

The Idaho Golf Course Superintendents Association

Grass Clippings

2023 Fall Meeting!

We are introducing three new speakers to the Idaho GCSA in Pocatello! Join us October 2 & 3, 2023 at Juniper Hills Country Club, where our education will bring useful and practical information that can benefit attendees (regardless of experience) and facilities (regardless of budget). This simply means it is obvious — you need to attend, regardless of your travel distance. The education and golf will be held at the country club and we have a hotel room block set. Our host superintendent is Dan Harding, CGCS.

Not only is it time to plan ahead and protect the dates, it is time to start thinking about your donations (we welcome donations from

companies, courses and individuals). Come ready to bid both on products for your facility and a few personal items to enjoy.

The conference agenda will offer descriptive information about each presentation. Here we welcome this opportunity to introduce you to our speakers.

Joey Young, Ph.D., (left) is an associate professor of turfgrass science at Texas Tech University. He served as a graduate research assistant in the department of

“Precision Turfgrass Management: A Tool for Greater Sustainability”

“Soil Moisture Mapping in Golf Fairways Using GPS

Enabled TDR Technology.” continued page 12



idahogcsa.org

Our Chapter Room Block and the Chapters of the Northwest Hospitality Room Phoenix, Arizona

Chapter preparations have been made for the 2024 GCSAA Conference and Show in Phoenix, Arizona. We are ready for this exciting new location!

Let's first discuss our chapter room block, which will be open soon. It will only be available for a few months — so it is important to act early when announced via email. We have 50 rooms reserved on the peak nights in our block for the Idaho GCSA, Inland Empire GCSA and Peaks & Prairies GCSA attendees. While our turnout will far exceed that, we limit our block request because not everyone is prepared to reserve early. For those who are ready, we have a great location about a 12-minute walk

continued page 14

To Enjoy Play at a Peer's Course

When you have the opportunity to enjoy playing another golf course, it is important to remember the rule of professional etiquette we are encouraged to follow in advance.

What to do:

To request or inquire about either a courtesy discount or a free round, it is important you contact the superintendent in advance of play to make arrangements. The superintendent will advise on the facility policy and the best course of action.

What NOT to do:

We can't say this enough. Please do not show up in the pro shop at your tee time and show your GCSAA card, asking if there is a professional discount. Our chapters discontinued our own chapter membership cards years back after receiving numerous complaints from pro shops for that very reason.

Facility rules vary and may even have a requirement the superintendent or assistant has to play with you. Some courses will only have a policy for superintendents and assistants. Some regions have continued page 12



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Did you know the events shown on our website homepage
are only a portion of events listed?

Click on the News/Events tab to see a larger list.

We are linked together.
Visit our links page to see what
organizations we proud to link
up with. >

FEB
23

**Idaho GCSA Spring Meeting & Trade Show
- Feb 23 & 24, 2023**

WOW! We are talking a new location and a new
date! See you at the Spring Meeting & Trade Show -
February 23 & 24, 2023. The board meeting will
[...]

ABOUT US

The Idaho Golf Course
Superintendents
Association brings
together the turf
professionals of the
region to offer

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Info about Idaho GCSA website!

- * Do you have an address change? Changing the information on Your Profile in the Member's Area will automatically update the association's database! Use of proper capitalization and spelling is appreciated.
- * Do you have any classified items? Please be sure to complete the classified section in the Member's Area.
- * Your username is always your email address. To set your password click on forgot password and follow the prompts.

*"The Idaho Golf Course Superintendents Association is
dedicated to helping its members provide the best playing
conditions in an environmentally friendly manner."*



President's Message

Always Learning

Jason Sigmund, President
The Valley Club, Hailey, Idaho

With the summer finally here, I reflect on the many hours spent driving around the course wondering if warm weather was ever going to show up, stressing out about whether the thousands of pounds of seed we planted will germinate and if we would be

ready for tournaments that were right around the corner, not to mention needing to manage cart traffic in those newly seeded areas. This past spring was a challenging one with the latest opening we had in club history with record snowfall, record vole damage, and the continuous cold weather that didn't seem to want to go away. Hopefully by the time this article is published, summer will have arrived and your course looks good.

