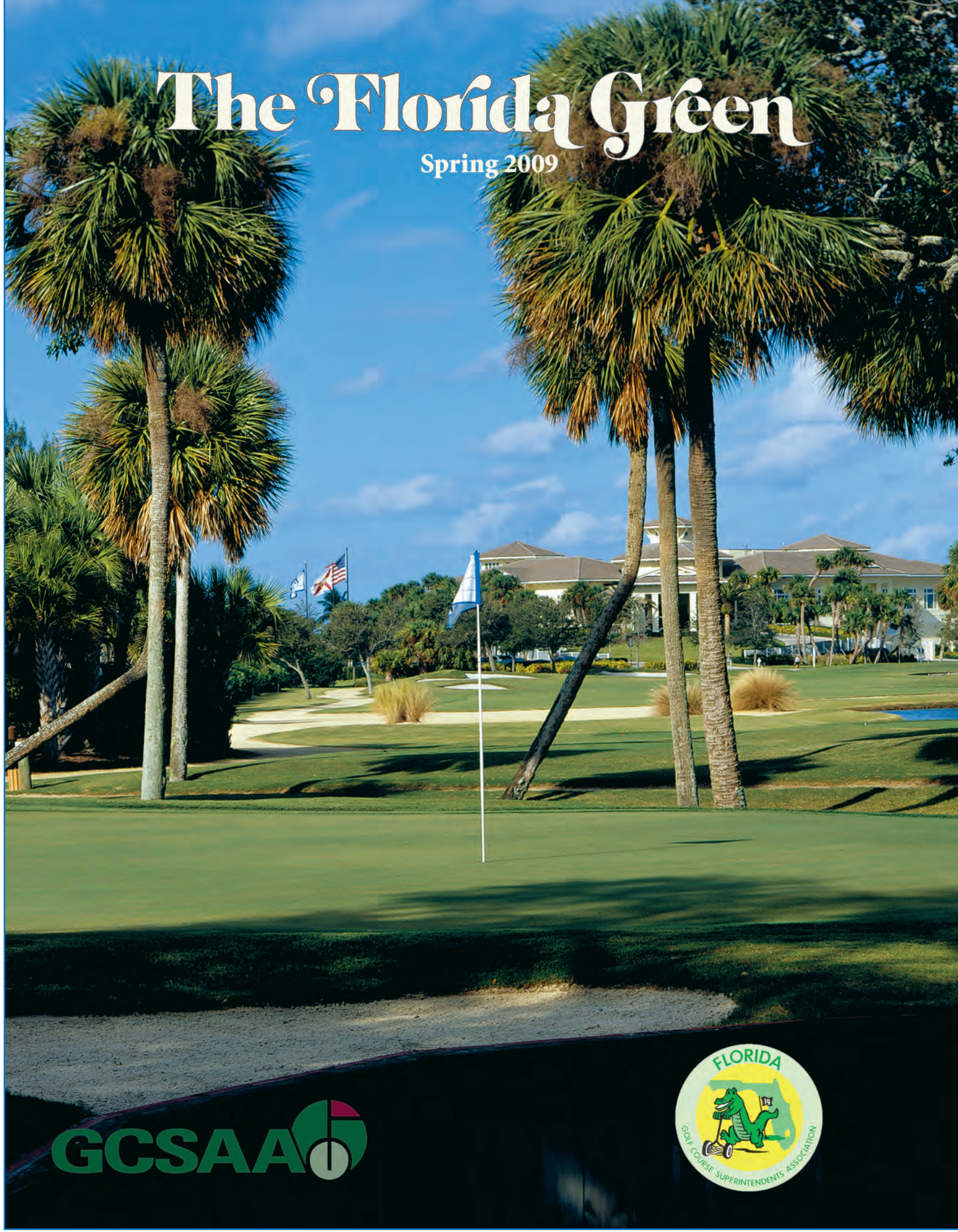


The Florida Green

Spring 2009



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– Current Toro Customer

"Much better than our current walking greens mower. I like the simplicity of the reel and traction drives."

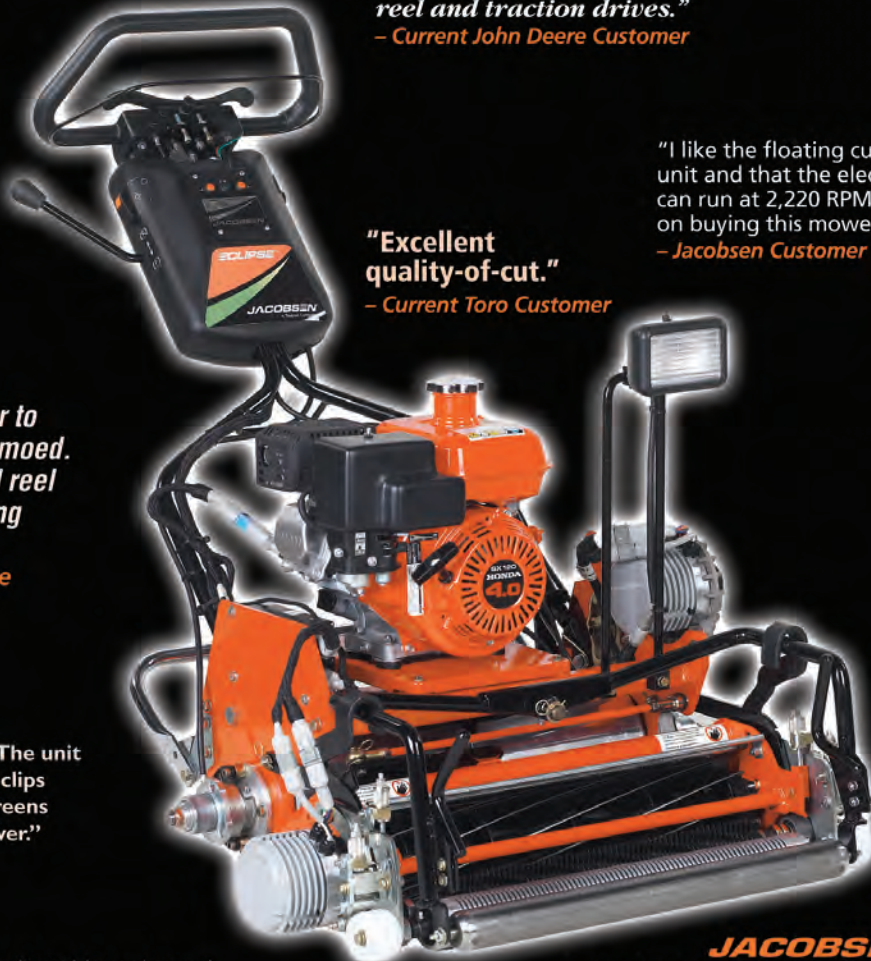
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FOREWORDS

Spring Into ACTION

Are you ready for spring? I'm sure all your courses are beginning to look their best as you get ready for those end-of-season member-guest tournaments. I'm just ready for some warm weather.

