



BRIEFS

CORNELL OFFERS SHORT COURSES

ITHACA, N.Y. — Cornell University has announced the start of their 2002 short course season. The one-week turfgrass management short course will be held here in January and in the Lower Hudson Valley area in February. Fundamental principals of soil management, grass identification, selection, establishment and primary care will be covered. Also, a new Organic Turf Management short course will be held in late January and focus on establishing and maintaining turf relying on fewer chemical inputs. Registration forms for these courses can be obtained by contacting Joann Gruttadauro at 607-255-1792.

GCSAA APPOINTS BORMAN

LAWRENCE, Kan. — The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's CEO Steve Mona has named Chuck Borman as the organization's chief operating officer. Borman, who has been the executive director of the Carolinas GCSA since 1998, had previous experience on the GCSAA staff as the director of membership and coordinating advisor. As COO, Borman will oversee GCSAA member programs and services in areas of education, research, environmental stewardship, career development, membership/chapter services, communications and publications.

2001 Newsmakers

Winterkill, drought and floods dealt hard lessons in 2001

By JOEL JOYNER

HOUSTON — Mother Nature was both forgiving and unforgiving to superintendents in regions throughout the country this year. Winterkill, drought, disease, and floods dealt some hard lessons and reminded superintendents that there's only so much that can be done when faced with the unleashed force of nature.

WINTERKILL

Superintendent Michael Wing at the 18-hole golf and ski resort, Sugarloaf Golf Course in Kingfield, Maine, started the 2001 season off with 14 greens severely damaged from winterkill. In the mountainous, western part of the state the golfing season is limited and soil temperatures make it a tough region to grow close-cut bentgrass.

"With a new construction course, you normally grow-in greens 12 to 18 months before play is allowed on them," said Wing. "We tried to do it in four weeks."

The course, usually open around mid-May, delayed its opening to the first of June. The greens were cultivated and

end of June to the first week of July," he said. "We got the last two back by the middle of July."

George Hamilton, agronomist at Penn State, paid a visit to the course in the spring to access the damage. "He said he had never seen anything like it," said Wing.



Randy Dayton

Fall preparations for this winter were altered slightly, mentioned Wing, but nothing radically different. "Unfortunately, I don't think there's a cure-all for this kind of damage," he said. "The best thing you can do is have a good, healthy stand of turf going into the winter. We've hardened the turf off with some high-potassium fertilizers and tried to keep any water on the surface of the greens to a minimum."

The greens were verti-drained in October and dormant seed was used in areas where there is quite a bit of *Poa annua*. "Chances are we'll be under enough cover to kill the *Poa*," explained Wing. "I've also placed permanent covers on all the greens for added protection. Hopefully, next spring, the covers will get soil temperatures up quicker to help the germination of the dormant seed."

"I've been here 18 years, and it's rare to come through the winter in real good shape," he said. "But this spring was one of the worst."

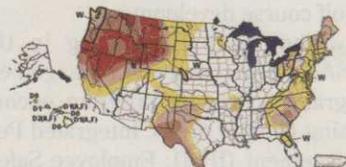
FLORIDA DROUGHT

Florida has spent the past three years in a drought. This spring didn't look very promising to most superintendents who were faced with phase two and phase three water restrictions. However, by late summer and fall, the state was on the

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U.S. DROUGHT MONITOR

Red, brown and yellow areas show drought-affected areas. The "bulls-eye" on Florida has disappeared this fall following a three-year period of drought.



Source: National Drought Mitigation Center, Lincoln, Neb.

overseeded a number of times, according to Wing. "With the exception of two, we had the greens back into condition by the

2001 Newsmakers

WOLF-Garten striving to ready laser mower

By JOEL JOYNER

BETZDORF, Germany — WOLF-Garten introduced its prototype laser mower, the Zero, in Europe earlier this year (*GCN* January). The company is now refining the "revolutionary" machine in order to take the product to the worldwide marketplace.

