



WORKSHOP SUMMARY

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The key issues that poured out of the water management workshop were the increasingly complex regulatory environment surrounding irrigation water use, the need for improving water use efficiencies and the development of best management practices for irrigation system management.

Not a single participant at the workshop was working in a municipality that does not have some form of water use bylaw. A challenge facing sports turf managers is making the various forms of bylaws work for a sports field environment. A system that allows professional field managers to make application timing decisions within a restricted water use situation would make best use of a limited resource. Rather than applying water based on some arbitrary calendar and/or street address criteria, water should be applied in a manner that is appropriate for turf growing conditions. Many managers feel it would be better to have a fixed allocation of water each year to be applied as needed rather than working within a day of the week and/or street address system that is effective

for communicating with homeowners, but not particularly suited to the grass plant's needs.

As water restrictions increase, there appears to be a movement towards looking at alternatives to irrigating with treated municipal water. Some properties lend themselves to the construction of on-site irrigation ponds that may provide more flexibility with regards to water use. Capturing on-site runoff is one thing, but if plans call for tapping into an existing stream as a water source, extensive regulations apply including the need to develop a bypass pond and maintain a minimum stream flow. Although not discussed in detail at the workshop, waste water recycling systems that incorporate sports fields may be worthy of future investigation.

Efficiencies in water application are critical for sports turf managers to make best use of this critical resource. Regular auditing of system performance, knowing soil conditions and using some form of water budgeting all contribute to ensuring that water is being applied in an effective and logical fashion.

What's Inside WORKSHOP SESSIONS

The Protection of Our Water Resources: A Conservation Authority Perspective
Bob Edmondson, Director, Watershed Management Services, Conservation Halton

Water Efficiency in Halton Region
Wayne Galliher, Water/Wastewater Outreach Coordinator, Halton Region

Establishing a Water Use Baseline
Gregory Snaith, President, EnviroIrrigation Engineering, Inc.

Use It or Lose It: Best Management Practices for Water Management on Sports Fields
Pam Charbonneau, Turfgrass Specialist, OMAFRA



The general consensus of workshop participants was that water restrictions are an inevitable component of managing sports turf in the 21st century. The key to success is being an efficient water user and communicating with policy makers to ensure that water use restrictions conform with best management practices for water conservation in field management. ♦