



The Glacier Slowly Recedes

By Monroe S. Miller

It ended up as one of the longest winters in a long time, the cold season of 1995/1996. Golf courses were slow to open, opened a little late, closed (two inches of snow in Madison on Easter) and opened again. When golf was finally being played here in the southern part of the state, snow hadn't yet melted up north. By and large, however, most Wisconsin golf course superintendents were relieved when winter gave way to spring and course conditions became more evident. Golf courses, generally speaking, overwintered better than a lot of us would have guessed. There were normal scars on most courses, snowmold up north, a little ice damage here and there, and all the rest. But considering the winter was 'way below average, there wasn't a lot of complaining.

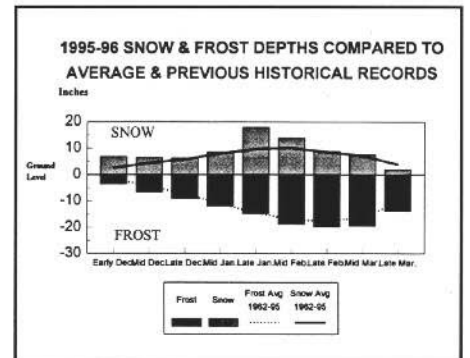
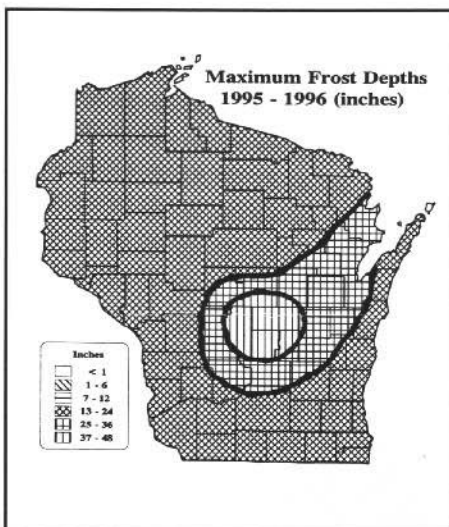
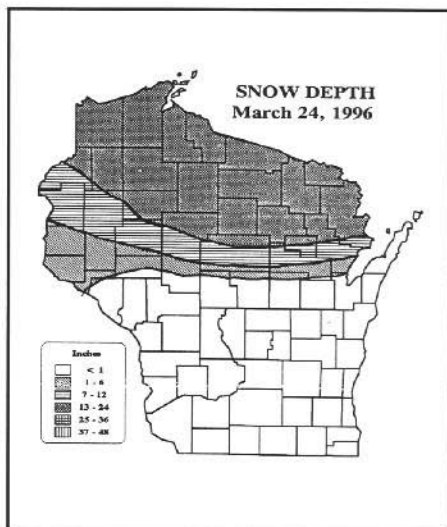
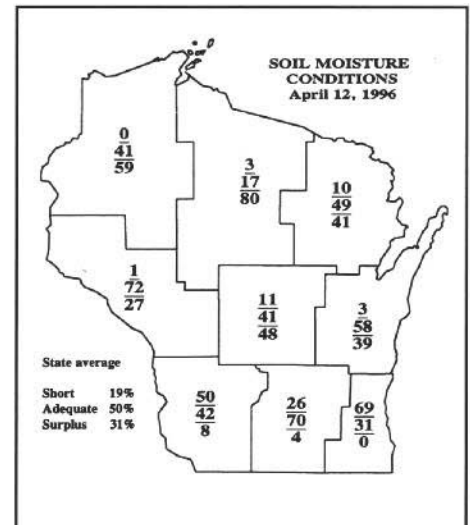
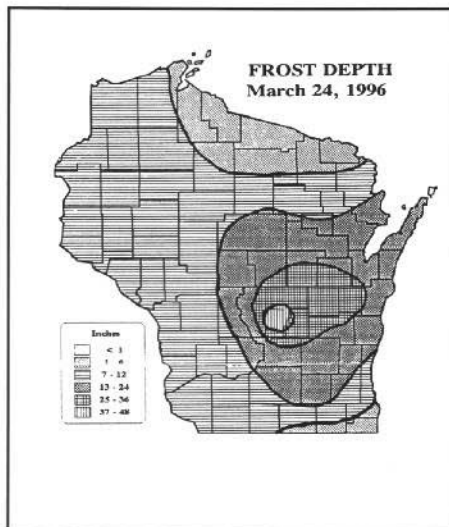
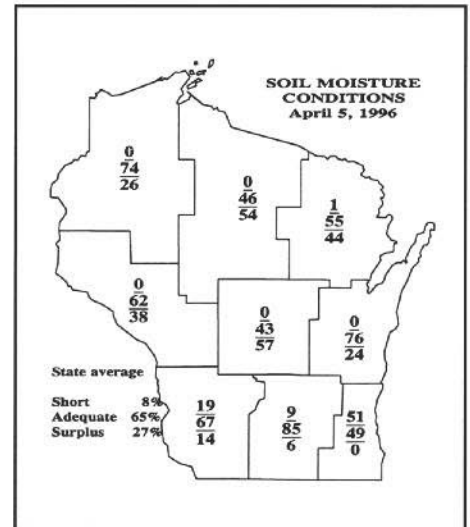
The complaining centered around the fact that it was an unending winter. It started very early—late October/early November—and receded at a glacial pace. But it did end, as we knew it would, and hopes are high for a great summer.

