

Peaks & Prairies GCSA 2020 Fall Meeting & Trade Show

We would like to host this annual event and we are cautiously watching as COVID-19 continues its presence. But in case we can make it happen, we are hard at work planning the event.

Our planned education would apply to facilities regardless of budget size! The event includes the return of a speaker who specializes in employee management issues. Bryan Peterson, PHR, SHRM-CP, Vice President, Human Resource Services, Associated Employees of Billings, first spoke to our association at our 2018 spring meeting in Billings. He is a speaker we continue to receive requests to hear again (and again). Also joining us will be Ed Nangle, PhD, who will not only share valuable information worthy of a trip to Billings, he will keep you engaged and even a little entertained. Oh, and the Irish accent comes at no extra charge. Nangle served as director of turfgrass programs for the Chicago

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Address Change for PPGCSA

The Peaks & Prairies GCSA has a new mailing address effective immediately. PPGCSA, PO Box 5003, Missoula, MT, 59806. The telephone number and email address remains the same.

Peaks & Prairies GCSA Scholarship Application Deadline September 20

Visit "Scholarship Opportunities" under the drop down "Info" tab of ppgcsa.org for the online application or to download a PDF. Please read application carefully as separate accompanying documents may be required.

PPGCSA Events:

PPGCSA Fall Meeting & Trade Show October 13-14, 2020, Billings Hotel & Convention Center, Billings, MT

PPGCSA "Almost" Spring Meeting March 1 & 2, 2021, DoubleTree Hotel by Hilton, Billings, MT

For event information, visit ppgcsa.org

Grass Enjoys an August Win

Our 2020 Montana Peaks & Prairies GCSA Scholarship/ Education Golf Challenge took place on August 12 at Bridger Creek Golf Course, Bozeman, Montana. We truly appreciate our facility hosts – Wes Easton, Dane Gamble, James Gamble and Bridger Creek Golf Course.

Considering the number of times temps have reached 100 degrees of late, coupled with "C-19," we were pleased with the field of over 40 players. First place honors went to the Hilands Golf Club team led by the birthday boy, Pete Grass.

We had eleven companies step forward to support the event with their hole sponsorships, that we greatly appreciate.

Our tournament committee has worked hard to find a location in Wyoming to host the event. We thought we had secured a host multiple times, but in the end, it didn't work out for the facilities. It isn't too late. If anyone from Wyoming would be interested in hosting a Wyoming Scholarship/Education Golf Event in September – let us know!

For tournament results of the Montana event, hole sponsors, and pictures, please see page 14.

Rounds4Research Results

The 2020 Rounds4Research auction sold all rounds donated this year! The auction, rescheduled to July due to COVID-19, raised nearly \$265,000 from 997 rounds, as reported by Katie Hiebert, GCSAA, in an EIFG press release. While donations were down, enthusiasm was still high for those supporting the profession with their bids.

While we are waiting for the results of our participation, we would like to thank our team chairs from Wyoming and Montana. Leading the charge for the cowboy state were Jason Busch and Jory Horsley from the Powder Horn. From Spanish Peaks, Ryan Blechta, along with Dan Meyer, reached out to the members of the Big Sky Country. The two states were neck and neck with 15 rounds each contributed. Expect a report of which state eked out with the most donations.

Rounds4Research generates resources to fund research and help ensure golf's future. The national program has raised more than \$1.7 million since 2012.



*“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

This One's For All of Us

Jason Lamb, Sidney Country Club, Sidney, Mont.

I know that you have heard me say it before, "I love what I do." I, like most of us, did not go into our line of work for the money, praise, or glory. Most of us are most comfortable simply being behind the scenes. We go about the daily tasks not to receive praise, but simply because we love our careers, and it is what needs to be done. I have told my staff many times, "You must love your chosen career because if you don't, it becomes work." I know it may sound like semantics, but I believe the difference in loving what I have chosen for a career makes it fun and stimulating. It's why I come to the facility and put in the hours that I do. I have had jobs that are "work." I mean they became monotonous to get up every day and go in to do the same tasks over and over again. I personally cannot do that for long. One such situation started to affect me negatively. I lost weight, which was not all that bad, until I lost four pant sizes. It also affected my sleep, my family, and my overall attitude on life. It was not good, to say the least, and I had to make changes.

