

## Celebrating Our New Location with a Worthy Agenda

Ever wonder how silicon, phosphite, and carbon work in your turfgrass management program? Come to the Fall Meeting. Ever consider what else can affect Poa, besides herbicides and growth regulators? Come to the Fall Meeting. Do you wonder what the tradeoffs are when coupling turf management practices with environmental stewardship? Perfect. Come to the Fall Meeting.

These topics are just a sampling of the discussions to be found at the Peaks & Prairies GCSA Fall Meeting and Trade Show to be held at... a new Billings location! To meet your expectations of a different experience with recent updates, we will be at the Billings Hotel &

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Beth Guertal, PhD

*“Pseudo Nutrients (silicon, phosphite, carbon) and How They Work in your Turfgrass Management Program”*

*“Fertilizers and Other Things that Affect Poa (other than herbicides and growth regulators)”*

J. Bryan Unruh, PhD

*“Gizmos and Gadgets: IPM Tools for the Turfgrass Manager”*

*“Coupling Turf Management Practices with Environmental Stewardship: Managing Trade-offs”*

*“Keeping Your Team Safe: Reducing Pesticide Exposure”*



### PPGCSA Events:

**PPGCSA Fall Meeting & Trade Show** October 16-18, 2018, Billings Hotel & Convention Center, Billings,

**Chapters of the Northwest Hospitality Room**

February 7, 2019, Location TBA

For more events, visit [ppgcsa.org](http://ppgcsa.org)

## What is a Successful Topdressing Program?

Attend this in-depth four-hour seminar, held in conjunction with the Fall Meeting. In this seminar you will learn about the latest proven research methods for recycling of cores and proper topdressing techniques, have a better understanding of the proper methods of calculating topdressing rates, and learn about pitfalls of improper topdressing programs. Attendees will leave this seminar ready to:

- Identify new equipment and methods to positively impact your topdressing program
- Conduct hands on calculations pertaining to your topdressing program

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## Chapter Room Block at GIS

The first of September, our chapter room block at the GIS will be open. Watch for email blasts to reserve your room at one of our two properties - the Horton Grand or the Residence Inn Gaslamp.

## Wyoming Scholarship Tournament

Chris Thomas, Mike Keith and Dave Befus, had the course in great condition and made everyone feel welcome, at the Wyoming Peaks & Prairies GCSA Scholarship/ Education Golf Event.

The staff at the facility was great and we not only enjoyed local support, it was also a beautiful summer day.

We appreciate all those who did not let the dog days of summer interfere with their chance to network and we especially appreciate the allied support. Stotz Equipment supported the event strongly with their displays. Check out page 23 for results!

**Scholarship applications are due September 20. Click on INFO tab of [ppgcsa.org](http://ppgcsa.org)**

August 2018

Volume 42

Number 3



*“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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**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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# President's Message



## Jason Lamb

Sidney Country Club, Sidney, Mont.

Good morning, afternoon, evening or even bathroom break, whenever you are finding time to read these awe-inspiring words of nonsense from the president. I hope everyone is finishing a productive, and relatively good, summer. I know we are shifting from the crazy-busy schedule of summer with ample crew to get tasks done to the crazy-busy schedule of fall where you are begging for help to pick up leaves and complete the mowing. It is times like these which really challenge my priority making skills. Take this article, for instance. It may appear as well thought out; a very well-planned-out piece of literature worthy of placement on the shelf next to Shakespeare, Dante and Homer. If that's the case, it is due to the editing of my wife and Lori. In truth, I find myself under the gun, so to speak. This is actually three weeks late and randomly put together, as you have surmised. My biggest struggle is time management and prioritizing. Throw in a little procrastination for good measure, and you get this article.

