

Noting that chapters will be integral to the success of revenue generation, membership growth and retention, and marketing efforts, discussion also included an examination of chapter effectiveness. Specifically, the delegates were charged with providing the board and staff direction as to how the association could best invest resources to enhance chapter operations.

The top three items were:

- **membership recruitment and retention;**
- **chapter executive development and support;**
- **chapter meeting effectiveness (attendance, timing, satisfaction, value, etc.).**

It was the consensus that many of the issues were interrelated and thus could be addressed if programs and services are developed and coordinated appropriately. Once again, support for expanding the field staff pilot program was communicated, and suggested as a means to implement effectiveness programs.

Delegates also expressed interest in providing support to GCSAA's advocacy efforts. They were briefed on the process the association follows for commenting to the EPA on product re-registration. The process includes an element for member input to GCSAA actions, plus the opportunity for chapters and members to become directly engaged as well.

To view the complete report log on to [www.gcsaa.org](http://www.gcsaa.org) and select Delegates Meeting Results.

## Key West GC reopens after hurricane

On Oct. 24, 2005 Hurricane Wilma – the most devastating hurricane to strike Key West and the Lower Florida Keys in almost 100 years – hit with an 8-foot storm surge, leaving the southernmost golf course in the U.S. under 4 feet of sea water.

For Key West Golf Club owner Gwenn Smith, Wilma may have taken the fairways but not her sense of humor. “For a short while, our golf course could accommodate Keys divers with drivers!” said Smith. Smith faced the economic adversity with her husband Bill and a perpetual optimism.

“We knew the 20-year old Bermuda greens could not survive being under salt water and this meant a major course rebuild; so our club staff quickly responded and got right to work.” added Smith.

Club general manager and golf pro Doug Carter said the 150-acre golf course was not only inundated with the ocean storm surge but the irrigation lakes were also infiltrated with sea water leaving no source of fresh water to flush the salt off the greens.

Before the waters had receded, Smith, Carter, head golf professional Eric Favier and superintendent Koby Minshall had a course-recovery plan under way.

Renovation on the front nine began in June. A salt-tolerant grass, SeaDwarf seashore paspalum turfgrass would replace less tolerant bermudagrass.

Carter said playability also figured

into the decision to regrass with SeaDwarf. “The grass is very dense and grows quickly. It seems to have a more vibrant color than the bermudagrasses and, with the proper maintenance practices, it will have less grain,” said Carter.

Seashore paspalum turfgrass is environmentally friendly, a constant concern in the Lower Florida Keys; it requires less water.

“The biggest environmental benefit is that it will handle effluent water for irrigation much better than other turfgrasses. This will help conserve the freshwater supplies,” said Favier.

Minshall said the new SeaDwarf grass will act almost like an insurance policy against future tropical storms and hurricanes. “Seadwarf will help us survive future hurricanes because it is more salt tolerant than bermudagrass,” he said. “Even if there is no storm surge associated with a hurricane, the rain water in tropical systems is high in salt content.”

Along with re-grassing the greens, fairly extensive work was completed to a number of fairways including new drainage or raising the greens on holes 1, 2, 5, 6 and 9.

The back nine greens are in shape for play this season but will be re-grassed with SeaDwarf in June.

Key West Golf Club originally opened in the early 1920s as a nine-hole facility. In the 1950s another nine holes were added. In 1983, Rees Jones was hired to design the current 18. Key West Golf Club was Rees Jones's first design with his own company. ■

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