

Grabbing A Tiger By The Tail

By Larry Gilhuly, agronomist, West Region

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There is no question that the major issue facing golf today is the availability and use of water. But what happens when the exact opposite occurs? What happens when too much water is received in a short period of time and causes major damage? This happened last year in Calgary, Alberta, and the story of perseverance is worth sharing.

The Glencoe Golf & Country Club is a private, 45-hole club located outside of Calgary. In 2012, the golf club decided to start rebuilding the Forest course. The construction was scheduled to be completed in June 2013; however, a heavy rainstorm one week before the scheduled reopening dumped four inches of rain on the course and surrounding mountains. The combination of heavy rain and melting snow pack resulted in a horrific flood that destroyed much of the golf course. After this devastation, many would have folded up the tents and looked at the situation with great negativity. Such was not the case with Kerry Watkins, AGS, and the maintenance staff at The Glencoe. After another multimillion dollar renovation, the course is set to open in August, despite a recent rain incident that was eerily similar to the one on 2013.

One year from the day when four inches of rain caused the Elbow River next to the golf course to flood, this agronomist was experiencing a two inch rainfall at



The nearly two miles of Tiger Dam added to protect The Glencoe Golf & Country Club was definitely good insurance. Note: the white mark on the tree to the right which shows the height of the river the year before.

the same site. However, measures had been taken to minimize the potential for flooding by installing nearly two miles of a material called Tiger Dam. This water-filled material was bolted to an asphalt path along the perimeter of the golf course and, when combined with over 500 feet of concrete road dividers, it offered an additional three feet of protection in case the river crested. Despite the cost of nearly \$1 million (\$475,000 to purchase the Tiger Dam tubes, \$200,000 in materials, and \$100,000 to set up and take down) this club was not going to let nature win again.

While the lack of water is a major issue around the country, sometimes too much water can be a major problem. In this case, the folks at The Glencoe grabbed the tiger by the tail, added some teeth to their golf course protection, and found a way to beat back a natural force for years to come.

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