But like most times, I digress. Now, back to the message. Priorities, how do we define them, set them and manage them? Sometimes it is incredibly easy to prioritize. Maybe it is the huge geyser of water running down the fairway, or, like the one that just paused my typing (the restaurant cannot log into the point of sale software and it is lunch time). Those moments of "Help Now!" These types of issues are easy for us to set as a priority. The ones I, and possibly many of you, struggle with are the not-so-pressing things we deal with daily, like writing this article. I knew I needed to write it, but "what" to write about and when it could be written caused the delay. Knowing Lori would make sure I wrote it, off it was pushed. Another example could be the prioritization of getting more superintendents and courses involved in our local chapter and the GCSAA. Both examples of what we may delay are still very important. Peaks not only provides great education and an incredible sup-

port network as we go about our jobs, the amount of advocacy that GCSAA does on our behalf is almost immeasurable.

But still, these type issues are not the ones I really want to address. Personal priorities are those I struggle with the most. Making time for myself, family and friends, saying no to staying that extra couple hours to finish just one more thing; these are what I have a hard time doing. Part of what is driving this article was school shopping. What? Yes, school shopping. The realization my daughter is going into middle school and my son is a third grader hits me hard. I may only have six more years with my daughter at home and only nine years left of stepping on my son's Legos. That realization hurts almost as much as stepping on those Legos. My career will be here after the kids are off and making lives for themselves. I need to spend more time with them now - while they still want me to do so. I need to spend more time talking to family and friends before tragedy or time take them from me. I know it may seem like there will always be time, but, trust me, there is not.

Enough of my soap box speech. Your coffee break is probably over by now or you have more important people you should be giving your valuable time. Until my next rambling, thank you for taking the time to read this. Now, go forth and prioritize.

### Peaks & Prairies GCSA

#### Extension/Resource Service

*\*Specify you are a Peaks & Prairies GCSA member*

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# Disrupting the Greens: Aerification using the numbers

Ryan Blechta, Superintendent, The Club at Spanish Peaks, Big Sky, Mont.

When I became the Superintendent of Spanish Peaks in the fall of 2013, I had no idea how much organic content the golf greens had, but when walking on them, it felt like you were walking on my living room carpet. My initial thought was that

it was due to increased thatch levels from being a sodded golf course and having had minimal maintenance.   
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**Aerification** continued from page 4

maintenance for two years during bankruptcy. I was looking to track how much thatch I had and how much I would be removing with different cultivation processes, which led me to David Doherty's class at the GIS show called "The Benefits of Oxygen and How to Maintain Oxygen Levels in our Root Zone." I learned about his company, International Sports Turf Research Center (ISTRC), and their patented evaluation and reporting method. The ISTRC testing program is able to provide an accurate breakdown of organic matter, along with soil texture and sand size distribution on an inch by inch basis, as well as the infiltration rate, water holding capacity, air and water porosities, percent solids, and bulk density of your soil profile.

We had our work cut out for us in the summer of 2014. We were coming out of bankruptcy and faced high expectations from the new ownership group. Our season at Spanish Peaks is

four short months, June through September, so any disruption to the playing surfaces is not ideal. I wanted to make sure that I was getting the most out of the aerifications to make an impact with the greens and also be able to eventually change our disruption to the greens.

When the quad tine was introduced in the golf industry, it seemed everyone was using it to decrease disruption to the surface while still being able to pull out a lot from the cores. I was accustomed to closer hole spacing, two aerifications a year - one in the spring before we opened and one in the fall when we were open. What I was looking to understand was how much displacement the quad tine was giving me and the best aerification tine to remove the most surface organic matter.

In order to better understand the thatch buildup, infiltration rate, air porosity, water porosity, and bulk density of the course, I decided to incorporate the ISTRC testing program for our greens in the spring of 2015. I intended to use this information to set up our future tracking of organic matter percentage in the top two inches of our greens. The testing process is simple. You call ISTRC, they send out their patented coring device and sampling tubes, and you take your samples.

The first year I started testing, the greens were averaging around 7.5% organic content in the upper three inches of the profile. Additionally, the greens had elevated water porosity and the bulk density was low. The test results indicated that the greens were in need of an aggressive, proactive culture program to diminish and control the organic matter production in the upper portions of the profiles. Toro has some great information in their aeration evaluation guide that can give you the percent of surface area affected, and amount of volume removed. Another great reference for selecting the right tine size is the ISTRC aerification displacement chart. With





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A diagram illustrating the integration of various irrigation components. From left to right: a control panel with multiple valves, a desktop computer with a monitor and keyboard, a handheld handheld device with a screen, and a valve assembly with a solenoid. Double-headed arrows connect each component to the next, indicating their interconnected nature.

