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GCSAA

Golf Course Superintendents Association of America

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Hosted by our Peaks & Prairies GCSA president, Rick Hathaway, registration will be open in July for the September 21, 2022 event.

Wyoming Site Welcome

We are in need of a Wyoming site to host our annual Scholarship/Education tournaments benefiting the continuing education and scholarship programs of the association. If you are interested in hosting, please contact Jason Busch (The Powder Horn) or Lori.

Congratulations to New Board Liaisons

As announced at the 2022 “Almost” Spring Meeting, we congratulate our newly appointed assistant liaison - Jared Dillinger, Bell Nob Golf Club, Gillette, Wyo.; and our newly appointed allied liaison - Jason Aanstad, Pacific Golf & Turf.

Thank you to all interested in serving the PPGCSA!

PPGCSA Upcoming Events:

Scholarship/Education Golf Events - Mont. September 21, 2022, Rock Creek Cattle Co.

Scholarship/Education Golf Events - Wyo. TBA

Fall Meeting & Trade Show October 11-13, 2022, Billings Hotel & Convention Center

PPGCSA “Almost” Spring Meeting March 6 & 7, 2023, Fairmont Hot Springs

MSGGA and WSGGA Contribute Grants to the PPGCSA

The quality of continuing education at an affordable rate in the region is positively impacted by the grants from the Montana State Golf Association (\$5,000) and Wyoming State Golf Association (\$500). We are all in this together to provide the best playing conditions possible for golfers, within the facility budgets!

There is a shared value in working together to provide quality state events. We wish everyone a great golf season.

Rounds4Research Auction April 25 - May 1, 2022

80% of the proceeds raised from our courses stays within our chapter. Regardless of your facility type we encourage you to participate. To complete the online donation form, please visit <https://www.eifg.org/research/rounds-4-research/donate-a-round/online-form>.

Without bidders, this event will not be a success. Please take the time to discuss the event with your pro shop and golfers. Materials to help you promote the event can be found on the EIFG.org website, and on links shared on our PPGCSA email blasts.

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GCSAA TOBO

March 2022
Volume 46
Number 1



“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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Peaks & Prairies Golf Course Superintendents Association

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Assistant Superintendent Liaison: Jared Dillinger, Bell Nob Golf Course, Gillette, Wyo.
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Dick Collins, CGCS

44-Year Career Closing

Terry Nelson, Whitefish, Mont.

“He has been a consistent supporter of Peaks & Prairies GCSA and the GCSAA, and found time to go through the GCSAA certification process...”

For the last 47 years, Dick “Duke” Collins, CGCS, has been employed at Whitefish Lake Golf Club in Whitefish, Mont., with the last 44 of those years serving in the position of green superintendent. In an industry that sees frequent changes in personnel, this is a phenomenal feat, to say the least. While Dick Collins eases into retirement, we can all reflect on a career that has spanned decades. A career that oversaw a local 18-hole course that transformed into a 36-hole championship destination facility. I’m not sure if 44 years at the same facility is a record or not, but we at Whitefish Lake Golf Club consider it our blessing to have had Dick around for so long.

While Dick has stayed put, he has nonetheless experienced about everything possible in the golf course maintenance industry. Under his guidance, the Whitefish Lake Golf Club has grown from an 18-hole facility to a now stellar 36-hole championship destination for avid golfers. Since he started working at WLGC, there has been a total remodel of the North Course. Dick has experienced grow-in with the creation of the new South Course; irrigation installations and rebuild; wall-to-wall cart path installation; return from flooding of sections of the South Course; adding bunkers; construction of a state-of-the-art turf center; addition of a short-game practice area; and most recently, new practice putting greens on both the North and South Courses. The turf center may be the most visible and proudest accomplishment and was on the wish list for 15 plus years before finally accomplished in 2012.

It is amazing to see how well Dick has managed his staff over the years so efficiently and respectfully. This is exemplified in the loyalty and exceptionally low rate of turnover for employees. In looking recently at a 2013 staff photo, I was amazed to see that nearly all of the same faces remain

employed at WLGC. His planning and guidance with the staff has created a culture that takes pride in its work and delivers a quality product year after year. He has always fought for his staff in every possible way making sure they are respected, taken care of, and have the necessary tools and equipment to do the many jobs required to maintain a quality course.

