



LETTERS

Monroe:

Listed below are a few questions which may facilitate "understanding" of the WTA and its process. I'm sure all this information is available (and has been available) but as we talked, it seems necessary to keep "telling people" over and over again. I'm as guilty as anyone of assuming that everyone knows (or remembers) the same things I do but it doesn't seem to work that way.

- 1.) WTA Purpose —
- 2.) Composition of Board of Directors —
 - a.) criteria for selection of Director nominees
 - b.) criteria for selection of Honorary Directors
 - c.) WGCSA representation
- 3.) Scholarship —
 - a.) eligibility for award
 - b.) criteria for selection
 - c.) maximum/minimum award amount
- 4.) Research —
 - a.) eligibility for grants
 - b.) criteria for grant selection
 - c.) process; who submits?, who defines parameters (how long, etc.)?, when submitted?, when awarded?, et cetera
 - d.) reporting; how often?, what form?, where published?, when due?, who presents?
 - e.) research assistant: reports to whom?, who defines project? who controls time?
- 5.) Funding —
 - a.) major existing income sources (on-going)
 - b.) major potential income sources (on-going)
 - c.) GCSAA, O.J. Noer, et cetera?
- 6.) Research Facility —
 - a.) projected cost (capital)
 - b.) projected cost (operational)
 - c.) timetable
 - d.) initial funding
 - e.) on-going funding
 - f.) location & site selection

- g.) effect on field work
- h.) WGCSA contribution

Anyway, these are some thoughts on what the "average interested party" may be curious about. The whole point is to communicate the process and goal, galvanize the effort, gain acceptance and make it happen for everyone's benefit.

Bill

Editor's reply:

Dear Bill,

I may not subscribe to your notion of the need to keep telling people the same thing, over and over again, but I do recognize that there have been substantial increases in the WGCSA membership in the past two years. It is entirely possible, even probable, that they haven't been properly introduced to the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association and its exciting program. Your letter provides a good framework to accomplish what we both feel is important, even if for different reasons. I'll address each point of your letter.

1. The purpose of the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association is to promote the turfgrass industry in Wisconsin, to serve as a communication channel within the industry, and in particular, to encourage the further study and research in turfgrasses at our land grant college, as well as to analyze and disseminate information relating thereto. The objective of the Association is better turf for all; athletic fields, cemeteries, golf courses, lawns, parks, playgrounds, roadsides and any other turfgrass areas.

2. (a.) The criteria for selection of Director nominees is determined by the nominating committee of the WTA. All WTA members are eligible to serve as a Director. The nominating committee (consisting of Terry Kurth, Jim Huggett and Monroe Miller for 1986) selects candidates with the demonstrated ability to serve, the interest to serve, the expressed commitment to serve and the appropriate qualifications for a WTA directorship. Three directors are elected at each annual meeting for a term of three years.

(b.) The Association may from time to time confer Honorary directorships which shall not be deemed part of the Board of Directors for the purpose of a quorum nor for the purpose of appointing or electing officers of the Association. Said honorary directors shall hold office for a term of one year. There shall be honorary memberships in addition and on the same basis as honorary directors.

(c.) The WGCSA is extremely well represented on the WTA Board. WTA President Tom Harrison is a WGCSA member. WTA Secretary is WGCSA Director Monroe Miller. WTA Director Roger Bell is a WGCSA Director. WTA Directors Red Roskopf and Curt Larson are both WGCSA members. A Honorary Director and Assistant to the President is Pat Norton, another WGCSA member. There has even been some concern that the WTA Board of Directors may be over-represented with WGCSA members, the size of our donation notwithstanding.

3. (a.) Students eligible for the WTA Scholarship must be a junior or senior at the University of Wisconsin—Madison majoring in Soil Science, Horticulture, Plant Pathology or Entomology with a specialty in Turf and Grounds Management and a professed interest in pursuing a professional career in the field of turfgrass management.

(b.) The selection of the student recipient of this award is made by the Dean of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences through the College's Scholarship Committee with prior recommendation from the respective departments and the Research Advisors to the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association. That group currently consists of Professors Love, Worf, Newman, Mahr and Kussow.

(c.) The sum of the scholarship is \$250 and it is made one time per year. Generally, one-half of the award is given during the first semester of the academic school year and the remaining one-half is given during the second semester, contingent upon the recipient's continued eligibility for the award.

4. (a.) Investigators eligible for WTA research grants are those UW—Madison staff in the College

of Agricultural and Life Sciences involved in turfgrass research, education and extension.