With the warm weather comes our "favorite" time of year time to start cranking up those verticutters and aerifying machines that golfers think we just love to run. The warm weather also brings out our favorite little bug the mole cricket. Right now there is a full-court press on the subject as EPA is looking at possibly canceling the temporary registration of broadcast friponil (Top Choice®).

While there are baits and other insecticides, I do not think there is one that works as well and is as safe as friponil. While they say they are looking at the broadcast application for fire ants, what about broadcast of granular Top Choice applications for mole crickets? Insiders think if we lose one, the other will likely follow, based on EPA's history.

Out of all the products that have been on the chopping blocks the past few years – Mocap, Oftanol, Nemacur, Methyl Bromide and MSMA – all are gone or going away. So with this latest notice I just would like to put it out there that we must get involved on the chapter and individual level.

When sample letters and talking points are sent out to the chapters everyone must take personal responsibility to draft comments and submit them and not expect that someone else will do it for you. In order to get EPA's attention there needs to be a significant show of concern on our part about the consequences of losing these products. Silence is consent to allow yet another product cancellation. Our position and concerns are based on science, peer reviewed studies, and real-world experience; the opposition often uses emotion and limited computer models



Shane Bass, CGCS
President

I'm confident that most of you are probably doing 75 percent of the BMPs but it doesn't do the industry any good unless you are documenting it.

to make their case.

We must show them that we practice what we preach and, for the third time I am pressing that we all sit down and do our BMP manuals. A lot of people worked hard to get these done but they are not doing us any good if we are not using them.

If you do not have the time to sit down and go through the checklist, delegate it to an assistant. That way when he or she moves on they will already be prepared to do them at their new course.

I'm confident that most of you are probably doing 75 percent of the BMPs but it doesn't do the industry any good unless you are documenting it. I promise I this will be the last time you hear me mention the BMPs but I sure would like to say one day that 100 percent of Florida golf courses are in compliance with the BMP manual.

Spring has sprung and soon we'll be on the summer run. I hope you had a decent golf season.



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FGCSA Members Make Headlines at GCSAA Conference and Golf Industry Show



Opening day of the Golf Industry Show in New Orleans looked almost normal, but when the week was over, total numbers were predictably lower than the past few years as the recession took its toll on attendance and participation. Photo by Joel Jackson.



Superintendent Craig Weyandt shared how he organizes and conducts nature walks on his golf course at one of the GCSAA Innovative Superintendent sessions. Photo by Joel Jackson.



Bob Randquist, CGCS was elected GCSAA Secretary-Treasurer at the 2009 GCSAA Annual Meeting in New Orleans. Randquist is the director the golf course and grounds at the Boca Rio GC in Boca Raton. Randquist had served two terms on the Board of Directors. GCSAA photo.



GCSAA Champion Seth Strickland, left, from Miami Shores CC, met with U.S. Ryder Cup Captain and Opening Session keynote speaker Paul Azinger before receiving the trophy for his second national championship in a row. Photo by Bruce Mathews. Courtesy of GCSAA.



Tim Hiers, CGCS, left, first president of the Florida GCSA, was recognized with the 2009 GCSAA Excellence in Government Relations Award by GCSAA President David Downing, CGCS during the Opening Session at the Morial Convention Center in New Orleans. GCSAA photo by Bruce Mathews.

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FTGA President Todd Himelberger and Ralph Dain, GCSAA's newest field representative, now serving Florida, made presentations at the Central Florida Turf Research Tournament at the Interlachen CC. The annual event has raised more than \$70,000 for turf research. Photo by Joel Jackson.



From left: USGA Agronomist Todd Lowe demonstrates the Tru-Firm device invented by the USGA equipment testing department to TPC Treviso Bay Superintendent Todd Draffen and PGA Tour Agronomist Collier Miller during the Ace Group PGA Champions Tour event in Naples in February. USGA Green Section Florida Region Director John Foy looks on. Photo by Joel Jackson.



The Palm Beach GCSA kicked off the 2009 turf research fundraising season by presenting a \$10,000 check at the FGCSA winter board meeting in January at Disney World. Pictured from the left are: PBGCSA President Kevin Downing, CGCS, FGCSA President Shane Bass, CGCS and PGCSA External VP Steve Pearson, CGCS. Photo by Joel Jackson.



From left: General Manager Tony Johnson and Superintendent Barry Shuman from the Timacuan CC in Longwood captured the 2009 Central Florida Research Tournament hosted by the Interlachen CC in Winter Park in January. The two-man scramble pairs superintendents and club officials. Photo by Joel Jackson.

2009 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FGCSA Chapter Events

MAY

- May 4 or 11 – Treasure Coast GCSA Blue Pearl Tournament, The Medalist Club
- May 7 – FGCSA Spring Board Meeting, Naples Beach Hotel
- May 8 – USGA Workshop/FGCSA Seminar 8 a.m.-Noon, Naples Beach Hotel
- May 8 – GC Horn Endowment Tournament, Naples Grande GC
- May 9 – Poa Annu Golf Tournaments: Classic at Naples Grande GC and Scramble at Naples Beach Hotel GC
- May 9 – Poa Annu Luau Dinner, Naples Beach Hotel 6 p.m.
- May 18 – Central Florida GCSA, Chapter Championship: Orange County National GC
- May 20 – UF/IFAS Turf Field Day, Plant Science Center, Citra
- May 30 – Palm Beach GCSA Fishing Tournament

JUNE

- June 4 – Everglades GCSA Vendor Appreciation Day, Wyndermere G.C.
- June 6 – Palm Beach GCSA Future of Golf Tournament, The Falls CC
- June 15 – Central Florida GCSA Meeting, The Legacy Club
- June 18 – Seven Rivers GCSA Annual Meeting, Candler Hills GC

JULY

- July 20 – Central Florida GCSA Annual Meeting, Dubsdread GC
- TBA – Everglades GCSA Annual Meeting

AUGUST

- Aug 7 – FGCSA Annual Meeting, Disney's Osprey Ridge GC
- Aug 8 – Central Florida GCSA Larry Kamphaus Crowfoot Open, Reunion Resort

Welcome to the 27th Annual Suncoast Scramble.

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*Special thanks to Superintendent Darden Nicks and the
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The Moorings Club

Island in the Stream



Panoramic view of the Indian River lagoon on the par 4, 6th hole is typical on the front nine holes at The Moorings club. Text begins on Page 8.