Up until recently, I never realized all the benefits that the GCSAA has to offer to its membership. Diving into the membership benefits page I noticed a few things that I would like to point out.

Career Coaching Services

I have used this many times throughout my career whether it's getting help writing a resume and cover letter, performing mock interviews, creating a LinkedIn profile, or career consultations. Most of the services are free with membership, but depending on how in-depth you go on a resume etc., there is sometimes a small fee.

Membership Discounts

If I had to guess, a lot of people do not know about this benefit, but it can save you or your club some money. Discounts are given on Columbia gear, Dell Computers, Avis, Enterprise, National, Golf Safety, Imperial, Lenovo, Office Depot, Unifirst, UPS, Zero Friction, Ascent, and Batteries and Bulbs. Check them out and start saving.

Free Webinars

This is one that I need to dive into more but there are over 500 webinars to choose from, ranging from agronomics, to business, to equipment management.

Employment Job Board

I'm guessing, most of us have used this service once or twice before. This is a free service that, can be a huge benefit in finding you the next all-star worker. Within 30 minutes, you can have a job posting up and running. In my experience, it's simple to do and have always had success finding good applicants with this service.

The others benefits GCSAA offers are health insurance, tele-health, life insurance, resources and information, tournament admission, and retirement resources. Please take a few minutes to look over the benefits on the website, you never know what might work for you.

In closing I want to encourage everyone to take part in the fall meeting on October 2-3, 2023. It's at a beautiful course — Juniper Hills Country Club with host superintendent, Dan Harding, CGCS. These are great opportunities not only to meet up with our peers and play golf, but to enjoy great education to enhance our turf career. Hope to see you there!

BREAKING NEWS:

**Northwest GCSA Expo III
October 13 & 14, 2025**

**Conference & Trade Show:
Coeur d'Alene Resort**

Golf Outing: CDA National Reserve



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You Can Make a Difference

Eric Heywood, Equipment Manager
The Valley Club, Hailey, Idaho



While every position is extremely important in the golf grounds department, arguably, the two most important positions are the superintendent and the equipment manager. If this relationship is not firing on all cylinders, every aspect of the crew will ultimately

fail. The superintendent plans and makes the decision on a course of action, and it is up to the equipment manager and technicians to provide the necessary equipment to perform the work needed to keep the club within the standards of playability. Without one, the other is not effective. It is important for both to remember that in many cases it is impossible for one to do the other's job, so working together is imperative. We have probably all worked in a position where this relationship was far from good, or completely failed. Once this happens, jobs get harder, motivation starts lacking, tempers flare, attitudes affect other members of the crew, and people move on. There are numerous ways to strengthen this relationship between the technician, superintendent, and assistants that will keep conflict to a minimum and make the operation run smoother overall.

The first thing I want to address, that I have seen time and

time again in my career, is the frustration of technicians caused by common agronomy practices. A great example is aerifying greens and top dressing. Yes, reels will get destroyed repeatedly throughout a season. It is our job to sharpen them and get them ready to go again as quickly as possible. The superintendent doesn't care to hear technicians complaining and no amount of complaining will keep them from top dressing greens. Another great example is equipment that is damaged during use. Everyone is human and makes mistakes. Our focus should be to get to work and make those repairs as quickly as possible. Leave the possible repercussions to the superintendent or an assistant. You need to be able to rely on the crew members to come to you when things get broken, and yelling at them is a surefire way to have them do the opposite. There is nothing more frustrating than a big mow day coming around and finding out two mowers aren't cutting right because someone didn't say something. Not only will this get you flustered, but you will have your superintendent breathing down your neck to get something figured out so that the golfers don't catch the early morning work being done. This makes it easy for frustrations on both sides to rise and for someone to get upset. So, my takeaway for the equipment managers and technicians out there is not to get frustrated or adopt a bad attitude for having to fix things that get dull or broken. This is why we are here and such an important part of the team.

continued page 6





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With full in-house bridge design, DCI Engineers provides comprehensive support on any golf course bridge design concept. Our team understands the expectations of these structures have unique performance and aesthetic properties that make up the on-course golfing experience. We partner with pro-level subconsultants for additional survey, geotechnical, environmental and hydrological design services that meet the expectations of our clients.

