

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

is a proud member of these green industry professional organizations:

ALCA

Associated Landscape Contractors of America, 12200 Sunrise Valley Dr., Suite 150, Reston, VA 22091; (703) 620-6363.

American Sod Producers Association, 1855-A Hicks Rd., Rolling Meadows, IL 60008; (708) 705-9898.

Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, 1421 Research Park Dr., Lawrence, KS 66049-3859; (913) 841-2240.

International Society of Arboriculture, P.O. Box 908, Urbana, IL 61801; (217) 328-2032.

International Turfgrass Society, Crop & Soil Environmental Sciences, VPI-SU, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0403; (703) 231-9796.

National Arborist Association, The Meeting Place Mall, P.O. Box 1094, Amherst, NH 03031-1094; (603) 673-3311.

National Golf Foundation, 1150 South U.S. Highway One, Jupiter, FL 33477; (407) 744-6006.

Ohio Turfgrass Foundation, 2021 Coffey Rd., Columbus, OH 43210; (614) 292-2601.

PGMS

Professional Grounds Management Society, 10402 Ridgland Rd., Suite 4, Cockeysville, MD 21030; (301) 667-1833.



Professional Lawn Care Association of America, 1000 Johnson Ferry Rd., NE Suite C-135, Marietta, GA 30068-2112; (404) 977-5222.

Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment, 1155 15th St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20005; (202) 296-6085.



Sports Turf Managers Association, P.O. Box 98056, Las Vegas, NV 89193-8056; (702) 739-8052.

Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association, 8500 Normandale Lake Blvd., Suite 1200, Bloomington, MN 55437; (612) 831-8515.

AS WE SEE IT

RON HALL, SENIOR EDITOR



We'd better take a stand before water-use decisions dry us up

The only sound to compete with the lubbing of the wide-beamed fishing charters is the complaining screech of a displaced gull. "No Wake!" the big square sign on the concrete fishing pier commands.

Who wouldn't take all this freshwater for granted?

(Literally millions of American homeowners who can't water their lawns or landscapes. Thousands of green industry professionals, always the first—sometimes the only—business people asked to make sacrifices "to help us through the drought, you know.")

The dredged Portage River channel is a roily congested freeway. Barely 30 yards across and full-bellied from the previous night's storms, it gathers up the astonishing parade of powerboats being disgorged by riverside marinas.

The boats, bow to stern, idle toward the river's mouth. There the captains finally jam their throttles down and fling up trailing fantails of silvery watery coins.

The freshwater here on Lake Erie is seemingly inexhaustible, even for those of us who have always lived on the shores of the Great Lakes. We don't take its quality for granted (we've learned some bitter lessons about runoff and pollution), just its availability.

This is where our drinking water comes from, our cooking water, our shower water, the water for our flowers and for our lawns.

Why even give it a thought?

Turn on the faucet. Use as much as you want. Pay the monthly bill.

The cost of the water? Hey, it's hardly noticeable, compared to other expenses that is.

That's not the case everywhere in the United States.

Water-use restrictions are springing up in the unlikeliest of places: the Pacific Northwest (see related story in this month's "Hot Topics" section), parts of Montana and Idaho, South Florida.

And the first action any water board

takes is the most obvious: stop watering lawns and landscapes.

This is not the answer to an aging, inadequate water/supply system, too much development too soon (i.e. too many acres of concrete parking lots, streets), or a deteriorating aquifer.

Actually, we in the green industry can and should help alleviate some of these drought problems.

We have solid research (hopefully more is coming) showing that green, growing turfgrass, can help recharge water systems, can dramatically reduce runoff.

Some areas recognize this. For example, the state of Maryland, in its efforts to safeguard the Chesapeake Bay, insists that bare-earth construction sites be rapidly covered with turfgrass or landscapes.

We're the professionals. We have the knowledge to teach the public about the water-conserving benefits of greenery. Also, about efficient irrigation systems and practices.

The California green industry several years ago determined that it *must* have a say on water-use boards and authorities. It determined that it *must* continually educate the public to the benefits of living, green lawns and landscapes. These benefits extend far beyond the fraction of one percent of a system's water needed to keep lawns and landscapes green and healthy.

Pacific Northwest green professionals learned the same lesson this summer.

Who gets the water and how it's going to be used—these decisions will be made by those industries that have worked themselves into the water-use decision-making process, before water becomes a crisis, a political issue.

We've got to have a say on our water authorities.