

For a while this new challenge was invigorating. And then it wasn't. No, I don't miss the "money stretch".

Politics...well lets just say working with golf course superintendents is delightful!

What I miss the most are the subtleties, the nuances, and the casual natural observations that could easily brighten my day.

In the winter, it was the solitude of tromping through the snow, pole saw upon my shoulder, to trim suckers and redirect tree growth. The quiet was often deafening, broken only by the sound of a crow or at times falling snow.

The spring, with rushing snow melt, stimulated all of my senses as dormant smells awoke, warm sun danced upon my skin, the first robins cleaned the remaining crab apples, dried and likely fermented, and patches of green grass peaked through the left over blanket of white. Soon the troops would be welcomed back for another season of chasing perfection.

Summer-time heralded sun rises, cool dew, rainbows, ducklings, thunderstorms, camaraderie, the orchestrated magic of fine turf management, attaining a peak in perfection, and the internal pride of job completion only to be recycled the following day.

Splashes of reds and oranges upon the blue waters of ponds and creeks with a background of healthy and brilliant green, colored my world in the fall. The summer staff was finally gone and the full timers could enjoy the peace. Projects were to be done, maintenance based on frost delays and "bed-time" schedules implemented. The intensity of agronomics put to rest for another year.

When I ponder my past, I do reflect upon my time as a superintendent and acknowledge that those were some mighty fine years. On balance, and in spite of some bumps in the road, I truly loved my job as a 'keeper of the green'. A great venue, exceptional and dedicated industry friends, pride and the ability to "work out of doors" allowed me to maintain my sanity even during the most challenging of times.

I have landed upon a vocation of equal enjoyment, and feel very fortunate to have done so. The rewards of the job are different, but still gratifying, the challenges much less physical but comparable in logistic planning. And when my soul yearns for an injection of peace, I take a break, grab my staff Sadie and Nugget, and go outside for a little walk about. As it is fall now, I am eyeing up trees to prune, logs to split, leaves to mulch and gardens to put to bed... hmmm, and I still love every minute of it.

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*Sam Bauer, UMN Extension*
- 10:00 - 10:30**   *Networking Break*
- 10:30 - 11:30**   *Teeing Up Your Leadership Style*  
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# *Taking Your Pulse; Maintaining the Heart of Your Golf*

By E. Paul Eckho



As fall turns to winter, many of your thoughts turn to warm spaces and relaxing places. Good for you. I, however, would like to turn your thoughts back to your irrigation system. Now is a good time to think about the life blood of your turf, and how it is serving or dis-serving you. Maintenance and evaluation of your system should be ongoing. For many superintendents, the only time they worry about the system is when it fails, rather than being proactive.

In coming articles I will try to walk you through all of the things

that you need to consider and how to go through the process. There are a number of professionals that can help in this evaluation process. Irrigation consultants can be hired for a fee to evaluate your system and give you recommendations. Their fees are usually based on how much information you want. Irrigation sales professionals often will be willing to help you evaluate your system. They of course are looking to sell you product, so it might be worth it to speak to all of the available manufacturers and see the different options.



ever sent out a sample to know what the quality is? How much is available to irrigate in a specified time period? All of these are things you should be considering about your irrigation water since all of them will affect the quality of the turf you irrigate with this water. Many of the problems found with your water source can be corrected.

There are filtration systems that can be customized to help take out many different kinds of particulate matter. Whether you have sand, muscles, or any other particle problem, there are solutions. Likewise, if you have a pH issue there are solutions to help adjust the water to a desired pH that will help you maintain better turf. If algae are a problem there are a number of options, chemically as well as aeration and other non chemical solutions to help you clean up the water you are providing to your turf.

When was the last time you saw the intake pipe to the system? Is it clogged with debris, is the pond silted in, both correctable problems. Much like the computer saying, ‘garbage

Fellow professionals can also be a good source; they may have experienced a problem that you should be looking for.

## WATER QUALITY

For simplicity sake I will start at the water source and work our way out. So, what is your water source? Do you have a well, municipal water, holding pond, river, lake or stream? What is the quality of the source? Does it need additional treatment before you try to irrigate with it? Does it have algae in it during portions of the year? Have you

in, garbage out', we have bad water in, bad water out. If you know the limitations, a solution can usually be found to improve the situation and thus make your life, and you turf-grass, a whole lot better.

## PUMP STATION

Now that you know the condition of your water supply, time to think about the next step in the system, your pump site. As I mentioned earlier, there are a number of sources to help you evaluate and maintain your pump site.

The pump site is the heart of the irrigation system. If you can't pump the amount of water the system is designed for, you will not experience the performance you are looking for. How long has it been since you serviced the pumps? Typically the impellers of a centrifugal pump should be inspected after they have

been in use for 5 years and replaced if there is significant wear. If you are pumping water with a large amount of particulates like sand this time frame should be reduced. You may not have noticed that you have lost pump capacity since it goes away so slowly, but once you put in a new

impeller, you will be amazed at how much water and pressure you have been missing.

Do you have a leaking seal on the impeller shaft? This will cause wear on the shaft as well as increased cycling of the pumps. In fact, any type of leakage anywhere on the pump site will increase the cycling of the pumps, which will put severe stress

on the pump site as well as the piping of the system.

Are your pumps correctly sized for the output you are looking for? Correction of this is a little more difficult since it will entail purchasing



new pumps and sometimes new motors as well, but it can significantly change the performance of your entire system, without changing the piping on the course.

Do you have a hard start, soft start, or VFD? Do you know what the differences are and how they affect the

system and your electrical consumption rate? As electricity costs rise, the need for evaluation of the pump site and its control system becomes increasingly important.

Many times the costs for better motor controls can be offset with reduced electric rates and subsidies from your electric company, making an upgrade a more viable option.

These are but a few of the major items that need to be looked at when evaluating your system. In future articles we will look further the system

at piping, heads and control systems. Please remember that evaluation and maintenance of the irrigation system is not a onetime thing, but rather an ongoing concern if you are to be able to rely on the system when you need it most.



*E. Paul Eckholm, CGCS, is a former golf course superintendent with over 25 years of experience in golf course management and is currently an irrigation specialist at Yamaha Golf and Utility. Paul has been working with numerous manufacturers of irrigation*

*products for the past 15 years on product development related to water use reductions. Paul currently holds a number of certifications in irrigation technologies.*

*All photographs were taken by Erin McManus, Superintendent at Medina Golf and Country Club.*

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# Winter Maintenance...A

*A compilation of snow m*



## *Ahead of the Pack*

By Connie Forten of Forten Consulting

As budgets tighten but the demand for high levels of service increase, the snow and ice management industry is stressed to do more with less. We no longer have the luxury of time to melt from the “top down”—a slow and expensive process, both economically and environmentally. Our melting should be targeted

at the pavement surface. Anti-icing—“bottom up” melting—will weaken the bond between ice and pavement, and allow quicker success in snow removal.

Which of the following proactive steps can you incorporate into your snow and ice management plan? Whatever you decide, make sure it is documented in your winter maintenance policy—and