SERVICE | INNOVATION | VALUE

Make a Difference continued from page 4

Technicians are your go-to when things break or are not working properly. Technicians that are doing their jobs well will always be following the manufacturer's recommendations when it comes to preventative maintenance. Be careful how you approach your technicians in high-stress situations such as when a sprayer goes down with a full tank of chemical. For one, technicians understand the extreme importance of getting the sprayer up and going again. It is important to keep in mind we need time to diagnose the issue and see if it's fixable right now. Let your technician think and work through the issue, while understanding the importance of getting it back out to work. This goes for anything going on at the golf course at any given time. Technicians know you need it and will do our best to get it back to you as quickly as possible.

Communication is key for any team to function properly. Without solid communication the superintendent doesn't know what standing the equipment is in, and the technician doesn't know what equipment to have ready for the tasks at hand. Simply having a few minutes a day to talk with each other can alleviate things being forgotten, or improve understanding of possible issues with certain pieces of equipment. If technicians participate in job board meetings, it is one way they can stay on top of what equipment might be needed for the next day, or in the near future. Another good option is a Google calendar that the superintendent or assistants can add tasks to for specific dates, which will allow the technicians to look weeks ahead at what is coming. If things get moved around, which they often will in this industry, the superintendent or the assistant can give technicians a head's up verbally, as well as move the task on the Google calendar.

Try your best not to waste each other's time. Oftentimes as a technician I have gotten in the habit of suggesting another plan because a piece of equipment is down. Don't fall into this line of thinking as a technician. I used this as a way to get everyone off my back so I could properly diagnose the issue in a timely manner, but oftentimes found that it was an easy repair and had that piece of equipment back up and running in a short period of time. Meanwhile, I had sent the other half of the team scrambling for another way to get the job done, just to turn around and say their equipment would be ready to go within an hour. Again, it is more important to explain you need a few minutes to diagnose the issue and you will let them know as soon as possible if it's an easy repair or not.

We are all going through life and a lot of the time life isn't easy. Something outside of work could be causing someone to have a bad attitude and if people are aware of these situations, they won't take it personally if they get a bad reaction from someone. Key employees should get together outside of work, or make time to go to lunch together, and talk about something other than work to try and reach each other on a personal level. Some may disagree with this, but in my experience I have found that having a personal relationship on some level will help each other be open about things outside of work that could affect performance.

These are just a few things to think about to strengthen the relationship between technicians, superintendents, and assistants. What works at our club might not work for yours, but it's worth finding what does. Happy employees make things run smoothly when they can get along and work together. Members and owners expect excellent results, so excellent relationships will get you to those results faster and more efficiently. Be a good human and work together, not against each other.

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Chlorothalonil 5G	Pulp Carrier	Chlorothalonil	75	40 lbs
Fungicide X	Pulp Carrier	Iprodione	75	40 lbs
6-0-12 + Fungicide VIII	Fertilizer Granules	Iprodione, Thiophanate	75	40 lbs
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Thanks to Brent Winn, Scott Draper, and River's Edge at Burley for hosting the 27th Annual Super/Pro Golf Challenge!



About the Super/Pro results posted on an earlier email blast, they were wrong! The results we posted was a copy of the results BEFORE a correction was made in the recording of scores. Here are the true results!

Oh, how did we learn we blasted the wrong info? We received a call and we aren't naming names. But, let's just say there is a little competition between a father and son superintendent.



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FINAL:

PLAYERS	Quota	+/-	
DRAPER, Scott	70	60	-10
ZOLLINGER, Zach	41	29	-12
DRAPER, Scott	69	57	-12
WINN, Brent	68	68	E
VINCENT, Jesse	61	67	+6
DAVIDSON, Josh	62	49	-13
ANTONE, Brenner	63	63	E
BRANDELL, Jeremy	62	49	-13
VITEK, Troy	57	42	-15
BRANDELL, Bart	48	~	~
FULLMER, Kelly	48	12	-36
BURTON, Bryce	75	64	-11
GRAHAM, John			
STANFIELD, Derrick			
THOMSEN, Sean			
SPRAKES, Mark			
COMSTOCK, Baylor			
BLISS, Alex			
SIGMUND, Jason			
MAKUCH, Andrew			
BEALL, Mike			
MAKUCH, Andy			
CAHILL, Nate			
HUSTON, Sam			