Photo by Daniel Zelazek

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Island in the Stream

By Joel Jackson, CGCS

When Craig Weyandt was 10 years old, his dad taught him how to mow the yard. When he looked back after his first pass with the mower and saw the neatly cut turf, he felt a sense of accomplishment and it felt good. Thirty-three years later, making sure the grass is cut properly is his job, but he has accomplished a whole lot more.

Weyandt is the golf course superintendent in charge of The Moorings Club, a 75-acre, par-64 gem in a tropical setting along the Indian River in Vero Beach. As Weyandt's turf management experience grew, so did his awareness for his environment. He has become an ambassador for the positive impacts his golf course has made as a wildlife sanctuary and living laboratory for learning about nature. He is a past president of the



This lake guarding the par 3, 9th hole is part of a nine-lake, 5-acre network which stores stormwater and provides back up irrigation. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.



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SUPERINTENDENT FACTS

Craig Weyandt, CGCS

Originally from: Middleburg
 Family: Wife Teri, sons Travis (24) and Connor (14)

Education: A.S. in golf operations from Lake City Community College

Employment: 2001 to present golf course superintendent, The Moorings Club, Vero Beach; 1991-2001 superintendent, Yacht & CC of Stuart; 1990-1991 assistant superintendent, Harbour Ridge GC Goldem Marsh course, Stuart; 1989 assistant superintendent Bocaire GC, Boca Raton; 1988 Westchester G&CC, Boynton Beach.

Professional Affiliations: Member of the GCSAA, FGCSA, USGA, FTGA. Past president of the Treasure Coast GCSA and Florida GCSA. Served on FGCSA, USGA and GCSAA Research committees.

Goals: Get The Moorings Club certified in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program. Become a Florida Master Naturalist. Compete in an Ironman competition.

Hobbies & Interests: Surfing, running marathons, triathalons and enjoying nature.



Craig Weyandt applies a little dab of The Moorings "magic dust" to ball marks and divots. Photo by Joel Jackson.

turf quality.

"I definitely do more spot treating than ever before," he said. "This includes disease management. I would never have thought to apply a fungicide to just a few greens or even just a spot on a green 10 years ago, but I do today. While I can credit being more environmentally conscious as one reason, on-site experience and overall turf management experience count for a lot. While products have improved, old-school methods of mapping, timing treatments and monitoring, I believe, give much better control and keep down costs."

Being proactive in his management practices means Weyandt must have a good communication plan in place to keep everyone informed of the hows and whys of his programs.

"My most used form of communication is e-mail," Weyandt said. "I relied on email so much that I switched to a Blackberry phone just so I could send and receive e-mails from anywhere. Before the phone, I would have to sit at the computer and read e-mails for what seemed like hours. Now I can monitor my e-mails 24 hours a day. Like anything else, it is a tool that must be managed. The good thing about having access to my e-mails on demand is that it allows me to take care of something much faster than before. I can read mail as it gets to me, rather than reading 20 or 30 each morning.

"I use e-mails to communicate with staff and other departments in letting them know when the course is

Florida GCSA and this past February Weyandt presented an "Innovative Superintendents" session at the GCSAA Conference in New Orleans: How to Organize and Conduct Nature Walks on Your Golf Course.

The Moorings Club is a residential golf community on Orchid Island near

the Gulfstream in the Atlantic Ocean. The property is on the eastern shore of the Indian River with most of the front nine comprising a peninsula jutting into the river offering dramatic waterfront views. Because of this sensitive location Weyandt has learned to minimize inputs while maintaining



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closed and why, whether for maintenance or rainfall, I want the staff to know as soon as possible the course is closed. If it is because of rainfall, I include the amount. I just know that a member is going to ask someone, "How much rain did we get?" and I would like staff to have the answer.

"Member outreach and education is primarily done through the club's newsletter and Audubon Tours. I have two columns in our newsletter, "The Porthole," that goes out to all the members. One is called "Turf Talk" and the other is "Wild at Heart."

"Turf Talk is used to explain the common and not-so-common maintenance practices. For

example, 'what is a soap flush? What pesticides or plant protectants are we using and why? Where does our irrigation water come from?' and so on.

"Wild at Heart features a brief description of a different plant or animal each month and how it relates to the golf course and some cool facts. For example, 'Did you know that Ospreys are either right taloned or left taloned, just like humans are right or left handed?' I always want these articles to be positive and educational. We never dwell on negatives or why the third green is brown. This newsletter goes to the entire membership, not just the golfers. Problems are discussed person to person

ELIMINATE GUESSWORK WHEN SPRING FEEDING

Spring fertilization varies greatly on a number of factors. Cultural practices performed, soil amendments made, irrigation and drainage upgrades, fertilizers applied, and what happened last fall plays a significant role with this season's success. However, having a sound fertility program will provide you with your best chance of success for the upcoming season.

Typically, spring applications are applied after the early flush of shoot growth has occurred, but predicting spring weather can be a challenge when it comes to soil and air temperature, and precipitation. That's why choosing a fertilizer that performs in cool climates is so vital.



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with board members.”

Weyandt explained how he is addressing a number of issues that face the golf and turf industries in Florida.

First on tap is water availability, use and conservation and irrigation management.

“Our water source is effluent. We have a contract with the city of Vero Beach to provide us with effluent water but I know that is no guarantee. In 2003 we did some course renovations which included rebuilding the greens. Since the course was going to be closed for the summer, I presented two other projects to take advantage of the course closure. The projects were a long-range landscape plan and a master drainage plan. The landscape included removing all of the exotic species (primarily Australian pine) and replacing with native (sabal palm, green buttonwood, gumbo limbo, etc.).

“The master drainage plan included routing as much drainage and other

runoff as possible into the irrigation holding pond and installing a pipe with a flapper gate connecting the irrigation holding pond to all other ponds. This tie-in gives me a little comfort in knowing that I am not just connected to a 2-acre pond but rather a 5-acre system. That means we can store more storm water and avoid discharges to tide and course flooding.

“Daily watering schedules are done with a Rainbird Maxi Cirrus controller with some local knowledge tweaking. Like everyone else we constantly watch the weather. One thought that always rings through my head when setting up irrigation cycles is that I read a long time ago that the number-two cause of golf course decline is over-watering.

“For the future, I am writing documentation for the long range planning committee putting dates or years on when things like controllers, pipe and the pump station should be replaced. This will make it much easier

for the board to plan and budget for future needs of the club and keep the system as efficient as possible.”

Most recent fertilizer ordinances around the state have sections directing golf courses to abide by the nutrient management guidelines in the *2007 Golf BMP Manual*. Homeowners are being restricted in their fertilizer usage and golf courses need to make sure they are voluntarily abiding by the BMPs to set a good example.

“I haven’t had to make many changes in fertilizer practices since coming to The Moorings Club,” Weyandt said. “Most of the changes had happened when I got here. I remember having three or four tons of fertilizer on hand when I arrived on property and saying, ‘I’m not applying the fertilizer until I can see a reduction in color or growth response.’ It took about four months before I noticed enough change to warrant putting the fertilizer out.

