

FROM THE PUBLISHER



Cut your water usage by 20 percent. Don't water on even-numbered days. Water only between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 p.m. No new turfgrass areas will be planted for the duration of the crisis. These and more are the mandates coming down from the water districts around the country.

How are we supposed to react to these statements? Is it possible to comply and still maintain the quality of our golf courses, sports fields, parks and recreational areas, and large turf areas?

I believe we can. However, if we get the same mandates next year, and water districts want us to again cut our water use by 20 percent, that will make it much tougher. If in two years they mandate another 20 percent cut, it will be virtually impossible to maintain the quality of our facilities.

This is what we are faced with... and we are going to have to learn to live with it. How we handle the situation now will determine how we live with it in the future.

If we cut back on our usage of water by 20 percent, and other facilities are ordered to cut back, we have a problem. The following year, when all facilities are got by without cuts the first year. This is precisely what is now taking place in many areas of the country.

A better analogy might be something like this: A family with two children lives next door to a working couple with no children. Each household is asked to cut its water usage by 20 percent.

The couple with the family can cut back easily, because they have been using enormous amounts of water for washing clothes, letting the water run when washing the dishes, taking showers, brushing their teeth or washing their cars, etc. The working couple have not been using their water nearly as much because they are not home during the day, so it is harder for them to cut their usage by 20 percent. However, both households meet their goals.

The following year, both households are again asked to cut their water usage by 20 percent. Since the family of four have been wasting much of their water, they still have room to conserve. But the working couple, who never used that much water in the first place and then cut back by 20 percent will find it an impossible task to cut another 20 percent. Yet this is what some water districts will be requesting. To say they are not realistic is an understatement.

I believe we will have to document at every step of the way how much water we used last year, how much we are conserving this year, etc. It won't be long before we need this documentation.

Recently, various organizations within the green industry met in Chicago, hopefully to begin what I would like to call the Green Industry Council, or Green Industry Forum. Whatever it is called, by meeting on a regular basis, the different associations in the green industry will begin to interface more with each other.

The Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA), the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), the American Sod Producers Association (ASPA), the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), the Irrigation Association (IA), the National Arborist Association (NAA), Professional Grounds Management Society (PGMS), and the Professional Lawn Care Association of America (PLCAA) were in attendance.

What came out of this meeting was a resolution approved by those in attendance, that the Irrigation Association (IA) be spokesman for the industry on water issues. The IA is already in the process of developing a speaker's bureau, as well as brochures and video presentations. The goal is to help inform the water purveyors as well as the municipalities and large users of water on what the irrigation industry is doing to conserve water. There are a lot of people who have misconceptions as to how much water is actually used. We must begin to talk to our water districts and show them that we not only are concerned, but we are actually doing something about conserving water. We have to inter-face with them before they go off half cocked and mandate water restrictions that we won't be able to live with.

If your association was not one of those in attendance in Chicago, let them know. They should be there the next time such a meeting is called.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis J. Smith".