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Kopec and Dr. Charles Mancino will oversee the facility, which has benefited from donations of money and equipment from scores of companies and the Cactus & Flue Golf Course Superintendents Association, among others. "This is a budding example of how the industry can support the universities and stay close to their programs. And the cost-benefit ratio is tremendous for everyone involved," said Kopec.

The number-one benefit will be the laboratory's work aimed at decreasing water application to sports turf by having better techniques in irrigation scheduling, he said. "Second, we need to develop new grass varieties that would use less water than Bermudagrass and that would be suitable as a grass cover. We're not looking to replace a 2-1/2 acre ballfield of highly trafficked Bermudagrass with another grass. We're looking to develop new grasses, perhaps domesticate some naturally occurring desert species into a turf setting where it would retain 95 to 100 percent grass cover and take five or six irrigations during the summertime at most."

Research on efficient water and secondary reclaimed water for turf will be "a strong part of the program because there's quite a populace being established in the Southwest and the research we do here is applicable to Tucson, Phoenix, Las Vegas and deserts of Southern California," Kopec said.

"There are 500-plus golf courses in this area and a lot of their turfs need this special management." Weed control is a problem at desert courses in the Southwest, he said, because Bermudagrass is grown in the summertime and courses overseeded with ryegrasses and other cool-season grasses from October to May.

Mancino is looking in to curly mesquitegrass, a low-maintenance grass native in Arizona at 2,800 feet and above. "For lower elevations, we're looking at buffalo grass, salt grass, paspalums and potential domestication of some other range species. Some would be applicable to golf courses," Kopec said.

The eight-acre facility includes 6-1/2 acres of turf. The laboratory structure contains a wet laboratory, office space, equipment garage and storage space.

Crucial to research efforts are the world's two largest lysimeters for dollar and copper Bayleton® and brown patch, fusarium blight, snow molds, for rhizoctonia brown spot, powdery mildew, red thread, rusts, summer snow mold and leaf spot. "TPC at Sawgrass, The 16th Hole," golfer Ben Crenshaw said: "I'm pleased that the ACSP is taking such an active role in showing how golf courses can enhance and protect wildlife habitat. Golf courses over the years have provided valuable open spaces, greenbelts, and natural sanctuaries for wildlife. I am hopeful that the efforts of the ACSP will increase public awareness about the positive effects a golf course can offer to the environment." The five prints in the series, "TPC at Sawgrass, The 16th and 17th Holes," golfer Ben Crenshaw said: "I'm pleased that the ACSP is taking such an active role in showing how golf courses can enhance and protect wildlife habitat. Golf courses over the years have provided valuable open spaces, greenbelts, and natural sanctuaries for wildlife. I am hopeful that the efforts of the ACSP will increase public awareness about the positive effects a golf course can offer to the environment."

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