

## Dive into the 2026 “Almost” Spring Meeting

Yes! We are returning to Fairmont Hot Springs, Anaconda, Mont., March 2 & 3, 2026, for an educational opportunity that will not only make you want to dive into the 2026 season, but also into the indoor and outdoor oversized Olympic swimming pools fed by a virtually unlimited supply of 155-degree natural hot spring water.

We are thrilled about our speaker lineup — which will include Becky Bowling, Ph.D., Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist - Turfgrass Science and Management, University of Tennessee, who was originally scheduled for the 2024 Fall Meeting & Trade Show. She had to cancel last minute due to a death in the family. Many of you stated then that Bowling’s presentations, “*Updates in Irrigation Infrastructure: Considerations for Investment and Renovations*,” and “*Water x Weeds: Building an Integrated Weed Management Approach*,” were an event draw for you. So, this is your chance to not only finally have this opportunity, but to benefit from knowledge and the insights of our great speakers including Darren Davis, CGCS, Olde Florida Golf Club, Naples, Florida; Alec Kowalewski, Ph.D., Oregon State University, as well as the participants of “We made it Through 2025.” And, of course we will gather for the hugely popular evening panel discussion, “Hot Turf Topics at the Hot Springs.”

Whether you bring your co-workers and/or your family, you will want to make this a priority to attend. The quality of education will meet your expectations!



*Private Webcast, PPGCSA - January 8, 2026*

*Chapters of the Northwest Hospitality Room - Orlando, Florida, Tin Roof, February 4, 2026*

*PPGCSA “Almost” Spring Meeting - March 2-3 2026, Fairmont Mont. & Wyo, Scholarship/Edu. Golf Events - TBA*

*PPGCSA Fall Meeting & Trade Show - October 13-16, 2026*



## Thank you, Dane Gamble, Bridger Creek Golf Course

Dane Gamble pulled off the Master of Ceremony with ease and professionalism at the tri-chapter Northwest GCSA Turfgrass Expo, III in October. It was not an easy task. It took time and preparation, plus he was “on” all day long — for two days. He accepted the position at our request and represented us very well. When you see Dane, make sure to thank him!

## Help! We are Near Target

**We are \$1,000 shy of our goal.** The Peaks & Prairies GCSA board of directors has approved a contribution of \$2,500 towards the \$5,000 Chapter Legacy Leader level of GCSAA’s Colonel John Morley Centennial Campaign. This endowment has been created to fund new and innovative initiatives for the next 100 years. We are asking for our members to help fund the remaining \$2,500 of the \$5,000 and we are just \$1,000 away.

We are reaching out to you, our valued members. Through our chapter, we encourage you to make an individual or facility donation of any amount, with a suggestion of \$100 or more. Your generosity will make a significant impact and help us achieve our chapter goal of raising \$5,000 towards the endowment.

## GCSAA Rounds 4 Research Auction April 20 – April 26, 2026

To continue to grow this important cause and help fund our chapter-related programs, we need your participation with donated rounds/carts for two or four people. It is never too early to complete the online donation form — <https://www.gcsaa.org/what-we-do/foundation/rounds-4-research/r4r-online-donation-form>

“Peaks & Prairies GCSA is dedicated to furthering the education of our members for the betterment of golf and its environment.”

November 2025

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Number 4



*“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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# President's Message

Pat Nowlen, Polson Bay Golf Course, Polson, Mont.

I am honored to serve as your board president for the upcoming year. Throughout my membership with Peaks & Prairies GCSA, I avoided getting involved with the association's business for a long time. Like many of you, I have sat in the back rows and quietly let things happen without any comments

or questions. In our minds, we hear things like, "They are more experienced than me," "I'm way too busy," or, "Others are better fit to lead." Lori was quite surprised a few years back when I finally told her it was time for me to step out of my comfort zone and get involved. Next thing I know, I'm presenting in the "We Made It Through," serving on the board of directors, and active as our chapter delegate. Meanwhile, I was struggling with anxiety to speak in front of all of you. So, I talked with some of the people who had been in this position before and asked for help and received encouragement, guidance, and support, and I made it through it.

Now, it's time for my first president's message, and I found myself reading the last few years of presidents' articles looking

for inspiration. What I was really doing was making sure I didn't repeat their message. I realized that I was doing exactly what this association was created for and had been all along. I am leaning on and relying on the membership of this association for support in the areas where I struggle. I was looking for guidance from the past leaders and learning from their successes and failures to achieve something.

