

Required Reading

Mike Huck, USGA Agronomist
 USGA Green Section — Southwest Region

Recently I read the book “*Tapped Out - The Coming World Crisis in Water and What We Can Do About It*” authored by former Senator Paul Simon. The book discusses current and future problems that we face with water shortages, not only in the West but other parts of our country and the rest of the world.

According to Mr. Simon, there is not a region of the United States (or the world for that matter) that will not face serious water shortages within the next twenty years - with or without a drought occurrence! The problem stems from a combination of things including worldwide population growth, increasing living standards that consume more water per person and a finite supply of fresh water. In short, we are using our potable quality water sources faster than nature can replenish them.

Other issues highlighted include the influence that global warming could have on coastal water supplies as rising ocean levels result in greater seawater intrusion. Another concern is the effects of ongoing irrigation in arid climates contributing to salinization of both soils and groundwater. (Anyone familiar with the problems on the western side of California’s San Joaquin Valley realizes this potential.) The former senator paints a rather bleak but (I feel) realistic picture of where we are heading with regards to water. He warns that the next war

in the Middle Eastern nations will more likely take place over water, not oil. To be honest, it opened my eyes as to how serious of a problem we all could face very soon.

Mr. Simon recommends various strategies to address the problem, the first being funding research for more efficient desalinization techniques. In his opinion that this is the only realistic long-term solution. Pollution management is also mentioned, linking water quality to water quantity. Finally a “short term” solution recommended is conservation. Most in the golf business, and particularly those of us located in dryer climates, understand this concept and can predict that the use of reclaimed or other alternative water sources will soon be the norm in our industry no matter where we are located.

The point of this entire discussion is that very few politically influential people in this world appear to recognize that we are headed toward a worldwide water crisis. In such a water dependent industry as golf, we need to educate ourselves on this issue and plan ahead. With this in mind, I encourage each and every one of you to get a copy of this book and read it. In fact get several copies and encourage your general manager, golf professional, green committee and board of directors to read it before it is too late and your irrigation supply is “*Tapped Out!*”

Pesticide Ban Gains Momentum in Sonoma

By Matt Weiser
 Reprinted from the Santa Rosa Press Democrat

Sonoma is moving ahead with its own proposal for a ban on pesticides. The Sonoma City Council is set to form a committee to develop a proposal to end the use of pesticides and herbicides on city property.

During debate on the subject during a recent council meeting, a majority of the council appeared to support the idea, which was proposed by Councilman Ken Brown.

The City of Sebastopol adopted a ban on pesticides on May 2nd and also established a voluntary toxics-free zone citywide to encourage private property owners to reduce their use of yard chemicals.

Brown said he’s not yet ready to take the idea citywide but said city government should set an example for the public.

“It’s the duty of city government to show the way,” he said. “We have control over our fate with regard to pesticides and

herbicides on city-owned land. It’s important because people are extremely sensitive to the use of these products — philosophically and physically.”

Critics say it’s going to take longer with Sonoma because it’s a more conservative community and a more conservative City Council. We know the City staff has some problems with it because it’s going to mean more work for them.

The City of Arcata, who banned pesticides this past year, says it actually saved money by eliminating pesticides and herbicides because it no longer had to do the training and record-keeping required by law when chemicals are sprayed.

But Sebastopol estimates it would have to spend \$30,000 on an extra full-time employee to equal the maintenance levels achieved with chemicals. The city also hopes to deploy volunteers to pull weeds instead. /