3rd place

PLAYERS	Quota	+/-	
HASQUET, Mark	62	56	-6
JACKSON, Craig	62	35	-27
ALLEN, Chad			
HORNZCUTT, Greg			

1st place

Tie 1st & 2nd

Tie 1st & 2nd

4th Place

1ST - \$200 / TEAM

CLOSEST TO THE HOLE #12
KELLY FULLMER \$40

LONGEST PUTT #9
JEREMY BRANDELL \$40

1ST - \$375 / TEAM
2ND - \$310 "
3RD - \$240 "
4TH - \$175 "



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More Than Just Cutting the Grass:

Thoughts and Observations from a Relatively New Superintendent

Paul Venable

Warm Springs Golf Course, Boise, Idaho

We all understand that most positions on a golf course involve more than just cutting grass. This is especially true for the superintendent. With that in mind, I understand that most of this will be old news to most superintendents. I am putting this out as more of a “heads up” for up and coming assistants and others who are aspiring to the position of course superintendent.

When I get asked about how I got into the golf maintenance industry, my explanation is as simple as that a friend of mine worked on a course, they were hiring, and I needed a job. I was twenty-six years old and the closest experience I had to turf maintenance was growing up on a ranch or mowing my parents’ lawn. My point is that before I started, I had little idea of what went into maintaining a golf course.

To be honest, when I first started, my interest in the industry did not extend much past just getting a paycheck. I guess

that for some of us, the job grows on us. After a couple of seasons, I started getting into the job and the culture of the industry. Along with that came a sense of pride in my work and the desire to do the best for the course.

I do not know if it is a personality trait or just a natural progression, but for some, when you are in a job you like, you start thinking about making a career out of it. Some of us start thinking about eventually trying to be in charge. Going from a seasonal maintenance worker to superintendent, however, can be a long road with a lot of challenges and a lot to learn.

For me, the best way I could think to set out on that road was to start learning everything I could about the course and the practices of golf maintenance. I made it a point to learn the operation and routines for every piece of equipment. I did all I could to learn the ins and outs of the irrigation system from the central control, to the pumps, down to the individual sprinkler heads. Over the seasons I learned as much as possible of how and why we did everything on the course, as I

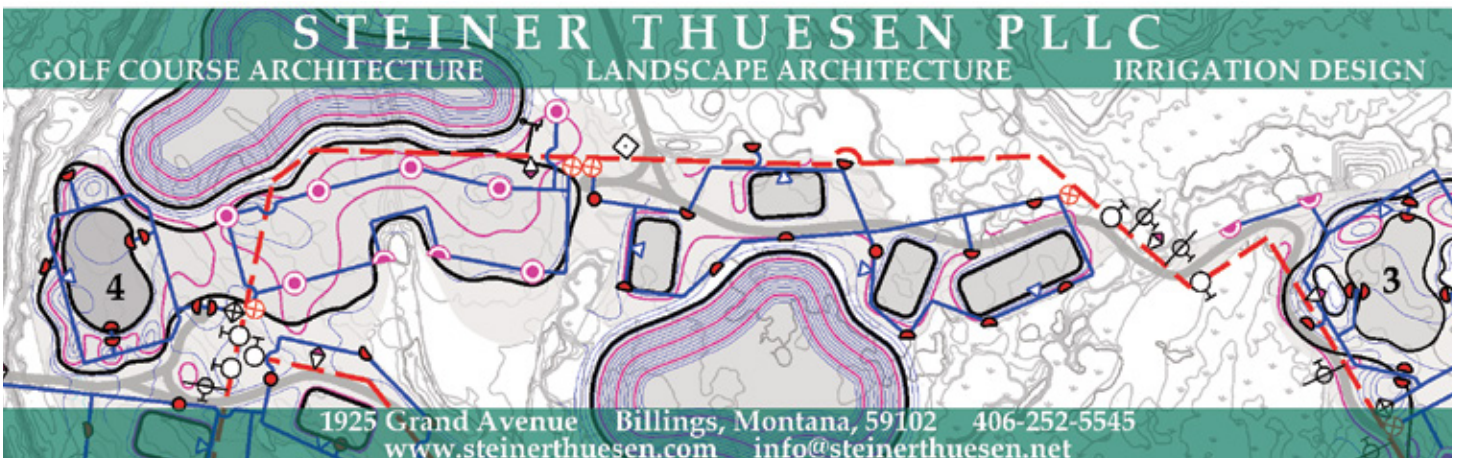
could.

