



# A Fish Story

By Rod Johnson



The fact that for the second time this year the word "fish" appears in the title of my message may lead some to believe that I spend a great deal of time doing just that. Please allow me to clear the air of any misconceptions. As a young boy who was reared "up North", I spent my share of time wetting worms and even on occasion accidentally hooking something other than a snag. Early on, the game of golf struck my fancy leaving little time for the pursuit of pisces.

The time constraints of golf and golf related employment don't seem to mix well with fishing. I do know a very prominent superintendent who several years ago, while still a Wisconsin resident, won a fishing pole at a golf event. The pole came without string and it's a safe bet that to date no string has been purchased in Michigan.

Our profession and the people who play golf in Wisconsin could stand to learn a few things from the large number of vocal Wisconsinites who do fish.

Recently a column of interest appeared in the *Milwaukee Journal*. It was

written by Jay Reed, one of the paper's regular outdoor writers. The column told of the public outcry brought about by proposed changes to Wisconsin's fishing laws.

Mr. Reed told of recently held public meetings and other forms of public discussion where standing room only crowds of fisherpeople "sent a message for the folks in Madison."

Further, Mr. Reed cited, a public rejection and weariness concerning the whole idea of more restrictive regulations. Now that sounds familiar.

What terrible restrictions could initiate the general public to protest infringement upon a recreation sport? Public hearings were held across the state concerning a proposal to cut in half the bag limit (from 50 to 25) on bluegills, crappies and perch. A limit of 25 fish per day sounds reasonable to me, but again, I'm no angler.

Do we as a profession or do the people of Wisconsin who play golf get nearly as excited when legislation is introduced containing potentially negative impact on our game? I'm afraid not.

Changes are in the works regarding Ag Bill 29. This recently passed bill may be amended to include posting and pre-notification. I am pleased to have been appointed by the secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection to an ad hoc committee on turfgrass pesticide applications. This committee was formed as a result of legislation introduced this spring. A mailing was made to the WGCSA membership at that time. Response was limited at best.

The immediate impact of legislation affecting our profession is not as obvious as the reduction of a fishing "bag limit". Unfortunately, many who make their living in the golf business or play golf recreationally will not get involved until golf course conditioning suffers and hence golf scores suffer.

As a profession directly impacted we must respond responsibly. Our response can not be of outcry and negativism. We stand ready to comply. All we ask for are reasonable and clearly understandable regulations.

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