

## WATER-USE PERMITS REQUIRED FOR GEORGIA GOLF COURSES

Many golf superintendents in Georgia who have failed to apply for agricultural water-use permits are putting their courses in jeopardy. Under the provisions of a new state law, a permit is required for all groundwater and surface water withdrawals of three million gallons per month or more for agricultural uses.

According to Tony Tyson, a University of Georgia Extension Service engineer, the use of the word "agricultural" in the water-use law has led to confusion and problems among golf course superintendents. "People involved with golf courses normally don't think of themselves as agricultural," he said.

"If they're watering fairways, even nine-hole golf courses would probably use that much water," Tyson explained. "If they water just the greens and tees, they probably wouldn't use enough water to require a permit, although some 18-hole courses might need a permit even then."

Permit applications are automatically approved for any golf course or other recreational turf area with a withdrawal system that was in place before July 1, 1988, as long as the applications are sent in by July

1, 1991 to the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. The county extension office has applications and instructions on the permit law.

The only exceptions to the new law are in the Chattahoochee River watershed, upstream from Peachtree Creek in north Georgia, and groundwater withdrawals in Chatam, Effingham, Bryan, and Glynn counties on the Georgia coast. Recreational turf facilities in those areas are considered industrial users and require industrial water use permits.

In other areas, if a golf course pumps an average of 100,000 gallons of water per day in any month from any single source, the approximate amount required to water 14 acres at two inches per week, it must have an agricultural use permit, according to Tyson.

Certain very large athletic complexes may also need a permit. "There will be a few athletic complexes that require permits," Tyson said. "But it's primarily golf courses that will need a permit under this law."

EPD officials pointed out that applica-

tions should be sent in before the 1991 deadline. "It's to their advantage to get permits now," explained David Ashley, manager of the EPD Water Resources Program. "During this first phase we'll issue a permit for the full capacity of the system. But there's a chance the permit will be reduced after that. In some areas you may not get a permit for the maximum capacity of the system."

"The way the law is written, we're bound to do a more stringent review of the applications after the initial sign-up period," Ashley added.

## WATER CONSERVATION GROUP HOPES TO UNITE GOLF COURSE FACTIONS

Recent discussions between the Golf Course Water Conservation Group in San Diego, CA, and developers, governmental agencies, and environmental organizations are expected to result in increased cooperation between the groups. According to John Moore, vice president of the conserva-



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