*Pat Nowlen thanking Ryan Knapp for his years of board service*



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# Past President's Message

Ryan Knapp, Stock Farm Club,  
Hamilton, Mont.

I want to thank everyone for the opportunity to serve as the Peaks & Prairies president this past year. To say that it has been

an eye-opening experience would be an understatement. I especially want to thank Lori Russell and the work that she does keeping our association one of the most respected in the nation.

One of the greatest privileges of this role has been witnessing the professionalism, innovation, and resilience of our members across Montana, Wyoming, and the surrounding regions. From managing extreme weather shifts to navigating labor shortages and water management challenges, superintendents and their teams have demonstrated an incredible capacity to adapt and accomplish great things when challenged. The successes at our respected facilities are largely because of your efforts and all of the hard work that goes into keeping a golf course thriving.

A major focus of our association has been fostering stronger

connections among members, with our allied and industry partners, and across generations of turf professionals. Our education conferences and trade shows have been successful and continue to grow, and we are always looking for ways to expand our educational offerings, whether that be online or in smaller regional "meet-ups." The exchange of knowledge between experienced superintendents and rising professionals remains the heart of our association and what makes our association so special. We are stronger when we share our experiences and support one another.

Equally important has been our commitment to advocacy and outreach. The golf industry continues to face scrutiny regarding environmental impact, and our members have shown that stewardship and telling our story are critical parts of our position. Whether through implementing sustainable turf practices, improving irrigation efficiency, or promoting pollinator habitats, our chapter continues to lead by example nationally. I encourage everyone to keep telling those success stories; they make a difference.

None of our successes would have been possible without the continued page 6

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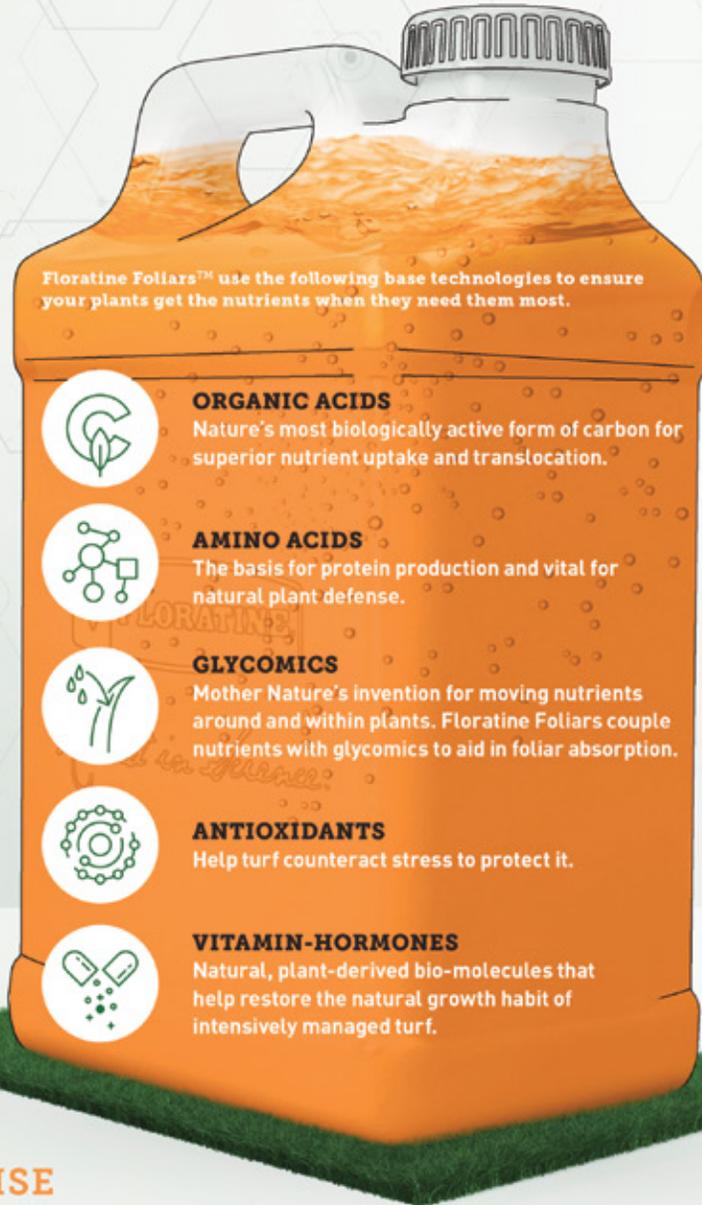
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## Past Presidents Message continued from page 4

dedicated leadership of the board, the engagement of our members, and the amazing support of our allied partners. Thank you to all who volunteer their time — serving on committees, mentoring interns and students, and hosting events.