Eventually I could identify issues and how to deal with them. I could manage and adjust the irrigation. I knew the equipment and operations well enough to train others on pretty much any of it. That led to managing the crew on projects and setting up the daily tasks. I even helped make decisions on routes and routines to improve efficiency, all while still a seasonal employee.

All of this led me to becoming the assistant superintendent. After that, when the time came and the position opened up, I became the superintendent of Warm Springs Golf Course. I stepped into the job fairly confident that my years of learning and experiencing all that I could had prepared me for the challenges ahead. In a lot of ways, it had. There have been challenges that have arisen unexpectedly and I have had to learn to deal with them as they come.

To start with, while I tried to learn about all aspects of the equipment and normal operations, I also became used to dealing with occasional break downs and failures. What I did not expect was the amount of time I would spend figuring out what to do when break downs meant I had more tasks to get done than equipment to do it. I also did not anticipate how often I would be acting as both superintendent and mechanic. Sometimes the regular mechanic is busy or has a day off, but when something needs to be fixed or adjusted asap, you become the one to do it.

You can know the irrigation system



inside and out. While you have probably spent hundreds of hours doing hundreds of repairs there may come a day (or usually a weekend night) when something major happens. Maybe the central computer goes down, or a pump. Or maybe a coupling fails on a main line and you find out via a call at seven o'clock in the evening that hundreds of gallons of water are bubbling out of the ground and flooding a cart path. Decisions will need to be made and actions will need to be taken.

I like to think that a well-maintained golf course comes down to a good maintenance crew. Managing the day-to-day and the routine tasks of the crew can be a challenge, but a good crew makes it a pretty simple routine. Managing an entire crew on a deeper and overall level is a whole other issue.

Dealing with a dozen or so maintenance workers means dealing with a dozen or so different personalities who need to work side by side on a daily basis. Anyone ever taught kindergarten or tried to herd cats? On top of that, building a good crew means trying to know when and how to find, hire, and hold on to the right ones, along with when and how to let go of the wrong ones. To this, I say "good luck."

Dealing with people will become more and more of a factor. Along with your own crew, members, passholders, and the public in general, you will be viewed as a well of answers for anything and everything course and turf related (e.g., "Why are the greens slow?" "Why are the greens so fast?" "What are you spraying, and why?" etc.).

You may even get a call out of nowhere from someone who was referred to you with questions regarding the best way to build a home putting green. The correct first response to this inquiry is, "Don't." It may surprise you that you could spend twenty minutes on the phone describing the recommended method to constructing a USGA spec putting green. These things



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happen.

Challenges like these and many, many more are "just a day on the job" for a superintendent. I may have made these challenges seem daunting and I hope that I did. They sometimes can be daunting and maybe even a little bit scary. On top of all of this, you need to deliver the best product you can. Being the "boss" is, and is not, all it is cracked up to be. There is a lot of responsibility and stress that comes along with being in charge of maintaining a golf course.

In the end, if you have what it takes to deal with all of this and so much more, you have the opportunity to be a part of one of the most rewarding positions the working world has to offer. Just a "heads up."



Fall Meeting continued from page 1

horticulture at the University of Arkansas, and at Mississippi State's Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology. Dr. Young teaches three courses on turf physiology, management, and pests at Texas Tech and he and his graduate students have worked on carbon sequestration quantification, effective plant growth regulator reapplication, and water conservation and quality efforts in turfgrass systems. "My research background involves both turfgrass pathology and physiology, so combining the knowledge I've gained, I'd like to help turf managers maintain the healthiest turf possible in a tough environment through best practices."

The following two presenters were so well thought of at a Utah GCSA event, we were quick to extend an invitation to both!

