

MANAGING THE STORM

by Joel Ratcliff, CGCS

As Golf Course Superintendent, we are required to manage many different kinds of STORMS. A STORM of golfers on a frosty weekend morning in late April, a STORM of June Beetles or Gypsy Moths. We manage the Pythium or Brown Patch outbreak that occurs after the summer thunderSTORM. We manage the drought conditions when no thunderSTORMS come our way.

These are all difficult STORMS to manage but this article is going to address the erosion problem and our solution to the 100-year to 200-year STORMS that seem to arrive every 1 or 2 years.

Indian Spring Country Club is a 310-acre, 36-hole complex located 6 miles outside the Washington Beltway in Silver Spring, Maryland. One of the courses, the Chief, is located on the high side of the property and drains very well. Unfortunately, it drains onto the Valley course which wraps around the Chief in a flood plain for two waterways, Northwest branch and Bel-Pre creek.

Due to extensive development in the last decade, the amount of run-off in these creeks/watersheds has dramatically increased. Even a 1-inch storm that comes too fast can cause the streams to come out of their banks. This became apparent to me on May 6th when 5.2 inches of rain fell in 5 hours. The Valley course was inundated three greens, two tees, and several fairways were under water. Most of the damage from this STORM was repaired relatively quickly.

The club's primary concern is the erosion of the stream banks and loss of property adjoining the stream banks. When the state began to widen Layhill Road from a small 2-lane country road to a modern 4-lane highway, run-off into Bel-Pre creek was dramatically increased, thus causing even more erosion along the stream banks.

Three years ago a long process was begun to protect our property. Lawyers were retained to negotiate with the state to help defray the cost of the erosion control program. Engineers were hired to design the rip-rap plan. More negotiations to obtain the necessary permits from local and state agencies were held.

My management skills will be required in July and August when a contractor will be hired to install the rip-rap along Bel-Pre creek. Approximately 7,000 tons of stone will be needed with about 3,000 tons of extra soil to be removed. This translates into approximately 350 round trips with 10-wheel dumptrucks across the golf course. Stream crossing and silt dams will need to be constructed to protect other downstream properties. Trees need to be marked that must be saved, truck routes to be roped off, mounding of soil over irrigation lines to protect them from the trucks' weight. Top soil will have to be replaced, seed will be sown, sod will be laid, asphalt cart paths and driveways will be repaired and storms of golfers will have to be kept happy.

This long, hard project will be worth the effort if Murphy's Law can be managed and the course will be safer and more enjoyable for future years to come.

Education Notes

by Steve Cohoon, CGCS

The educational program for the June 13 meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents features a man who is no stranger to the association. Dr. Houston Couch will be with us once again to shed some insight into the technical world of pesticides. This month he will talk on the synergism of certain pesticides and what that means to the turfgrass manager. Dr. Couch's presentations are always both informative and entertaining with his unique style making it fun to keep abreast of the latest technology. This would also be an excellent meeting to bring your Assistant or Spray Foreman, to help make them a better employee. So come on out and see how you can use your pesticides more effectively.

I have also been pushing the computer seminar taught by Dr. Kevin Mathias. This is an excellent program and I encourage anyone who has a computer, or thinking of purchasing one, to attend. If you did not receive an entry form please contact Kevin or myself of your intention to attend. Do it soon as space is limited, and if you are certified, each seminar day is worth .6 CEU's.

I look forward to seeing you all at International Town and Country Club on June 13, and don't forget to RSVP your reservation to the Mid-Atlantic office as a courtesy to our host.

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