Bringing down the price is the primary objective for the company. "The price, at the moment, is too expensive," said Hubert Bihner, manager for motorized products. "We've dis-



The "Zero" will be marketed worldwide.

cussed it with our European suppliers, and we believe that in one or two years it may be more viable.

"It's possible in that time to reduce the price from 60,000 German marks [about \$27,500] — for just the laser cutter itself — to between 10,000 to 15,000 marks [about \$4,600 to \$6,900, respectively]," Bihner said. "Once that is achieved, then we'll start to bring the machine to the market. At the moment, there's no chance because the mower would be around 100,000 marks [approximately \$45,800]."

WORKING TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY

Ten years ago, Bihner explained, costs for the same laser cutting system

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2001 Newsmakers

Superintendents initiate innovative plans to get golf courses Audubon certified

By JOEL JOYNER

CHICAGO, Ill. — Audubon International provides information and guidance to help preserve wildlife habitat and protect natural resources, but superintendents are the ones who make it a reality by implementing innovative plans to make golf courses more environmentally friendly.

Superintendents fulfilled Audubon International's environmental mission this year by protecting bald eagles and creating trout spawning channels, establishing buffer zones and native areas, identifying and attracting wildlife, and sharing their environmental message with their communities.

This year has shown an impressive turn out in the number of courses striving to get

their courses registered and certified with the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP). There are now more than 300 golf courses worldwide that have met the challenging but rewarding certification process.

SEA MARSH AT SEA PINES

Identifying wildlife and maintaining 600 acres of preserved land at the Sea Pines Plantation on Hilton Head Island, S.C., has helped superintendent Jim Cregan at the Sea Marsh course (*GCN* May) reach certification. The course has gone above and beyond certification requirements by having 100 percent of their landscape plans native and buffering as much as 25 percent of their shorelines.



Brain Bossert



Jerry Kienast

"Members and people in the area know

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2001 Newsmakers

GCSAA to launch Internet venture by year's end

By ANDREW OVERBECK

LAWRENCE, Kan. — Despite industry objections and the general unwillingness of superintendents to purchase supplies online, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America has finalized its e-commerce strategy and plans to roll out the refined Web site before the end of the year.

When the association announced its e-commerce intentions in late April, the industry and superintendents bristled at the idea that the GCSAA would profit from the venture at the expense of its members. In order to gauge response, the association held a 90-day pilot program that was followed by a series of industry feedback meetings. By late summer, the association had abandoned its net market strategy (that would have levied a percentage fee on all transactions) in favor of a more traditional storefront model that protects existing distribution channels.

"People had it in their minds that the GCSAA had already decided what they wanted

to do with e-commerce," said Bryce Gartner, senior manager for Internet services for the GCSAA, who stepped into his role during the end of the pilot program. "The industry and superintendents had opinions on where they thought we should take this. Since the pilot,



Bryce Gartner

we have changed the approach and gotten a more favorable response."

According to Gartner, the storefront model will preserve existing relationships between suppliers, distributors and superintendents.

"We are not trying to cannibalize the distribution channels or affect relationships," he said. "We are trying to take advantage of the traffic on our site and be the third party that helps our industry partners get together with buyers in a way that gets the local distributor involved

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GCSAA launch

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in the process."

PRICING UNVEILED

The GCSAA's Internet program will offer suppliers and distributors relatively cheap Web exposure.

"We want to assist companies which have not built a Web presence yet and those companies that have," Gartner said. "The pricing will also be based on the

number of products listed so that it is attractive to both large and small companies."

Participants will be charged a flat, annual "space" fee of \$2,500 that includes hot links and keyword search capabilities. From there, the pricing will be divided into "single" and "multi" tiers based on the number of groups or levels in the storefront.