Serving as your president has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my career. It reminds me that while turf management is a science, our success as an industry is built on relationships rooted in respect and collaboration. Thank you for the opportunity to serve, and for the work that you do every day to make our association something to be proud of.

## January 8 is Peaks & Prairies GCSA Private Webcast

Registration is open for the annual Peaks & Prairies GCSA Private Webcast, Thursday, January 8, 2026, with Mike Richardson, Ph.D., presenting. Whether you gather your staff, your peers in the region, or participate on your own, this is a beneficial opportunity to earn GCSAA EDUs and interact with your peers. Please visit the calendar event of [ppgcsa.org](http://ppgcsa.org) to register. We look forward to meeting online!

## GCSAA BMP Tool Now Simpler to Use

GCSAA recently rolled out an enhanced BMP tool that's simpler to use, has fewer steps to complete, and is more useful for facilities. The tool's significant upgrades allow you to better tell your story, manage your risk, and receive personalized support from the experts at GCSAA.

Implementing BMPs is essential to the future of our profession to help document the science-based practices and responsible course management that benefit everyone in the

community your golf course serves.

Watch for more information from GCSAA concerning the resources that will be available to help you complete your facility BMPs with the simpler-to-use tool.

## Congratulations to New Board Members and Allied Liaison

We are fortunate to thrive year to year among a membership willing to serve their profession. Our gratitude for service is offered to our recently elected officers and directors, and allied liaison, Brian McGiff, Simplot Turf & Hort. President - Pat Nowlen, Polson Bay Golf Course, Polson, Mont.; Vice President - Brandon Barkley, 3 Creek Ranch, Jackson, Wyo.; and Secretary /Treasurer – Sean Sullivan, CGCS, The Briarwood, Billings, Mont. Elected Directors at the business meeting: Tim Furan, Meadowlark Country Club, Great Falls, Mont.; and Mark Lyon, Teton Pines Resort & Country Club, Jackson, Wyo.

On behalf of the membership, Pat Nowlen presented Ryan Knapp, Stock Farm, Hamilton, Mont., a token of thanks for his leadership as president and years of service on the board. We also offer our appreciation to Jason Aanestad, Pacific Golf & Turf for his years of service as our allied liaison.

## Chapters of the Northwest Hospitality Room

This is such a great location, of course we are returning to the Tin Roof for our 2026 Chapters of the Northwest Hospitality Room in Orlando! This unique venue was certainly a hit during our last Orlando visit — between the eclectic décor, great options for seating and networking, and the great location. Enjoy the evening with your turf industry peers at our private event at the Tin Roof of Orlando, Wednesday, February 4, 2026, 6:30 - 9:30 p.m. Complimentary food and beverages will be offered thanks to the generosity of our allied partners.



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# Opening Golf Courses to Winter Recreation Is a PR Win

DJ Woodruff

Purple Sage Golf Course, Evanston, Wyo.

Many golf courses sit dormant and unused through winter months. But some communities are using golf courses as snow-covered ski trails

for cross-country skiing enthusiasts. It's not just about utilizing unused space; it's also proving to be a smart public relations move.

For years, golf courses have faced criticism from non-golfers. Accusations range from environmental concerns, like excessive water use and pesticide runoff, to perceptions of exclusivity and poor use of land. Allowing winter access to these beautiful landscapes helps address those concerns.

Cross-country skiers, snowshoers, and even fat bikers are finding joy in exploring golf courses when the snow hits. These users often represent a demographic that might never set foot on a golf course during the regular season. By welcoming them during the off-season, golf course managers are building goodwill with the broader community.

This increased access helps reshape public perception. Suddenly, a golf course is no longer a drain on the community but rather a part of the local winter recreation scene. That's a big win, particularly for publicly funded or municipally owned courses. Residents are more likely to support investments in land that has year-round uses.

The benefits extend beyond PR. This kind of seasonal dual-use supports local health and wellness initiatives by providing accessible spaces for winter exercise. It also encourages a connection to nature.

For golf courses, the transition doesn't require major investments. Grooming ski trails is low-cost once the initial investment is made. The environmental impact is minimal. Sensitive areas such as greens and tee boxes can be avoided with signage and basic guidelines.

In a time when public land use is increasingly scrutinized, and communities are hungry for inclusive, multi-season spaces, opening golf courses to cross-country skiing is more than just a nice gesture. It's an easy way to build community support and stay relevant year-round.

