

Douglas Community Golf Club and Bridger Creek Golf Course Hosts Events



The Wyoming Scholarship/Education Golf Tournament will be held June 24, 2015, at the Douglas Community Golf Club. We appreciate the invite of host superintendent, Danny Renz, to enjoy his facility. Lunch will be served at 11:00 a.m., followed by golf. The format will be a Four-Person Scramble this year. Bring multiple teams from your course or your facility. Proceeds



from the event benefit the continuing education and scholarship programs of the association. Registration forms are available online to download, or to register and pay online.

The Montana event will be September 3, 2015, at Bridger Creek Golf Course, Bozeman, Mont. This date will allow you to play golf by day and then stay for the MSU Cats game! Host Superintendent Dane Gamble encourages you to mark this date. Registration information will be available this summer.

We are seeking hole sponsors for both the Wyoming and Montana events. For Wyoming, please contact Danny Renz, (605) 890-1113, and Montana contact Dane Gamble, (406) 586-4866. Remember, you do not have to be a Peaks & Prairies member to play - everyone is welcome!

PPGCSA Events:

PPGCSA Fall Meeting & Trade Show

October 27-29, 2015, Billings, Mont.

Peaks & Prairies GCSA Scholarship Education Golf Tournaments, June 24, 2015, Douglas, Wyo., and

September 3, 2015, Bozeman, Mont.

“Almost” Spring Meeting

March 7 & 8, 2016, Helena, Mont.

R4R Down to the Wire!

We are still seeking courses to participate in the Rounds4Research program. It is important we grow this event – both in donations and in participation. But to do so, we need your help. Please donate your rounds of four with carts. Encourage your pro shop to help you spread the word. Without golfers to bid, the program will not succeed.

To complete your donation on line, please visit <http://www.rounds4research.com/donate-a-round/>, or contact either Cole Clark (406)850-8611, Cody Schulke (509) 432-3744, or Jory Horsley (307) 751-5585.

Rounds4Research takes place June 8 -21.

Altschwager Attends Symposium

Wade Altschwager, Anaconda Hills Golf Course, Great Falls, Mont., and Lori Russell attended the 2015 Chapter Leader/ Executive Symposium at GCSAA headquarters in late March.

Representatives of 23 GCSAA chapters came together to focus on their leadership skills to better lead their chapter, as well as course facilities. Numerous topics were covered during the event including leadership, governance, operations, and communications, as well as a small group discussion among the five north-west chapters in attendance. *(See more about this event page 10.)*



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THE PERFECT LIE is published quarterly by Peaks & Prairies GCSA, and is edited by Lori Russell. Our newsletter is not copyrighted, but we would appreciate credit being given when original material is reprinted. Advertising and article deadlines are the 10th of February, April, July, and October.

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*“Peaks & Prairies Golf Course
Superintendents Association is
dedicated to furthering the education
of our members for the betterment of
golf and its environment.”*

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President's Message

Sean Sullivan, CGCS
The Briarwood, Billings, Mont.

Now that we have most of our staff hired, irrigation turned on, equipment repaired and cutting, and winter projects completed, there are no excuses for not playing in one - or both - of this summer's scholarship tournaments.

June 24, the tournament will be at Douglas Golf Club, in Douglas, Wyoming. Host superintendent is Danny Renz. September 3, the tournament will be at Bridger Creek, in Bozeman, Montana. Host superintendent is Dane Gamble. There is plenty of time for everyone to work one or both tournaments into your schedule. Whatever you think is more important to do will still be there the following day. And, on a side note, rumor has it there is a Cats game on the 3rd, so you have another reason. If you are the superintendent and still believe you can't leave the course, at least send your assistant or someone else from your course. It would be nice to have as many courses represented as we can. Obviously, some dis-

tances are hard to overcome. It would be tough to justify driving from the Flathead Valley down to Douglas to play a round of golf, but the local Wyoming folks should be able to make it. Likewise, it would be a long drive from Cheyenne to Bozeman, but the Montana folks should be able to make it easily enough. I'll even use my Presidential powers and ask the Governor to have the National Guard open the gates and allow our members from Great Falls, Helena, and the Flathead Valley to have a one-day pass. That way we can remember what you guys look like!

Apart from the opportunity to take a break from the daily grind, there are the networking benefits to the tournaments. There is the opportunity to visit with the local vendors, without the pressure to buy (although they would be happy if you did!). Enjoy the chance to see two other golf courses, and maybe even learn some new problem-solving skills. Who knows what you will learn from the experience, but one thing is for sure... you will have fun. If, in the future, you don't want to travel to a golf event, you can volunteer to host the event. That way you will already be there and at work. Kill two birds with one stone.

