

MGCSA GOLF COURSE ECONOMIC & WATER USE COMMITTEE UPDATE

by **Scott Hoffmann, Chairman**

The MGCSA GOLF COURSE ECONOMIC & WATER USE COMMITTEE has recently met with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Division of Waters. The purpose of the meeting was to share MGCSA concerns over water appropriation standards and priority rating as they relate to golf courses, and to determine what we can and should be doing as an Association and concerned user to help ensure a fair and adequate allocation of water to Minnesota golf courses.

As a result of a sharing of ideas and information with the DNR and because of information gained through the MGCSA Economic & Water Use Survey, the committee will be directing its energies toward the following goals:

1. Through the use of case studies of individual golf courses, work with the DNR to re-define water appropriation standards. We are looking for golf courses of all types that have water metering devices and that can accurately determine percentage of water allocated to greens, tees, fairways, and roughs.
2. Through the legislative process, attempt to raise the priority rating for golf course greens and tees from Minnesota's lowest priority of "five" to a rating of "three" which places us on a par with agriculture and sod-growers.
3. Encourage the use of water meters on all Minnesota golf courses.
4. Encourage the installation of water efficient, state of the art irrigation systems.
5. Encourage the use of drought resistant grass varieties.
6. Encourage ground water sources for golf course irrigation over surface water sources, or at the very least have a contingency plan for greens and tees.
7. Provide the DNR with observation wells to monitor ground water levels throughout the state. These could be existing golf course wells and would be of great help in aiding the development of a statewide hydrologic map.

Among the information learned were some startling facts about Minnesota's water resources. In the last 30 years our water use has quadrupled and is expected to do the same in the next 30 years. Some experts say that in 50

years, Minnesota's water resources will be more valuable than Texas oil ever was. What this should be telling us is that we must act now to define how our water is being used currently to help ensure a fair and adequate future allocation.

The committee would like to thank all of you that participated in our survey. Although this is just a beginning, we now have a basis for future work and have gained some very pertinent information about water usage and the golf industry in Minnesota.

If you are willing to participate in a case study of water usage on your golf course, and/or monitoring of your ground water levels, please contact Keith Scott, (612-938-6900), or Scott Hoffmann, (218-829-2811).

WATER CONSERVATION . . .

OUR SHARED CONCERN

by **Larry Vetter & Water Use Committee**

The drought of 1988 heightened public awareness of an issue about which the turfgrass industry has been concerned for years. Water is a precious commodity. It is not unlimited and without it life, as we know, cannot exist.

Given this indisputable fact, the Minnesota Golf Course Superintendent's Association (MGCSA) has assumed a proactive stance in identifying water use by its member courses and charting a course of action that will further encourage wise use of this limited resource.

The logical starting point was to identify the industry status quo. A survey of member clubs was conducted and data gathered from this and other sources are presented as the base from which to develop a responsible plan of action. Data from and action by the golf industry in Minnesota pertinent to this process are:

- * Directly generates \$255-300 million revenues annually.
- * Generates in excess of \$18 million in state sales tax revenue annually.
- * Provides over 16,000 jobs.
- * Over 20% of golf rounds impact tourism.
- * 75% of survey respondents host charitable events with 54 specific charities identified. Golf has been documented in one area as second only to United Way in raising funds for charity.