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# Dealing with Changing Membership Demographics... this old dog is struggling

Gary Colstad, Valley View Golf Club, Bozeman, Mont.

*My* name is Gary Colstad and I have been a superintendent at three golf courses over a span of 32 years. The last 25 years have been spent at Valley View, a private golf club in the Gallatin Valley. Normally, I do not pay much attention to changes going on around me. Yes, Bozeman is going through a “growth spurt” which causes many headaches for local government officials. But on a personal level, there really are not any large-scale issues that affect me. Yes, I might have to navigate through 17 detours on my way to and from the golf course (wish I had invested in orange traffic cones years back). I might have to deal with a few motorists whose driving skills I would consider inadequate. But I always survive and end up at my destination. That destination, frequently, is Valley View Golf Club.

It is there at the golf course that I tend to struggle with change. The demographic of our membership is changing at a more rapid pace than I am comfortable with at my ripe old age of 65. About the time COVID blessed us with its presence, the

average age of our membership began a steady decline. Don't get me wrong; our membership is full, very healthy, and full of energy, but with change comes a few challenges. Thankfully, technology has made massive strides over the last few decades. This was a necessity for golf course maintenance to keep up with the ever-increasing expectations demanded by today's golfers. The high expectations brought forth by our membership...I can handle that aspect. My philosophy is that I have the highest



continued page 12



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## Changing Demographics continued from page 10

expectations for the golf course over anything that a member can throw in my direction. The pristine playing surfaces have always been demanded. But often members' expectations do not include factoring in weather, staffing, or budget restrictions. The demand for exclusive amenities is starting to spiral out of control (once again, just showing my age), but these demands can also be met if members keep budget restrictions in line with their demands.

While the younger membership can inject energy and new ideas into our club, it can also create tension around traditional standards of course care and etiquette. As respect for the golf course declines and member expectations rise, our maintenance staff (and all other club management) faces an intriguing balancing act in sustaining course quality and member satisfaction. I do not want to point the finger (☹) exclusively at the younger members. It appears the established routines for course care — repairing ball marks and raking bunkers — are no longer a value that some golfers carry around with them, regardless of age. But currently, as the average age of our membership decreases, the club is welcoming younger players who may have different relationships with golf and less familiarity with its traditions. This demographic shift can lead to a decrease in respect for the course, as newer members may not be as well-versed in the unwritten rules of golf etiquette or the importance of maintaining course conditions. Maybe it is a casual attitude that is being integrated into our membership. Maybe the game of golf is being thought of as a leisure activity rather than a disciplined sport. The relaxed attitudes are never more apparent than the foursome that has the music playing for all to hear. Education is always an option, but my frustration boils over when the same few golfers are asked repeatedly to please keep the golf carts

out of the restricted areas. I have read that younger golfers are more apt to respond to modern communication tools including social media, on-course QR codes, or short videos. Maybe, but...I have always been anti-signage at Valley View. It is a private golf course. Members will read a sign once (maybe), and if the message tickles their fancy, they might abide by that request. If not, that sign will never be read again and will serve the same purpose hanging back in the maintenance facility. A sign to remind golfers to repair their ball mark will not change anyone's routine. If repairing a ball mark is part of their routine, they will continue to do so. If not, a sign will not change their habits.

With today's media showcasing immaculate courses and high-profile tournaments raising standards, members expect lush fairways and fast greens. This trend puts additional pressure on maintenance crews, club management, and resources, as maintaining top-tier conditions often requires significant investment in equipment, staffing, and maintenance scheduling. Providing immaculate golf course conditions is what we do for a living. We strive for perfection. Many times, we fall short. Mother Nature is tough to deal with at times, but we always seem to meet the challenge. Often, all I see on the golf course are details that need to be addressed. That is not the best way to navigate my day, but that is in my DNA. On occasion (many times in the fall months), something will catch my eye and make me stop and admire the place where I work. Mother Nature plays a big part in that beautiful picture, but my maintenance staff and all the other administrators at Valley View can also take a bow for their hard work in providing a top-notch golf course for our members to enjoy. All I ask is that the members enjoy the "View," respect the game, and above all...respect the golf course.

You all take care, stay healthy, and have a great offseason.

TEB 2024

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# Poa: To Fight or Not To Fight...

Jeff Hegland

Iron Horse Golf Club, Whitefish, Mont.

As I write this, we at Iron Horse Golf Club in Whitefish, Mont., are currently applying our

eighth application of PoaCure. Poa has been a hot topic at Iron Horse from grow-in to the present day. The current club board and greens committee have asked us to take a more aggressive approach and have committed to at least a three-year PoaCure trial.

