

Water Conservation: Our Shared Concern

(Also see GCSAA Water Utilization Fact Sheet on Page 10)

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

Given this undisputable fact, the Minnesota Golf Course Superintendents' Association (MGCSA) has responded by assuming 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. Data gathered from the survey and other sources are presented as the base from which to develop a responsible course of action. Data from and action by the golf industry in Minnesota pertinent to this process area:

- **Directly generates revenues** between \$255,000,000 and \$300,000,000 annually.
- **Generates in excess of \$18,000,000** in state sales tax revenue annually.
- **Provides** more than 16,000 jobs.
- **Over 20% of golf rounds** impact tourism.
- **75% of the respondents** host charitable events with 54 specific charities identified. Golf has been documented in one area to be second only to United Way in raising funds for charity.
- **Host numerous events for recreation** and/or competition for juniors, junior and senior high school boys and girls, senior citizens, college, university and corporate participation.
- **No segment of the turfgrass industry** spends more on research and updating of equipment aimed at conservation, including computer-controlled irrigation, drought-tolerant grass-

es, tensiometers, surfactants, cultural practices and others.

- **80% of the respondents** reported using some form of water conservation.
 - **Establishment** of a full-time Water Resources Committee.
- The golf industry in Minnesota has an enormous impact on the quality of life that we are so proud of in our state. Besides offering the recreational and competitive opportunities already mentioned, each individual golf course property has an environmental impact in the following way:
- **100 acres of actively growing turf** produces enough oxygen to support approximately 7,000 adults.
 - **This same process is the greenhouse effect in reverse** as carbon dioxide is used to produce the oxygen.
 - **Grasses reduce undesirable noises** by 20-30%.
 - **Wildlife is attracted** to grassy and treed areas.
 - **Grasses modify temperature.** This same 100 acres has the cooling capacity of more than 7,000 tons of air conditioning.
 - **Grasses absorb and reduce glare.**
 - **A typical golf course will recharge the water table** with approximately 10 times the amount it uses.
 - **Dense turf has more than three times** the water infiltration rate of thinly covered areas.
 - **Grasses absorb pollutants and trap particulate matter** from the atmosphere.
 - **Grasses are the most effective form** of plant life for the prevention of soil erosion.

Numerous other environmental, economic, mental and physical health statements can be made. However, the above is meant to be indicative of the contribution that the game of golf makes to the State of Minnesota and the respective communities that are located within the state.

The MGCSA study found that an average of nearly 300,000 gallons of water per acre were used in 1988 on the courses whose superintendents responded to the questionnaire. One disturbing thing that became obvious was that some do not know how much water they use on their property.

As a result of this study and its on-going concern for its industry and the environment, MGCSA commits to the following action items:

- **Encourage the installation of effective metering devices** on all golf course irrigation systems in the State of Minnesota.
- **Permanently install a functioning committee** for the increased conservation of water and other resources.
- **Intensify the educational opportunities** available to our membership, specifically addressing water conservation.
- **Continue contributions**, and expand as resources permit, to research dedicated to water conservation in areas such as irrigation equipment, plant breeding and selection for better drought tolerance as well as lower water use, and cultural practices that will reduce the use of water, reduce run-off, improve water retention and facilitate the expanded use of effluent water.

—MGCSA Water Resources Committee

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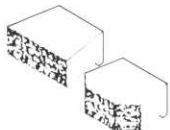
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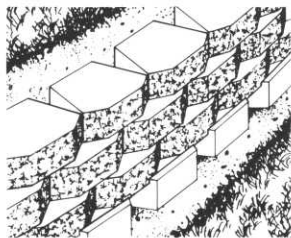
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