So where am I going with this you may wonder? Here is my point. I do what I do because I love it. I am fine to stay behind the scenes. If a member tells me the course is in great condition, my normal response is, "Yah, it is coming around." I know there always is more to improve. Or, if they say you are doing a good job, it is answered with, "The crew has been working very hard." I truly believe it is a team effort and not my accomplishment. So, that being said, every year for the past 30 years, our club has had a tournament called the Gleason Haralson Memorial. It is a two-day tournament with all the proceeds going back to the facility - the grounds to be more precise. Over the years the tournament proceeds have purchased more than \$250,000 of equipment, which is huge in our small operation. But that is not the point of my rambling. At the end of each tournament the committee awards The Golden Putter. The Golden Putter is given to someone they feel has made considerable contributions to improve the golf course. It is normally given to a member or volunteer. It is rarely given to employ-



ees, since they are just doing their jobs. Well, this year I was the recipient of The Golden Putter. They said the contributions I have made over the last 12 seasons have improved our club beyond measure. When it came my time to thank them, I could not even give credit to all my staff over the years that do the majority of the work. Not because I did not want to, but because I could not speak. I felt such a surge of honor and pride in what my staff has accomplished over the years by simply doing what we love to do, my eyes welled up, my heart raced, and it was all I could do to say, "Thank You." Again, I say I do what I do because I love it and not for awards. But, I will treasure that acknowledgement for my entire career. My kids and I are going to make a display for it this winter and I will place somewhere that I will see it every day. Now, I know there are many of my peers that deserve their own Golden Putters for simply doing what they love, and there are not enough to go around. I would be humbled to accept mine knowing we all deserve one, and you can come see it on display anytime you make it to Sidney. Thank you all for doing what you do. It is an honor to be the president of Peaks & Prairies.

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I haven't seen that before...

Jeff Jensen, Superintendent
Jackson Hole Golf & Tennis Club, Jackson, Wyo.



Every season most of us probably find ourselves saying, “I haven’t seen that before,” to varying degrees of hyperbole.

To me, that is part of the fun. The infinite number of variables that exert an influence on the maintenance and presentation of a golf course keeps one on their toes. These variables provide an impetus for new learning. They can give a challenge in the form of disease pressure, or a rest in the form of two days of rain. This time of the season, when you superimpose stressors on top of the mid-season monotony, these novel circumstances are perhaps more often a source of frustration than enjoyment. Because of this, in a handful of days, the membership director of my club will dust off his favorite phrase: “angry August,” and begin to use it again like he just discovered alliteration.

So here is the one for this year: “I never thought I would live through a pandemic.” It is likely safe to say that most of the novel circumstances on our courses this year stem in some way from the public health concern of a novel virus. For example, I never dreamed I would see pool noodles in the cup. Or, I

never thought I would see four carts in a group... well, you get the point. Until a few days ago, I had not known how prolific wild raspberries were in a wooded area next to our twelfth hole. But that brought a ten minute respite and a tasty treat compared to the hours of training, sanitizing, re-scheduling, and the general re-learning of how to manage the golf facility during a pandemic.

While this one challenge has brought about many new problems to solve, I believe the industry as a whole has risen to the task. We have gone from initially being well positioned as a business that sells an outdoor activity to working with

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I Haven't Seen that Before continued from page 4

numerous stakeholders to enact public health measures for the health of our guests and facilities. I am proud of our industry and my facility who been proactive in taking measures to help mitigate this worldwide crisis while still enjoying the game we love.