Other than raising funds for scholarships and continuing education, these tournaments serve a few other purposes. They strengthen the chapter association. Attendance shows support for a fellow superintendent and his/her course. It also shows the management of the facility how strong and supportive Peaks & Prairies GCSA is.

I wish everyone a successful growing and golfing season.

Kind regards to you and your families,
Sean Sullivan, CGCS

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Inbox ZERO

Jason Busch
The Powder Horn, Sheridan, Wyo.

The news is always reporting that Americans are increasingly blurring the line between work and personal time. Technology, they say, is the culprit. With smartphones and tablets so prevalent in society today, it is easy to see why. Long hours are standard for golf course superintendents, and this technology allows us to stay connected even when we are not at the course. Keeping up with the golf course when we are away can be a good thing, but I have become increasingly overwhelmed with the amount of information thrown my way when I am trying to spend time with my family. If I don't respond to an email right away, I know it would just get buried in the bottomless pit that I call my inbox.

I decided to make a change about a year ago. I wanted to organize all of my emails in a way that I could easily find what I was looking for and identify what was important to me. I'm sure that many of you already have some sort of a system for dealing with email, but for those of you who don't, I can help.

The steps below will help you to achieve "inbox zero".

Create Folders

Most email providers will allow you to create folders or labels. These are key for good organization in your inbox. Create a folder for every category that you feel is important. See the attached picture for an example. The folders that I have created are on the left side of the screen. I will delete or add new folders every once in a while as the need arises. Too many can get confusing for my pea brain.

Sort Old Emails Into Folders

This was the daunting part for me. I had about 650 emails sitting in my inbox that needed sorting. I ended up deleting about half of them, but some of them were stuff that I knew I might need to access at a later time, like equipment quotes,

continued page 6

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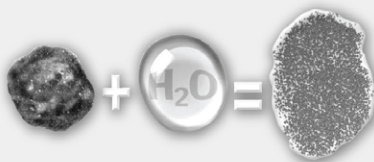
Soil testing and plant tissue analysis are valuable tools that can be used to develop a turf nutrition plan. Determining the correct amount and balance of nutrients is essential to turf health. Other factors to take into consideration are the turf type, the length of growing season, climatic conditions, and the amount of wear the turf is exposed to. The timing and levels of turf nutrition depends on the type of turf being grown.

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Inbox ZERO

continued from page 4

conversations with membership, and so on. The good stuff was moved into the folders until I only had a couple of important items that needed attention soon. These were left in my inbox, almost like a to do list.

Deal With Email As It Arrives

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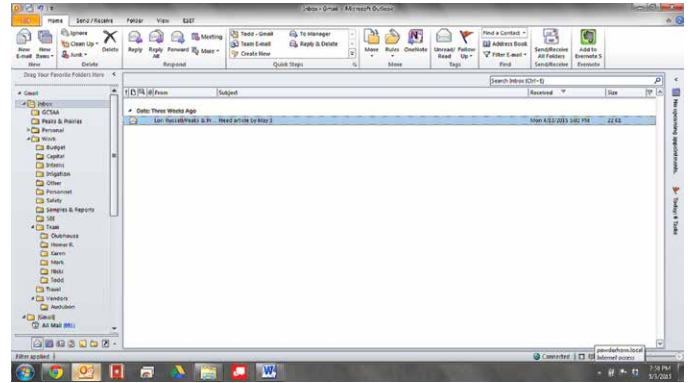

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away if it is junk. If I want to save it for reference, it goes in the appropriate folder. Only items that require action will remain in my inbox. Once they are taken care of they can be deleted or filed to the appropriate folder. As you can see in the screenshot of my inbox, I can still do some procrastinating. Lori asked me to write this article three weeks ago, and I am about four hours away from the deadline. It is going to feel good to delete that one here in a second and get back to inbox zero.



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A WARM AND EARLY SPRING

**Clark Throssell, Ph.D.,
Turfgrass R&D, Inc., Billings, Mont.**



Spring has arrived early in 2015 and with it has come temperatures that are warmer than normal. First, I hope the warm spring is bringing more golfers and more revenue to your golf course. Second, I trust you have adapted your agronomic programs to an earlier spring. In particular, you should have applied your preemergent herbicide (if using one) and second, be on the lookout for ants earlier than you usually would.