# ISTRC

## International Sports Turf Research Center Aerification Displacement Chart

Tine Size	1.25" x 1.25" Centers	1.5" x 1.5" Centers	2.0" x 2.0" Centers	2.5" x 2.5" Centers	5" x 5" Centers
1/4" Hollow Tines	3.14%	2.18%	1.23%	0.79%	
3/8" Hollow Tines	7.07%	4.91%	2.76%	1.77%	
1/2" Hollow Tines	12.57%	8.73%	4.91%	3.14%	
5/8" Hollow Tines		13.64%	7.67%	4.91%	
5/8" Hollow Vertidrain					1.23%
3/4" Hollow Tines				7.07%	1.77%
3/4" Hollow Vertidrain					1.77%
1" Hollow Tines					3.14%
1" Hollow Vertidrain					3.14%
7/8" Drill & Fill (7" Ctrs)					1.23%
Graden Verticutter (15 Blades @ 1" Spacings)	1mm Blade 3.93%	2mm Blade 7.87%	3mm Blade 11.81%		

Note: 1/4" Quadlines remove as much material as Regular 1/2" Hollow Tines  
3/8" minimum for ease of topdressing fill if replacement of material is required  
For double aerification make two passes at approx. 37° (slightly less than 45°) to minimize overlap

this information and the test results from ISTRC, I was able to put together our organic removal program. Now we are able to track our surface area removed per year and eventually that will allow us to avoid pulling a core from the greens,

instead using solid tine aeration and fill with sand.

With the change of aerification tines and the addition of adding a deep verticut during the aerification process, we are on track to get our organic content to 3-4%

by 2021. Furthermore, I was able to eliminate the fall core aeration altogether by switching tines and adding the verticut. Deep verticutting can actually remove more surface organic matter than core aeration, but in most cases, the organic matter removal is limited to the upper one inch of the root zone. By adjusting our aerification program we were able to eliminate the fall aerification, allowing us to decrease the impact to membership.

Over the last four years, we have documented our organic removal program and the obvious correlation between the air porosities and the infiltration rates, as well. All too often in the maturation of sand-based USGA greens, organic matter will build over time to the point of excessiveness, resulting in imbalances in the pore spaces that can be upward of 3:1 to 4:1 water to air ratio. My ability to move water and air into and through the root zone is extremely important for the greens to work efficiently,

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**Aerification** continued from page 6

which is why I continue to pull a core and remove as much organic content as possible. That, combined with other practices such as venting via a HydroJect and needle tines, deep vertical solid tine aeration, regular topdressing, and regular grooming of the turf, have proven to be extremely beneficial to the health of our turf. The goal is to increase firmness and consistency by removing excessive amounts of organic and thatch that are contributing to the water holding at or near the surfaces.

The current organic removal program I have initiated at Spanish Peaks will help me monitor the aging process of the greens, evaluate the effectiveness of my current cultural practices, modify the program based on data if need be, make adjustments to the program to meet the individual needs of specific greens, and detect problems before they affect the health of the greens.

I am happy to say that we are on track with our current program, we have made a few tweaks, but we are on track to get our organic content in the upper root zone to 3%-4% by 2021. This has represented a major positive change in our putting green program.

It's my opinion that it is not the number of aerifications per year that is important, but rather how much displacement we are able to perform. Having measurable results you can track

and use to reach your desired goal is the key to success. My program has proved beneficial for me at Spanish Peaks, however what might work for Spanish Peaks may not work at your course. Implementing a well-balanced program will help to create healthy greens that your golfers will enjoy.



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# You Better Belize It

**Chris Thomas, GCS, Riverton Country Club,  
Riverton, Wyo.**

*It* has been a very interesting journey over the last eighteen months. Opportunity always seems to present itself when you least expect it. Growing up, I always remember my parents saying never be afraid to promote yourself and capitalize on an opportunity.