Imagine encountering a few of this year's now common sights during any other golf season. Not finding rakes in bunkers... is this golf on Mars? Hand sanitizer everywhere... what is the club trying to say? Four carts in a group... if you don't like each other, why play together? Respiratory hygiene training for employees... are we in preschool? The willingness to adopt these changes and readily internalize them into an idea of "this is what golf now looks like," is humbling. It is a testament to the golfing community and to the hard work spent leading, guiding, and dragging our facilities to this point. This mid-season point of reflection may allow us to ready ourselves to experience another new one: an "easy August." It does not roll off the tongue as well, but I think we have earned it!

In most cases, the golf courses look great, especially after removing all those "touch points!" In some cases, the course is a little beat up, but rounds have never been higher. Or if you are like me, you are not exactly pleased comparing the course this season to the previous year, but proud of what has been accomplished given the circumstances. Hopefully, the crew is hitting their stride and you have completed the last hand washing seminar long ago. It might just be me, but players seem happier. Maybe folks are realizing what a blessing a round of golf can be?

My hat goes off to the skeleton crews who are still going strong in August, to the folks who donated PPE to healthcare workers, to the clubs who have helped with employee medical expenses, to the significant others who work in the healthcare industry, to those that once again figured out how to do more with less, and to the players that make it a point to safely enjoy their facilities. I am proud to work in a profession surrounded by all of you!

This year has been a wild ride so far, and I know that we are not done counting the unusual moments. So take an opportunity to relish the season's accomplishments large and small; I have faith the next odd thing we will see is an easy August. Besides, how good does the course look without bunker rakes?!



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*Pictured above Cole Clark and
Collin Morikawa*

Enjoy the different opportunities this business provides. Last July I was lucky enough to get invited to play in the John Deere Classic Pro Am, where I got to meet and play 18 holes with Collin Morikawa, this year's PGA Championship winner. *Cole Clark*

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2021 GIS Will be Virtual

As GCSAA announced mid-August, the 2021 GIS will be virtual. We were ready with our PPGCSA chapter room block in Las Vegas if the event had taken place, but we had not contracted a venue for the Chapters of the Northwest Hospitality Room. One important benefit to those registering for the GIS event – registrants will have access to the content generated beyond the first week of February. Registration for the 2021 GIS opens October 13.

PPGCSA Fall Meeting & Trade Show

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District Golf Association prior to moving to OSU/ATI. During his time with the CDGA, he was responsible for diagnosing and



Getting the Most Out of Employee Performance / Effective Communication & Delivering Difficult Feedback (Peterson)



troubleshooting turf-grass issues at 392 golf courses and teaching the online Great Lakes Turf School. Nangle has gained a wide range of experience at golf clubs in Australia, Ireland and the U.S. He earned his PhD from The Ohio State University. Nangle



Ed Nangle, PhD. *Nangle has so many great options for topics - we are working on narrowing down our selection!*

currently serves as a consulting director of research for the Irish sportsturf institute and is collaborating with the PIN app, spearheaded by Adam Scott.



At the Fall Meeting you can also expect a big change – new this year will be bumping the half-day seminar on the third day to part of the conference the second day. The entire event will be offered within two days instead of 2.5 days. **“Wetting Agents and Their Effects on Putting Green Surfaces”** will be presented by Doug Karcher, PhD, University of Arkansas, a prominent standout in the world of turf who maintains an extensive research program. Karcher is a sought after speaker across the United States, and he has spoken in Spain, Germany, Italy and Thailand. He is a professor, department of horticulture, at the University of Arkansas. Karcher was granted a US Patent as an inventor for determining plant nitrogen levels from digital images. He is a founding board member of the European Institute for Turfgrass Science, an organization dedicated to providing research-based recommendations to the European Turfgrass Industry.