“I believe we do get a small amount

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COVER STORY

FUN FACTS

Vehicle: Ford F-150

The last good movie I saw: Marley & Me

I stay home to watch: Fuel TV

The book I've been reading: Runners World

Favorite meal: Splash and Meadow

Prized possessions: Family

Personal heroes: Parents

Favorite performers: All the workers at Hospice

Nobody knows that I: Chewed tobacco for 17 years

I'm better than anyone else when it comes to: Copying others, for I have no natural talent

If I could do it over: I would have never started chewing tobacco

I'd give anything to meet: My parents again

My fantasy is: Peace

The one thing I can't stand:

Is a small bar of soap

If I could change one thing about myself: I would like to be able to focus better

My most irrational act:

Screaming like a little kid on a ride at Disney

Most humbling experience:

Being a father

My dream foursome would be: Tiger, My father, and sons Travis and Conner.

(But Craig, that's a fivesome)

My best fish story: My son and I were splashed by jumping spinner sharks while surfing.

My most amazing, lucky, important golf shot: I thought no one saw me hit that house.



Craig Weyandt challenges himself to succeed by competing in marathons.

of useful nutrients with the effluent. Combined with our heavy soils, nutrients tend to hang around longer and aren't subject to leaching. We have all but removed supplemental phosphorus from the turf diet and I haven't seen any ill effects. I still put out two or three tanks of liquid fertilizer though the irrigation system in the winter, depending on temperatures.

"One change in our

program that will reduce how much we fertilize this year is the club's decision to not overseed. This was a conscious decision by the green committee and the board of governors to save money and concentrate on weed control. With no seed in the way this year, we can reduce our overall winter fertilizer bill and try to reduce our Poa annua population. There have also been many savings so far like labor and fuel,



The "seasides," as Weyandt calls these waste bunkers, can be temporary water hazards in the early fall due to warm water, high tides and prevailing winds. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

but I am most excited about zero transition in the spring. Revolver® has made transition so much easier, but I'm looking forward to spot-controlling Poa and volunteer rye rather than large broadcast treatments and waiting for Mother Nature to do the rest.

"I definitely do more spot-treating than ever before. It just makes sense to not waste the time, labor and dollars on unnecessary applications. Mole crickets still amaze me. Just when we thought we had the silver bullet, those little critters still find a way to drive me crazy. I remember hearing, 'Don't worry about your greens, the TifEagle is too

tight and they don't like it.' Well, they still eat it all the same and damage is even more noticeable. Our cup changer carries a mixture of lemon joy and water each day. If he sees tunneling damage it's treated as soon as possible. We focus on mapping our problem areas and concentrate on controlling them before they can spread.

"Primo® remains a vital tool in our turf management program. It has helped me get through droughts and the wet season as well. I like using it most in the wet season. We try to time our application before major storm events, in case we receive a lot of rain.



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THE MOORINGS CLUB



The Moorings Club Golf Maintenance Staff

Location: Vero Beach, Fla.

Ownership: Member Owned. Average rounds per year: 22,000

Number of Holes: 18; Yardage: 4,338 yards; Par 64; Slope/Rating: 109 / 61.7

Designed by: Pete Dye, opened: 1971

Management Team: Club President Tony Calderone; Green Chairman David Drury; Clubhouse Manager Craig Lopes; Executive Chef Michael Lander; Director of Fitness Kim Palmer; Head Golf Professional Tom Thornton; Tennis Pro: Donna Roup; Superintendent Craig Weyandt, CGCS.

Major renovations/Ongoing projects: 2003 Greens renovation by Barbaron, Inc.; 2004 Hurricane renovation (new trees, repair greens and driving range netting); 2005 Hurricane renovations (repair tees, bunkers, cart paths and new driving range netting system).

Total acreage: 75. Turf acreage under maintenance: 70

Greens: TifEagle; avg. size 5,500 sq.ft, 2.5 acres; HOC winter .125", summer .140"; green speed goal: 8.5 – 9.5 year round. Overseeding: none

Tees, Fairways and Roughs: hybrid bermudagrass. Tees 2.0 acres, HOC .50", overseed with 6 lbs/1,000 sq. ft. Poa trivialis. Fairways 17 acres, HOC .50". Roughs 32 acres, HOC 1.75". Fairways overseeded with 400 lbs/A with ryegrass, overseeded with rye at 300 lbs/A.

Bunkers: 46; type GA-26 sand, machine raked with Toro Sand Pro.

Native areas: 2 acres of waste areas called "Seasides." They are raked with a Smithco to maintain habitat for fiddler crabs.

Waterways: 9 lakes, 6 acres. As of Jan. 1, maintained in house, assistant superintendent has an aquatics pesticide license. Changing maintenance program and adding aquatic plants.

Irrigation: reclaimed water; Flowtronics PSI 2,000 GPM pump station, Rainbird Maxi - Cirrus controller, 750 heads at roughly 70-ft. spacing. Fertigation and Diamond K gypsum injector.

Water management, conservation practices: Remote, solar powered, wireless weather station to measure and replace moisture lost by turf by evapotranspiration.

Staff: 16 including superintendent (14 full time, 2 part time).

Key maintenance staff members: Assistant Supt. Scott Campbell; Equipment Technician Andrew Dawson; Pest Control Technician Carl Carter; Irrigation Technician Keith Pater; Forman Jose Morales; Administrative Assistant Elizabeth Rodriguez.

Then I know the turf is not growing out of control while the mowers sit idle waiting for things to dry out. We backed off using it on the greens at certain times of the year. We had several occasions where it was used and poor turf performance followed. Primo was stopped and conditions improved. While I do not know for sure if the two were connected, we use it wisely."

BUDGETING

"Like many others we were asked to cut budgets this year," he said. "We have looked long and hard at each line item and have made a few changes. Contract aerification was one area we reduced. This year we plan to conduct all fairway and tee aerifications in-house. We will contract a deep drill in August but we will do all other aerifications. Our large aerifier is a spoon-tine aerifier. This unit does not go as deep but I believe for a year it can be effective enough at relieving compaction and decreasing the biomass in the upper root zone. It can be more disruptive. Instead of the normal straight up and down holes, the spoon tine is going to make elongated craters and take longer to heal over.

"With fertilizer so expensive, we may try to run a little lean this year, and shopping and complete bidding are a must. Just how far I can stretch applications is yet to be seen

"Labor, the largest item in the budget, is sometimes the last to be considered. I have promised the staff I will keep them posted if any changes need to be made but to definitely be prepared for overtime cutbacks. This is done primarily on weekends. For example we may stop walkmowing earlier this year and begin triplexing. This may only reduce one man on weekends but those are all overtime hours. I hope to have a full staff during the season, but we may not replace positions immediately in the summer."