A warmer than normal spring means the soil will warm up faster than usual, which means crabgrass will germinate earlier than usual. Hopefully, you applied your preemergent herbicide and watered it in before crabgrass seed germinated.

Warmer soil temperatures will also mean ants will be active earlier than usual so scouting for them and treating, if present, should take place earlier than usual. Controlling ants early in the season while the population is low is more effective than waiting until later in summer when the population is high. As always, it is highly likely that more than one application will be needed to control ants throughout the growing season.

Postemergent Crabgrass Control

A couple of things to remember about crabgrass control: 1) preemergent control is easier and more effective than postemergent control; and 2) if you do plan to use postemergent herbicides for crabgrass control, it is easier to control younger, smaller plants than older, larger plants.

Preventing crabgrass plants from producing seed should be your number one goal. If you can prevent crabgrass plants from producing seed, each year it will get progressively easier to control.

Start scouting areas that have a history of crabgrass infestation now and look for the germinating seedlings. Once you have identified the germinating seedlings, formulate a plan to control the seedling crabgrass. Crabgrass seed will germinate over

about an 8 week period beginning when soil temperatures in the upper two inches of soil are in the range of 55 to 60° F. Therefore, if you plan to use a postemergent herbicide to control crabgrass, depending on when you make the first postemergent herbicide application, it is likely you would will need more than one application to control crabgrass seedlings. For instance, if you make the first postemergent herbicide application June 20 to 25, a second application in late July may be needed as well to make sure all the crabgrass seedlings are controlled. Be sure to control the crabgrass plants before they produce seed heads.

According to Patton and Weisenberger (1), the following active ingredients (or herbicide combinations that contain one of the active ingredients) are labelled for postemergent crabgrass control in cool season turfgrasses: Dimension (dithiopyr) (Dimension is only effective on crabgrass plants 1 tiller in size or smaller), Tenacity (mesotrione), Acclaim Extra (fenoxaprop-ethyl) and Drive (quinclorac). Each active ingredient has unique properties and understanding those properties will allow you to get the maximum benefit from the active ingredient used. To my knowledge, no active ingredient is labeled for crabgrass control on cool season grass putting greens.

To achieve effective postemergent crabgrass control, the crabgrass plants should be green and not under drought stress at the time of application. Uniform coverage of the crabgrass leaves with the spray solution is essential for good control. Read and follow all label directions when using any herbicide.

Quackgrass

Quackgrass (*Elymus repens*) can be a problem on golf courses and other turf sites (my lawn) in our region. Unfortunately, there are no selective herbicides that will control quackgrass growing in a cool season turfgrass stand.

That leaves a nonselective herbicide that contains

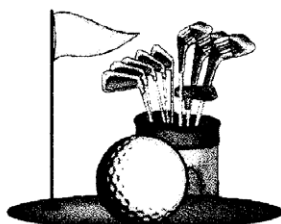


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glyphosate as your only option to control the quackgrass and all other cool season turfgrasses growing on the site. According to Patton and Weisenberger (1), at least two glyphosate applications, but sometimes three or more, may be needed to control quackgrass. Make the first glyphosate application while quackgrass is small in size and fully green. Encourage the quackgrass to regrow after the first application and reapply glyphosate approximately 3 to 4 weeks after the first application. Repeat this cycle until no quackgrass regrows.

It will be difficult to achieve 100% control of quackgrass using glyphosate because of the extensive system of rhizomes that quackgrass develops.

Spring Maintenance

Before you get fully engaged in your summer maintenance schedule, take some time to evaluate what worked well and what wasn't as successful with your putting green management program this spring. Keep in mind, creeping bentgrass is always slow to begin active growth in spring.

Based on conversations with superintendents in Billings, a modest approach to managing creeping bentgrass putting greens in early spring works best. Avoid applications of large amounts of nitrogen fertilizer. Try spraying 0.2 lbs. of soluble nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft. in spring and watch what happens. Let the grass tell you if more nitrogen is needed or not. If you don't see much of a response to the first application of 0.2 lbs. of soluble nitrogen, wait until the grass responds and starts to grow a little bit more rapidly before reapplying another 0.1 to 0.2 lbs. of soluble nitrogen.

In early spring, consider relying on your roller to smooth

the putting surface and provide the putting green speed that golfers want. Roll as needed to keep the putting green speed in your target range. Only mow when there is noticeable leaf growth and at the highest reasonable height possible in early spring. Gradually lower the mowing height in several small increments as the creeping bentgrass starts to grow at a modest rate.

