

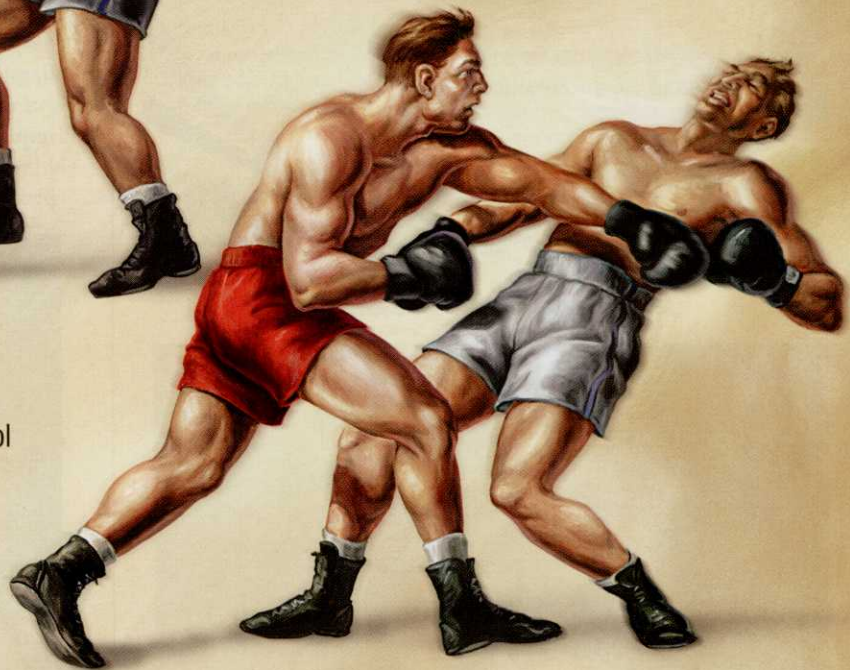
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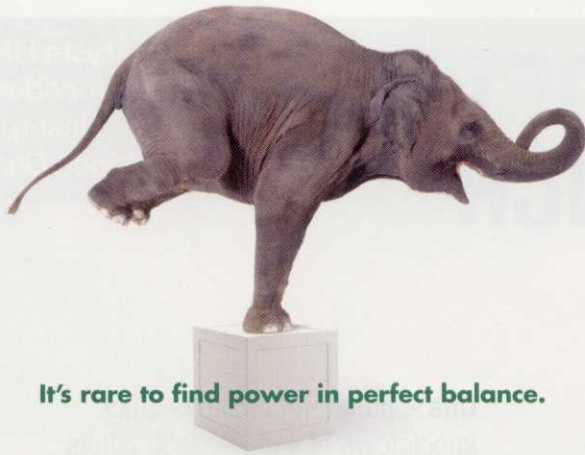
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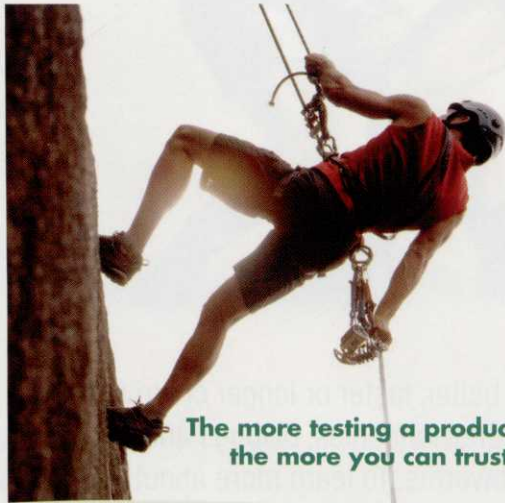
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www.golfcourseindustry.com/readerservice - #61

ACCESSORIES

This spring, he's looking to purchase and install granite hole markers as part of the course improvement.

Erdman and family chose to purchase their golf course accessories from Standard Golf, after they compared prices and products in several catalogs from different companies that offer accessories.

"We're happy with the products," he says. "We spent a little more, but we know they'll last."

Erdman likes Standard Golf's local service, too. He works with the distributor Van Wall Turf & Irrigation in Omaha.