Finally, I asked Weyandt about his years of service to his chapter and the FGCSA.

"Association volunteering has made me a better listener. In order to work together with people, you have to hear what they are saying and try to

Association volunteering has made me a better listener. In order to work together with people, you have to hear what they are saying and try to understand their position... Empathize if possible. I also encourage everyone to step out of their comfort zone... get out and be active.

understand their position. Empathize if possible. Trust me: this is very difficult for a person with ADHD. I would always want to get my opinion in and want to be heard but I have also learned to listen.

“I also encourage everyone to step out of their comfort zone; whether it is volunteering for your association, your church, community, local school, etc., get out and be active. Do you want someone else making all the decisions for you? Maybe you might

want to take an active role in the world around you. Has golf given you a good life? Have you given back? How have you contributed to making your profession or job better?

“I believe that everyone has the ability to achieve but one must first have the desire. Set a goal (desire) and then make a road map on how to achieve success. Sounds funny, but that’s how it all begins.

Continues on Page 20

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“A year ago I was challenged to step out of my comfort zone and reach for an athletic goal that I thought was unachievable. That goal was a half-Ironman race (1.2 mile swim, 56-mile bike, 13.1-mile run). I accepted the challenge first by writing it down on paper. I had to put it in my own words and keep it somewhere to remind me of my personal challenge to myself. That was the first step, accepting the challenge. Then I made a training plan and stuck to it (the second step).

“I’m happy to say that I achieved my goal on Oct. 25, 2008 by completing The Florida Challenge half-Ironman in Clermont (6 hours, 14 minutes). Trust me. You get a far greater feeling in life of being alive by having someone put a medal around your neck for completing a goal, or hanging a plaque on the wall for your time and service than you do by sitting at home watching TV.

“So get out there and achieve!”



The 18th green is framed by the new clubhouse complex rebuilt after being damaged by the 2004 Hurricanes. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

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Converting Roughs to Save Water and Money

By Steve Beeman

Editor's Note: While this article focuses primarily on the highly relevant topic of water use and conservation, it seems obvious that, at a time when golf participation and revenues have been flat or falling, converting roughs to native areas is a logical way to reduce ongoing maintenance costs.

Water use has always been a concern for golf courses in Florida, and it is becoming an increasingly critical issue. Golf course superintendents will have to allocate irrigation resources to those areas of turf that are in play, and away from turfgrass rough that rarely sees a golf ball. Out-of-play turf acreage diverts water, money, chemical, and human resources from those parts of the golf course where the game is played.

In discussions with golf course superintendents around the state, I learned that there are fairly consistent costs associated with maintaining rough. Besides irrigation costs, the common expenditures include mowing (including equipment maintenance), fertilization, herbicide and pesticide. Depending on the price and availability of water, the annual cost to maintain an area of rough varies between \$2,000 and \$4,500 per acre, with an average in the \$3,000.00 range.

Golf courses with proportionately large acreages of rough must devote almost as much time, money, and people to those areas as to the fairways, tees, and greens.

A good example of the contrasts between golf courses with limited rough and those with excessive rough can be found in one place, at PGA International in Daytona Beach. The Champions Course has 170 acres of rough, while the Legends Course has only 40 acres. Superintendent John Lammrish CGCS has been steadily converting out-of-play rough on the Champions Course to native grasses and other natural areas for the past several years.



Bridgewater GC in Lakeland. Native grass beds reduce water use and maintenance costs in the roughs. Photo by Joel Jackson.

A golf course in the median range of rough acreage is Venetian Bay in New Smyrna Beach (superintendent, Scott Eberly) with 104 acres. Examples of golf courses with minimal out-of-play rough include Old Memorial in Tampa (superintendent, Trent Inman CGCS) with 18 acres and Old Colliers Golf

Club in Naples (superintendent, Tim Heirs CGCS) with 35 acres.

The easiest and most logical places on a golf course to convert turfgrass rough to native plants or natural areas are the slopes, lake banks, and flats around tee boxes, where no golf ball should ever travel. Lake banks are especially attractive for conversion

SUPER TIP

Portable 'To Do' Board for \$10

By Fred Fulford

The job board in the photo is a small dry-erase board. They cost about \$3 through any national office-supply chain. The markers and the eraser fit in the bracket base below the board. The brackets are scrap aluminum from the mechanic shop. Total cost is about \$10 or less, depending on how much you want to spend on markers.

I put sticky-backed Velcro on the brackets and board to make it removable and keep it in a small trash bag in the glove box in case of inclement weather. This proved to be a easy, inexpensive way to keep up with the constant flow of ideas and "To Do" jobs that come from an enthusiastic superintendent like Kyle Sweet.



A portable job board is a handy visible note pad and "To Do" jobs reminder list. Photo by Fred Fulford.

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because they can be difficult to mow, fertilize, and treat chemically and because the establishment of native plants provides a natural filter around water bodies. Areas between greens and the next tee are also prime candidates for conversion, as are mounds and berms that border fairways or separate one hole from another.

Conversion from turfgrass rough may involve planting trees, shrubs, ornamental grasses, or ground covers. Native plants should be used wherever possible since they can survive with little or no irrigation, and the idea is to save water. Another option is to create sand or shell waste bunkers or mulch beds.

I must stress that native areas, whether planted, mulched, or waste bunkers, are not maintenance free. Once established, trees and shrubs require very little maintenance but the initial cost is fairly high. Native grass plantings should be cut back once or

twice a year, and may benefit from limited irrigation during drought periods. The clippings can be left in the plant beds as mulch. Waste bunkers will require some chemical control for weeds and mulch beds will periodically require mulch or pine straw replenishment.

An important factor in the decision to convert turfgrass rough to natural areas, besides water conservation, is balancing the initial cost with long-term savings and determining how much time will be required to recoup the conversion expenditures. Once that payback period has elapsed, the perpetual savings of time, money, and water will increase maintenance efficiency.

Converting an acre of turfgrass to trees or shrubs is the most expensive planting option, in the range of \$15,000.00 to \$25,000 per acre. The long term advantage is that eventually this option will probably not require

any maintenance. Planting native grasses can cost between \$3,000.00 and \$5,000.00 per acre, which represents a payback time of only one to two years, but also requires annual pruning.

This cost is extremely small, however, compared to turfgrass maintenance and supplemental water is rarely required. Establishing mulch or pine straw beds costs around \$20,000 an acre and about \$5,000.00 per year in material replacements. Waste bunkers cost around \$70,000 per acre to construct and \$1,000 to \$3,000 a year to treat for weed control.

Every golf course manager has to weigh the options regarding maintenance budgets, short- and long-term limitations on water, playability, and aesthetics. For many it may make sense to convert out-of-play turfgrass to something else. Others will not be able to justify the initial costs. For everyone, though, water is still the 500-pound gorilla in the closet.