Over the past 25 years, many things have been tried to limit Poa as much as possible, with most of the effort focused on greens and approaches. A relentless plugging program on greens has been quite successful in maintaining virtually Poa-free putting surfaces.

That being said, for this article, I will only be referencing applications to Kentucky bluegrass. Eight applications have been applied to bluegrass mowed at 1" or lower, which includes tees, fairways, and our practice facility—totaling roughly 50 acres.

## The Process

I'll summarize our experience with PoaCure and the process we've used so far to provide a regional, hands-on review rather

than a national research or technical approach.

We began this program on August 10, 2024, and made a total of four applications in 2024—one application every two weeks, with the final application on September 21. All applications were made at the labeled rate of 1.2 oz of PoaCure per 1,000 sq. ft., sprayed in two gallons of water per 1,000 sq. ft.

We decided to close for a few hours during the first several applications due to the need to water the product in immediately with approximately 0.20" of irrigation. This step alone presented a bit of a challenge. We chose to create specific Poa programs in our irrigation satellites and had one or two people dedicated to following the sprayers and managing water



September 4, 2024 Poa starting to thin out on hole 3

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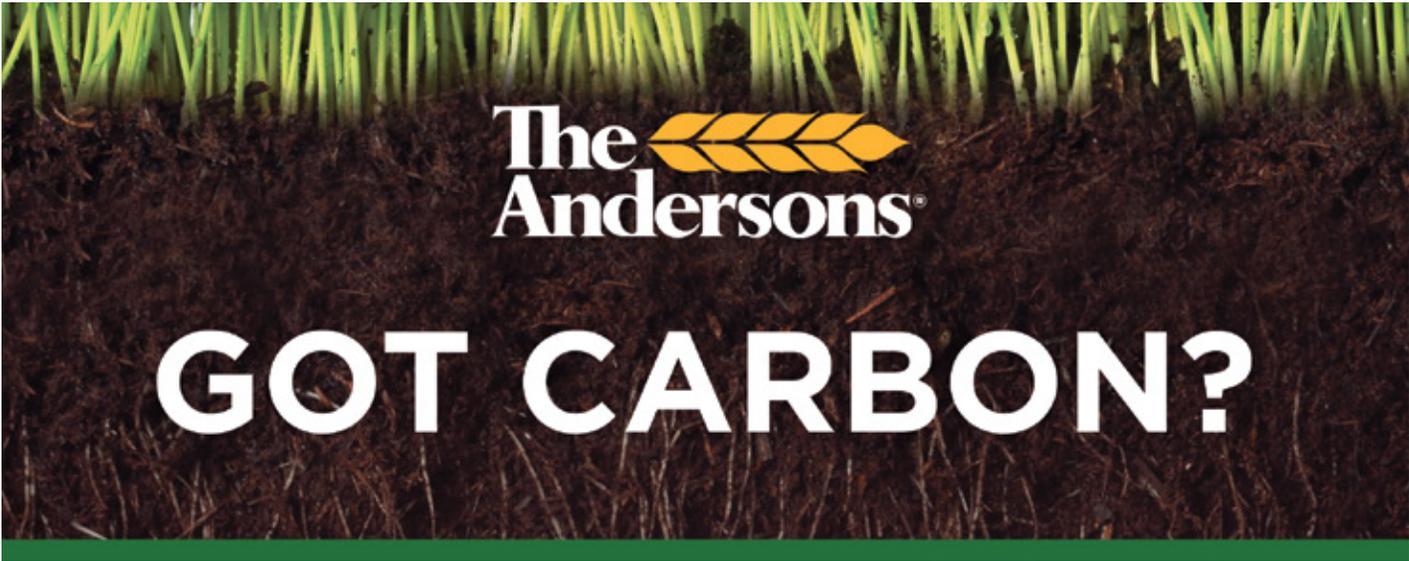
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## Poa Fight continued from page 16

immediately after each application.

For our course, putting that amount of water down definitely created some pretty wet playing conditions right after each application.

### The Results

Now for the after-effects. We started to see yellowing, a sunken appearance, and generally unhealthy Poa fairly quickly in some areas—approximately 20 days after the initial application.

By day 30–45, things started looking pretty good or bad, depending on your perspective, with large patches being discolored and beginning to thin out.

We found that some areas were affected far more than others. By this time, it was mid-October, and time to move on to normal winter preparations.

Going into winter, it became clear that PoaCure was working.