The base single-tier storefront, which is geared towards individual

suppliers and distributors, will cost \$2,000 and allow for 500 product listings. The more listings in a storefront, the more it will cost a supplier. For example, 1,500 listings will cost \$4,000. The standard multi-tiered storefront, which is set up for larger companies that want different sections to manage individual distribution channels, will cost \$5,000 per year. Companies will also be charged a yearly maintenance fee of 20-percent of

the total storefront cost.

"What we have done is taken how contracts between suppliers and distributors are written today and made it electronic," said Gartner. "Companies can manage business through this site the same way they do it today."

DRUMMING UP SUPPORT

The next challenge for Gartner and the Internet services team is to drum up support for the storefront model. While most compa-

nies are happier with the storefront concept, some are not convinced that the Internet will be an important player in the short term.

"I don't know if this change will cause more people to participate or not," said Kim Ross, director of marketing and e-commerce for Simplot Turf and Horticulture. "Superintendents don't seem to be transacting online. We are not implementing e-commerce on our site right now, but we will evaluate everything on a case-by-case basis."

At press time, Gartner said that they had yet to sign agreements with any companies, but that there were "three or four that had expressed interest."

However, he is optimistic that the site can be launched this year. "We need to have critical mass before we launch it," Gartner said. "But we are in discussions with companies and we feel that we can do it by the end of the year." ■

Audubon

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that we are striving to put nature first here," said Cregan. "Our relationship with the environment and community awareness about the things we do on the golf courses are important."

Cregan has been adding flower beds to both the Sea Marsh layout and the Ocean Course, which



Maintenance workers tend to one of the many flower beds at Sea Marsh

was Audubon certified back in 1999, for the past four years. "We continued that project this summer with three more flower beds," he said. "We've added more native grasses throughout the property as well trying to make the courses as aesthetically pleasing and environmentally friendly as possible."

A third course at Sea Pines, Harbour Town, planned to register with the Audubon program this summer. "That hasn't happened yet," Cregan said. "The course superintendent will be tackling that this winter. Our fourth layout, a private course, just opened back up following its closure for the past year for reconstruction. The superintendent there also will be pursuing the program. The goal is to have all four courses certified by next year."

ASPEN GLEN GOLF CLUB

Superintendent Richard Eide, at the Aspen Glen Golf Club in Carbondale, Colo., converts his course into a 17-hole layout whenever bald eagles visit their nest

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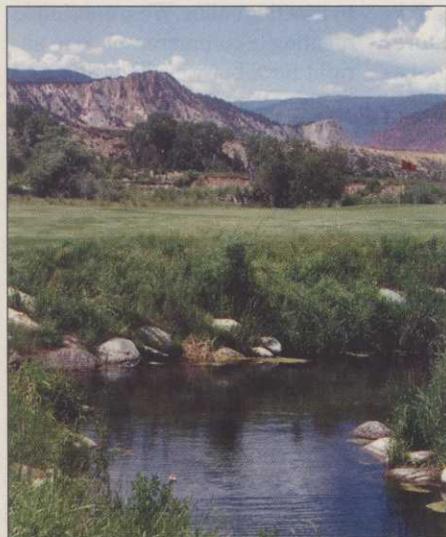
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Environment first

Continued from previous page

high on a 150-foot ponderosa pine tree along the 10th hole fairway (GCN August). Adding two trout spawning channels on the property also contributed to Aspen Glen's certification. The club is owned and operated by Dallas-based ClubCorp.



A trout spawning channel at Aspen Glen GC

Built on land that used to be a potato farm and cattle ranch, the location of the eagle nest and tree has been recorded as far back as 1905. The current nest has been a home for migrating eagles since the 1940s. "We are allowed to go into the protection zone for maintenance reasons when the nest is occupied, but the hole is completely off limits for play," said Eide.

The course shut down for winter Nov. 11. "The eagles are usually a Thanksgiving bird," said Eide. "Although last year we saw them at the end of October, they haven't showed up yet."

