

GCSAA Releases Results of First Golf Course Environmental Profile

Editor's Note: People and the press often make and repeat claims about how golf courses affect the environment, but previously a centralized and coordinated, easily accessible database has been lacking. There certainly have been peer-reviewed scientific research studies over the years that independently have shown that properly managed turfgrass is not a threat to the environment. This effort by the GCSAA's Environmental Institute for Golf is to capture the overall impact and practices of the entire industry.

This is the first of four focused surveys addressing components and practices used on golf courses. It covers overall land-use characteristics and environmental stewardship to lay the groundwork for more specific surveys to follow on water, fertilizer and pesticide use.

The water and fertilizer surveys have been completed and are being tallied now for release later this year. The final survey of this first round of baseline data-gathering, pesticide use will be rolled out this month. There will be follow-up surveys at periodic intervals to measure how well golf courses are doing in making environmental improvements.

Here are the summary conclusions excerpted from the first survey on land use and environmental stewardship. It is very revealing and positive, but also sets the stage for more involvement and improvement:

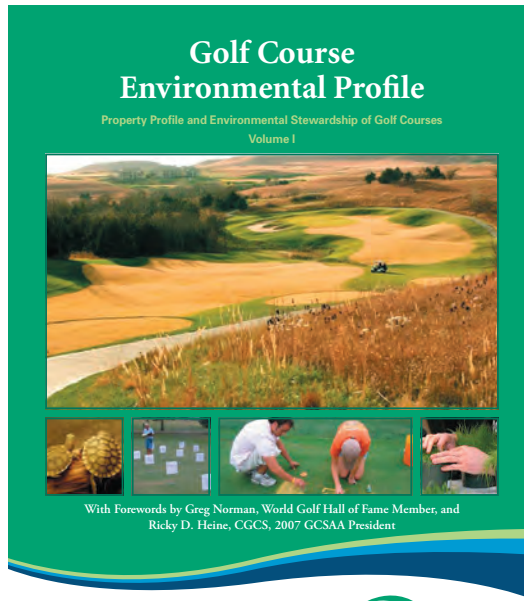
MAINTAINED TURFGRASS

- Contrary to popular belief, the entire golf course is not composed of high-maintenance turfgrass.
- The total acreage of an average 18-hole golf course is 150 acres. Of that total, 100 acres are maintained turfgrass. Fifty-eight acres, the rough and driving range, are not highly maintained areas.

- On most golf courses, the highly maintained turfgrass is dedicated to the three acres of greens and three acres of tees.
- Additionally, some golf courses have highly maintained turfgrass on the fairways, which comprise 30 acres of an average 18-hole golf course.

TURFGRASS SPECIES

- The grass species grown on each



With Forewords by Greg Norman, World Golf Hall of Fame Member, and Ricky D. Heine, CGCS, 2007 GCSAA President

The first of four focused surveys addressing components and practices used on golf courses. Two more surveys are scheduled to be released this month

- component of a golf course varies depending on the agronomic region of the country, supporting the principle of growing the best adapted turfgrass species for the particular geographic location.
- Cool-season grasses are grown on 66 percent of all maintained turfgrass acreage.
- Kentucky bluegrass is the most widely grown cool-season grass, found on 23 percent of all maintained

turfgrass acres.

- Warm-season grasses, mainly bermudagrass, are grown on 34 percent of all maintained turfgrass acreage.

NON-TURFGRASS ACREAGE

- The non-turfgrass landscape on golf courses is substantial and can make an important contribution to green space and wildlife habitats for local communities.
- Non-turfgrass landscape of an average 18-hole golf course is 50 acres, including 35 acres of elements such as forests, wetlands, ponds, streams or other specialized habitats.

• Facilities have the opportunity and the responsibility to maintain these areas in a sustainable manner to further enhance the environmental qualities of a golf facility.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

- On average, over the last 10 years, an 18-hole golf course has made five environmental improvements.
- Approximately 29 percent of 18-hole golf courses are involved in a formal, voluntary environmental stewardship program.
- Facilities involved in formal, voluntary environmental programs have made an average of seven improvements to enhance the golf-course environment in that 10-year period.
- The data suggest that such programs are having a positive impact on the golf course environment.

This report provides a review of land use on golf courses. The results of this initial survey establish a baseline that can be compared to data from future surveys to identify change over time and highlight golf course land use to guide golf industry agronomic and environmental initiatives.

A copy of the complete first report on the GCSAA's Environmental Golf Course Environmental Profile can be found at: <http://www.eifg.org/programs/GCRPfullreport.pdf>