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SUPER TIP II

Quick Tip – No Slip

In these challenging economic times, most golf course managers are striving to decrease expenditures. That's one reason I selected this Super Tip. From start to finish, this tip takes less than 15 minutes to complete and comes with a price tag of about \$10.

On numerous occasions my equipment manager, Guillermo Gomez has instructed the crew on how to correctly remove the hydraulic quick-connects from our tractors and properly store our gang units. Sometimes employees still perform the task incorrectly, resulting in back pressure in the gang unit's hydraulic system and subsequent leakage of hydraulic oil from the fittings.

The resulting oil spill presents a potential slip-and-fall safety hazard.



Placing disconnected hydraulic hoses in this handy hose cup prevents spills and slip hazards. Photo by Darren Davis.

To rectify the situation Gomez affixed a 4-inch PVC cap to the frame of the gang unit with a 1/4 by 1-1/2-inch bolt. When the employees disconnect the hydraulic hoses they have been

instructed to place the ends into the PVC cap. Should there be any leakage, the fluid would be contained in the PVC cap and can easily be cleaned up with a mechanic's shop towel.

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Balancing The Budget

By Wayne Kappauf, CGCS

Balancing the budget is a concept that everyone in business uses and is expected to achieve. It simply means balancing revenues against expenses or not spending more than you bring in.

The United States government can't seem to do it, the state government can't do it and neither can local government. Big corporations can't do it and many don't even try. For that matter most of the people in America can't do it in their own households.

Golf course superintendents, however, are expected to do it and most of us do. We do not do it by printing more money, taxing our members and adding surcharges on greens fees. We do it by keeping in touch with what is going on around us, by making the most of

what we have and finding better ways.

When I was single I ate steak; when we had kids we ate hamburger; when the kids grew up I went back to steak; when the stock market crashed I went back to hamburger (actually ground turkey).

We all have to adapt to our surroundings and situations. Superintendents are among the very best. We invent ways to do more with less. We create work schedules that allow us to be more productive. We research and find better products that give us the best bang for the buck.

We find the best way to stretch a pound of nitrogen and a gallon of water. If we cannot afford to boom spray, then we spot spray and educate our clients about an occasional weed or two. Instead of cutting the entire flower budget we make sure we take care of key areas and pay extra attention to detail and visual impact.

Superintendents know the game of golf and what it takes to produce

memorable rounds for their players. We know how to prioritize what comes first and what can wait until the budget crisis is over. We would love to have a perfect golf course but the word "perfect" is more suited for a "perfect sunset" or the "Miami Dolphins' perfect season" than it is for a golf course. Superintendents get that and understand what they have to do to make their operations successful.

The next few years are going to be interesting. Balancing the budget will continue to be an issue. While we should all be confident that the economy will turn around, I think we would all agree that balancing the federal budget could take years.

Superintendents will not have that luxury of time. Our employers expect that budget balanced every year. We will have to come up with even more ideas to do more with less. I think we will. I look forward to eating steak again soon but for now hamburger helper sounds pretty good. ■

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Common Cents

Surviving Difficult Economic Times

By John Foy

Just a short time ago, the golf industry in Florida was riding the crest of a wave. At most courses and especially during the winter season, the tee-time sheets were completely filled; and even though new-course construction had declined compared to what was going on in the 1990s, things were prosperous.

Over the past 10 to 15 years, tremendous strides have been made in course conditioning and presentation. However, additional costs were incurred to provide the level of conditioning and quality expected and now considered a standard by American golfers.

For many years, the accounting firm of Pannell, Kerr, Forster, has tracked and reported on course operating costs of their clients across the country. While we know that costs have been increasing, it is eye opening to learn just how much they went up in the past 15 years. In 1992, the average maintenance cost per hole for clubs across the U.S. was reported to be \$34,671. By 2007, the average cost per hole for all country clubs was reported to be \$107,190.

In 2008, worldwide demand for basic materials required for the formulation of fertilizers and pesticides, plus skyrocketing petroleum costs, resulted in dramatic jumps in the cost of basic and necessary tools for maintaining healthy turf and producing consistent, good quality overall course conditioning. While the prices of some materials have subsequently declined, for budgeting purposes, a lot of manufacturers and suppliers have suggested figuring on a 25% to 30% increase in the cost of materials for 2009.

On top of all of this, the major downturn in the national and global economy has had a major impact on the golf industry. This is especially true in Florida because so many courses around the state are directly connected

to the real estate development market, which has essentially collapsed. The sad reality is that the wave has crashed onto a very rocky shore, leaving many courses with reduced revenues.

The following are some general suggestions for dealing with a course maintenance budget crunch, or in some cases, crisis:

Written course-maintenance standards and proactive communication with course officials and golfers

First, it should be reiterated that each facility is unique; and over the years we have found that regardless of the budget, the most successful operations share a common characteristic: they have clearly defined and written course maintenance standards, which cover the basic and necessary management programs and practices that need to be performed on a daily, weekly, and annual basis.

Written course-maintenance standards are an integral tool for communicating and educating course officials and golfers about where the dollars are being spent on the golf course. In turn, when it is necessary to reduce the operating budget, the course maintenance standards can be used as a basis for identifying possible cost savings or cuts.

Cost *savings* are defined as items that will result in fewer dollars being spent without having a marked impact on standards and overall conditioning of the primary play areas. Cost *cutting* is where reductions are made that result in a reduction in the standards and overall conditioning.

Focus on sound agronomy and the basic practices for maintaining healthy turf

Managing above- and below-ground growing environments is essential for successful turf management. So, continue to invest in proper aera-

tion and topdressing programs, as well as vegetation control, especially around putting green and tee complexes. Turf grown in a poor environment is less reliable and more expensive to maintain. The same is true for turf that is grown in unfavorable soil conditions. Cutting costs here will result in poor turf performance and a much larger cost down the road.

FERTILIZATION

A return to the basics in fertilization can save hundreds and in some cases thousands of dollars a year. With regard to nitrogen, the use of less expensive, readily available sources such as ammonium sulfate will require that bulk applications on fairways and perimeter rough areas be made on a more frequent basis; but it is still possible to provide very acceptable turf quality, and the turf really doesn't know the difference in the source of the nutrients.

Also, broadcast spray applications of the micronutrients iron and manganese will maintain a very acceptable green color character without excessive growth. Stay focused on the basics of soil pH, phosphorous, and potassium levels. Unless a truly poor quality irrigation water source is being utilized, there is really no justification for regular applications of various soil amendments.

Some cost savings can also be realized with using basic soil testing rather than routinely having extensive analysis run that does not provide a great deal of truly meaningful information.