Take time to enjoy the beautiful late spring and early summer weather. There is a long golf season ahead of you so make sure you find time to do the things you enjoy.

Clark Throssell, Ph.D., is a turfgrass scientist and works with the turfgrass industry on technical and scientific issues. He serves as the technical resource for Peaks & Prairies GCSA members. (This article can only be reproduced with written permission of the author.)

References: 1. Patton, A. J. and D.V. Weisenberger. 2015. Turfgrass Weed Control for Professionals, 2015 edition. Purdue University Extension Service. West Lafayette, IN.

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Getting Involved

Wade Altschwager
Class A Superintendent
 Anaconda Hills Golf Course,
 Great Falls, Mont.

Everyone says that the best way to improve your self is to get out of your comfort zone. Through personal experience, I have found this to be very true. It is far too easy to fall into what is comfortable and easy because it usually feels good, and, since it feels good, it makes staying where you are comfortable seem just fine. When I end up doing something that I am not as comfortable with, it is then that I learn just how much more can be attained by pushing myself, even if that push is a little one.

About four years ago, I was asked to serve on the Peaks & Prairies Board of Directors. Prior to being asked, I had been a member of Peaks & Prairies for 12 years and never imagined I would consider sitting on the Board. I usually attended the Fall Meeting & Trade Show

and it was there that I gained a lot of new and relevant information that enabled me to perform my job better at my golf course. Never having attended a university turf program, the information I was able to take away from these meetings has always been very valuable to me. Most of my knowledge about course management has been attained through Peaks & Prairies meetings, a correspondence course and on-the-job experience. However, I was not taking advantage of the opportunity given to me to interact with the other superintendents at these meetings. By nature, I am a quiet and reserved person. I am not usually the person who will just go up to people and strike up a conversation. Over the course of the 12 years, I found that the value of interaction with the superintendents at the meetings was just as important as the knowledge that I learned in a seminar.

When I received the call requesting my service on the Board of Directors, I knew two things for certain; this was way out of my comfort zone and taking this opportunity would be the best thing for me. Again,



(Right) Wade Altschwager (Peaks & Prairies GCSA), Lori Russell, James Curdy (Inland Empire GCSA), and Gerald Flaherty, CGCS (Idaho GCSA)

over the next four years, I would find those two things to be true. I met more people in that time than I had in the previous twelve years. The networking opportunities that have arisen have been very helpful and encouraging. Every superintendent I have talked to has been more than willing to share ideas on anything from golf course issues to hobbies. Through it all, I have gained a greater appreciation of Peaks and Prairies being an association made up of and for the superintendent, which means an intricate part of our association's productivity depends on us as members. Our input and involvement helps it run in the way we all want it to run. This realization was the reason it only took me about two seconds to agree to run for a Board of Directors position when asked.

Recently, I once again found myself outside of my comfort zone when I was selected from the Board of Directors to

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attend leadership training at the Golf Course Superintendent Association of America (GCSAA) headquarters in Lawrence, Kansas. I knew of board members attending this training, but I never thought I would be an attendee. Once again, it was the challenge of going beyond what was comfortable that led to one of the greatest opportunities for me to grow as well as serve our association by representing it at the national level.

Approximately twenty regional associations from across the country were represented at the Leadership Symposium,



where we learned about what the GCSAA is doing to further the golf industry and help superintendents in their jobs. Currently, the GCSAA is advocating for golf at the federal level as well as supplying superintendents with resources

to help us understand the issues that are being brought before Congress. The opportunity to visit the national headquarters and meet the people working there who help our association better serve its members opened my eyes to the level of

commitment the GCSAA has for its members and for the golf industry. Being part of the Leadership Symposium was a great opportunity to represent our association at the national level as well as grow professionally.

I would like to finish by saying there is a lot of need for people, like you and me, to become involved in our association. There are opportunities for each of us to shape our association and to stretch ourselves as superintendents. Any of our Board members, as well as Lori, would be happy to help you find a place to plug in. Each one of us adds to the value our association offers its members. The association is in constant need of people willing to step up and help with its operation. This can be anything from giving a Board member your input about the association to serving on the Board or a committee to writing an article for this newsletter. Our newsletter is always in need of articles from its members. The time commitment is not that great and the benefits to the association, as well as you professionally, far surpass the sacrifice. We just have to stop being so comfortable.

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Congratulations to These Members!