(b.) Grant criteria are determined by the Board of Directors of the WTA and involve rather basic and simple considerations. Among those are grant request size, pressing needs of the turfgrass industry in Wisconsin as gauged by the broad experience base of the Directors, and the critical "fairness" principle.

(c.) Each researcher submits his own proposal for project(s) in his area of expertise — plant pathology, soils, horticulture (weed and herbicide studies) and entomology. Because of the limited resources of the WTA, the projects are usually of shorter duration (three years and less). The requests for funding are due to the Board of Directors by April 15 (or before) of the year of the project. Although longer term projects may be approved in principle, continuation depends on industry interest, available funds and preliminary results. Awards are made at the meeting immediately following the due date of the requests to facilitate faculty planning for the upcoming season.

(d.) Annual reports are submitted by investigators to the Board of Directors as soon as data is analyzed at the end of the season. All reports are professionally prepared. They include the title of the project, its length, any cooperators (which are frequently Golf Course Superintendents from around the State of Wisconsin), a narrative describing the objectives of the study, methods and procedures used, along with any other significant information. All raw data is presented along with a statistical analysis which determines its significance. Finally, the reports include a discussion and summary section. The reports submitted to the Board of Directors are then put together in a meaningful order, taken to a printer and published, as a collection for the year, in a bound book form. These results are then made available to the membership of the WTA at no cost and are available for sale to non-members at a cost above that of printing. The book is entitled "WISCONSIN TURF RESEARCH — Results of 1986 Studies." The

1985 results ran 68 pages and the collection of 1984 results was 80 pages in length.

(e.) A Research Assistant is a student who, while working toward a graduate degree, is employed part-time to assist in the conduct of research. The student is typically employed half-time. To qualify for a research assistantship, the individual must be enrolled full-time in a degree program. Full-time status for a graduate student means 9 to 12 credits per semester of coursework and three credits during the summer session. The three summertime credits are generally research credits. Hence, research assistants commonly devote all their time to research during the summer months.

Half-time research assistants are expected to devote an average of at least 20 hours per week to research. This research effort may or may not contribute to or be a part of the research all students must carry out as one of their graduate degree requirements. This is left to the discretion of the Professor in charge (Dr. Wayne Kussow, in the case of the recently approved WTA R.A.). The student participates in the Professor's research program and may select some segment of this program as a topic for his graduate thesis research. In this case, part of the student's research effort serves a dual role. It contributes to the Professor's research program and generates a portion of the student's thesis research.

It is important to note that the time requirement is not limited to twenty hours. More commonly, those students holding a R.A. appointment will commit greater amounts of time than actually required. On-going and successful research programs at other institutions require graduate students — master and Ph.D. — and post-graduate work. There are currently no graduate students involved in turfgrass research at the UW—Madison, and the recognition of their key importance was fundamental in the decision by the WTA Board to initiate funding for such a program. Without research assistants and technicians, the research output of the UW would likely be one-tenth or less its current level.

There is no fixed agenda regarding the types of research the WTA-financed research assistants will conduct. However, Dr. Kussow does intend to follow a few simple guidelines:

1. The research will be problem oriented and will focus on cultural practices;
2. An effort will be made to select problems that concern a broad cross-section of the turfgrass industry; and
3. The research will not consist of product testing or evaluation.

These guidelines will be applied in the context of reality, which imposes some limitations on what kinds of research can be conducted. Until the O.J. Noer Center for Turfgrass Research is constructed, there will be restrictions due to lack of facilities and equipment. Another restriction arises from the fact that the research will be carried out by a candidate for a master's degree. This individual cannot be expected to conduct research that takes more than 24 months to complete. Finally, there is the matter of program support. Dr. Kussow will need to obtain extramural funding to pay for things such as field and laboratory supplies and materials, for student help and for any analytical services needed. Depending on the nature of the research, these costs typically range between \$2500 and \$5000 per year.

Dr. Kusow would be pleased to receive research suggestions from the WTA membership. He can be reached by telephone at (608) 263-3631 or you can write to him at the:

Department of Soil Science
University of Wisconsin
1525 Observatory Drive
Madison, WI, 53706

5. (a.) Major existing sources of revenue for the WTA are:

1. Dues
2. Winter Conference
3. Summer Field Day
4. Golf Outing
5. Advertising

These sources accounted for 70% of the income of the WTA in 1985. Additionally, special contributions were made, including the very generous donation of our WGCSA.