The Fall Meeting & Trade Show wouldn't be the same without the trade show and golf, as well! We have been in contact with the hotel facility, who has successfully hosted events adhering to health guidelines set forth. Our trade show booth floor plan will be reviewed for approval by the health department. We will announce soon where golf be held!

Our goal is to make it all work as safe as possible. Registration material won't be out until

the first part of September. We know everyone is trying to be cautious with the approach and holding back a bit. COVID weeks feel like years.

Wetting Agents and Their Effects on Putting Green Surfaces (Karcher)



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Golf Courses, COVID-19 and Copper

Thoughts from a Foolish Golf Course Superintendent

(Grassclippings, April 2020, Idaho GCSA)

Disclaimer: Readers beware! I am not a pathologist, virologist, immunologist, or epidemiologist. I know nothing about viruses and less about COVID-19. I have done scant reading and no academic research in writing this 'article'. Please ponder the ideas with great caution and skepticism. I am a wayward golf course superintendent and a fool amongst great men.
[foolishgolfsuperintendent, April, 2020]

COVID-19 has changed the way we live; it has changed the way we die. Recently, life has taken some unimaginable twists and turns. Every day is new. Every day is full of change. Golf courses have not been exempted from this change. Eventually, some things will return to "normal" but other habits, practices and processes will remain forever changed.

Fortunately, many golf courses remain opened. Most of these have removed frequently handled items like benches, coolers, bunker rakes, ball washers, and divot buckets. This minimizes the potential for spreading disease and makes the course a little safer. Most courses have not removed cups and flagsticks, as they seem too integral to the game. Many have modified the cups and most are disinfecting the flagsticks

throughout the day.

Most superintendents are aware that copper, in addition to being an essential plant and animal nutrient, has strong anti-microbial properties. It has been used for hundreds of years in agriculture for its anti-microbial properties. It probably gained its prominence as a fungicide in grapes (Bordeaux, circa 1880). In the golf industry, copper-based pesticides remain a common tool for many superintendents.

In human medicine and pharmacology, ancient Egyptian and Greek cultures used copper as a curative for human diseases caused by various fungi, bacteria and viruses. During the cholera epidemics (1800s), individuals with moderate exposure to copper possessed less chance of being infected by the cholera bacteria.

In more recent times, studies show copper destroys a long list of fungi, bacteria, and virus responsible for human diseases. These microbes include norovirus, coronavirus (possibly the strain causing the current pandemic) and strains of E. coli. Although copper's mode of action appears simple, it is probably more complicated than currently understood.

continued page 12

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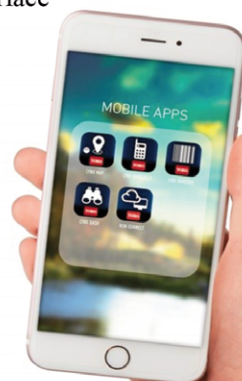
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Copper continued from page 10

Copper surfaces contain a small amount of 'free' ionic copper. When a virus particle contacts the copper ion, the ion appears to destroy the outer



(Figure 1 above)

membrane of the virus and degrade the cell. This degradation includes destruction of the cell's DNA and RNA, rendering the virus unfunctional. In some instances, these reactions occur within minutes.

For several years, researchers have promoted the idea using copper-based metals in public areas. Studies show that copper-based items can reduce the presence of microbes by 80 percent. In addition to common public areas, Bill Keevil (professor of environmental health care at

the University of Southampton, England), recommends using copper in sports settings and with athletic equipment.

A golf course contains areas and items that receive a lot of handling (rest rooms, carts, ball-washers, bunker rakes, divot scoops, cups, and flagsticks). Most of the items that receive repetitive handling are made of hard plastics, fiberglass, and metals. Research on the longevity of COVID-19 on various materials is new. It seems to last longest on hard surfaces like plastics and metals. The virus remains viable on these surfaces for 3-7 days. On softer surfaces like paper and cardboard, the virus lasts one to two days. On copper surfaces, the virus lasts only three to four hours.

