



Sky is Falling

By Kris Pinkerton, Golf Course Superintendent, Oshkosh Country Club



For those superintendents and other distinguished individuals who view the Noernet on a regular basis, you may recognize the title of this article. Then again, I'm not quite sure what it has to do with the topic of runoff! Oh well! What is important is that Rod Johnson and Jordan Sensibar brought this to our attention.

DNR News Release: January 24, 2001

NRB approves public hearings of polluted runoff rules

MADISON, Wis.— *Wisconsin moved one step closer Wednesday to controlling polluted runoff, now regarded as the biggest threat to the state's lakes, rivers, wetlands and groundwater.* (And so on)

It is my understanding that what is before us is a number of proposed rules that ask everybody who contributes to runoff pollution to take steps to control it. Before going any further in my comments and so forth, all this can be found at the DNR website: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/cae/r/cc/news/RBnews/2001/0>

10124BCO.htm

Just above the heading titled: **(Some key changes from the 2000 draft runoff rules)** click on the link. That will take you to some 500 plus pages of the revised 2001 draft rules! Click on NR 151 Runoff Management (66 pages) to read about what could potentially affect each and every one of us in the green industry.

Where did this come from and why are we only hearing about it now? Apparently lawmakers in the 1997-99 state budget instructed DNR and the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection to overhaul the programs to increase their effectiveness. The agencies and advisory groups worked for two years to produce the first draft rules that went to public hearing in March 2000. I can only assume that most of us were not aware of these sweeping changes because non-agricultural properties (golf courses included) were not included in the first draft.

We are now! Rumor has it that the Ag people said wait a minute, what about all those homeowners and golf courses that spread phosphorus all the time! Not to leave anyone out, "non-municipal properties which have over 5 acres of pervious area where fertilizers or pesti-

cides are applied and discharge runoff to waters of the state or to a separate storm sewer that discharges to waters of the state." Every one included! Those working for municipalities, you've been in the mix all along!

PROPOSED NR 151.14 (3) REQUIREMENTS. No later than March 10, 2008, lawn and garden fertilizers and pesticides used on these properties shall include application of fertilizer based on soil test results and use of pesticides in accordance with an integrated pest management plan. Note: The owner should consider using slow release fertilizers to reduce the concentration of nitrates reaching groundwater.

Seems harmless, right? So, how do we soil test for nitrogen? As far back as I can remember, nitrate analyses are not included in soil test results because they are subject to rapid change and variability. What if slow release fertilizers don't fit into your program all year long? I know that I'm not the only superintendent spoon feeding his greens during the summer! And what about potassium? I know a number of courses that have a high content of potassium in the soil, but only a small portion is normally available for uptake by the turf-

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grass plant. Hopefully you can see where we could potentially be heading. Do we want the DNR or local law enforcement interpreting our soil tests?

Again, the same vague language, "use of pesticides in accordance with an integrated pest management plan," should scare most of us! As stewards of the environment, I believe most of us are already using IPM. We may not all have the plan on paper, but still are practicing the principles in our day to day decision making! So, are we to allow the DNR or local law enforcement to again decide for themselves if we, first of all, have a IPM Plan and second, is it being followed?

In backing up just a bit, also affecting a lot of golf courses will be the remainder of **Subchapter III - Non-Agricultural Performance Standards**.

NR 151.11 Construction site performance standard for new development and redevelopment. This applies to anyone disturbing 5 acres or more of land before March 10, 2003, one acre or more after March 10, 2003, and also grading or otherwise removing topsoil from the bank of any navigable stream, lake or other body of water exposing more than 10,000 square feet. Requirements include written plans to reduce sediment and the pollutants from entering waters and storm sewers, and best management practices to help reduce the sediment load carried off in runoff and so on!

NR 151.12 Post-construction performance standard for new development and redevelopment. This applies for the most part to those parties affected by NR 151.11 above. It requires a full blown storm water management plan which takes into consideration total suspended solids, peak discharge rates, infiltration by design per storm event, buffer areas and fueling and vehicle main-

tenance areas. This encompasses some (8) pages of terminology.

NR 151.13 Developed urban area performance standard. This section is written for municipalities and yes, the golf courses which are a part of them. Requirements again are very detailed and certain segments apply to golf courses.

There is another annoying note that I found in the Transportation Facility Performance Standards. Under the section of "Buffer area," 'Note: It is recommended that seeding of non-aggressive vegetative cover be used in the buffer area.'; "Native vegetation is preferable and short-rooted vegetation, such as Kentucky bluegrass, is least desirable." Interesting stuff!

Dr. John Stier has sounded the alarm down in Madison and he will begin to form a committee to chal-

lenge the issues at hand. Sometime during the first week in February, the DNR will have made available at their website, locations, dates and times when these hearings will be held. So far, I can tell you that each site will have two meeting times (1:00p.m. and 6:00p.m.). Hearings are to be held during the middle two weeks in March at the following cities: Madison, Richland Center, Green Bay, Waukesha, Wausau and Eau Claire. Again, please check their website for confirmations.

It is extremely important that we have representation at each of these meetings. Without voicing our opinions and facts, NR 151 and its subchapters will no doubt be passed into law without any trouble! Constructive comments can be e-mailed to "Mary Ann Lowndes" <LowndM@mail01.dnr.state.wi.us>



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