Duke’s skill at managing the maintenance budget has been exceptional as he consistently finishes each year remarkably close to the budget forecast.

The list of course improvement projects under his supervision is exhausting just to ponder. In the past 20-plus years alone, he has helped shepherd over \$4.7 million in course improvements, all while still delivering a high-level golf course on a daily basis for the last 44 years. As is apparent, Duke was always looking for ways to improve the course throughout his career. While some projects took years to complete, he never let go of the dream.

Dick Collins, CGCS, is an icon in the golf industry and has served on the Peaks & Prairies GCSA Board and is a Past President. He has been a consistent supporter of Peaks & Prairies GCSA and the GCSAA, and found time to go through the GCSAA certification process, becoming a “Certified Golf Course Superintendent” in 2003.

There are many words that describe Dick Collins — including steady, quiet, loyal, prideful, stubborn, consistent, respectful, leader, caring and thoughtful. I use stubborn because his Dad often referred to him as such, but in the golf industry that stubborn streak has proven to add to his consistency in course preparation. Dick would always stick to the basics and the tried-and-true methods that were successful for him year after year. That said, he was consistent in implementation of USGA agronomist recommendations every year.

It has been my pleasure to work with Duke the past 35 plus years as a board member and fellow employee. I consider him one of my friends and speak for everyone at WLGC in saying he will be missed. But true to his nature, he’s not just riding out into the sunset as he has agreed to consult next year to help in any way possible to ensure the smooth transition for our new superintendent and staff.



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I Need Help (and I don't mean labor)

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

For many years I have struggled to not let parts of life maintaining a golf course cause me excessive stress and anxiety. In the pursuit of turf perfection — as many of us strive for and hopefully achieve at least a couple times a year — I have always “stressed.” And it seems my stress level has steadily increased over several years, building up to my realizing this last summer that I needed some help.

It was only early June, but we had already experienced several weeks of well-above-average temperatures with little natural moisture. What I call “July weather” had started before Memorial Day. One day the stress of my strive for perfection, mixed with stressed turf and a wind event (those of you with lots of trees on your course understand), led me to break down and cry, thinking I just can't do this anymore. Adding to the stress was knowing the summer was just beginning, I still need to work a few more years (so I can't just quit/retire), and knowing we have an unusually full tournament schedule in 2021. I knew this feeling was not good and I needed some help.

Luckily for me, I knew who to reach out to for help and

they agreed to work me into their schedules. I have as club members and friends, a therapist (Kee) and a nurse practitioner (Stacy), who specialize in mental health issues. Explaining to them that I often wake up in the middle of the night and think about the sticks or a pinecone that were not picked up, or what I should have stayed longer and done, even though I just spent 12-14 hours at work that day. I carry the feeling I shouldn't go home until things are perfect, even when knowing that it is almost impossible to achieve. A windy day or thunderstorm can raise my blood pressure and anxiety to the point of sometimes throwing fits, even though there is absolutely nothing I can do to change it. These traits and feelings can make me feel horrible, along with making it very hard on my family and employees.

My “mental health intervention,” as I call it, was actually a very interesting process of looking inward about what internal and external factors made me feel this way, and basically how I had arrived at this point. Even though some may take being told they have mental health issues as hurtful or embarrassing, I often say and live by, “Sometimes the truth hurts.” My diagnosis? ADD and OCD tendencies, and slightly on the autism spectrum.