In December of 2016, my lovely wife, whom I have been married to for 22 years, expressed the same advice. We were on a family vacation in Cancun, enjoying some great family time and getting some much-needed R&R after an active and long golf season. My son and I had just finished playing golf and we headed to the pool to join my wife and daughter. If you know Mystie, my wife, she is very social and loves to talk and meet new people. When we arrived at the pool, it was no surprise to me that she was engaged in a conversation with a lady at the pool. Naturally, I was extremely late to the conversation. As soon as I was introduced, the talk quickly turned to golf. Several minutes into the conversation, Andra, Mystie's new friend, was telling us after their vacation was over in Cancun, they were heading to Belize to look at a property to possibly build a golf course. Without a blink of the eye, my wife speaks out and says, "Well, my husband knows everything about managing a golf course!" At that time, I had no idea the impact that conversation would have on our lives. After sucking down a couple of banana monkeys (a blended concoction of vodka, banana and chocolate syrup, which I highly recommend), our visit came to an end. As we were leaving for our room, Mystie turned to me and said, "You are going to give her husband your number!" So, I found a napkin and a pen, wrote my contact info down, and went over to Paul and introduced myself. I then handed him the napkin with my contact information. The conversation was very short, and he made the comment he should fly me down to Placencia, Belize, to look at the property. My first thought was, "Well that was a complete waste of time, and that will never happen!"

About three months go by and we are in Casper, Wyoming, for the day when I received a phone call from an area code that

I did not recognize. Naturally, I didn't answer it,

thinking it was a telemarketer. Shortly after the phone dings saying I had received a voice mail. I reluctantly started to listen to the message and it was Paul. I can clearly remember the message! Basically, he was following up on our conversation in Cancun and was reaching out to see if I was interested in coming down to evaluate the property he was going to purchase. I quickly called him back. This guy was dead serious! After about 15 minutes on the phone he said he would be in contact with more information about flying me down.

Several months passed by and now it is June 2017. By this time, I have pretty much written off the idea of anything happening. As we all know, our summer schedules are very demanding, and we miss out on a lot of opportunities for time off. My son had qualified for the National Championships in Ft. Benning, Georgia and I had decided that I was not able to make the trip because of work. So, off my wife and son go to Ft. Benning, while I stay back and work and care for our then 14-year-old daughter. Once again, the phone rings and this time I recognize the 503-area code. I answer the phone and it is Paul! After several minutes of the update on his golf project, he pauses and asks, "Is there any way you could come down now and take a look at the property?" I was completely taken of guard and proceeded to tell him that my wife was out of town, I was home alone with my daughter, and said the timing really isn't good right now. The phone call ended. I remember clearly that I was sitting at my office, trying to wrap my head around what had just happened. I glanced over at the tournament schedule on my desk and realized that I had no events this weekend. Without thinking, I quickly called Paul back and told him I think I could work it out. Within 30 minutes of getting off the phone, I had booked my flight to Belize City. I would

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**Belize It** continued from page 10

be flying out of Denver at 5:30 the next morning. That was about 15 hours away. Then it dawned on me, my wife was out of town, I was home alone with Shayna, and I hadn't even talked to Mystie about this. *Crap!* I quickly found my son's girlfriend who was working for me to see if she would stay with Shayna, ran to the house to pack, and jumped in the car and I'm off to Denver. I figured I had plenty of time to break the news to Mystie while I was on the road.

As I am headed out of Riverton, Wyoming, I contacted Mystie to fill her in on the whirlwind of events that had just taken place. I think she was in complete and utter shock, along with being a bit envious I was headed to Belize without her. I reminded her it was her fault for being a social butterfly at the pool! We both had a good laugh. 24 hours later I arrived in Belize City. It's amazing all the thoughts that go through your head when traveling to a foreign country, having no idea where you are going to stay, who these people even are, and I wasn't even sure I remembered what this guy looked like. I don't know if any of you have been to Belize International airport, but it is very small with one runway, no lights and no taxi aisle for the planes. Once I got off the plane, I started to realize how hot and humid it was, and naturally I was wearing



