

# PEER-TO-PEER: BETTER TURF THROUGH NETWORKING

*MGCSA Superintendents were asked:*

*Tree removal and trimming are critical and dangerous aspects of golf course maintenance. Do you employ an on staff arborist, contract the work out, or do the best you can in house? What do you do with the wood?*

**At Southview Country Club** we do as much of the tree removal and clean up in-house as possible. We do not employ an arborist but however will contract any removals or trimming that are questionable in safety. I am not willing to take any chances when it comes to safety. We wear hard helmets and Kevlar chaps whenever we are running chainsaws. These essential personal protective devices should never be over looked and have prevented injuries for us on more than one occasion. We chip all or our own brush and either give the wood away for firewood or dispose of it if it is not suitable for heating.

- Jeramie Gossman  
Southview Country Club

**At Minikahda,** we contract all of our work out. We have been working with Tim's Tree Service for the past 30 years. All of the wood is hauled off site.

- Jeff Johnson  
The Minikahda Club

**At Olivia Golf Course,** we do the best we can in-house that our greens committee selects trees for removal and major trimming, trees that are to be removed are felled (by myself or an experienced member/volunteer) a day or two before our course member work days. We generally have one work day in the fall and one in the spring with most of the tree removal done in the fall. Members bring trailers, rakes, saws, tractors, loaders, etc to remove the wood. Members are free to take as much of the wood as they would like the rest is piled on the course brush pile and burned once a year as a training exercise for our city fire department. We have a couple of members with access to boom/man lift trucks and trimming is done when ever conditions allow...typically after the ground is frozen in the fall. Often the resulting brush on the ground doesn't get completely cleaned up until our spring work day.

- Rolly Rauenhorst  
Olivia GC

**At Minocqua,** we recently hired an individual who previously worked for a



forestry/tree service company. Prior to this we did a small percentage of work within our staff and contracted the majority out to a tree service contractor. Occasionally we will rent a boom lift to do any jobs that need to be done in the air. We haul brush off on a trailer, and would like to get a chipper in the future as our brush pile is enormous. The logs are usually taken home by staff and used as heat for the winter.

- Bill Stein  
Minocqua CC

**At Somerset Country Club,** we do not have an on staff arborist. As much tree work as we do, we certainly could have one. The tree chipper is one of our most valuable tools. A power pruner with a homemade tree bucket has saved us a lot of money too. The Somerset staff does most of the tree work. We do have special pruning done in trees too big for us. And we hire-out the work where the property line borders the highways.

We used to have a fire burning stove at the maintenance facility. Now we put the wood outside the fence and it is gone within hours. The wood that is too big to handle we haul down to the tub grinder. The wood chips that we make are used to mulch evergreen trees and new plantings. Somerset used to have a stump grinder for the dutch elm that moved through. With all the ash trees that may need to come down it may be time to purchase another

stump grinder.

- James Bade  
Somerset Country Club

**At Tanners Brook,** we remove the dead trees ourselves. With a parkland style golf course, we don't have a lot of trees anyway. We pile and burn the brush in the winter time and sell the wood to the golfers. We use the money generated to pay for upgrades in our shop.

-Kevin Clunis CGCS  
Tanners Brook GC

There is another thing that MGCSA members can do with the trees they cut down. They could recycle them. There are various people that are always looking for logs to cut into lumber, especially hard woods. As you know I am involved with recycling used and scrap lumber to make my bluebird boxes. Many hobbieist, furniture makers, cabinet makers, farmers, etc. have their own small lumber mills where they cut, dry, and store for use. You probably could find them on the web via Google. Just a thought.

- Jack Hauser  
Bluebird Recovery Program

**At Hiawatha,** we have a Forestry Service within our Park Board. The branches are chipped, large trunks are haul away by a service. The smaller pieces are cut up by the staff and used for firewood.

- Robert Porter  
Hiawatha GC

**At The Ridge at Castle Pines North** in sunny Colorado, we perform the work in-house and burn some of the wood in fire pits outside the clubhouse entrance during the winter evenings. The remainder of the wood is stockpiled and eventually chipped at the end of the winter season. Once the wood has been chipped, we use it around our Ponderosa Pines throughout the property.

- David Soltvedt  
The Ridge at Castle Pines North

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## Peer-to-Peer-

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**At Dellwood,** we use a tree service to do trimming and precarious removals. We do most of the tree removals and canopy raising. All wood is dealt with in-house. Trimmings and softwood trees are burned on site. Hardwood trees are given to members or split for bonfires at the clubhouse. We recently hired a certified arborist to do a tree inventory, evaluation and management plan.

- Eric Peterson  
Dellwood GC

**At New Richmond,** all of our tree removal is done in house. We have a wood chipper for much of the clean-up and rent a stump grinder for a week each year to clean up the stumps. The wood chips are used on the course for mulch plus we give them away to members. A couple of the crew members use the wood. One heats his house with it and then he sells some of it. Any major tree trimming is done by a tree service.