Colorado's Division of Wildlife, Fish & Game made their annual visit to the property in October to inspect the two trout

spawning channels created along the Fork River. "We're trying to maintain the water flow," Eide said. "The river levels are so low at the moment that there's only so much that we can control."

The course also was maintaining weed intrusion in the channels. "But the Fish & Game people recommended we add more weeds," said Eide. "It creates a better habitat for the trout by providing cover and areas to hide."

Eide already has environmental projects lined up for next year. "We have tree plantings and a couple of major landscape projects in the planning stages," he said. "We'll be making the area down by the trout spawning channels as native looking as we can get it. It's been mandated and approved by the board, and our horticulturist will be drawing up a plan this winter."

Eide has earned three environmental stewardship awards from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

BRYN MAWR COUNTRY CLUB

Bryn Mawr Country Club superintendent Brian Bossert will be hosting a second Birdwatching Open on the course next spring (GCN September). "It was a lot of fun this year," he said. "We happened to figure out where our hawks were nesting on the property that morning and discovered some interesting spe-



A view of the eighth hole at the Bryn Mawr CC

cies of birds."

One of the projects that helped the

course reach certification was the installation of an equipment washing pad. Grass clippings are screened out and the water used to wash equipment goes through a treatment process before being emptied safely to the sewage system.

"Between the wash pad itself, the equipment and the lean-to housing for the wash area, the costs ran to as much as \$25,000," Bossert said. "No one was really kicking our butts to do it. The project was basically our own endeavor."

A monthly newsletter is distributed to members explaining environmental changes made on the course. "It discusses matters like native areas that we've let grow," said Bossert. "We want members to know that it's not because we've gotten lazy and don't feel like mowing those areas. We also distribute a lot of video aids and pamphlets from the Audubon to our members."

"For the most part, we were doing a lot of the right things," he said. "It was primarily a matter of documenting our practices and projects."

WILLOW RUN GOLF CLUB

At the Willow Run Golf Club in Pewaukee, Wis. (GCN April), the ACSF played an essential role in helping the facility better define the layout. The toughest part of the certification program for superintendent Jerry Kienast was simply finding the time to do everything.

"I originally resisted it like you wouldn't believe because of our budget restraints and the fact that we have a heavy workload already," Kienast said. "What changed my mind is that I'm an outdoorsman, and the changes we've made attracted wildlife considerably."

"When I first started here six years ago, we had one blue heron that would occasionally stop by each season. Last year, we had five blue herons that now live on the course permanently," explained Kienast.

Course ownership and management



The certification program made the layout more challenging at the Willow Run Golf Club

has changed hands twice since Kienast first joined the establishment. "I've worked with a private owner as well as a management corporation prior to being with International Golf Maintenance (IGM) and the Meadowbrook Golf Group," he said. "Everyone basically looked away up until now."

"For example, I have an irrigation system on the back nine that has hand-quick couplers," said Kienast. "It's absolutely ridiculous and ancient. We received one of five awards within the IGM company for environmental stewardship, and now they're buying us a new irrigation system that we are going to install. It's in the planning stages right now."

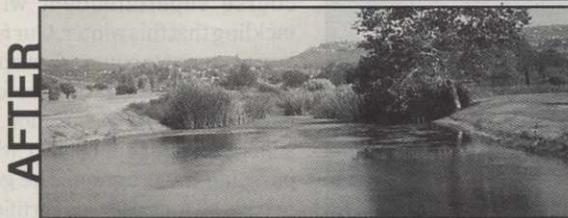
The course is looking to add another eight more acres of prairie grasses. "Also, considering our budget, we'll be implementing a fairly aggressive tree-planting program."

Kienast described the certification as a slow process. "Low budget, daily-fee courses should not try to do everything at once," he advised. "Small projects that gain the golfer's acceptance and shows that it benefits the environment as well as their play is the way to go. Some members resisted at first. But they've seen the big picture, and now they're patting me on the back. We've really turned this place around." ■

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