(b.) Wrestling with the problem

of expanding income is never ending for the WTA Board. There is a plan, and it is only a plan at this stage, to figure out a way to "tax" the end user and final benefactor of the kind of research we all know that is needed. The dairy industry has a checkoff plan for each hundredweight of milk sold. The corn growers might tax each bushel of corn taken to market. The same goes for pork producers, cranberry growers, truck farmers, etc. The problem with the turfgrass industry is that our final product isn't always a commodity. We would, however, like to see a one cent charge on each round of golf played in Wisconsin funnelled to the WTA. We would like to make arrangements to receive a similar amount donated for each square yard of sod sold in the state. Similarly, each home lawn treated by the lawn care industry could be taxed an insignificant sum, but the total for the year, statewide, would be substantial. The point is, in each case, the final user supports the research. Keep in mind that these ideas are still in the formative stage, but that is always the first step.

(c.) The two sources of income that you mention here, the GCSAA and the Noer Foundation, are certainly sources of research monies for the UW staff, once they have developed an applied program and have the facilities to carry out longer term and more basic research. They are **not** sources of income for the WTA. We are all, in fact, in existence for the same purposes — horses of a different color, if you will.

6. There are no definite answers to the questions you ask about the research facility. What the WTA Board knows for certain is the obvious — we need one. That need is amplified by the fact that we are among the very few that do not have such a facility, despite the size of the turfgrass industry in Wisconsin (see the WTA "Green-space Report" authored principally by WGCSA member Ed Devinger). We are also aware of the fact that by virtue of being among the last to have a turfgrass research facility we have the opportunity to have the best. We are able to eliminate problems and mistakes encountered by other

land grant colleges and at the same time incorporate the best of what they have. Determination of what kind of facility to plan for was the responsibility given to a WTA subcommittee of Jim Huggett, Monroe Miller and Tom Harrison. The subcommittee worked with their own resources but received the bulk of the planning input from Dr. Kussow, Dr. Worf and Dr. Newman. These men, through their contacts with colleagues at other land grant institutions, laid out some general requirements in terms of a building and of the property need for a turf research farm. Timing seems to be working in our favor since the Chancellor of the UW—Madison has given the green light for construction of a University golf course. Although the subcommittee has some ideas about items you mention — costs, timetable, initial and long-term funding — we feel there is wisdom in waiting on public discussion until we have shared those thoughts

with the Madison campus chancellor. A meeting with Dr. Shain may even have taken place by the time you read this. Rest assured that as soon as there is something to report or to discuss, you will read about it in the GRASSROOTS.

Finally, questions have arisen about the "O.J. Noer Center." The subcommittee felt there could be no better way to honor a man who was a graduate of the University of Wisconsin and quite possibly the premier turf agronomist of all time than to name a turf research station at his alma mater after him. Thus, the name was born.

The WGCSA will be hearing more and more from the WTA. A formal report by one of the WTA Board members will be given at each WGCSA Board meeting in 1986. That same report will be presented to our members.

Monroe

An Open Letter to all WGCSA Members

from Tom Harrison

The Board of Directors of the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association would like to take this opportunity to thank the membership and Board of Directors of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association for their financial support over the years and particularly for the grant of \$5,000 for 1986. The WGCSA is in a leadership position in Wisconsin in their commitment to turfgrass research. All the members of the WGCSA should be proud of this role and the WTA is indeed very thankful for this tremendous support. The superintendents of Wisconsin have a great deal to gain from this continued commitment to the WTA.

The WTA is struggling very hard to bring the University of Wisconsin's research efforts up to the level of our neighboring states. All the efforts put forth to date — the yearly grants to Dr. Worf, Dr. Mahr, Dr. Kussow and Dr. Newman, the research truck purchased in 1984,

publishing of research studies, e.g. — are a tiny part of what the WTA is struggling towards. These past efforts, whereas they are meaningful in regards to showing the U.W. administration that we are a dedicated and serious group, merely scratch the surface of what Wisconsin really needs in terms of research.

Wisconsin needs a commitment from the U.W. administration that urban agriculture is a significant and sizeable industry in Wisconsin. The green industry needs to be recognized such that it is not last on the priority list for research support. Once this fact is recognized then the question becomes, how do they as a state land grant college better serve this industry. The answer to that is an urban research facility. The WTA, in its efforts gets the University moving, had to first make basic support efforts such as we have done for the last four years. As these efforts took place we have been busy