

“Once we cleared the elk hurdle, it was motivational. I thought, ‘If we can clean up after the elk, I think we can make it through the whole season.’”

- Eric Foerster

Ironbridge Golf Club's maintenance crew, including equipment manager John Weidler (left) and superintendent Eric Foerster, have devised unique equipment and processes to clean up after several hundred elk each spring.

Put Precision



weedalert.com

Speedzone®, Powerzone®, Surge®, Q4® and ProForm® are registered trademarks of PBI/Gordon Corporation.
T-Zone™ is a trademark of PBI/Gordon Corporation.
Katana™ is a trademark of Ishihara Sangyo Kaisha, Ltd.
weedalert.com is a registered service mark of PBI/Gordon Corporation.
ALWAYS READ AND FOLLOW LABEL DIRECTIONS

Performance In Your Tank

NEW



**New T-Zone™ With Triclopyr
For Tough Weed Control.**

NEW



**New Katana™ For Weed Control
In Southern Turfgrasses*.**

Nobody knows your turf like we do!

**G pbi/gordon
CORPORATION**

800.821.7925 • pbigordon.com

An Employee-Owned Company

rethink every single aspect of what we do," Foerster says. "Once we cleared the elk hurdle, it was motivational. I thought, 'If we can clean up after the elk, I think we can make it through the whole season.'"

STARTING WITH STANDARDS

The time after learning about the bankruptcy was unsettling – and Foerster didn't even

know if the course was going to open.

"I thought, 'Now I've lost all my crew, how the heck am I going to get all this stuff done?' I had no idea," Foerster says. "One of the things we'd always prided ourselves on previously – it's a development mentality – it's all about being green, all about details, all about aesthetics, which is great when we had the crew to do it."

{ FABRICATING SOLUTIONS }

CLEANING UP AFTER ELK

Old way: Collect all the elk droppings that accumulate over the winter with vacuums and blowers – a task that can take four or more workers several weeks.

New way: Weidler created a bear-claw-like rotary blade to install on the rough mower. In the spring, one man mows the entire course in one week, chopping up the elk droppings, which remain on the course.

* **SAVINGS:** Several weeks' worth of man-hours.



That wasn't the case anymore. Thankfully, Foerster had good records and an existing golf course standards document he used to review every process.

"I'd always kept accurate time records on how long everything takes, and I just started adjusting that to what I think we could do based on meeting with my staff," he says.

Ironbridge did open, but much of the detail work would change and Foerster had to find many new ways to operate.

"The third week in April we got a call saying to open the next day."

Foerster and crew made some typical cost-cutting changes: They increased no-mow areas by leaving buffer zones around the ponds, which saved some time. Bunkers went from being hand-raked daily to twice a week plus spot checking. Greens went from being walkmowed to triplexed. Fairways went from being doublecut to being mowed twice a week.

In many cases, finding ways to improve processes meant going back to the basics, Foerster says.

"We used to mow greens to heights around 0.110 inch; we're back up to 0.125 inch," he says. "By increasing height of cut and focusing on greens fertility, we're able to eliminate most of our moss problems. That's something that wouldn't have happened before. It was a problem on our first, seventh and seventeenth holes. We had patches here and there. By

We Gave You The
DURANIUM-801[®] Bedknife

Now We Give You The
NEXT GENERATION
THE INFINITY

As the world changes, so do we
Longer Lasting...
Cost Effective...
Value in Your Pocket

www.jrmonline.com
888-576-7007 or 336-354-1243

JRM Inc.
Innovative Turf Technology

JRM Inc. P.O. Box 1689 Welcome, NC 27374

www.golfcourseindustry.com/readerservice - #21



Fast.

► Total fire ant control within 72 hours



Furious.

► Year-round fire ant protection



For fire ant colonies, it's a perfect storm.

Only one solution has the benefits of both baits and contact insecticides. DuPont™ Advion® fire ant bait is one of the fastest, most effective products available today—eliminating the entire colony in just 24 to 72 hours. Advion® provides outstanding year-round protection in just one or two applications. And it does it all with an excellent environmental and toxicological profile, and a reduced-risk classification for fire ant control from the U.S. EPA. Experience all-in-one fire ant control today. Call 1-888-6DuPont (1-888-638-7668) or visit us at proproducts.dupont.com. Advion®. Unbeatable results.

DuPont Professional Products



The miracles of science™

Always read and follow all label directions and precautions for use. The DuPont Oval Logo, DuPont,™ The miracles of science™ and Advion® are trademarks or registered trademarks of DuPont or its affiliates. Copyright © 2009 E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Company. All rights reserved.

changing up our program because we were forced to and go back to the basics, that actually helped us solve a problem.”

Foerster also saved time by outsourcing fertilization on the rough and fairways.

Because of the logistics of the course layout, fertilization used to take the crew about three days (estimated labor cost of about \$1,500) using a Lely spreader that spreads about 1,000 pounds per load. Now, he calls on his local

suppliers for fertilizer applications, which takes them about six hours with specialty equipment. As an outsourced service it costs \$800 to \$900.