Those who enjoyed a conference off our usual beaten path are the winners! Jackson, Wyo. was an outstanding location for a variety of reasons. The hotel offered great service and the property really worked well for the event. We were surrounded by the beautiful Tetons, and, with the timing of our meeting – moose, elk and deer surrounded the town. Further enhancing the personal experience was a special breakfast cooked and served by the 3 Creek maintenance staff in the maintenance facility on the second day. Thanks to Dan Tolson, CGCS, and his team for making their idea a reality, for their hard work, and for the excellent food!

The education was certainly worth the trip. Our small-but-mighty-group came through in a big way supporting the silent auction, of which our members graciously and generously supported. Randy Norvelle, CGCS, deserves our kudos for

putting it together and keeping everyone competitive with the bidding.

So you probably picked up on the small-but-mighty group comment, or you may have heard our numbers were down. While it didn't diminish the event or experience, it was a little disappointing. We know the arrival of an early spring and the late March timing played havoc with some people's participation. And for some of our members, it would have been a long way. But for those in the Jackson area who faithfully drive both to Billings and our Spring Meeting sites – they appreciate those who reciprocated with the travel.

To all of our allied supporters, meeting attendees (including Idaho GCSA members) who supported us, and the local facilities – thank you! It was our privilege and a pleasure.

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Grass Note

“It’s A Double Edge Sword”

**Pete Grass, CGCS
GCSAA Vice President
Hilands Golf Club, Billings, Mont.**



Often times, when you are representing people on issues, there are opposing sides who disagree about what should be done. The issue of the Clean Water Act (CWA) is no different. The Act has been in effect since 1972 and we in the golf industry have conformed our practices and operated under the guidelines of it since then. In the last year, the EPA, in conjunction with the Army Corps of Engineers, has made proposed rule changes to the CWA titled the Waters of the United States or “WOTUS” for short.

From my perspective, there are two major issues within the proposed changes. The first is that the expansion of federal regulatory authority to the level far beyond navigable waters as currently authorized scares me. The second is the lack of defined parameters within which we would know how to adjust our practices. The most important of the words included is “near.” It is used in the context of any fertilizer or pesticide application “near” a WOTUS. Here is where my two concerns combine: most every golf course I have seen has some sort of

water feature(s) some of which may be covered under the current CWA (but I believe the vast majority are not). Under the proposed WOTUS rule, potentially every one of them now would be included, even if they only have flow seasonally or even temporarily, such as heavy rain event. As long as they feed or somehow connect to navigable water eventually, possibly even through groundwater, not just surface flow, they would eventually be included. Not only would we be subject to a federal permit process to apply products to water or land or make any renovations including storm damage restorations to our course water features or even drainage areas that are dry (except after a major precipitation event), we would not know for sure exactly where the permit process would begin, because of the word “near.” The threat of Citizen Action lawsuits is also opened up by this rule and ambiguity of terms. I have limited, but some, experience with the “permit” process for applications and

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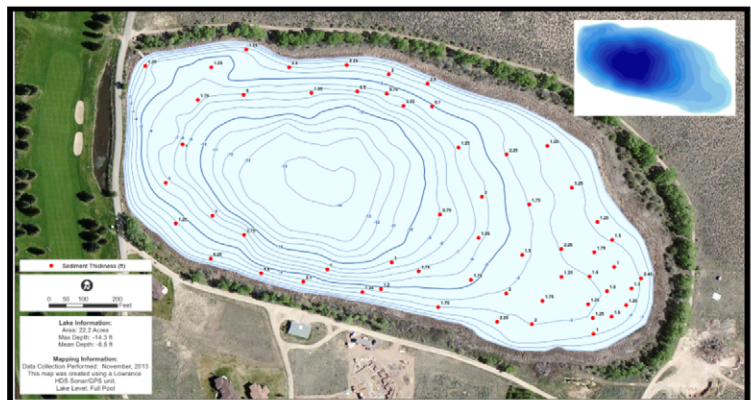
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Grass Notes

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renovations to my facility. No aspect of it is either simple or inexpensive, especially if you include the time it takes to do research, fill out and submit, much less wait for approval of state or federal forms.

National Golf Day took place recently on April 15th and your GCSAA delegation in Washington DC had 86 meetings with Senators and Representatives; I was in all three Montana offices to express my concerns about WOTUS.

