

USGA

Water Everywhere And Not A Drop To Drink!

By: Mike Huck, Agronomist, Western Region

I wish there was no reason to write on this subject matter, but under the circumstances I feel it is most appropriate. The floods that have hit the north central portion of California and the Reno/Tahoe Nevada areas are truly a disaster. Many people's lives have been affected by this unusual weather pattern with countless dollars of damage and loss. Those of us unaffected by the floods should all count our blessings.

Golf courses will be cleaning up and repairing damage for a long period of time to follow. Direct kill of turf due to submersion may not be too severe since most of the flood water was very cold, the result of snow melt. The amount of submersion damage, however, will vary depending upon the following six factors:

- (1) Turfgrass species
- (2) Total amount of time submerged
- (3) Depth of the water
- (4) Light intensity
- (5) Physiological condition of the turf
- (6) Temperature

There is also a real potential for problems to develop from silt and soil deposits that may not be realized until the stress of summer arrives. A layer of fine particle soil deposited over a sand putting green will seal off the surface if not adequately cleaned. Large deposits should first be removed by shovel on greens and tees. Then I would strongly recommend that contaminated greens and tees be washed thoroughly to remove any silt or soil before play commences.

Large deposits of sand, silt and soil that

may be left behind on fairways and roughs will require a lot of time and labor to remove. A tractor with a grading box is the best method to begin the process of removing the "bulk" of the material. Hosing fairways clean after the bulk of the material is mechanically removed is not practical. Power bunker rakes and plow blades are excellent for finishing the job without causing too much damage to the turf. At the very least enough of the soil must be removed so that a majority of the grass blades are exposed to sunlight.

These fine silt and soil particles can cause problems in fairways where a layer is left behind in the thatch. Irrigation becomes difficult and localized dry spots often surface. About all that can be done is to aerate fairways often and pulverize the cores. This will blend native soil with the silt deposits and over time break up the layers. Slicing fairways is a quick way to open up problem dry spots as they develop. During the coming summer slicing may become a nonstop program in worst case scenarios.

Replanting may be required of some areas and at this time of year you may be forced to use some grass varieties you would normally not consider. Perennial ryegrass will make a relatively quick, playable fairway, but if your desire is to return to bermudagrass, the transition may be painful and slow. You may want to consider using a fine fescue or redtop as a nurse crop and then begin overseeding common bermudagrass back into the stand when soil temperatures begin to reach the mid-sixties.

These two grasses will not provide the quality of fairway in the short term that ryegrass will, but over the long run, the bermudagrass will reestablish more rapidly within either of these turfs.

Finally, communicate with your golfers regarding what they can expect this coming season and it would be a great idea to begin this process now. If you feel posting this article where golfers can read it would be beneficial, please feel free to do so. Good luck to all of you in your golf course recovery efforts and one last thing, please mark your calendars for our upcoming regional conferences. ▶

Barbara Mikel (Cont'd)

based in the San Fernando Valley and Bay Area." Tiring of the commute along highway 5, she decided to learn to fly her own plane, and obtained her license in 1977. She recalls one occasion when past Association President, Brian Bagley flew with her to a meeting in Napa. "Brian maintained total composure until landing. That is when I heard this long sigh. I don't think he was critiquing the landing, I think he was happy to be on the ground again."

Like Brian, who was grateful for a safe landing, as an Association we too are grateful for the many contributions and professionalism Barbara has brought to our Association. Through her guidance, dedication and direction we have been able to assume a position of leadership within our industry. Thank you, Barbara, and perhaps we should thank fate as well. ▶



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