jeans. Going through immigration only added to my adventure as I was unable to completely fill out the temporary visa card, due to having no information as to where I was staying while in Placencia. Apparently, this is very important information in obtaining a tourist Visa. The young lady quickly noticed that I had left this area blank and asked where I was staying. I just replied a friend's house, and I don't know the address. She stared at me briefly and said, "Stann Creek?" I quickly said, "Yes!" She promptly stamped my passport. Now I had to catch my next flight. Naturally, I had to go through customs and go through security again for the next flight. Pretty sure they have no labor laws as the girl running the baggage scanner couldn't have been much older than 12. Once I got into the terminal, I checked in for my next flight on Mayan Air. There was probably a total of ten people in this area of the airport. Just as I turned around and sat down, the lady got on the microphone and called my name for boarding. Wow, that was quick! So I followed her out to the runway, and I oet my first glimpse of the plane I would be getting into. This prop plane could sit about six people. She told me that I was the only one on the flight and I was welcome to sit in the cockpit with the pilot. I had no problem with that. All I can say is, the plane ride was incredible; what a beautiful country. Placencia is about 75 miles south of Belize City and is only a 25-minute plane ride. I hadn't felt this excited in a long time.

*(pictures left and above - farm)*

continued page 14



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Placencia is a 16-mile peninsula that in some areas is no wider than a football field. Landing in Placencia was very interesting. The runway stretched across the peninsula. Basically, the runway practically touches the lagoon and the Caribbean ocean and was not much wider than a cart path! The road running down the peninsula runs around the runway and there are two arms that come down to block traffic while planes land and take off. That landing was worth the \$125 airline ticket! The airport is very small and about the size of a trailer house so unloading and picking up my luggage took no more than a few minutes.

I began to get very nervous when I sat outside the airport for 45 minutes waiting for my ride. I was asked by airport staff a couple of different times if I needed a ride, but I didn't even know where I was going. I then began to wonder if I had flown into the right town. I thought he would have been there a lot sooner! Finally, a white pick-up pulled in. That's my ride, thank goodness!

The next five days were great! I stayed at the Maya Beach Resort where my room was about ten yards from the ocean and the views were incredible. The next day I met Paul and his business partner, Gary, for breakfast. Conversation was focused on the building of a golf course. After breakfast, we headed out on a boat to the property that they would purchase that afternoon. The boat ride is only five minutes across the lagoon. Once we arrived at the property, I immediately understood why they there were so intrigued about this 50 acres. This property is an existing tree farm and plant nursery. It is truly breath



taking. We spent the better part of the day walking the property. The most interesting part of the day was when Gary pulled me aside and wanted to show me where there was some access to a canal west of the property and could be a potential irrigation source. So, we ventured off to look. Luckily Jim, the current owner, was with us. He has been working this property for 30 years. Next thing I knew, I was walking through a swamp and the water was waist deep. This may have been the hottest I have ever been in my life. I thought for sure I would have an encounter with a crocodile or snake. Fortunately, we did not see any animals, but the plants we were walking through did plenty of harm. My hands were extremely cut up by the razor grass that I was grabbing so I didn't step into any quicksand. We had to be careful where we stepped because we

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## Belize It

continued from page 14

would sink down into the water up to our necks when stepping into these little quick sand spots. This happened several times. The walk to see a canal took about two hours. It was slow moving. The day was eventful and I felt lucky that I experienced a part of Belize that most people wouldn't on a normal vacation.

To summarize the trip, they purchased the property while I was there, I was able to take a vacation in the middle of the summer which, as we all know, never happens in this profession, I was able to see a lot of the sites in the area, and, most importantly, I was hired on as their golf course consultant.

It has been a rewarding journey over the last 18 months. The project has moved along quickly, and I am now moving to Placencia, Belize, to live and work on the project. It is crazy to think how being at the right place at the right time can change your life forever. My family and I are taking a leap of faith. We will be moving down on August 22 of this year. We are in the process of selling our house and everything we have accumulated over the last 22 years of marriage. We are literally downsizing to two suitcases, a carry-on, and one personal item each. Let the adventure begin!

I look forward to updating you on how things evolve over the next year. Better Belize it part two...Which is a local phrase down there.