A couple weeks ago, the management group at my course began contemplating the idea of replacing standard fiberglass flagsticks with copper flagsticks. To test the idea, we built a flagstick out of half-inch copper tubing and some old fittings (Figure 1). It was easy to build and relatively inexpensive (around \$25). Initially, we were concerned about the appearance of the copper flagstick. However, on a green, it looked pretty good... almost cool

The copper flagstick does have a few drawbacks. It is more difficult to see

than a traditional yellow or white flagstick. It will likely oxidize and weather, and change in appearance. And, it seems a little flimsy. The flimsiness could probably be corrected with thicker tubing, or a filler (perhaps a wooden dowel).

Converting flagsticks to copper would probably not eliminate the need to disinfect, but it would, in all likelihood, dramatically reduce the microbial count on the flagstick. Ultimately, the use of copper could encompass much more than flagsticks. Undoubtedly, superintendents would create a plethora of ways to incorporate copper into golf course accessories.

COVID-19 will continue to change the way we live, and it will continue to change the way we play. Hopefully, humanity gains ground against COVID-19 in the near future, but our sensitivity to infectious diseases has increased, and the prevalence of infectious diseases will remain. As an industry, golf is almost insignificant in the battle against COVID-19 and other diseases. Yet, if golf courses can utilize more copper accessories, they may improve safety levels to players and the community in general. Although more research is needed, these safety improvements seem a worthy endeavor.





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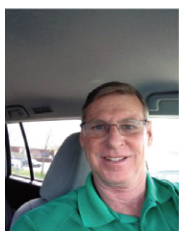
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Best Management Practices: A Long but Valuable Journey

Pete Grass, CGCS, Hilands Golf Club, Billings, Mont.

“Golf courses are a bad use of land, they waste precious resources like water, while the fertilizers and chemicals they use pollute.” Agree? Disagree?

Want to debate that statement?

Like it or not, these thoughts are real and held even by people who live in Montana. Back to this thought in a minute.

In our industry, we all work with tools that allow us to produce a product for our customers to enjoy. In Montana, and very soon also Wyoming, we have acquired a new tool. It is not a rake, shovel or mower - but words and pictures combined in a manual. *The Best Management Practices for Montana (Wyoming) Golf Courses* manual is that tool. As part of the 12-person team who took on the development of this tool for our Peaks & Prairies Chapter, I believed in its value from day one. But, it proved that value to me after a phone call and conversation with a gentleman named Vern Smith from Emigrant, Mont. Vern is a member of the Northern Plains Resource Council (NPRC). Wikipedia defines them as a “grassroots conservation and family agriculture group.” He agreed to lead a committee from that group in reviewing a draft version of the BMP manual for us. After sending Vern a couple printed draft copies, I waited about two weeks and talked with him again. He mentioned he had told the NPRC board that he and his group were doing the review for us and an NPCR board member made negative remarks, similar to my opening line. Vern, who is not a golfer but a rancher and soil health advocate, told their board that he read the BMP draft manual cover to cover and what it shows is exactly the opposite of those types of opinions. When either planned, built or renovated and then maintained using the BMP

as a guideline, golf courses are great land use assets. Courses benefit - not hurt - nature and the environment. BINGO, that is exactly what I believe the BMP manual is designed to demonstrate. By using BMP, superintendents and their staffs will be guided towards management practices that will keep golf courses as environmental assets in their communities.

A little history about the process. After a few individual states started the ball rolling with developing BMPs, GCSAA saw the great value in what they had done. The association wanted to develop something that would help all 50 states to eventually have a BMP manual by the end of 2020, which, by the way, is still on track to be done. Knowing that this would eventually be of great value to the industry and game of golf itself, GCSAA/EIFG knew it would also be a very expensive and time consuming endeavor that they would not be able to fund alone. As GCSAA President back in 2016, I am proud to have personally been a part of the education process about BMPs with the USGA senior leadership team, and eventually being there when Mike Davis, USGA CEO told Rhett Evans, our GCSAA CEO, that “they were in” and would help financially support the efforts. A bit later, the PGA Tour also invested in the project. I often say, we at GCSAA do not have a major golf event to generate multi-millions to fund the association, but luckily, we do have great industry partners who do and help when needed.