OK, if you have these issues, what can you do about it? With their help and encouragement, Kee and Stacy taught me about Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). It is basically learning to understand what is within your control or truly your responsibility, and how to move on without causing concern or anxiety with the things that are not in your control. They helped explain how stress about small things golfers don't notice (like a stick, pinecone, wet/dry spot), or letting one comment/complaint (by someone who just missed a putt or had a bad round), make us feel that we are not properly doing our jobs. For me, one complaint or negative comment would be dwelled upon (even after receiving multiple compliments the same day), still feeling that things could be better and therefore not being happy

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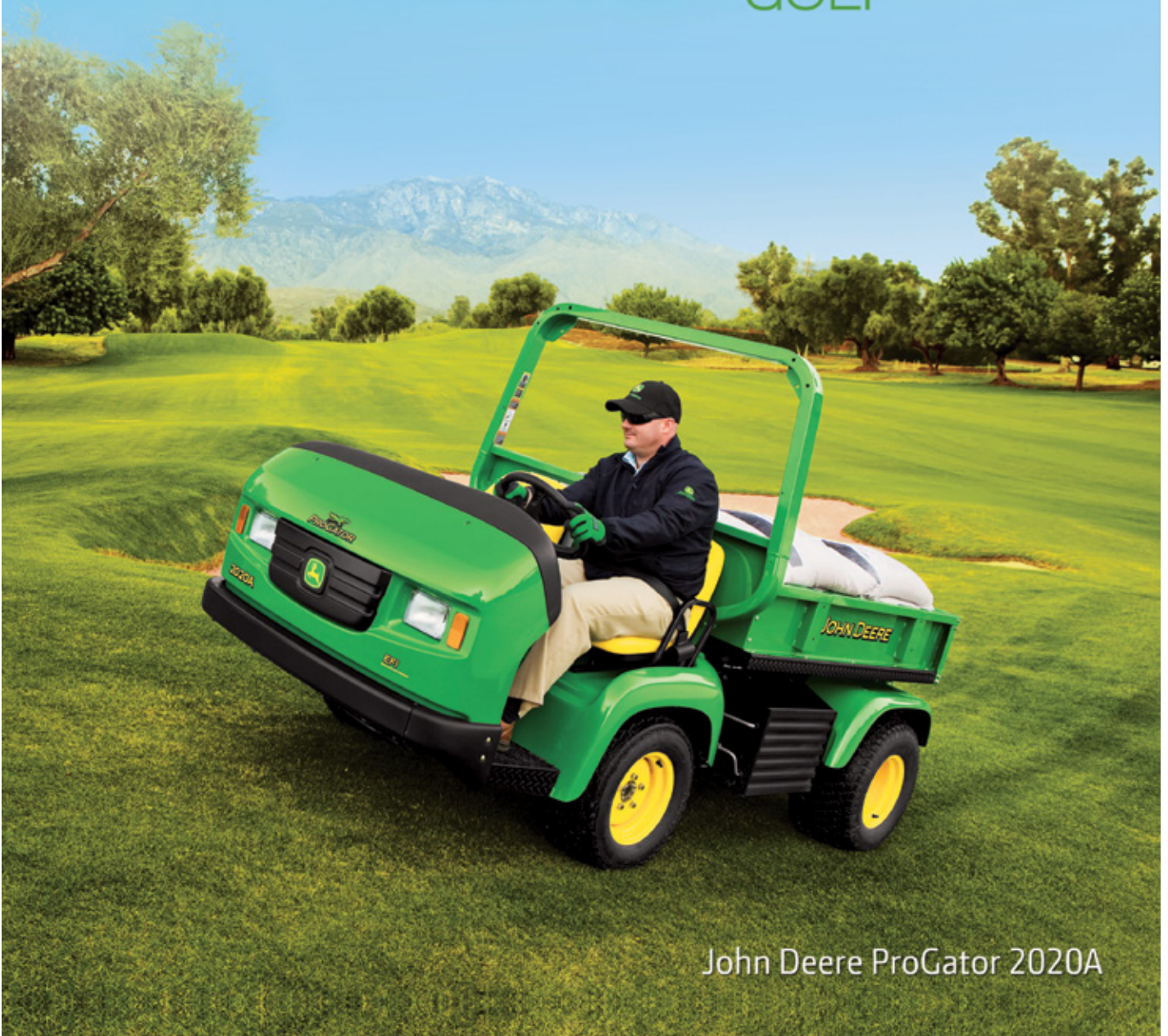
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Pete Grass, CGCS

with the course conditions in that unachievable strive for perfection.