Watering Ironbridge’s greens has changed, too. Foerster noticed localized dry spot on the greens in the late spring or early summer.

“There was no way we were going to be able to keep up with the hand watering with our crew size,” he says.

So, instead of light irrigation events based on ET rates, Foerster chose to flush the USGA-spec greens. Moving to flushing allows the crew to water the greens once per week from mid- to late June until the end of the irrigation season; the greens require no hand watering.

“The key to flushing was to achieve field capacity,” Foerster says. “Once we did that, the greens were great.”

“If you don’t reach field capacity, you may have a soggy mess on your hands. For us, we would typically water the greens for approxi-

(continued on page 48)

Mastering a new mind-set

Eric Foerster partly attributes his ability to maintain Ironbridge Golf Club with a stripped down crew and budget to what he learned while earning his Master Greenkeeper designation. He’s the 51st person to earn the MG and one of only 20 people who hold both the MG and Certified Golf Course Superintendent designations.

Foerster decided to pursue the MG after attending the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association’s Turf Management Exhibition (BTME) as part of Bernhard & Co.’s exchange program. He started the process shortly after returning from the trip in 2008 and earned the designation last fall.

“When I’ve traveled to England and Scotland and talked to the guys over there, a lot of them manage courses with small crews like this all the time,” he says. “They look at us and say, ‘It’s crazy – you have 20 guys?’ So having that connection through the MG process, being a member of BIGGA and following the practices they do every day has been helpful.”

One example he gives is bunkers. “They don’t rake traps every day, but here it’s expected,” Foerster says. “Over there it’s not about the perfect lie. Golf is still a game there. I think I was able to bring back a bit of that to this golf course last year. It wasn’t about perfection. It was about concentrating on playability. That I can do with what I have. Maybe cart path edges aren’t perfect, but I can tell you, you can come out here and play golf and you’re going to enjoy yourself.”



No Water? No Sewer?

No Problem.

The Clivus Multrum M54 Trailhead is an odorless composting toilet system with handicapped accessible bathroom structure. Ideal for mid-course, the Trailhead structure is available in single or double-stall configurations and a variety of finishes. And like all Clivus systems, the Trailhead is odorless and does not pollute.

Call Clivus today to learn more about why the Trailhead is the Natural Solution for your golf course restroom.

clivusmultrum
INCORPORATED

800-425-4887 www.clivusmultrum.com

Visit our booth (#2149) at the Golf Industry Show in San Diego

Digital Edition

- E-mail to anyone
- View on a PDA
- Print multiple copies

GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

LEARNING THE ROPES

GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY
THE INDUSTRY'S NEWS AND RESOURCE CENTER
www.golfcourseindustry.com



SHARPEN YOUR INSTINCTS.

The new Lynx™ Control System from Toro Golf Irrigation helps you do just that.

Your golf course often demands quick thinking and swift action in order to maintain optimal playability, while best managing resources. Now there's a faster, easier way to act on your course management decisions. The smart Lynx Control System was developed to give you intuitive control over what happens on your course by making all of your essential course irrigation information readily available in one place.

Lynx is the latest advancement in Toro's complete portfolio of irrigation solutions. Switch to Lynx, and begin to run things your way.

©2010 The Toro Company. All rights reserved.

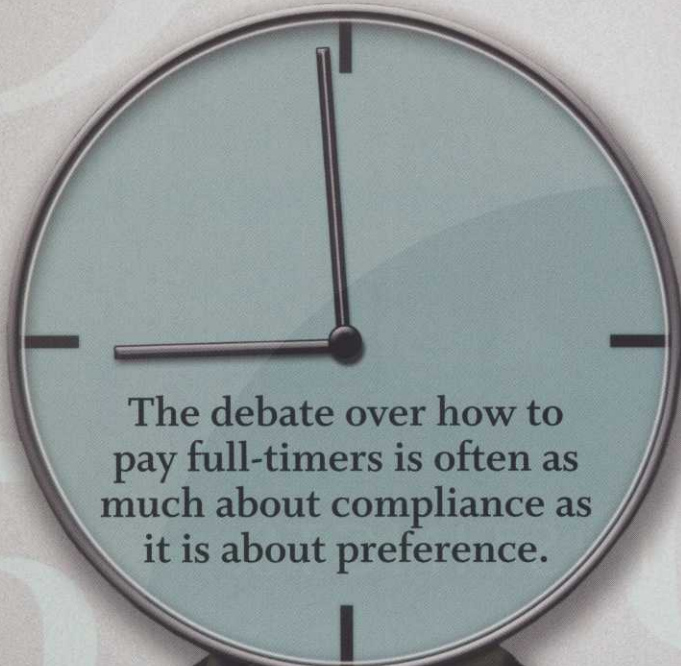


Count on it.

www.toro.com/Lynx

www.golfcourseindustry.com/readerservice - #24

EPIC BATTLE:

hourly
vs.
salary


The debate over how to pay full-timers is often as much about compliance as it is about preference.

“Compensation is a simple matter of economics,” says superintendent Alpha.