*(Pictures to right, staff housing and nursery)*



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# SUMMER IS WINDING DOWN BUT KEEP YOUR GUARD UP

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

Summer is winding down, but there are still many things to keep an eye on for this year and next. Discussed below are several items that some of you will need to address this fall and/or next year.

## Crabgrass

By the time you read this article, it will be too late in 2018 to do anything practical to control crabgrass. The crabgrass is too large in size for effective control and it has already produced seed. After producing seed, the crabgrass will naturally decline, fade away and be killed by the first hard frost later this fall.

Make a map of the crabgrass infestations you see today. You will need to treat these locations with a preemergence annual grass herbicide next spring in order to prevent crabgrass from occurring in 2019. Crabgrass is a prolific seed producer, even when mowed regularly, so it will be back at the same locations in 2019 you see it at right now.

The best way to control crabgrass long-term is to not let it gain a foothold on your golf course. Treat locations with crabgrass in 2018, and in spring 2019, with a preemergence herbicide to try to break the cycle of seed production. Your focus needs to be on not letting the crabgrass produce seed in 2019.

## Moss

Moss is one of the most difficult weeds to control on putting greens. It is very competitive with creeping bentgrass (*Agrostis stolonifera*) and/or annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*) at putting green mowing heights. Moss is an opportunist and takes advantage of thin spots of turf, such as shaded areas, unrepaired ball marks or high traffic areas like cleanup passes and walk on, walk off areas. Stressed turf that is mowed below its tolerance height or turf that is under fertilized



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with nitrogen also favor moss invasion.

Alleviating the stresses that lead to thin, under performing turf is the first place to start with moss control. A healthy, actively growing turf stand that can out-compete moss is the best control strategy.

If you are using QuickSilver (carfentrazone, FMC) to control moss, and have not exceeded the yearly maximum rate allowed, continue to make QuickSilver application every two to three weeks at 2.0 – 3.0 fl. oz./ acre (reports are 2.0 fl. oz. works as well as 3 fl. oz.) during fall.

Moss will grow well during cooler temperatures of fall and recover. Making regular QuickSilver applications this fall will keep the moss in check and favorable growing conditions will allow the creeping bentgrass and/or annual bluegrass to fill in thin areas and overtake small patches of moss.

Keep in mind that it took several years for moss to become established on greens and it will take several years to control the moss and have grass fill the voids left by the moss.

## Ants

While playing golf at several Billings area golf courses, I noticed ant mounds on the perimeter of greens and in tees. The ant species present is likely the turfgrass ant (*Lasius neoniger*).

Ant colonies prefer areas in full sun to keep the colony warm, and consist of a queen laying eggs throughout the spring and summer to produce workers. Once a colony has been established, the resident queen may survive and lay eggs for several years.

Ideally, ants should be controlled in April or May when mounds are first noticed. Control measures should continue whenever an unacceptable number of mounds are observed.

continued page 18

## Guard Up continued from page 17

Ants are persistent, so you must be persistent with your control measures. Some insecticides used to control ants only control the worker ants. It is difficult to control the queen, so over time, the colony recovers and the mounds return. That is why you need to be persistent with your control measures to keep ant mounds in check.

Ants provide natural suppression of other insects that may potentially damage turf, so it is important to only treat areas where mounds are a problem. Avoid large scale, blanket applications of an insecticide to control ants. Only treat the areas where mounds are observed.

## Topdressing Greens

With the return of cool weather in fall, creeping bentgrass and annual bluegrass will experience a growth spurt. Growth in fall will be noticeable, but there will not be as much growth as in spring. The fall growth spurt means you should increase your topdressing frequency to match the increased growth and organic matter production by the turfgrass.

Managing organic matter on greens is best achieved through dilution of the organic matter with sand added via topdressing. The goal is to have a uniform rootzone media in which the organic matter and sand are a consistent blend with no layers present. Light, frequent, sand topdressing is the best strategy to consistently dilute the organic matter that is being produced by the turf.

Warm weather in fall seems to last longer than ever before, which can be seen in green, growing turf well into October and, in some years and some locations, early November. This means greens should be topdressed lightly as long as the grass remains green and is growing.