*Bleached out bentgrass #1 approach, March 26, 2025*

### Spring 2025

All of the areas where we saw Poa injury last fall looked even more affected—or completely dead—this spring. Time to double down, right?

We started right out of the gate with two additional applications on April 21 and May 5. Now, after six total applications, many of these areas were so thin that it was difficult to mow during the wet spring without creating a muddy mess.

At that point, we decided to sod out the worst Poa-kill areas using two semi-loads of big roll. For the other affected areas, we took more of a hands-off approach, as it is not recommended to aerify or seed into treated areas to preserve the pre-emergent properties of PoaCure.

That being said, we did try to push the bluegrass with extra fertility in many locations, hoping it would slowly fill in.

*Poa knocked back and little to no activity hole 3, June 4, 2025*



By early June, these areas were still mostly bare with little to no Poa activity. However, just a few weeks later, those same bare spots looked as though we had seeded. The only problem? We hadn't. It was all Poa, filling back in—and quickly.

By late June to early July, you almost wouldn't have known

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we had done anything at all. Let's just say, we were disappointed in the pre-emergent performance.

*Poa filling back in and fast on hole 3, June 23, 2025*



*Poa is basically totally filled back in hole 3, August 7, 2025*

### **Bentgrass Battle**

As a side note, we also decided that if we were going to attack Poa, we could go after the bentgrass in those same areas. We applied two applications of Tenacity in the fall of 2024, followed by one in the spring of 2025.

Wow. You combine bleached-out bentgrass and mostly dead

Poa, and what you get is—what I would call—a pretty ugly golf course. (All in an effort to have a pure stand of bluegrass.) Maybe the old saying "green is good" applies now more than ever!

### **Fall 2025 & Reflections**

After the rapid Poa regeneration in June, and a summer of pretty darn good course conditions and aesthetics, we once again loaded up our sprayers for two more applications on September 6 and September 21, wrapping up the final applications of 2025.

As I write this in mid-October, we're just now starting to see the Poa yellow out and show that sunken appearance again. I'll be honest—it almost feels like we're starting over for the first time.

### **Looking Ahead**

The biggest questions moving forward:

- Will we ever get to a point where Poa doesn't bounce back so vigorously?
- Can we get control of the seed bank in the soil?
- Will we eventually gain the upper hand?

We've done small test plots with more regular summer applications, and we're seeing much better control in those areas—seemingly eliminating the summer rebound effect.

### **Final Thoughts**

After two seasons, our battle is far from over, and there's still much to learn and adjust as we try to improve Poa control using PoaCure.

If you're considering this program yourself—or being asked by membership to control Poa—just know that there is finally another tool available. But I would caution: it's not foolproof, and the road is likely to be long, expensive, and a little ugly along the way.

With the significant financial investment and the current trial results, I still find myself wondering: Poa—To Fight or Not To Fight...



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# Restoring a Classic: Yellowstone Country Club's Phase 1 Course Renovation

Cody Schulke, Yellowstone Country Club, Billings, Mont.

After more than a decade, Yellowstone Country Club finally broke ground on a long-awaited project: a full bunker renovation. Phase 1 focused on rebuilding every bunker from the ground up, but with contractors and heavy equipment already on-site, the club seized the opportunity to complete additional course improvements at the same time.

In 2024, YCC hired architect Harry Bowers of Signature Design Services to lead Phase 1, enhancing the original Robert Trent Jones, Sr. design to improve playability, aesthetics, and shot values. With more than 35 years of design and construction experience and a strong background as a competitive amateur, Bowers brings a rare understanding of both playability and course strategy. Early in his career, he worked directly with Robert Trent Jones, Sr., including a visit to YCC in the 80s with then-superintendent Don Tolson, when the course's future was first discussed.

Since founding his own design studio, Bowers has contributed to 80+ projects and collaborated with Raymond Floyd, Curtis Strange, and Tom Weiskopf. For this project, he was not just behind the plans, he relocated to Billings, shaped every bunker himself with a skid steer, and collaborated daily with subcontractors and YCC staff to bring the design to life.

In Phase 1 every bunker was reshaped in a consistent design in keeping with Robert Trent Jones, Sr. design philosophies of strategy, challenging, and the concept of "hard par, but easy bogey." Bunkers were reduced from 77 to 64 through elimina-

tion and consolidation. Each bunker received new drainage, new sand, and reshaping, with raised backs for better visibility. EcoBunker edging, a stacked synthetic turf, was installed to create a clean, durable edge and reduce maintenance.