PEST MANAGEMENT

There is no question that we have heavy weed, insect, and nematode pest pressures on Florida golf courses. As a result, it has been the standard operating procedure to conduct large acreage broadcast pre-emergent herbicide and preventive insecticide treatments. While total elimination of pre-emergent herbicide treatments and preventive insecticide applications is not being suggested, focus efforts down the middle.

Also, the practice of a truly integrated pest management program is being mandated as a more economically and

environmentally sustainable approach to course management. Continually scouting and mapping pest activity, and then following up with localized site-specific treatments are basic components of an integrated pest management program.

To be effective and maintain an acceptable level of pest control through the primary play areas, golf course superintendents and assistant superintendents need to resume an active and committed role in the program. This is true even at facilities that still have the luxury of an IPM specialist or spray tech.

LABOR COSTS

Labor costs (payroll expenses and benefits) have

been increasing over the years; and again according to the Pannell, Kerr, Forster survey, it now consumes 60 percent to almost 70 percent of the annual operating budget. Along with reducing or eliminating overtime hours, hiring freezes and reducing staff have been necessary cost-cutting measures. With fewer people and labor hours available, a return to increased triplex mowing instead of hand-mowing putting surfaces, approaches, and tees is being mandated.

While care does need to be exercised to avoid excessive wear and creation of triplex rings around the perimeters of putting surfaces, reduced hand mowing will not require major compro-



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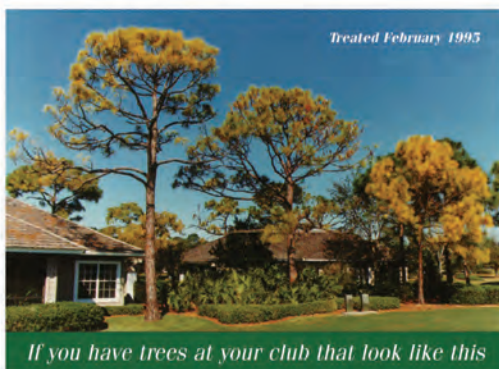
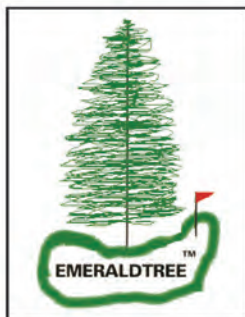
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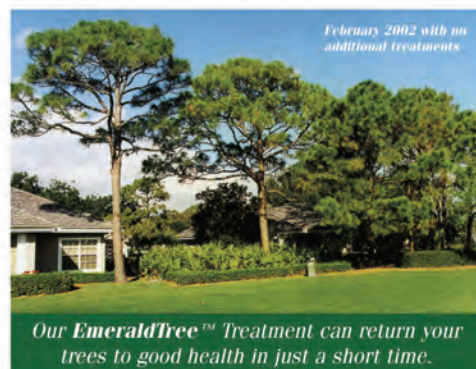
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mises in quality and conditioning.

Throughout the state, the practice of growth regulator programs on fairways during the growing season has been a common practice for reducing mowing requirements. However, at a lot of courses, the fairways are still being mowed three or even four days a week. Based on my experiences, a mowing frequency of two times per week provides an acceptable play character for average to high handicap golfers. The main tradeoff that must be accepted with a two day a week mowing frequency is an increase in clippings on fairways that are mowed early in the morning before the dew has burned off.

With roughs, a mowing frequency of two times per week has been the standard, and the use of growth regulator treatments is not considered cost effective. A rough mowing frequency of once a week is a cost-saving option, but maintaining a height-of-cut


in the range of 1.0 to 1.25-inch would be advised so that the roughs do not become excessively penal between mowings.

A few negative comments about less definition between the fairway and rough cuts may arise; but it is unlikely that the vast majority of golfers will complain about a lower bermudagrass rough height of cut.

Not changing hole locations and tee markers (except on par-3 tees) on a daily basis are a couple of other small labor-saving options that might be considered.

Getting the staff out of the bunkers is an area where much more significant labor savings can be realized. American golfers have become obsessed with having consistent and perfect bunker conditions, and this has resulted in excessive maintenance of a hazard.

At many courses, it has gotten to the point that more time and money



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is being spent on bunker maintenance than putting greens. Especially in South Florida, daily raking of all bunkers and mechanical edging monthly and in some cases every two weeks, has been the standard.

Yet complaints about overly soft bunker sand are common. When it is pointed out that excessive cultivation results in the occurrence of soft sand, the standard response from course officials is that daily raking is necessary because the golfers will not or do not know how to re-rake the sand after they have played their recovery shot.

In the Rules of Golf under Section 1: Etiquette: Behavior on the Course, the player's responsibility as far as care of the course is covered. With respect to bunkers, "before leaving a bunker, players should carefully fill up and smooth over all holes and footprints made by them and any other nearby made by others."

Until more golfers are aware of and

accept their responsibilities, it will be very difficult to reduce and control bunker maintenance costs. Complete raking of greenside bunkers two or three times a week, and once a week with fairway bunkers would be suggested as a reasonable standard.

The remainder of the time, spot raking as needed can be practiced and accomplished in conjunction with other tasks such as routine mowing of the greens and tees.

Lastly, filling in and eliminating bunkers that are not necessary and critical to the strategic play of a course, should not be flatly ruled out for producing cost savings.

BOTTOM LINE

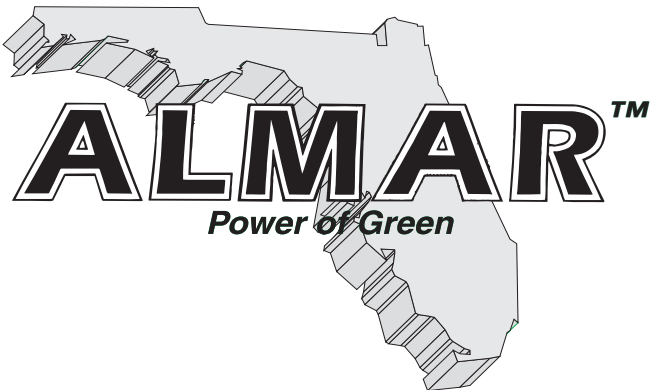
Over the past year and no doubt continuing into the future, cost cutting and savings have been and will be a primary topic of discussion during USGA Green Section Turf Advisory Service visits to courses in Florida and across

the country. All USGA agronomists have been gathering ideas and options for reducing costs; and the suggestions offered in this article are some of the most common; yet clearly far from inclusive.

A big part of what the USGA Green Section does is provide a candid review of how agronomics, economics, and politics impact the golf course maintenance operation. As more golf courses are faced with cost cutting, communication with golfers and course officials will be more important than ever before.

If standards must be lowered, then it is better to get the news out sooner, rather than letting golfers be surprised by them.

