



Guinness, a 4-year-old Labrador/collie mix, helps Joe Kinlin discourage the geese at Bey Lea Municipal GC in Toms River, N.J. This photo shows one of Bey Lea's irrigation ponds with the vegetative buffer and fencing that the facility put in place to control the geese population. Photo courtesy of Joe Kinlin

NEWS & notes

Debra S. Swartz, formerly with the Michigan Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Program and a seminar instructor for GCSAA, recently joined e-par USA as the organization's Great Lakes regional representative and environmental specialist. In September, **Jim Sluiter** joined e-par USA as the organization's Florida regional representative and sustainability specialist. Most recently Sluiter was staff ecologist and manager of Audubon International's Cooperative Sanctuary Program. "We're thrilled to have Debbie on our team," said Kevin A. Fletcher, Ph.D., president and CEO of e-par USA. "She's an incredibly knowledgeable and well-respected veteran of the environmental movement in golf and turf operations, and she brings with her a focus on education and training that will be critical to our goal of having the use of environmental management systems become commonplace throughout the industry." Fletcher added that Sluiter brings skill and passion, as well as expertise and leadership, to the organization. "It's a homerun for us and will serve our growing membership base well," he said. In concert with the launch earlier this year of its Environmental Management System for Golf in the U.S., e-par USA is developing a network of regional environmental leaders to help support growth, provide training and education, and deliver on-site consultation and auditing for the program.



Policing the geese

Geese populations in New Jersey are on the rise, and they love to congregate on open turf areas like those found at Bey Lea Municipal Golf Course in Toms River Township. Geese droppings are not only a nuisance to golfers playing on the course, they are also a source of bacteria affecting water quality in the Long Swamp Creek. Bacteria in the water draining from the golf course enter the creek, which then flows into the Toms River and eventually the Barnegat Bay.

A newly completed project at Bey Lea Municipal GC aims to tackle this problem. With a grant from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), the Barnegat Bay Partnership (BBP) coordinated the installation of a 25- to 30-foot-wide vegetative buffer of native plants around each of the four ponds on the course last fall. Vegetative buffers are one of the most effective goose management techniques. The buffers planted at Bey Lea are a mix of wetland species, shrubs and tall grasses. Geese avoid feeding and nesting in areas where tall vegetation obstructs their access to the water and may hide predators.

The township of Toms River, the BBP and the contractors, Birdsall Services Group and Down To Earth Landscaping, worked together to complete the project. To keep geese away from the newly planted areas, the project included a wooden lathe and rope fence, which will be removed once the plants are established.

The installation of vegetated pond buffers at Bey Lea is part of a larger NJDEP-approved watershed management plan to implement projects to improve water quality in Long Swamp Creek.

Geese management is a major component of this plan. The NJDEP has identified fecal coliform (bacteria found in goose droppings and other animal waste) and nitrogen as the principal pollutants in the Long Swamp Creek.

In addition to being a goose barrier, the vegetative buffer also acts as a filter, with the deeper roots of the native plants helping to remove pollutants from stormwater runoff. The buffers also are adding to the beauty of the course. According to Bey Lea Golf Course Class A superintendent Joe Kinlin, "Everyone at the course can't wait to see all the plantings mature. Golfers and staff all feel that these plantings will not just help the environment, but will also enhance the aesthetic quality of the golf course."

GCM

This article originally appeared in the spring-summer 2012 issue of the *Barnegat Bay Beat*, the quarterly publication of the Barnegat Bay Partnership at Ocean County College. Joe Kinlin is the GCSAA Class A superintendent at Bey Lea Municipal Golf Course in Toms River, N.J., and a 17-year member of the association.