Enjoy the cool fall weather and get away from the golf course to enjoy your favorite outside fall activity. The turf will be fine in the fall.

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 and Prairies GCSA members.

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## Topdressing Seminar

continued from page 1

- Implement cost savings related to ordering and using better proportion amounts of topdressing.

Conducting this seminar is Adam Thoms, PhD., Assistant Professor Commercial Turfgrass, Iowa State University. Separate registration is required for this seminar on October 18.

Lunch is included with the conclusion of this presentation, allowing for plenty of daylight for your drive home – or to hunting camp!

Earn GCSAA EDUs by attending.



Adam Thoms, PhD

## “Development of a Topdressing Program for Golf Course Turf”

Thursday, October 18  
in conjunction with  
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# Fall Meeting continued from page 1



Laurie Kerzicnik, PhD

### ***“Insect Residents and Visitors on Urban Trees”***

different trade show venue as you visit with our experts? How about playing golf earlier this year with a mid-October date?

We are also excited about bringing you a slate of speakers joining us for the first time. Several of you may already be familiar with Beth Guertal, PhD, having taken a class at the GIS or having enjoyed a GCSAA webcast. We appreciate your recommendations to bring her to Montana. Best Management Practices are important to the industry and an expert who has made a major contribution to BMPs for the Florida green industries, water quality/quantity industries, and golf course industry, is Bryan Unruh, PhD. Unruh’s work demonstrates that green spaces are sustainable and can coexist with nature without negative environmental impact.

Need help dealing with – and understanding - your employees? What is crawling or flying around the region? You will find these topics addressed at the Fall Meeting.

Topdressing is a common and vital practice at your golf course. Let’s talk all things topdressing with the Thursday morning seminar.

Got pesticide points? We do. Wyoming has approved five

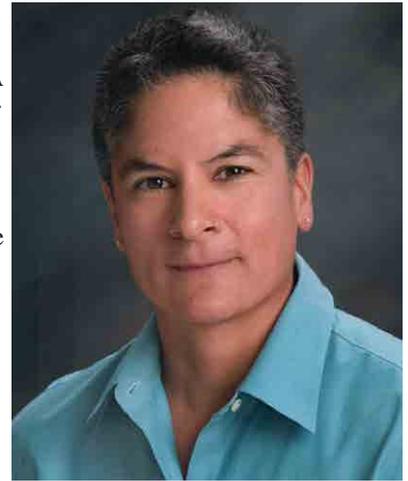
Convention Center! (Still take the same exit because this property is near the old Holiday Inn Grand). We will have plenty of room for the trade show and meeting space all under one roof. Consider bringing your swimsuit, and even your family, to enjoy the two amusement style waterslides in the indoor pool.

Won’t it simply be a refreshing change to walk and experience a

credits and we are waiting to hear from Montana and Idaho. Of course, GCSAA EDUs will be available for attending.

We have listed great reasons for you to attend the Fall Meeting and Trade Show, however, the most important reason is to talk to your peers face-to-face.

Several of our supportive allied partners have already committed to sponsorships and booths. We still have plenty of booth space and sponsorships available, but be sure to check out the sponsors to date in the conference agenda.



Kee Dunning, MS, MEd, LCPC, LMFT

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presenting with,

Stacy Stellflug, PhD, APRN, FNP-BC

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# Golf Course CSI:

Travis Martin

Meadow Lake Golf Course, Columbia Falls, Mont.

I am curious how many superintendents, assistants and mechanics find themselves wearing the 'detective hat'? From late night vandalism, golfer accident reports, and equipment malfunctions, to turf conditions. It is uncanny how often we are called upon to 'solve' mysteries.

Of course, there is always the golf cart in the pond that is fun to analyze. This last season we had a cart severely damaged with the explanation that the cart just suddenly swerved and hit a curb. Upon investigation, the damaged cart had been driven 300 yards away from where the incident actually happened. It was 'staged' on the golf course next to a raised man hole cover - which could collaborate their story. However, the tire drag marks on the community roadway suggested another story. In following the marks down the road, we were able to locate cart shrapnel in a rocky ditch, where it would appear the cart was maneuvered to 'jump' a pile of rocks. Upon these findings, the driver was held accountable for all damages.