If circumstances require your golf course to save money or cut costs, we can help you with the process, as well as communicating the implications to owners or members.

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PROVEN SOLUTIONS

Nobody Can Tell Your Course's Story Better Than You

By Shelly Foy

Too many superintendents tell me that public speaking is a weakness they know they should overcome. One thing we do know for sure is that there is no one on your golf course who knows it better than you do. Maybe you don't know the difference between a heron

and an egret yet; but you do know every aspect of what it takes to maintain your golf course in terms of labor hours, equipment, and maintenance practices.

The USGA Green Section talks a lot about the importance of having written maintenance standards. These standards are developed with input from your course officials and golfers/members. When the time comes that you have to make budget cuts, being able to talk to golfers about how these cuts will affect these written standards, is critical.

Hosting tours on your golf course

is one way to start becoming more comfortable with public speaking, and developing critical one-on-one communication with your golfers.

Here are a couple of tried and true ways to do this:

- Have an open house at the maintenance facility. Set up different stations where golfers and members can learn about the equipment (what it is, what it does, and why these practices are important) and the environmental implications of your equipment wash down area. Some superintendents work

GCSAA Announces 2008 Chapter Environmental Leadership Winners

"This year's winners are to be commended for their commitment to environmental stewardship on the golf course," says GCSAA President David Downing II, CGCS. "They, along with their facilities, have demonstrated that golf courses can be compatible with the environment, and in many cases enhance it."

Judges selected winners in three national categories (public, private and resort courses), and an international winner, with an overall winner selected from those four. Recognition was given to the top entry from each GCSAA-affiliated chapter, and merit honors were awarded to those that did not earn national or chapter honors but deserved special recognition in the opinion of the judges.

Golf course superintendents and their courses that have been

Florida's 2008 Chapter Award Winners

Public Facilities: Jason Kubel, TPC Tampa Bay, Odessa, Fla., Florida West Coast GCSA

Private Facilities: Jeffrey Burgoyne, CGCS, The Club at Twin Eagles, Lehigh Acres, Everglades GCSA; Shane R. Wright, CGCS, Vero Beach CC, Vero Beach FL, Treasure Coast GCSA

Resort Facilities: Christopher Flynn, CGCS, Grand Pines GC, Orlando, FL, Central Florida GCSA

named national, chapter or merit winners were formally recognized during the opening session of the 2009 GCSAA Education Conference, held in conjunction with the Golf Industry Show in New Orleans in February. In addition, program

sponsors have made donations to The Environmental Institute for Golf, the philanthropic organization of the GCSAA, in the names of all national and chapter winners.

The Environmental Leaders in Golf Award recognizes golf course superintendents and their courses for overall course management excellence in the areas of resource conservation, water quality management, integrated pest management, wildlife/habitat management and education/outreach. In addition, these categories are judged on sustainability, criticality, originality and technology implementation/use. An independent panel of judges representing national environmental groups, turfgrass experts, university research and members of the golf community conducted the award selection.

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with the clubhouse and make it a happy hour with a beer and wine table and a few snacks. They are visiting your office, so clean up and spruce up, and let your knowledge shine.

- Some of you have participated in Audubon International's Green Golfer Challenge over the past two years. The 2009 Green Golfer Challenge is now under way with some exciting changes. Please check out the program on the FGCSA web site or log on to www.audubongreengolfer.com. Talk with your course officials and make one day this year a Green Golfer Day.

- Challenge yourself to spend some time on the first tee talking to your golfers about the positive environmental practices you implement on the golf course (BMP's, ACSP, etc.), and encourage them to sign the Green Golfer Pledge. This will give you the opportunity to get to know the golfers playing your course and receive feedback on how important environmental issues are to them. Solicit their support for your environmental practices, not just for this one day, but for every day.

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No News Would Be Good News



**GREEN SIDE UP
BY JOEL JACKSON**

The old saying, “No news is good news,” might apply to our media outlets these days. It’s pretty easy to become jaded about our news outlets these days knowing full well they tend feed on controversy and misery to make their headlines.

I was told as much once by a reporter a couple of years ago who was going to interview me on the MSMA and arsenic topic. He was doing a story on the battle between cat and bird lovers over how to address the feral cat population and their impact on birds and other small animals. I said something naively about presenting the facts from both sides and let the chips fall where they may. He said, “Oh no. You’ve got to have controversy!” Boy was I looking forward to that interview.

And now headline after headline, telecast after telecast it’s nothing but gloom and doom over the economy. No doubt we’re

in a front page Wall Street recession. And there’s no doubt that construction workers especially in the housing market and manufacturing workers in the auto industry are feeling the pain which trickles down to shopkeepers of some specialty shops and other marginal ventures that were just hanging on anyhow.

All this with home mortgages included was built on bad loans with little or no federal oversight and lots of greed bordering on criminal action like using false information on loan applications just so the financiers could get their fees. We won’t even talk about CEO salaries, bonuses and golden parachutes.

If the media really want to do something then stay on the trail of the CEOs and hound them till they break and keep pounding Congress to finally get some backbone and enforce regulations and plug up the loopholes in existing laws. That would be positive news for those of us who played the game by the rules, pay our taxes and make modest livings doing our daily work.

I wonder if the media get out of their newsrooms and studios. They must lead normal lives too. What I see on a regular basis is crowded food courts at the mall, a full Starbucks with folks still buying \$4 cups of coffee, bustling restaurants (even if was a chain like Applebee’s) on a Friday night, lots of cars on the road on the weekends, jammed parking lots at Downtown Disney, and so on.

Are all these people in denial? Or is the media just doing its usual blood and bad news lead stories? I think

the latter is more the case, and quite frankly I’m getting mad as hell and I’m not taking it anymore.

We have never been extravagant spenders. I guess having parents who were kids during the Great Depression and young adults during World War II helped instill a certain respect for saving for a rainy day. Sure we clip coupons and check out sales. We’ve even started buying staple items like canned foods, paper products, etc. from Wal-Mart where we can save 50 to 75 cents on a half-gallon of V-8 juice over the Publix price. That’s just common sense and good stewardship of our money.

But like any of you out there with IRA investments in mutual funds, we also took a big hit. Yes, we’re diversified but when the Dow Jones goes from 14,000 to 6,000 we all feel the pain. The media just keeps poking at the wound making us feel worse. One friend told me he doesn’t open his financial statements from his brokerage. He just puts it in the shredder. So to him no news is “good” news. Well it’s not good, but he knows it won’t do any good to fret over something he can’t control.

And that my friend is the lesson of the day. We can choose how face each day, with the knowledge that these recessions come in fairly predictable cycles and it will pass. I’d like to close by paraphrasing some thoughts from Luke Cella, executive director of the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents: “In the meantime we can go about our lives knowing we are not alone, your fellow professionals share knowledge and are willing to help and

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