Since that day back in early June, when I knew I needed help and reached out for it, I can honestly say my life has become so much better. I would in no way say perfect, as changing long-term or even lifetime habits is always a work in progress. But now, using the CBT process to think through situations and react accordingly has changed me and how I meet the challenges of each day. In our initial meeting, we discussed that if using only the CBT process was not enough to bring relief to my stress/anxiety, there are also several medication options to try. I said I would first try just the CBT and so far, it has given me the relief I needed—even through the golf season. I am holding open the idea that at some point I still may need something else to help me.

I share my story to have us all think about how we deal with our work and home lives. If there are situations or circumstances in your life that cause extended struggles for you, do not hesitate to reach out for help.

An interesting thing I learned in reaching out was that some of what Kee

and Stacy told me about myself, and my needing to let go and not worry about things beyond my control, was what my wife, Charlene, had been telling me for years. Moral of that story is we often have family or friends that know us pretty well and can help, if we only listen to them.

Hopefully during “offseason” our lives are more relaxed and we can enjoy our jobs with less stress compared to the summer months. The moral to my story is to realize asking for help is not a sign of weakness, nor should it be embarrassing to you. Realizing you may need help often takes way too long, so the sooner you ask, the sooner your life can improve. In my case, I waited way too long. But, I am so happy I eventually did reach out as it has made a significant positive improvement to each of my days.

If you would like to discuss my experience with CBT and coping with stress further, you are welcome to reach out to me.



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The Transition Zone

Russ Grover

Buffalo Hill Golf Club, Kalispell, Mont.



When most of us hear the words, “Transition Zone,” we immediately begin to think of that challenging region of the country where turfgrass can be an absolute nightmare to maintain. Speaking from experience, it can take its toll, but it can also be a very rewarding experience. While this article is not going to be in reference to that definition, it will refer to the challenge of transitioning into something new and overcoming the obstacles we may face.

Inevitably we all transition in our careers whether it be from a crew member into a higher role, an intern to an assistant, or an assistant to that coveted superintendent role. Even as superintendents we can move from one course to another or be promoted into more responsibilities. The fact of the matter is, we all strive to grow and move forward in our careers, and eventually we all find ourselves in the Transition Zone.

My definition for this Transition Zone is the time period when you first start to move into a new role and begin experiencing the normal emotions of getting your feet wet. The

feeling of something new can be both exciting and scary. The excitement of getting to put your own mark on things and proving to yourself and those around you that you are the right person for this role. At the same time, you are dealing with new responsibilities and challenges in an environment that you may or may not fully understand yet. “What will and won’t work?” “Do I need to tweak my methods or possibly change them all together?” “Am I ready for this?” These are all valid questions you might start to ask yourself during this time. As someone who has been in the Transition Zone several times

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Transition Zone continued from page 8

in my career, I thought I might offer a few personal pearls of wisdom that have helped me along the way.

Be Teachable:

None of us will ever know it all. Every day we are all still learning and growing. So, whether you are a seasoned superintendent or a first-time string trimmer, be teachable. Be willing to listen and learn from those around you and who have come before you. I believe this is a valuable trait to have not only in your career, but in your life in general. You never know what you might learn. I have been taught many things by unexpected people. There is no blanket method to the madness of what we do and anything that can help us better understand and navigate our way forward is always a good thing.

Be Genuine:

After the interviews are all over and you begin your new role, remember to stay genuine and uphold the qualities and values that made you stand out for this opportunity. Whether joining a new club or moving up at a current one, stay true to yourself and to the principles that you have learned along the way. Don't feel that you need to drastically change yourself to accomplish your new goals and expectations. You were chosen based upon who you are and how you portrayed yourself. So, maintain that same character and stay genuine.



Be Confident:

Finally, I think the most important piece of advice I can share is to be confident and believe in who you are. When the questions of whether you are ready, or if you can really do this start to come into your mind remember, yes you are and yes you can! You have worked hard to get to where you are, and you should never discredit that no matter your role. There are many times still to this day that I must remind myself of this. Being confident doesn't mean you are better than everyone else. In fact, just the opposite. Being confident means you believe in yourself enough to recognize your weaknesses and know when you need to ask for help.