With bunkers repositioned, mowing patterns were redesigned, widening fairway landing areas and refining contours around mounds and



*EcoBunker installed on green bunker.*

*Green bunker finished.*



*Green bunker*





*Ditch before, during, and after construction.*



bunkers to enhance alignment, playability, and overall aesthetics. Greenside collection areas were also introduced to many complexes and will be mowed at collar height once the sod is established.

The irrigation pond on hole #2 was expanded by approximately 1.5 million gallons, bringing total storage to around 13.5 million gallons to support early season irrigation before ditch flows begin. Excavated soil from the expansion was repurposed across the project, including construction of twenty-five new tee complexes — ten back and fifteen forward — providing flexible playing options for all skill levels. The new square bentgrass tees replace bluegrass and set the standard for future tee renovations.

On holes 2 and 7, deteriorating railroad tie ditch walls were removed and replaced with natural, sloped creek banks for improved stability and aesthetics.



To reduce water, fertilizer, labor, and mowing, select rough was converted to naturalized areas. Irrigation heads remain temporarily until membership approves the change, as pace of play is being evaluated. These areas are not fully in place so it will take a season to see the benefits of the reduction.

Over two hundred trees were removed in Phase 1 to restore sunlight, turf health, and original course vistas. Once members saw the reopened views of the Rimrocks, feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Another 200 for removal may follow in a future phase, leaving about 1,000 trees. Although the arborist

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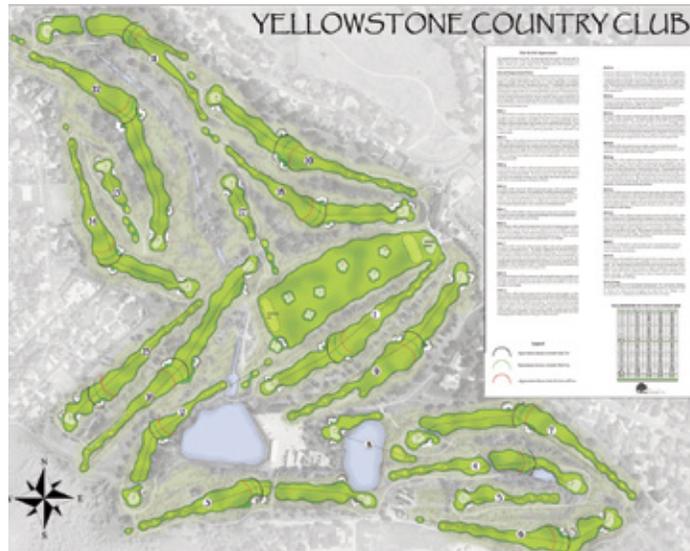
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## Yellowstone

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subcontractor underperformed in areas, YCC staff will complete the work to club standards over the winter and into next season.

The practice area also saw upgrades and additions. The main range tee was leveled, eliminating a tier, and a new elevated teaching/lesson tee was added to the opposite end of the range along with a large chipping green and two bunkers. One bunker will be used to chip on the green, and the other will be used to simulate a fairway bunker shot out into the range. In



the range, nine elevated targets were added for improved practice versatility.

To fund Phase 1, the Board of Directors opted for a member capital call rather than new debt following the 2019 clubhouse project — \$2,750 for resident categories and \$900 for non-resident members. The total project cost was \$1.8 million (\$1.6M construction + \$200K contingency for lost revenue). Future phases have been discussed. Phase 2 may include additional tree removal and tee reconstruction, while Phase 3 could involve a full greens renovation. As for now, nothing is set in stone or scheduled.

Executing the project while maintaining daily play and tournaments was a major challenge. In addition, YCC took on a significant amount of work that was being done poorly by the subcontractor, including moving thousands of feet of irrigation pipe and wire, soil prep, sodding, and tree stump wood chip removal. Compounding issues throughout the season included equipment failures, unexpected maintenance facility repairs, irrigation mainline leaks, sustained pump failure, and changes to mowing locations and routes while areas were under construction. Despite it all, the maintenance crew delivered exceptional results, proof that great crews make great projects possible. To say we are looking forward to winter this year is an understatement!



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# Negative Effects on a Tree's Natural Life Cycle

Pete Grass, CGCS, Retired *(Edited from MSGA September Newsletter)*

In 99% of instances, the word "TREE" is accompanied by many positive attributes. Those can include cooling shade, carbon sequestration, soil stabilization, landscape formatting, property protection or shelter belt, and geographic identifier. In my opinion and experience, in the 1% remaining instances, which can be true most anywhere and especially on a golf course, the word "TREE" can be used in the connotation of a swear word in how trees are integrated into a golf course layout.