Included for your perusal are the weather stats for winter's end.

Congratulations are due Bill Vogel of Spring Valley. The Grounds Management Association of Wisconsin recognized Bill as the GMAW "Person of the Year".

He has a long standing dedication to the golf turf and landscape industry in Wisconsin. Three cheers for Bill!

The National Golf Foundation conducted a study that shows the majority



of American golfers believe that golf course superintendents use pesticides and fertilizers responsibly. In general, the study also shows that golfers' general concerns about the environmental impact of golf have decreased.

More than 80 percent of the golfers surveyed believe that superintendents are environmentally responsible and that we use water and chemicals wisely. Nearly two-thirds of golfers now believe that golf courses are good for the environment. That figure has come up from 55 percent less than two years ago.

The survey results show that our own awareness of problems and their solutions are getting through to our customers.

Chris Kleinsmith, a student in Wayne Kussov's turf and grounds management program at the UW-Madison, won the 1995 AGR EVO USA turf scholarship. He was presented the award by John Turner at the WTA EXPO in Middleton on January 10, 1996.

Chris is a native of Holman and will be an excellent addition to our profession in the years to come. He is a deserving winner.

I always look forward to the WGCSA business meeting in Fond du Lac, especially now that it is scheduled so it doesn't conflict with

preparations for opening day. It is good to see colleagues, learn of what has gone on in their lives during the winter months, and to listen to what they think course conditions are in all corners of Wisconsin.

This year had the potential to be particularly interesting. Frank Rossi, having learned from Arthur Miller in Orlando, moderated a panel of individuals of differing attitudes about golf courses and environmental issues. It was spirited and well received.

Also adding to the interest of the day was a visit to Fond du Lac by GCSAA chapter relations committee member Randy Zidik.

Randy is a Pittsburg area golf course superintendent. He was also on the GCSAA board of directors a few years ago. He traveled to Fond du Lac to answer questions about affiliation requirements, and went out of his way to say—several times—that he wasn't going to give us "the company line."

He was an intriguing choice to attend the WGCSA meeting to sell affiliation requirements. The curiosity I noticed was that a few short years ago when he was a GCSAA director I remember him as one of the one man/one vote guys. If my memory is correct, Randy has done a 180 degree turn with his current belief in central power, big bureaucracy and chapter subordination to GCSAA.

It was nice of him to take time to try

to explain the GCSAA motives and their plans. After he was done, the people I was with felt he should have saved his time. He didn't answer the questions put to him.

I tape recorded the session he led, listened to it again, and reached the same conclusion I did from the live presentation. The fundamental question of "how will these changes, most notably dual membership requirements—make Wisconsin a better chapter?" was answered with "it probably won't."

That is hardly a ringing endorsement for voting for the elitist requirements GCSAA wants. A similar answer was offered to the question "how will individual superintendents benefit?"

Interestingly, when I asked him if, for a financial report, we sent the bureaucracy in Lawrence a report that said "we made money" would suffice, Randy replied, "yeah, sure." Sensing this was good news, the follow-up question of "will a one sentence response on chapter activities, such as 'we had a good year', be good enough?", Randy said "yes".

So, should we affiliate (far, far from a certainty) and should we answer as above, I will play the tape for Lawrence employees to remind them what a committee member told us, if anyone objects.

Unfortunately, there are all sorts of low life and scum floating around in our society. One (or several) of them recently broke into Aldo Leopold's famous shack—his inspiration for *A Sand County Almanac*—and stole a wooden chest of old tools and other historic items.

The shack, in the Leopold Reserve, is in a rural area near Baraboo and the Wisconsin River. People from around the world have visited the shack and gotten inspiration from it. I'm one of those people. The shack is so well known that it is on the National Register of Historic Places in America.

An act of thievery like this is just one more incident that builds mistrust and uncertainty and uneasiness among citizens. The Leopold Foundation will now likely have to install a security system. It wasn't long ago they finally had to padlock the door on the shack. It had been open for all to visit. No more.

(Continued on page 35)



Of course, there is little chance the crime will be solved. The senselessness of it is numbing.

As of this date, we still have an opening for a speaker this year. My suggestion is to invite Bruce Williams to make the (apparently) long, difficult and torturous trip up from Chicago. Maybe he can stand in front of us and offer something other than the political pulp and adolescent rationale we've heard about affiliation requirements. I would like to hear Bruce defend his impertinent comments about those among us who make \$20,000 a year and his belief they have plenty of money to pay their own GCSAA dues (\$210) and state dues (\$110 in Wisconsin). I would also like to learn how some of our colleagues are our enemies, based on organizations they may or may not belong to. There are scores of other questions we could put to him.

After all, he has twice accepted invitation to come to Wisconsin to meet with us only to bail out at a later date. This year, before Mark Kienert

could invite him to the spring business meeting, in a pre-emptive strike, he told Mark he couldn't make it because he was going to Canada.

You sort of wonder why he is reluctant to come north. Maybe Rod Johnson has bad breath . . .

Setting all the nuisances aside, this a good time of the year. As Walter Hagen suggested years ago, "take time to smell the flowers." ♣

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