Senator Daines and Rep. Zinke's offices both share golf and agriculture's concerns with the proposed rule and are not in favor of it becoming final. Senator Tester is taking a "wait and see" stance which concerns me in that once implemented, the rule is much harder to reverse or not fund through the appropriations process than it is to fix the rule before it goes final. If any of you, no matter what state you are in, are comfortable contacting your national elected officials, please send a short note or call your local or Washington office and tell them that you are concerned with the impact that the proposed WOTUS rule would have on your facility.

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Grass Notes

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From the environmental activist community, we are hearing the comment that if you are against the proposed WOTUS rule, you are against clean water. As we, who spend our days (and nights sometimes) managing water and soils all know, we are the front line and some of the best stewards of clean water management and proper environmental practices to provide recreation, wildlife habitat and community assets at our facilities. I understand their thought process in saying so, but educating them on what we “really do” each day is part of what we as individuals, Peaks & Prairies and GCSAA should be and are doing now. We are asking to do business and provide the recreation, jobs and the huge economic impact that golf does, at a reasonable regulatory level. You can go to the government relations section of gcsaa.org to learn more about the WOTUS rule and see our public comments.

From my perspective as a GCSAA Director, we are in a difficult situation from a member benefit standpoint. We often hear from some members that they are not sure what they are paying dues for or whether they are getting anything in return for them. On just this WOTUS issue, if the rule were to pass as currently written, the things I spoke about would go into effect and we would all, in some way and many in a huge way, live with greater expense and “hassle” doing the exact same things we are currently doing. If we are successful in getting EPA to draft a better rule or even getting reasonable exemptions for golf facilities situations, most, if not all, members would have





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never known what changes would have happened without us telling them. That is the job and role of GCSAA, to monitor and advocate on our behalf, certainly at the national level and often at the state level, things that will affect how we do our jobs. As I have said in my articles over the years and in person to many, you get “value” out of your membership by using as many of the programs and services that GCSAA provides, and even though you probably never realize what the Association is doing for you “behind the curtain” (Wizard of Oz reference for us old folks) at HQ in Kansas and in Washington, DC.

This is also another instance that is a clear example of how even a non-member and their facility benefit from members supporting GCSAA. Any changes to the WOTUS rule will not apply to only GCSAA members facilities, it will apply to all golf facilities. If you are a non-member reading this, think about supporting your industry and helping yourself and your facility through what I wholeheartedly believe is a great value for even the smallest (physical size and budget) of you. I know every dollar is tight but we are all part of an industry that works together to support each other. If you need any help or ideas on how you could approach your “boss” to encourage support of your membership for what it could do for you and your facility, I am always happy to help and share my thoughts. Let me know, pghgc@montana.net or 406-855-6440.

To access the member's only section of the PPGCSA website for the first time, please use your email address provided to the association as your user name, click on forgot password, and follow the prompts.

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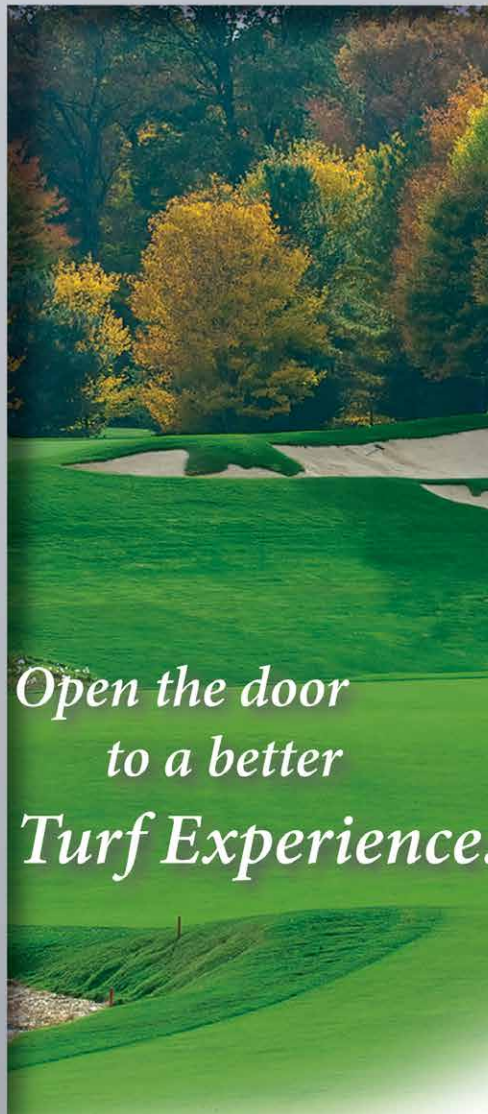
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