Amanda H. Christensen (below) is an accredited financial counselor and extension professor specializing in personal finance educational outreach at Utah State University, Morgan, Utah. She co-authored and serves as principal investigator on a statewide Empowering Financial Wellness grant to enable individuals to make smart money decisions. Christensen is editor of the Utah Money Moms blog on social media platforms and co-author of the PowerPay Money Master Online Course. She regularly contributes finance content to KSL's Studio 5 television show and Utah Public Radio. She has



"Retirement Investing Strategies"

authored numerous national award-winning materials and resources for teaching personal finance and was the recipient of the 2020 USU Extension Innovator Award, as well as a Best of State award for personal finance education in 2023.

Bryan G. Hopkins, Ph.D., is a certified professional soil scientist with degrees in turfgrass science, soil chemistry, and plant nutrition. He is a professor at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah where he teaches and conducts research on turfgrass. He has over 200 publications and has given thousands of presentations. Dr. Hopkins consults with his family's company, Sci-Scapes Inc., with a variety of golf, sports turf, and other private firms. As he explains, "Water is increasingly scarce and costly. As such, irrigation is increasingly scrutinized, especially on golf courses." Long-standing best management practices for irrigation will be reviewed, new technologies discussed, and the research results of actual golf course case studies will be revealed.



"Fertilization to Reduce Water and Pesticide Use: A Science Based Case Study"

"Cutting Edge Water Management: Conservation and Healthy Grass Synergies"

We will also move those valuable discussions outside to the golf course! Monday afternoon you will enjoy play at Juniper Hills, designed by Billy Casper and Francis James. Its classic design includes ten water holes, five of which you must cross the Portneuf River. We will enjoy the recent renovations to the clubhouse and experience why this facility is an important gathering space to the community.

Playing Golf at Another Facility

continued from page 1

policies in place to allow reciprocal play for grounds crews. But, again, it is all through the superintendent. There is no set of rules for play a course has to abide by — which the superintendent will share with you.

On the flip side... as a superintendent, please return the calls of your peers. We know the season gets crazy busy, but a return call is not only professional, you never know when you will be the superintendent reaching out and waiting to hear back!

We hope you enjoy lots of opportunities to enjoy golf whether at your own facility or a peer's. And, also, plan to play golf at the Idaho GCSA Fall Meeting at Juniper Hills, where we have made all arrangements on your behalf.

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**Fall Meeting Silent Auction committee chair is Sean Coffey, Osprey Meadows. Please reach out to Sean with your donation — you don't have to wait for him to contact you!**

## We enjoyed a record number of Link Legacy and Link Turf scholarship applicants in 2023!

Congratulations to these successful candidates who each received a scholarship from the Idaho GCSA:

2023 Link Turf Scholarship:

**Bryan Archbold  
Sean Coffey**

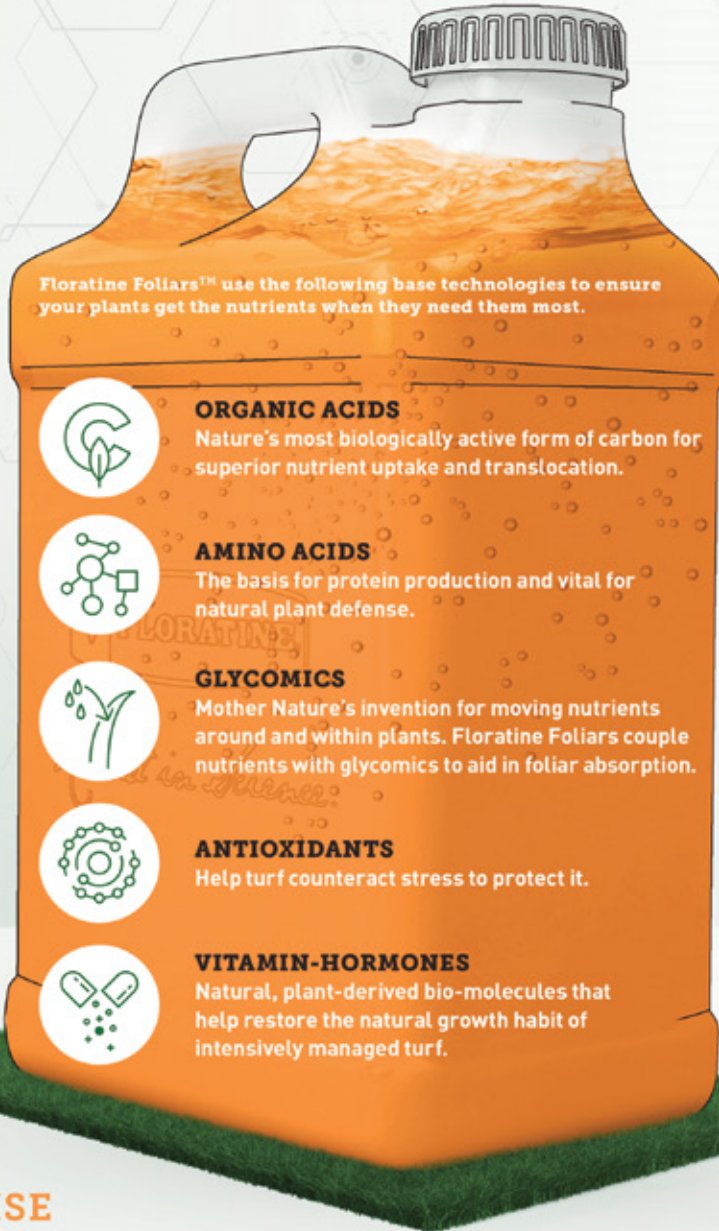
2023 Link Legacy Scholarship:

**Emma Meredith  
Cael Mooney  
Chloe Roth**





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## Room Block & Hospitality Room

continued from page 1

from the convention center, at the Hyatt Place Phoenix Downtown. The Hyatt Place is close to numerous restaurants and activities. As the hotel boasts, you are near “celebrated museums, major shopping, buzzed-about restaurants, and the light rail station for easy transport to venture out.” With your stay you will enjoy a free breakfast. And on site is Adams Table Patio and Bar with shareable appetizers, bistro-style burgers, sandwiches, and salads. There is even a 24/7 Espresso Bar. The price is \$229 +tax. Parking is an additional charge. In case you are wondering, the hotel price range within the GCSAA block is \$189 - \$329, with light rail service required for the lower-range properties.

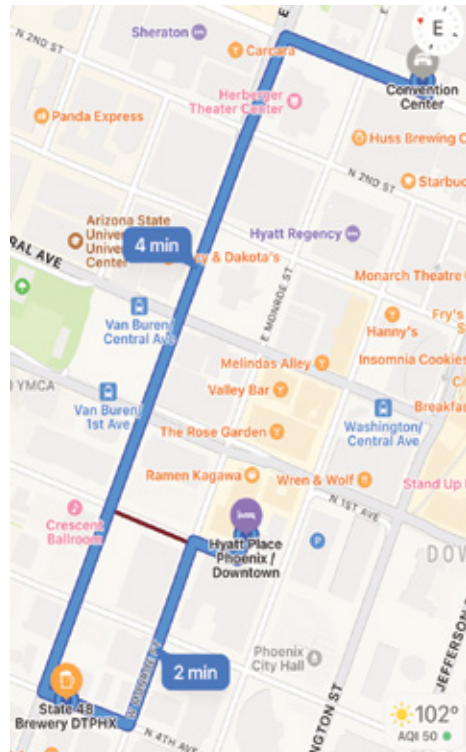
The Hyatt Place is also about three blocks from the Chapters of the Northwest Hospitality Room at State 48 Brewery, on January 31.

Both the Hyatt Place and State 48 Brewery are located within Phoenix’s designated Entertainment District — filled with microbreweries, bars and restaurants in historic buildings. Before the designation in 2015, businesses could not get liquor licenses if they were located near a church.

A little history for you. State 48 Brewery opened in 2018 and was the second State 48 location. There are now six breweries found in the state. As you probably have guessed already, State 48 Brewery refers to Arizona’s place as the 48th state admitted to the Union. Our event location in downtown Phoenix has a scratch kitchen and a full bar and is considered one of State

48’s largest locations. There is a second-level mezzanine and a two-level patio. Inside you will enjoy funky artwork and you can even see into the brewery from much of the seating. The success of this private event will be thanks to our supportive allied members, who come through for the region each year. It is not too early to contact Lori with your commitment.