I hope by sharing some of the things that have helped me to navigate the Transition Zone, I can help some of you when you find yourself there. When that time does come, I wish you the very best, and always remember you earned it.

Bell Nob First Green Field Trip

Jared Dillinger, Assistant Superintendent



October 5 gave way to a beautiful fall day in Gillette, Wyo., with unseasonably warm temperatures — perfect weather for third and fourth graders to spend time learning outside with hands-on labs via a First Green field trip. The First Green program provides superintendents and teachers with resources to help create learning labs that engage the students in unique ways. After connecting with the STEM teacher at a local elementary school, we put together a plan to host two grades, over two separate days, with five stations to facilitate their learning, as well as a chance to better understand golf. Some of the kids had never even stepped foot on a golf course and were excited for their first visit. We, too, were excited to get the chance to showcase our golf course and help kids apply their STEM skills in the real world.

At 9:00 a.m., forty-two fourth graders the first day, and forty-four third graders the second day, arrived via bus and piled in front of the clubhouse for our first introductions. We introduced our maintenance team, as well as our newly appointed

parks and rec. director, Dwyane Dillinger, CGCS. As we were introducing ourselves, hands were already shooting in the air and the kids were teeming with curiosity and anticipation. A brief history of Bell Nob Golf Course was explained, as well as what we do daily. Then, the stations were described and where each would be held. The stations, in order, were 1) Soils & Agronomy, 2) Water Quality & Conservation, 3) Equipment/Shop Tour, 4) Putting w/ the Golf Pro, and 5) Math on the Golf Course. The kids were split into their respective groups and each went their separate ways.

At the Soils & Agronomy station, I introduced the students to the idea that a golf course doesn't just provide a benefit to golfers alone, but also to the environment and the community, as well. We talked about how the turf reduces the air temperature, recharges the groundwater supply, and provides a great

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First Green continued from page 11

habitat for wildlife. I then asked if anyone knew the three components of soil. “Dirt?”, was the most common answer of the day, which made me and most of the students smile and laugh. We looked at several different soil cores of the green, rough, and fairway. Students were impressed at the uniformity of the green core and how it held together like an accordion, as we slowly pushed it back into the hole. Lastly, we let the students put a handful of our greens grade sand through a sieve and touch each section to feel the particle size difference.

The second station was the Water Quality & Conservation station. Here the superintendent, Dan Vandersloot, spent time explaining how important the quality of the water is for the turf and how the golf course works to conserve water for the environment. He showed the students the acid we inject into the irrigation system and how this affects the pH of the water, and why we try to get the pH as close as we can to neutral seven. The example we used for conservation was catch cans on one of our greens. Dan turned on the water for a brief minute and the students would rush over and record how much water was in the cans. IT was then explained and how that information can be used to figure our uniformity and help conserve water by decreasing the amount we use when necessary.

At the shop, our equipment manager, Darin Caldwell, gave the students a tour of our home away from home. He went over

the various pieces of equipment we use daily and let the kids get hands-on experience by sitting on some of the equipment. Recruitment starts early in the golf course industry! Also, the students were introduced to the grinder and were shown how we keep our reels cutting tight and low. They were amazed at how low the mower reels can cut grass at and thought maybe the greens were fake grass.

As students went from the equipment shop up to the putting green, they were met by the golf pro, Cameron Brown, and were excited to try putting and they had fun doing so. They putted at different holes of different lengths, and even competed to see who could make the most putts. Including a putting station with the pro in the program is important because for some kids, it is their first-time getting hands-on a club and seeing how much fun golf really can be. The more kids we get involved in the sport, the better future golf has.

The last station on the list was the Math on the Golf Course station instructed by Dwayne Dillinger, CGCS. Here, we had setup a 30’ x 30’ section ahead of time with marking flags. A measuring tape and measuring wheel were made available to the students to find the length of each side of the square. After this, the students went inside to our junior room where they used a whiteboard to figure the area of the square. Dwayne explained why this is important to maintenance staff and how often we use area math on both squares and rectangles, as well as irregular shapes. The teachers found it helpful to see the students applying the multiplication lessons they had been learning in the class and the applicability to apply future geometry lessons to the golf course setting.