Accessories are important to Erdman because he wants Prairie Hills to look nice. He wants to provide a quality product for golfers through his high standards. For example, customers can tell the quality of a flagstick when they pull it out of the hole, he says.

Erdman plans to upgrade other accessories as part of the overall improvement of the course. He intends to purchase new ball washers in the next year or two and improve the water stations by building a platform on which the water container can sit. Erdman also plans to



At Prairie Hills Golf Course, Nick Erdman plans to upgrade the ball washers and water stations, as well as purchase more directional signs, hazard markers and out-of-bounds markers. Photos: Nick Erdman



buy a few more directional signs, hazard markers and out-of-bounds markers. There are some markers on the course, but he wants to upgrade them and purchase more.

Prairie Hills' customers comment on the quality of the accessories and link that to the overall improvement of the course. Word of mouth about the course improvement is spreading, Erdman says.

Currently, there are 75 members of the public course, a significant decline from the 400 who were members 10 year ago. Erdman's goal is to increase membership to between 250 and 300 people.

"We should attain that pretty easily in two years," he says.

Right now, Erdman and staff are planning for the 2008 season. They'll make purchases in late February and early March for all aspects of the course.

"We want everything in place before we head outside for the season," he says.

Erdman's father-in-law and mother-in-law, who had never lived in Pleasanton, moved there from Wyoming to help manage the course. Erdman and his family have no previous golf course maintenance experience, however, he says they all golf and grew up on a farm. Farming has similarities to golf course maintenance, he says. Erdman and his family rely on one of the course's young maintenance workers whose grandfather built the golf course in the early 1980s.

"We lean on him at times," Erdman says. "We also look at other golf courses. We know what looks nice."

It will take another year to get where Erdman and his family want the course to be conditionwise.

"It will never be perfect," he says.

Last year the course generated 6,000 rounds from June through December. The goal is to get to 15,000 rounds annually.

"We're trying to be realistic," Erdman says. **GCI**



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www.golfcourseindustry.com/readerservice - #63

BY JOHN WALSH

A small but important aspect

Quality accessories reflect the overall operation of a golf course in Minnesota

For Paul Diegnau, CGCS, it's the little things that separate a golf operation from the competition. Little things such as accessories: flags, sticks, cups, tee markers, bunker rakes, ball-mark repair tools, yardage markers, hazard stakes, ball washers, etc.

Diegnau, superintendent at the public 18-hole Keller Golf Course in Maplewood, Minn., views accessories as an important aspect of a golf course.

"If you have poor-quality accessories, it's a reflection on your operation, and golfers notice those things," he says. "They say things like, 'Oh, you got new flagsticks.

They look nice.'"

The parkland-style Keller Golf Course, which opened in 1929, is county owned and was renovated last in 1990. Another large-scale renovation might occur in the near future.

During the season, Diegnau's staff consists of about 15 workers, varying by a couple people each season. His assistant, the mechanic and two foremen are union employees for the county, but Diegnau, who isn't a union employee, and the mechanic are the only full-time employees of the course. The two foremen and the assistant work at ice rinks during the winter.

Because the course is a municipality, the budget is somewhat different than other golf

course operations. Diegnau, who has been at Keller for the past 12 years as superintendent, has a \$540,000 maintenance budget, which has been flat the past several years except for wages. Diegnau has no specific line item for accessories, but spends between \$1,500 and \$2,000 on them annually. Accessories include: flags, sticks, cups, tee markers, bunker rakes, ball-mark repair tools, ball washers, yardage markers, traffic control signage/markers and hazard stakes.

"We always have fresh flags every year," he says. "We also paint the flagsticks every year, unless they're too beat up, in which case we replace them."



At Keller Golf Course, Paul Diegnau, CGCS, spends between \$1,500 and \$2,000 on accessories annually. Photo: Keller Golf Course



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ACCESSORIES

Accessories need to be durable to withstand the rigors of golfers' behavior. The paint on the Par Aide satellite tee markers, which are composed of plastic resin, are taking a beating because golfers at Keller are hitting them with their clubs, Diegnau says. Keller's clientele is a blue-collar crowd with a large percentage of single-digit handicappers with high expectations. Diegnau refurbishes these markers every year, but within several months, they're beat up.

Theft also plays a part into the type of accessories Diegnau purchases. He uses checkered flags on the course without the course's logo on them.