My most baffling incident from this past season came when



I was scouting the course one mid-morning. I used one of our cut-across paths to jump ahead of golfers and resumed on the cart path. It did not take long before my detective eye noticed something peculiar. At first I couldn't quite put my finger on it. Then it hit me. The grass on each side of the cart path was scalped drastically below the rough height of cut. Then the realization hit me that the foot on either side of the cart path fit the dimensions of the fairway mower. By this time, I was by the creek running the length of the property, which was where I had an employee weed eating for the day. A quick consultation confirmed my suspicion; the fairway mower had indeed run



down the asphalt cart path with its reels down and engaged. I found the operator on another fairway, and asked for an explanation. I was met with, "It wasn't me," but then turned to, "Maybe I thought I was rough mowing" after I explained there was an eye witness. To this day I cannot fathom what was going on that would cause an operator to run 500 yards along a cart path with reels engaged.

As a turf manager, I am called upon countless times to treat faltering turf. I recall being told to hand water a 'localized-dry spot' on one of our greens. I loaded up the hoses and wetting agent and headed for the troubled green. Closer inspection revealed a different story. In the middle of the brown spot were two very healthy footprints. Putting on the detective hat, and observing a few groups of golfers, the cause was not lack of moisture but the application of bug spray. We were having an above average mosquito year, and each group would apply bug spray when they arrived at that hole.

There are mysteries that surround us on a daily basis. By stepping back and looking at the big picture, we are able to notice the details that tell the story. If I ever wanted another career, I just might pass for a private eye.



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# “What pesticides are you polluting the environment with?”

by Sydney Kitchen

Daughter of Mike Kitchen, CGCS  
Teton Pines Resort & Country Club, Jackson, Wyo.



“What pesticides are you polluting the environment with?” was the question on the other end of the phone. My dad, always the ambassador, gently replied “What pesticides do you think I’m using?” He invited the middle school student, and her entire class, to come visit the golf course so he could show them what he does as a superintendent. He explained about the precautions he takes to ensure the streams flowing through the golf course are not contaminated. He told them how the right cultural practices minimize the need for fungicides and insecticides. He took them out on the course so they could see the nesting boxes that are part of the course’s Audubon Certification. With his calm, gentle demeanor, he didn’t just explain to them how hard the golf course industry works to minimize negative impacts on the environment; he showed them that golf courses can be, and usually are, environmental stewards.

My brother and I grew up on the golf course. Some of our first steps were on the greens, toddling around in our bare feet.

We spent countless hours riding in carts with my dad, talking about the flowers, the squirrels, and the birds. We loved to explore the bushes and the native grass areas, sometimes looking for lost golf balls and sometimes just enjoying being outside. Every spring we got to watch baby ducks on the ponds, fox kits wrestling on the fairways, and river otters playing in the stream. We knew all the irrigation boxes on the course where salamanders and frogs could be found in the summer, as well as the best places to view trout and bald eagles. In the fall, my dad would tell stories of bull moose sparring on the greens with each other, or sometimes, with an unfortunate flag stick that was accidentally left out overnight. So, when I hear people saying golf courses are bad for the environment, I don’t know whether to laugh or cry at their lack of understanding.

My dad sees each encounter with misinformed people as an opportunity to change how they look at golf courses’ impact on the environment, and he does it with the even-tempered diplomacy of a true ambassador. I lack the knowledge about the golf course maintenance to be able to change people’s minds by explaining the horticulture, hydrology, and chemistry behind environmentally friendly practices, but I do have great memories that I can share. I can tell people about the grove of aspens that is home to a moose and her baby every spring, and I can tell them about the osprey that nest near the fourteenth fairway and catch fish out of the nearby stream. I can tell them about the different amphibians – ecosystems’ keystone and indicator species - that my brother and I would always find at the golf course. Maybe that’s just as effective as explaining the philosophy and implementation of environmentally friendly golf course practice and design. Or maybe it’s even better.



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