

Turfgrass Matters

Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents

Maryland Senate Visits Queenstown

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On August 29, 1995, the Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents and the Maryland Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee toured Queenstown Harbor Golf Links. The tour was arranged with the guidance of Maxine Adler, Esq., who is a lobbyist for the Maryland Association of Green Industries. MAAGCS is an active partner in this umbrella group consisting of Lawn Care, Arborists, Sod Growers, Nursery Growers, as well as the Maryland State Golf Association, the Mid-Atlantic Professional Golf Association, and the Greater Washington and Eastern Shore Association of Golf Course Superintendents.

Queenstown Harbor Golf Links is located in one of the environmentally sensitive Critical Areas of Maryland's tidewater region, and, since its inception, it is one of the few golf courses to have installed a comprehensive monitoring well program. As a result, it is able to provide documentation on the beneficial effects on ground water and surface water that have resulted from its conversion from agriculture to a golf course.

Hosts for the day were: Bill Shirk CGCS, Course Superintendent, Trent Wright, Course Professional, and Lex and Charles Birney, Managing Partners.

The day began with introductions. Bill Shirk talked about the history of the golf links and the hurdles they had to overcome during the seven plus years

of obtaining a permit. Needless to say, when the final approval was issued, groundbreaking began in earnest. Bill described the ground water monitoring well system, the locations as they relate to subsurface water flow, and the findings on nutrient loading. During five years of test data, a distinct downward trend is evident.

Bill led a caravan of course Superintendents, State Golf Association members, and EEA committee members to our first of many stops on the golf course. The agenda included test well sites, Critical Areas and Mitigation sites, as well as a beautiful butterfly garden with our final stop at Bill's environmental weather station.

At each stop, discussions enlightened our Senate guests about the day to day as well as the long-term decisions that confront Bill and the Birneys. Several course Superintendents could relate to IPM and Best Management Practices, as they pertain to their individual courses. Plant Protectant and Sprayer Technology as well as irrigation Delivery Systems created lively topics fielding many questions from legislative members. Chemical application and irrigation perceptions were met head-on. Hopefully, a clearer picture of both will stay fresh in the minds of our guests.

The staff of Queenstown Harbor Golf Links are also very proud of their commitment to the love they share for the environment. Bill discussed working

with various school groups, planting wetland areas, and allowing the use of ponds for state fish stocking programs. He also works in cooperation with the Wildfowl Trust of America and the Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage when planting in wildlife areas, selecting the placement of nest boxes for the different species of birds and the location of bat boxes which helps to control the mosquitos.

Our final stop at the weather station allowed Bill to emphasize on how the use of generated data coupled with close monitoring worked hand in hand with the daily decisions on plant protectant use, weed control, and irrigation practices at Queenstown Harbor Golf Links.

Clarence Blount, EEA Chairman, thanked the entire management team, the MAAGCS, and MAGI for the informative day and looks forward to reviewing legislative proposals having a better understanding of golf course maintenance programs

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