"We're in a suburban setting, and if we put a logo on things, they tend to disappear," he says.

Diegnau purchases as many accessories as he can from Minnesota-based Par Aide partly because he believes the company has high-quality products. He has also purchased accessories from Standard Golf and other companies who send him various product catalogs.

"I used to purchase flagsticks and bunker rakes from Standard Golf but have now switched to Par Aide because I like supporting local companies," he says.

Diegnau prefers bunker rakes with fiberglass handles. He used to have a difficult time keeping the rakes looking nice after they sat in the sun all summer, so he put heat-shrink plastic covers on all the rake handles.

"Throw some Armor All on the heads, and they look new," he says.

Generally, Diegnau purchases all accessories in February or early March before the season starts and as needed during the season. When it comes to flags and flagsticks, he purchases enough to replace those that are stolen or broken. Sometimes golfers and/or vandals throw the tee markers into the woods and ponds, so he keeps extras on hand in case that happens.

Diegnau also uses HIO cup cutters, which are hammered into the ground, not twisted,

so it's easier for smaller, lighter people to push into the ground.

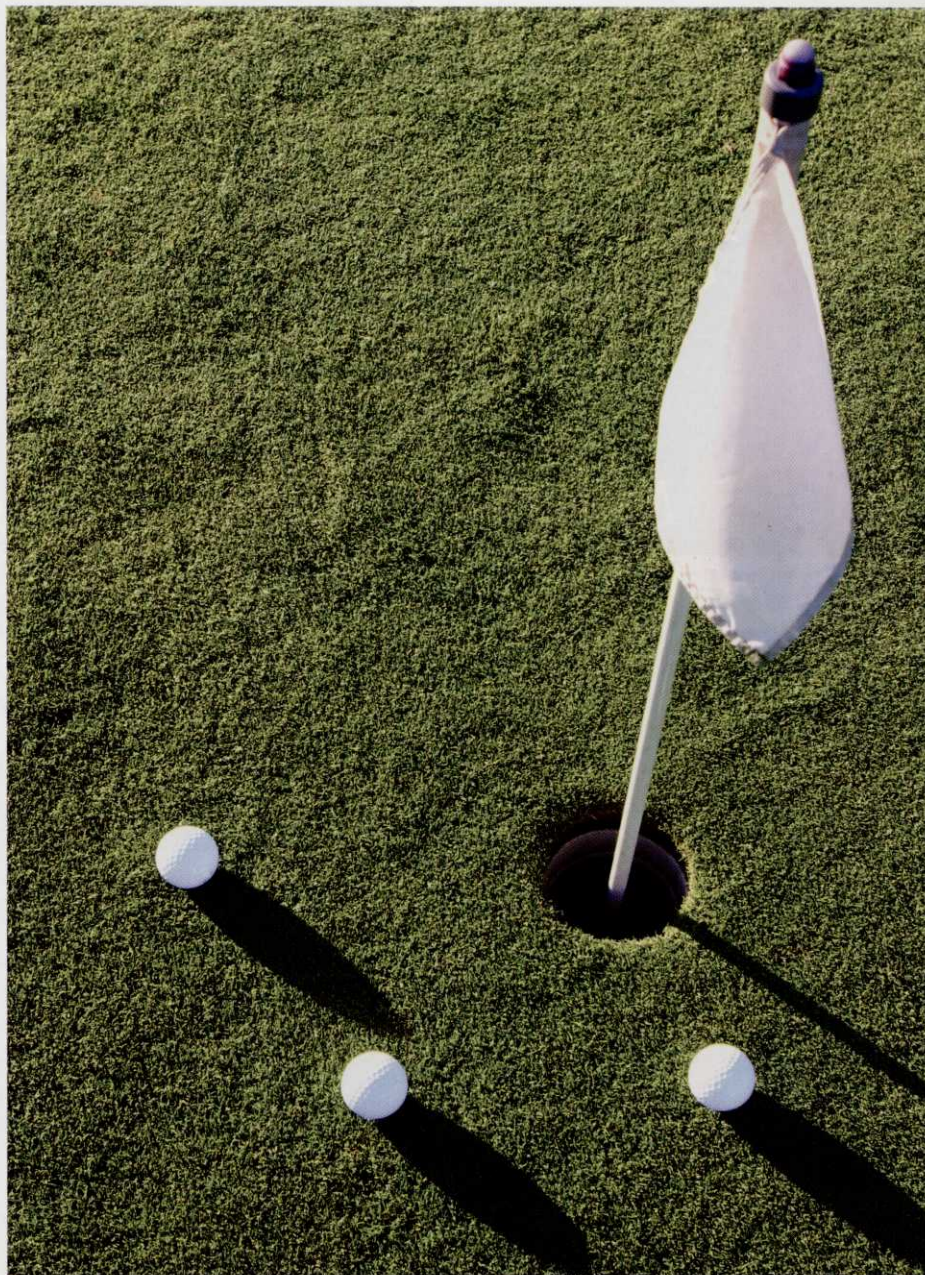
Yet, there's one accessory that eludes Diegnau: the perfect ball-mark repair tool. Currently, he's using a product called the Klaw from Eagle One Golf Products, but it wears out quickly and is expensive to rebuild.

