

Wisconsin's Nonpoint Source Rules- What They Mean for Turf Managers

By Carol Holden, NPS Education Coordinator, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Many of you have been following the progress of DNR's proposed administrative rule, NR 151. The rule is the cornerstone of a package of eight rules aimed at curbing polluted runoff that was adopted by the Natural Resources Board in January and moved on to the Senate Environmental Resources Committee and the Assembly Natural Resources Committee for review. The Assembly committee held a hearing on the February 27 and the Senate has scheduled a hearing for March 5. While we can only speculate on the legislature's actions, it is possible that the rules could become official sometime this summer.

So what does that mean for golf course managers and other turf managers? By March 10, 2008, some owners of golf courses and other turf areas will need to meet a fertilizer application performance standard to protect water quality. If the property owner applies fertilizers to five acres or more of pervious surface, and the property discharges runoff to waters of the state, fertilizer applied to that area will need to be done in accordance with site-specific nutrient application schedules based on appropriate soil tests. This standard applies to both municipal (NR 151.13(1)(b)3) and non-municipal (NR 151.14) properties. The nutrient application schedule should be designed to maintain optimal health of the vegetation. A previous draft of NR 151 had a requirement to apply pesticides according to an Integrated Pest Management Plan. That requirement was dropped from the final draft that is now in legislative committee.

Before this performance stan-

dard goes into effect in 2008, DNR expects to have a technical standard developed with input from turf managers, University of Wisconsin and other interested parties with technical backgrounds in this area. DNR is taking an educational approach toward implementing this performance standard rather than a permit approach and plans to work with UW toward that end.

For more information on this performance standard, contact

Mary Anne Lowndes, DNR, at (608) 261-6420 or e-mail: lowndm@dnr.state.wi.us. Information about the rules, including the citations referenced in this article are available on DNR's Runoff Management web page: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/wm/nps/admrules.html>. Hard copies of NR 151 or other parts of the nonpoint source rules package are available from Virginia Mayo Black, e-mail: blackv@dnr.state.wi.us.