- Tom Johnson  
New Richmond GC

**At Ruttger's Bay Lake Lodge,** we remove most of our wind/storm fall trees ourselves. Any trees that I feel are too dangerous to fall or are close to buildings we hire a local tree company to drop for us. All of the wood that we generate from trees is used for the more than 15 fire pits that we have at the resort for our guests to enjoy. In an average season we will use in excess of 25 cords (that's not a typo) of firewood in fireplaces and the outdoor fire pits.

- JW Wollner  
Ruttger's Bay Lake Lodge

**At St. Cloud Country Club,** we do not employ an arborist. The only tree trimming done in-house is from the ground only with pole saws. All of our trimming is contracted each year. Removals are done in-house if the tree is manageable to our staff and this is determined by the supt. or asst. supt. The wood is sometimes offered to members and/or burned. When contracted out we retain the woodchips and use them in areas of our golf course.

- Dan Hanson  
St. Cloud CC

**At Crosswoods Golf Course,** we just completed a renovation of our 5th hole that included widening the fairway and construction of a new green. All in all, it

required about 3 acres of trees to be removed. We hired a commercial logger to remove the trees. Holy cow! They sheared the trees in three hours and chipped them all in three hours, quite an operation. The chips were hauled off to burn in coal fired power plants. Nothing was left except stumps. Aside from this project, we usually drop/trim trees in house and offer the fire wood to members at no charge.

- Michael Stone  
Crosswoods GC

**At Chisago Lakes Golf Course,** we complete tree removal and trimming in-house. Also we have a member work day in which the trees we want removed we fall and the members can cut-up and take the wood. We concentrate on a few heavily wooded areas that we want to thin. They pile the brush and wood they don't want and we haul it to our burn pile. The work day is on a Saturday in December from 9am-noon with the course providing lunch afterwards. We usually have around 25 participants with only a handful taking wood. Many members enjoy the camaraderie with the other members and start asking about the day early in the fall. We also tie the day to our pro shop clearance sale and the following year golf memberships are available.

- Brian Brown  
Chisago Lakes Golf Course

**At Minnesota Valley Country Club,** we budget roughly \$20,000 annually for a line item called "trees and shrubs." We expense tree and shrub trimming, removals, and new plantings into this category (approx. \$13,000). We also expense annual elm tree injections and ash tree drench spray into this line item (approx. \$7,000). We trim trees in-house on an annual basis during the winter months, rather extensively, but from the ground only, no climbing. We pull a burn permit for the month of March and burn the trimmings on a gravel road at our driving range. Any climbing work for thinning and deadwood is completed by professional arborists that are brought in annually during the winter. They also do any large removals and difficult hangers for us, and are brought in for major storm damage. Typically, this wood is removed from the property by the arborist. We have a total tree inventory of 1,230 mature trees. Great topic!

- Mike Brower  
Minnesota Valley CC

Any minor pruning we would do on our own throughout the winter, including

basal pruning. I had the good fortune to fell over 300 trees before I left the great Midwest, only one fell to date though since I have been in Oregon. They grow them a lot bigger out here. At the golf course we would cut all logs to 8'8" and stockpile them near the shop. By the spring time we would typically have enough for at least one load for the local timber company and usually make enough money to cover the labor and then some. Anything that was not big enough to sell for timber, but still good for firewood I would let a few wood hounds from my staff go out and cut and haul away. We would then try and chip any debris that was not worth anything as firewood and use the chips in the perennial beds. It is that time of year, and I am beginning to miss the smell of my Husqvarna, please fell for me.

- Tod Blankenship  
Oregon State University

**At Marshall Golf Club,** we usually contract out our tree removal issues. Last year we removed about 20 old Poplars on the course during the month of February. The company was excellent in their detail. They supplied clean-up and stump removal in all bids. This year we have only 4 poplars that are marginal but are removing them along with some other older trees. For the most part we keep our membership informed during this process and fortunately many who have heated workshops have collected most of the wood for burning. The leftover debris we chip ourselves with our chipper and use this material as mulch for newly spaded trees. Any old and weak Elms that are removed during this time or throughout the year are immediately disposed of off-site at the local tree dump. We have found out that in most cases it's cheaper to contract it out if the price is reasonable, which allows more time to concentrate on more important issues on the course.

- Kurt Hovaldt  
Marshall Golf Club

**At TPC Twin Cities,** we contract out large tree removal and trimming. We will do some pruning and trimming that we can reach from the ground with a pole pruner or chain saw. We chip all of the wood. Most of our tree work stems from losses to Oak Wilt so chipping is the preferred solution.

- Roger Stewart  
TPC Twin Cities