After around 1.5 hours, everyone had finished their last station and we all met at the clubhouse restaurant for the lunch of cheeseburgers, chips, and a cookie. Our restaurant team did a great job of dishing out burgers to all the students, teachers, and volunteers. It was a great way to the end the day of learning with a fun lunch at the golf course. We used the grant money from the First Green program to pay for the lunch, so overall, the field trip didn’t cost the maintenance department more than our time. The First Green is a wonderful program and it was a great success at Bell Nob. I want to thank Leann Cooper, everyone with the First Green program and the GCSAA for all their help in setting up the event. We will be doing more in the future and expanding into the junior highs for more advanced lessons.

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Today's CGCS

David Phipps, Northwest GCSAA Field Staff



The famous philosopher, Heraclitus, once said, "The only thing that is constant is change." With that said, change brings new opportunities and new opportunities bring growth. The GCSAA Certification Committee felt the same way as it took a close look at our existing certification program. Like most successful programs, as they grow, they need to evolve to meet the changing times. This was the approach as the committee decided to make some changes to modernize the program. The intent was to keep the high standards of the certification process while reducing the amount of time necessary to complete it.

There is no denying it, the GCSAA certification program is not for the faint of heart. It has been regarded as one of the most robust certification programs in our industry and those who have passed it have truly stood up to the rigors of the program. Stephanie Confer, GCSAA's certification manager, told me, "I don't have the exact percentage on this, but looking back it looks like only 25%-30% of individuals who purchased the portfolio completed the certification process." With the new changes to the program, now may be the right time to get started.

To review what has changed, let's look at the old criteria.

FIRST, to be eligible for the program the applicant must have met the eligibility requirements of specific levels of education and experience. In other words, meet the Class A requirements. In addition, the applicant must have possessed a current pesticide license or have passed the GCSAA IPM exam. SECOND, the applicant must have completed the online GCSAA self-assessment. THIRD, the applicant must have completed a portfolio. LASTLY, the applicant must have completed the proctored, paper-based exam and attesting of the golf course. Renewal requirements followed.

The new program is similar in several aspects. The applicant still must meet Class A criteria and possess a pesticide license or pass the IPM exam.

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There continues to be an attesting component and an exam. And, the renewal criteria remain the same.

What is different:

- The self-assessment requirement has been eliminated. Candidates and CGCSs alike cited the completion of the self-assessment as an obstacle to the program. The tool was not being used by members outside of those completing it for CGCS, either. Since it has no bearing on demonstrating knowledge, it was removed as a requirement of CGCS.
- The portfolio has been removed in its current form as it was also cited by members as an obstacle of application to the program. In addition, Psychometrician Dr. Kim Thayn expressed that in the distant past, a portfolio was sometimes required in certification programs, but is an outdated instrument today. In the portfolio's replacement, the competencies previously tested in the portfolio are now evaluated through either the written exam or attesting process.
- Through a scientific process, the exam has been reviewed and updated to align with today's superintendent competencies.
- A new Leadership & Communication requirement has been added. Individuals who have completed the Assistant Superintendent Certificate Series (ASCS) Principles of Leadership & Communications certificate have already met the leadership and communications requirements of CGCS. If a CGCS candidate hasn't completed the certificate, they must complete the following criteria...

The new Leadership & Communication component of the program gives options for completion. You will be required to provide proof of three out of the four following activities:

1. Write and publish an article for a chapter newsletter or Golf Course Management Magazine.
2. Volunteer service. Select one of the following:
 - a. Serve on a GCSAA chapter or golf organization task group or committee.
 - b. Serve on a chapter board of directors.
 - c. Participate in hosting a First Green field trip.
 - d. Serve as a GCSAA Grassroots Ambassador.
 - e. Attend National Golf Day.
3. Give a presentation and document your experience.
4. Complete or update your facility BMP template or create and implement a BMP manual.