“Your club may see it that way,” replies superintendent Beta. “But at my municipal course, we use benefits like a pension and great medical plan as incentives for our assistants and mechanics.”

“Don’t forget the human element,” says superintendent Kappa. “My guys jump at our training opportunities and they really appreciate the flexibility our comp time program gives them.”

“I’m sure they do,” says Alpha. “But comp time doesn’t spend like summer overtime pay.”

You may have had a conversation like this a time or two. Approaches to compensation, hourly vs. salary for starters, vary like the nature of one hole to the next.

FINDING BALANCE AND THE LAW

Local and federal labor laws have been established to help balance employees’ need to be paid fairly for their work with business’ need to manage payroll. Carrie Riordan, senior director of member programs with the GCSAA, says that balancing act is one of the biggest areas superintendents struggle with in budgeting.

One of the most common questions, Riordan says: “Can my assistant be salary, because my assistant is working a lot of hours and it’s more cost effective for the facility to have the job salary vs. hourly?”

The answer is consistent: “Maybe.”

Positions like first assistant, second assistant and equipment manager are different in the eyes of the law. Federal law has key guidelines that help determine whether an employee can be exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act, according to the U.S. Department of Labor Web site. This law requires overtime be paid at the rate of one and a half times the employee’s regular rate for hours worked over 40 in a work week.

In the golf industry, the most common exemption granted under the law is in section 13(a)(1), where an employee must be paid on a salary basis no less than \$455 per week for work that directly involves management of the business and also requires specialized academic training. For more information on state

TOTAL INSECT CONTROL TOTALLY

We're like, toast.

For sure.

Totally.

ALOFT Insecticide provides total insect control, guaranteed.

Simply apply once early for season long control of all major turfgrass insects, surface feeding pests and white grubs. It has two kinds of powerful activity to provide residual, systemic control and fast knockdown. Plus, we're so confident in the proven effectiveness of ALOFT, we're backing it with our Unsurpassed Performance Guarantee. To learn more, call 866-761-9397 or visit arystalifescience.us/aloftguarantee.



Total Control. Guaranteed.™

law consult your state department of labor or the GCSAA.

Riordan says job titles add confusion. "The title really doesn't have anything to do with whether you pay hourly or salary. It's completely based on the job duties," she says. She encourages superintendents to have written job descriptions to spell out each position's duties. That analysis and documentation can help eliminate problems early.

Many superintendents rely on their assistants to supervise the crew, and that supervisory role satisfies a key component of federal law. But that's only one driver behind having an assistant on salary, according to Bill Maynard, CGCS, at Milburn Country Club in Shawnee, Kan.

"I have always salaried my assistant superintendents," Maynard says. "It's just the number of hours that I demand from them, it becomes more beneficial to the club. He's usually here 30 minutes prior to the shift and stays 30 minutes to an hour after the shift. The guy is always on call."

Superintendent Chris Carson of Echo Lake Country Club in Westfield, N.J., sees two viewpoints in the debate over assistants' pay.

"One is take advantage of these guys and in the process they get a boost up and get a chance at a superintendent's job," says Carson. "And the other is pay them for the hours they work. I'm more in that camp, I guess."

At Echo Lake, the assistants and equipment staff are paid hourly and everyone, including seasonal staff, qualifies for benefits like 401(k), sick pay and medical. The average tenure for seasonal staff is 12 years.

Charles Passios, COO at the Golf Club of Cape Cod in North Falmouth, Mass., notes that what may be a lot of responsibility doesn't automatically mean an employee is exempt.

"One of the biggest myths, at least in Massachusetts, is the mechanic position," Passios says. "Even though they are directly



Kriz

responsible for one of the biggest asset pools (golf equipment) a course has, they typically do not manage staff as part of the job and therefore do not qualify for salary."

Some issues, like a mower that breaks down mid-morning, can really hurt a day's productivity. That kind of equipment crisis often means overtime.

Equipment manager Mike Kriz, Arrowhead Country Club in Rapid City, S.D., is the current president of the International Golf Course Equipment Managers Association. He says employees seek the best kind of compensation to fit their lives. Most equipment managers in the association are hourly employees, but that varies. Some people have busy lives outside work and would rather not work many extra hours.

"It's what's important to you," Kriz says. "There are people out there who live off overtime."

CONSIDERING THE BIG PICTURE

One goal for Dave Pease, general manager and

Seize The Power.
Maximize Aeration.

AquaMaster
FOUNTAINS AND AERATORS
MASTER THE POWER AND BEAUTY OF WATER

Choose The Industry Leader!
Floating Fountains • Fixed Fountains • Aeration Lighting • Accessories • MasterClear Natural Microbial Products

AquaMaster Advantage

www.aquamasterfountains.com 1.800.693.3144

AWAY WITH GEESE

*The **AwayWithGeese** floats in the water and works at night -7 days a week. 365 days a year.
*Flashes 360 degrees at a height of about 18"-24".
*Solar powered - no changing batteries
*One light covers up to 4 acres. Range 150 yards.
*90 day unconditional warrantee

\$335

geesedamage.com
(800) 555-9634
JWB Marketing Columbia, SC