Vern, who is not a golfer but a rancher and soil health advocate, told their board that he read the BMP draft manual cover to cover and what it shows is exactly the opposite of those types of [negative] opinions.

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Stephen, Charlene and Pete Grass

For this project, GCSAA assembled a team of industry professionals from every aspect of golf course development, design, construction and maintenance. Led by Dr. Brian Unruh from the University of Florida, they developed a “national” BMP template of almost everything possibly related to a golf course, housed on the GCSAA website, that could eventually be used by individual states to adapt what pertains to them. It was this template that we used to individualize our MT and WY

BMP manuals.

The well over one million dollars that has been dedicated to this effort not only developed the template, but much of it is going to GCSAA affiliated chapters in the form of grants to adopt, publish and distribute BMPs when completed. P&P was awarded one of these grants for \$7500 back in 2019.

The MT/WY BMP draft review process was just as time consuming as the adaptation from the national template to the state versions done by the P&P group. The input that Vern and his NPRC team gave us was very helpful. Thanks to them, the “Nutrient” section became the “Nutrient and Soil Health” section, with great additions of thoughts that only an outside perspective can give - which is exactly why part of the process is to have an “outside of golf group” review the document. The other two “groups” who reviewed our Montana draft were both the Montana Departments of Agriculture and Environmental Quality. In Wyoming, their similar state agencies are currently doing the same. I say kiddingly (for the most part), be careful what you ask for, as I got back 16 pages of feedback. There were a few typos and grammar corrections, but mostly great suggestions and additions to make the content more understandable and valuable. For anyone who has ever spent hours and hours - and in this case, days and days - looking over hundreds of pages, writing and rewriting things, that is exactly why you

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have fresh sets of eyes look at a draft to find the mistakes and share professional input for improvements. We as an association should be so grateful to all three groups for the time and effort they voluntarily gave to make our state BMP's such great reference materials. I know I am thankful.

The next level - or what I call phase 2 - is beginning now. At our "Almost" Spring Meeting at Fairmont, Mark Johnson, GCSAA Associate Director of Environmental Programs, presented a "how to start" your individual facility BMP from the state BMP template hosted on the GCSAA website. The goal is that eventually each individual golf facility in MT/WY have either individualized the state BMP to fit their facility, or, at the very least, adapted the state BMP as their own. A lofty goal, but I truly believe that with some of us willing to help both our member and non-member facilities, this is a goal we can achieve by the end of 2021.

Why do I believe so much in the value of these BMPs? I



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refer back to my opening lines and the story of Vern Smith and the NPRC. Sometimes it takes educating one person at a time, but it is certainly easier doing it in larger groups. Having the documents in hand, we now have the tools to get out in front of individuals and groups to do so. Hopefully, very soon we can be sharing our individual facility BMP manuals, also. I think your players, members, owners, city councils, board of directors, or whatever type of facility structure you operate under, will be both impressed and proud of what you and your facility are doing through your BMP's.

I offer a couple of final thoughts. First, a shout out and thank you both my son/assistant Stephen Grass and to Emily Fuger at GCSAA for all of their help and patience with an old, not technology savvy person (ME) in this process. If you ever have questions about the process, state BMP or what you can do to work on an individual facility BMP manual, I will always be happy to help. I may not always have an answer but, through this entire process, I have learned who does and can get you to them. Email is pghgc@montana.net and phone is 406-855-6440, use either to reach me.

**Montana and Wyoming BMPs
are now linked to the home page
of ppgcsa.org**



*From deep in
the archives...*

*Pete and
Stephen Grass
in 2004!*



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