The attesting process is to be enhanced, with a scoring rubric incorporated for consistency in grading. The 2021 Certification Committee is currently working through this process with Dr. Thayn. Attesting content will be reviewed and structured in a way that lends itself to providing better direction to the attestors for grading. This process will be completed and ready for the next growing season for most.

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There are a few additional enhancements to the program:

- Candidates may now apply and pay online.
- The CGCS process has become more flexible, with the exam and attesting being conducted in any order to accommodate your busy schedule.
- With the online exam, proctoring can be conducted remotely, via webcam.
- Candidates may now take the exam ONLINE and get results immediately! (NOTE: The paper version is still available.)
- There are sample questions candidates can take to get an idea of what the exam will entail—coming soon.

I am by no means an expert on this program since I am not a certified superintendent, but I can certainly attest that the work that has gone into making this a more time-efficient, yet accountable, program. We can all be grateful to the staff at GCSAA and those who have served on the Certification Committee over the years for adapting and changing our certification process to meet the needs of today's superintendent. Our program remains the standard by which all others are measured.

Please feel free to reach out to Stephanie Confer anytime for CGCS related questions. She is happy to help!
sconfer@gcsaa.org



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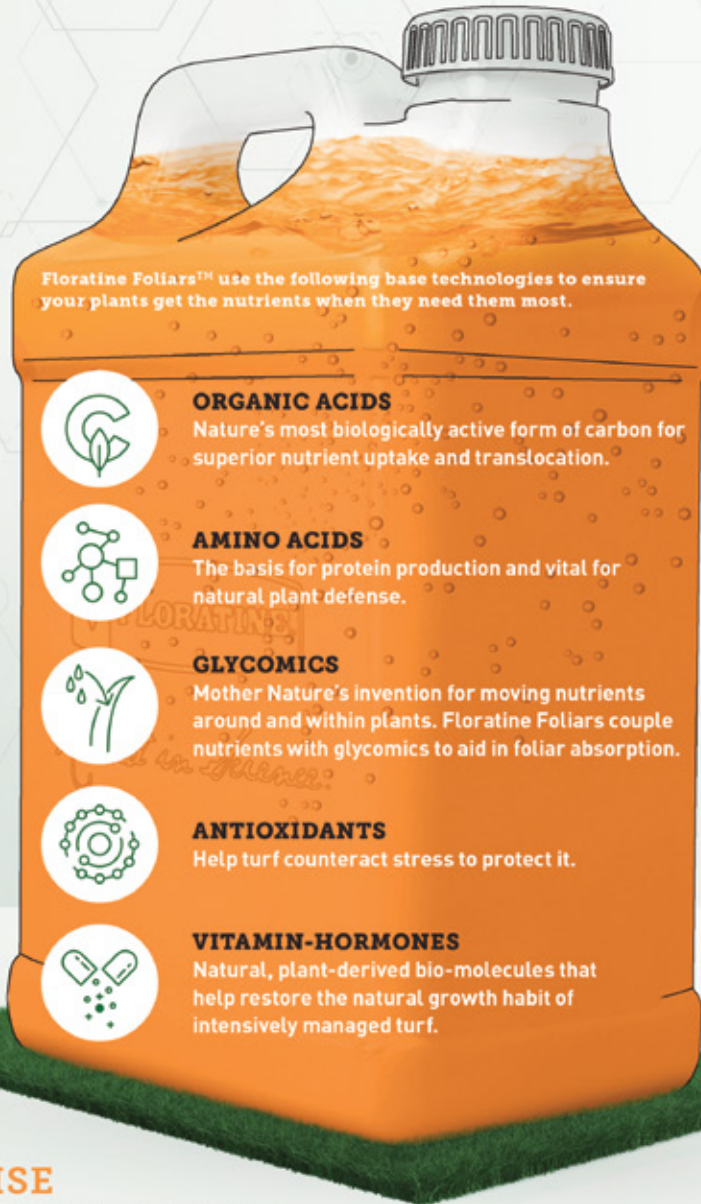


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