"I've tried most versions on the market and have yet to find the perfect one," he says. "Par Aide has a new one, but we haven't bought it yet. I'm looking for something that lasts a bit

longer and doesn't need to be repaired as often. More importantly, it has to do a good job of repairing ball marks on the green. Some of them don't even do a good job of that."

One of the jobs of the cup cutters at Keller is to repair ball marks.

"If the repair tool is three- or four-feet long, they're more likely to repair more ball marks because they don't have to bend over," Diegnau says. "I'm always trying to minimize ball marks." **GCI**

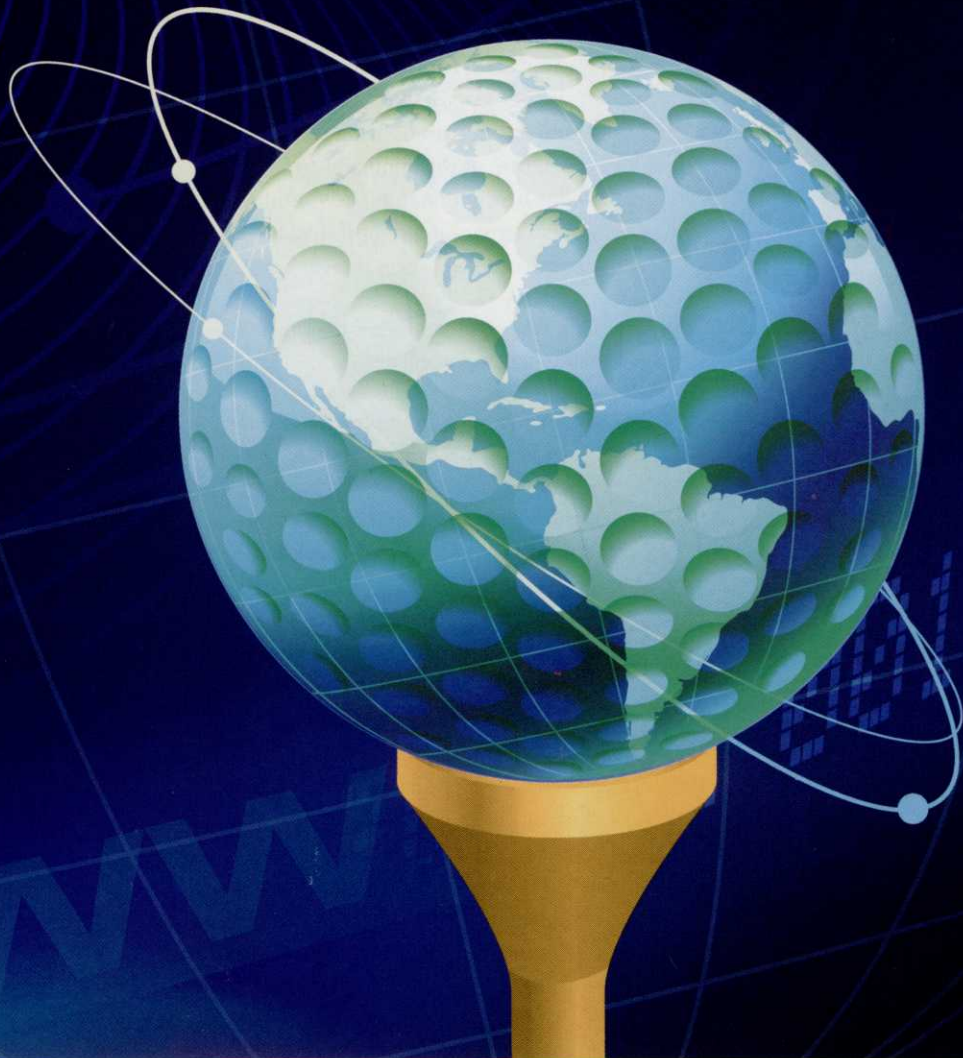


Accessories are an important aspect of a golf course and are a reflection of how one is operated, says Paul Diegnau, CGCS, at Keller Golf Course in Minnesota.

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Tim Moraghan is principal of Aspire Golf Consulting in Long Valley, N.J. He can be reached at tmoraghan11@comcast.net or 908-635-7978.

VOLUNTEER SEARCH

Q How should I ask for volunteer assistance during the weeks leading up to and the week of a professional tournament I host?

A Begin with your local and state golf course superintendent chapter meetings years before the tournament. Take advantage of the talent to announce when the event is coming and present a detailed outline of what will occur and the volunteer requirements. Use your association's Web site to place a want ad. Provide accessible response information, such as phone numbers and e-mail addresses for you, the club and the professional staff. Speak at universities in your state that have a turfgrass or PGM program where students are looking to add to their experience or serve as interns for longer periods of time. This is a great forum to promote the event and the educational aspects of serving as a volunteer.

Q What can be done to increase volunteer interest and response?