So, what instances could possibly make a poor, defenseless tree be "cussed at" from a golf course superintendent's point of view, at least? I have several examples to share and here is my not all-inclusive list. I tried to think about a rating system of worst to not so bad, but each instance can have a major negative effect at some point in a tree's natural 35 to 500-year life cycle.

#1) A general rule of thumb in our high plains/mountainous region is that the faster a tree grows, the shorter overall lifespan it has. "Patience is a virtue" applies to trees; when there is a need to fill in for some reason, often the shortest-lived tree is chosen rather than a quality species that will be there for lifetimes.

#2) Original or newer tree placement. Trees, like humans, grow up; they are cute when they are young but can become a pain when they mature to a size not considered when planted. For example, when three small trees are planted too close to each other, all three become misshaped when mature. If you try to take out any one of the three, the ones left will have bare sides. As trees grow, they often become a double hazard, blocking a reasonable shot from a bunker or a reasonable opportunity for any shot to reach a fairway or green. Removing a tree several years after it was planted because it outgrew its intended purpose results in a waste of time and money down the line. HEAVEN FORBID IT WAS A MEMORIAL TREE FOR SOMEONE.

#3) What type of mess a tree produces (just normal fall leaf cast, cotton, fruit, nuts, pine/spruce needles, pinecones, brittle branches). Before selecting a tree variety, anticipate the mess it will make on a daily, weekly, monthly, and seasonal basis and the labor costs and inconvenience to golfers that tree will cause. What direction is the prevailing wind from? If a tree is planted, where will the branches/mess go in a wind event? You certainly don't want it on greens, next fairways, bunkers, or tees where golfers can move debris before hitting.

#4) Tree roots. When there is a battle for water and nutrients in the soil between trees and turf, trees will win every time. This is because of their massive root system, which is much deeper than turf and can extend out 3X the height of the tree. A 100' tall tree can have roots up to a football field away. Another root factor is choosing tree varieties that do not have large surface roots that hit mower blades or catch a club because they were

hidden below turf.

#5) Irrigation blockage. Any tree should be placed where it does not significantly block irrigation coverage, either both by its trunk or lower branches. If you see healthy turf surrounding a long, thin, dry area near a tree, 99% of the time the main irrigation head for that area is directly on the opposite side of that tree from the dry area.

#6) Shade. Turf needs sun to be healthy. In 1973, two years before I started working there, the #6 green at Hilands was totally rebuilt because it was the worst green on the course. The trees surrounding it were never touched. It only took a couple of years before the back 2/3 of the green again became very thin and wet. After a USGA agronomist visited to examine why the rebuild was failing, an ah-ha moment occurred. We were on that green at 1 p.m. in late June, the most northern position of the sun during the year. The area of the green that was thin and wet followed the exact shade lines from the row of 60' tall spruce trees and a massive 120' silver leaf poplar. In other words, the bad area never saw direct sunlight at any point during the year. After removing all of those trees, a miracle: the issues went away, and it has been every bit as healthy as all the other greens. In spring and fall when frost can be a delay issue, trees, especially on the first several holes, can be a major influence on start times for staff and golfers. A few poorly placed trees can equate to lots of extra labor cost and lost revenue in those shoulder seasons.

#7) Winter conditions. You would be amazed how much sun blockage even a deciduous tree can do without leaves in the middle of winter, much less a pine and even worse, a spruce tree. Especially in situations where ice buildup is a factor, not having proper sunlight to help melt things because of poorly chosen/placed trees has lost lots of turf, especially *Poa annua* greens. At different times of year, the same tree can be a blessing and a curse; choices have to be made about which is most important.

#8) Air movement. Have you ever played a course where in the summer they had fans located around greens? They are there because someone didn't allow proper design and tree management to be followed. Think back, I bet that green was surrounded by trees and in a depressed pocket where literally no air movement was taking place on a regular basis.

I could go on, but I'll stop there. Trees generally are wonderful things that do amazing things for a healthy environment. The problem is that often those who make decisions around golf courses (boards, grounds committees, owners, etc.) do not factor in the things I have mentioned. Again, I admit as a superintendent several of these things I have learned by doing it wrong, but I also have had occurrences when either my or outside arborists' opinions were overruled because it was a memorial tree or it was someone's favorite tree variety that should have been removed or added. Remember, like us humans, trees have a lifespan, and waiting too long can be dangerous, and that tree is a liability, not an asset.



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