine turf, as we know it, something for only the super rich (new compliance laws are very costly). I can see it now, Robin Leach explores fine turf on "LIFESTYLES OF THE RICH AND FAMOUS." Robin comes on the screen surrounded by fairway-type turf. He opens the show saying, "Once every man's dream, a beautiful lawn is now only available to the super rich. We will now whisk you away and dedicate the whole show this evening for visiting the top turf in the U.S.A."

By now I must sound like I am leaning on the panic button, calling for every able-bodied Turf Person to mobilize on their riding mowers. As soon as the Right-to-Life (anti-abortionist) and the

Pro-choice groups get off the steps of the capitol we can...wait a minute, wait a minute. There is already a major effort to inform, educate, and affect the lawmaking process. Below is a list of groups that already have begun, or will begin shortly, working with lawmakers on the issues that are important to us:

- Central Illinois Golf Course Superintendents Association
- Chicago District Golf Association
- Illinois Turfgrass Foundation
- Illinois Fertilizer and Chemical Association
- Illinois Coalition of Responsible Pesticide Users
- Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents
- Professional Lawn Care Association of America

This list is not complete, but it's like the commercial for joining the Army, "it's a great place to start." Now, more than ever, we need YOUR involvement in YOUR profession. If laws are passed taking fine turf away from all but the wealthy, at least we can say we went down swinging as a group.

In closing this message, I'm sure you're all aware of the elections this fall. Many issues are being discussed in the political arena. The number one issue is the **environment**. Why, it's such a good-guy thing to be for. Think about it, at least the number two issue (and a very touchy one at that), abortion, has some politicians polarized.

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