A A personal and succinct letter addressed to your fellow superintendents and golf enthusiasts outlining when, where, what and how they and their staff members can assist you is the first step to generate interest. Include what event is coming, who is conducting the championship, when it's occurring, and reinforce that you and your staff are excited about hosting the event. State how many volunteers you wish to have to supplement the current staff, the work to be accomplished, the training required for an efficient operation and how long their volunteer commitment will be.

Q How do I organize responses so I can assign and schedule tasks and contact volunteers with necessary information?

A Enclose a volunteer application form with your invitation that includes space for the following information:

- Personal information such as name, address, home, work and cell phone numbers.
- Age of the volunteer.
- Copy of a valid driver's license.
- Verify the physical ability to perform golf course maintenance functions.
- Areas of expertise, such as mowing greens, tees, fairways and collars; hand-raking bunkers; and syringing fairways, tees and greens.
- If a uniform is to be provided, request shirt and hat sizes for men or women.
- For longer assignments, determine if the volunteer requires housing or not.
- A signature of the applicant to acknowledge he understands the volunteer position isn't guaranteed, or if it is, for what length of time.

Q What type of service other than turf maintenance is needed?

A The following are examples of nonturf-related items that need attention:

- Creating job descriptions, organizing contingency crews, and monitoring daily volunteer check-in and check-out procedures.
- Assistance with specific on-course job training and supervising of certain group tasks.
- Providing a security system to hold and protect the volunteer's personal effects so they're not lost during preparation work on the golf course.
- Operating the transportation system to shuttle volunteers to and from their hotels and designated parking areas, bringing in needed operational supplies, responding to mechanic's requests and running miscellaneous chores throughout the day.
- Ensuring all radios are accounted for, charged and distributed to the proper individuals.

Q What items or information are important to make the volunteer effort safe, fun and memorable?

A When you're putting together amenities for the volunteer package, consider the following:

- Catering for three meals a day plus fresh water and snacks at any time.
 - Proper accommodations that allow the volunteer to rest and relax so they're fresh for the next day's early arrival to the golf course.
 - On-site facilities so those who choose to stay have a quiet place to nap.
 - Access to medical assistance for various reasons and emergencies.
 - Volunteer uniforms for each day.
 - Plenty of comfortable and air-conditioned transportation from hotels to the golf course, airport to hotel, dorm rooms to golf course, and back – at all hours of the day.
 - On-site computer and cell-phone access so superintendents can catch up with their own staff and families.
 - Punctual starting times for daily staff meetings. This will reduce confusion about arrival and start times.
 - A well-supplied volunteer information package that includes items such as daily uniforms, maps to the golf course, hotel locations, restaurant locations, a map of club property, irrigation maps, on-course food vouchers, sunscreen, sunglasses, ear plugs, a water bottle, energy bars, a hat and an alarm clock with extra batteries.
 - A personalized thank you letter on club stationary and a small appreciation gift.
- All volunteers must realize it's your golf course on which they're working, not theirs, and should do what's asked without question. They should know they might not have a glamorous job, but that's part of volunteering. It should be a fun, educational and rewarding experience. **GCI**

Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG, is president of Golf Agronomy International. He's a 38-year, life member of the GCSAA. He can be reached at terrybuchen@earthlink.net.



Travels With Terry

Globetrotting consulting agronomist Terry Buchen visits many golf courses annually with his digital camera in hand. He will share helpful ideas relating to maintenance equipment from the golf course superintendents he visits – as well as a few ideas of his own – with timely photos and captions that explore the changing world of golf course management.

Mix it up

Sprayer agitators have to operate consistently to keep chemical compounds thoroughly mixed in suspension during spraying operations. Pictured is a Toro Multi Pro 175 low-profile sprayer mounted to the back of a Toro Workman utility vehicle. The sprayer pump also is operated from the utility vehicle engine. When the utility vehicle is being driven at lower speeds, the sprayer pump agitation system doesn't keep the chemicals mixed adequately.

Ray Nilsen, assistant superintendent at the Tucson (Ariz.) Country Club, came up with an idea to improve the sprayer agitation system. Nilsen designed and built a supplemental agitation system using a Honda model WX 15 1.5-horsepower pump with an adjustable throttle. The pump was mounted to a 1/4-inch-thick steel plate, which was mounted and welded to 2-inch square tubing, where the platform was bolted on the sprayer. All of these materials were in the club's inventory.

The 10 agitator nozzles were replaced with larger venturi openings to increase water flow. The pump intake hose was hooked to the sprayer drain at the bottom of the tank. The pump discharge hose was hooked to the existing agitator hoses. The sprayer pump agitator discharge pipe was connected with a tee in the line to the bypass valve so the fluid has somewhere to go.

The pump fuel tank can mix and spray about three acres of greens before it needs refueling.

Nilsen purchased the pump from Northern Tool (www.northerntool.com) for about \$500. He purchased the hoses, quick disconnects, venturi openings and fittings from A.D. Williams in Phoenix for about \$120.



Spread it accurately

Applying fertilizer precisely is an art form for golf course managers. Steve Gruhn of Spirit Lake, Iowa-based GolfKnowledge/Precision Golf Course Management offers GPS-produced mapping, GPS guidance and computer controls that guide spreaders to apply fertilizer exactly where turf managers desire at differing application rates with no skipping or overlapping.

The Bobcat 5600 Toolcat 4 x 4's forklift attachments move pallets of fertilizer bags or large totes as needed around the course and loads the fertilizer spreader hopper. The Simonsen fertilizer spreader's dual side-spin, which is attached to a custom-made, fifth-wheel hitch connected to the tow vehicle, is hydraulically driven at variable rate speeds.

First, the golf course must be GPS mapped with all of the specific sizes of the greens, collars, tees, fairways, roughs, bunkers, lakes, etc., with between 40,000 and 50,000 GPS reference points recorded for a typical 18-hole course. Then a grid system of management zones – fairways divided into 5,000 to 21,000 square feet, for example – is designed. Then the on-board GPS application controller/computer (patent pending) can apply precisely only what's needed, where it's needed (at varying throw widths) at different application rates while keeping the operator on the correct track so there are no gaps or overlaps. The GPS guidance/computer controls also can be used similarly while using a tow-behind sprayer. **GCI**



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These procurements are subject to participation goals for M/WBEs and /or WBEs as required by Local Law 129 of 2005.

Copies of the RFP can be obtained on January 11, 2008 at the Agency's website <http://www.nyc.gov/parks>, the City Record's website www.nyc.gov/cityrecord and at the Olmsted Center, Room 61, Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, Flushing, NY 11368 during the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday - Friday from January 11, 2008 to March 7, 2008.

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