To demonstrate how easily accessible these locations are to the convention center, here is a snapshot of a map. There are even more dining options than what shows here. And while the times shown are referencing driving, it shows the proximity.



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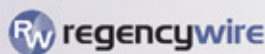


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This article originally appeared in *The Perfect Lie, Peaks & Prairies GCSA*, the fall of 2009. Times change and Tolson is no longer a superintendent. What hasn't changed is the value of the information.

## Building a Better Mousetrap

**Dan Tolson**  
3 Creek Ranch, Jackson Hole, Wyo  
*The Perfect Lie, 2009*



in the mountain west offers unique challenges that stimulate creativity and experimentation. This time of year in other parts of the country, superintendents are worried about diseases, insects, flooding, drought and more. In our part of the country, we're battling voles. I suppose snow mold, ice damage, wind, elk or drought get their share of conversation during doughnut breaks at

the fall meeting. But, at my golf course, the most significant damage in winter comes from voles. After permanent snow blankets the fairways, voles move in and enjoy fine dining mid-December through March. Anticipating my seventh winter at 3 Creek Ranch, I've been thinking all season about new ways to ensure the golf course emerges in spring with vole damage at an acceptable threshold.

I wanted to share a brief summary of what we intend to do this year to protect the course. I hope it generates some ideas for others. This is not university research, just a turf nerd trying to find a better way to control a pest. If you have vole problems and can offer any suggestions, I welcome your comments.

### Habitat Modification:

We have 100 acres of native grass surrounding 80 acres of bluegrass fairways and rough. After a wet spring, the native

continued page 18



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## Edge of Nordic Ski Trail

*Voles cannot cut through ice wall created from snow grooming equipment.*



## Better Mouse Trap continued from page 16

grows thick and offers an ideal vole environment all summer. Our first step is to go in after them, mowing the native and burning lake edges in the fall. After mowing, we can easily identify areas of heavy activity. Also, disturbing their summer homes encourages migration to un-mowed areas far from the golf course. In addition to mowing the native, we reduce the height of cut in the bluegrass rough from two inches to one inch, gradually stepping it down starting in mid-September. I believe this discourages them from feeding on the Bluegrass because the rough canopy no longer offers burrowing shelter and the forage is less desirable. We especially focus on bunker faces where the voles are drawn to the steep, thatchy slopes and deep drifted snow that persists late into spring.

### Poisoning:

Numerous poisons are registered for controlling voles. Most require an applicator's license to purchase. We have tried them all with varied success. 3 Creek Ranch is an environmentally sensitive property with abundant and diverse wildlife. We use poisons with care and have not tried broadcasting as some labels recommend. After mowing the native we patrol the bluegrass perimeters and place poison inside recently used tunnel systems. All valve boxes, irrigation satellites, and catch basins are baited and poisoned as well.

### Trapping:

There are many ways to trap a vole, some more cost-effective

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tive than others. We have had success laying 18" long sections of poly pipe throughout the course with a small amount of poison and aromatic bait (apples or peanut butter) inside. We place the "condos" along every ~50 yards of the native edges, next to catch basins, around greens and buried in the lip of bunkers. 1 1/4"- 1 1/2" pipe works best, 2" or bigger and the voles will build their nest inside the pipe. Installing a T with 3' of vertical pipe and a cap allows re-baiting throughout the winter. A roll of poly pipe is inexpensive and allows us to keep the poison protected under snow cover and safe from non-target species.

#### **Deterrents:**

Logical thought would say if you apply a product to the foliage that makes it taste bad to voles or makes them sick, they would avoid eating it. While spraying our fairways for snow mold, we make a pass with the sprayer around the perimeter of each hole. In the past I have observed where fungicides were applied, voles stayed away. Timing the spray to immediately precede snow cover is critical. Last year we applied fungicides early and the snow came late. The result was no observable benefit from our fungicides as a deterrent. Another product we haven't used before, but intend to try on small areas this year, is castor oil impregnated on clay particles. Available under many labels and formulations, we are using "Dr. T's Mole Out," spread at 4 lbs./1000 and watered in. I have talked to sod farms and nursery growers who have had great results with this product.

#### **Exclusion:**

We are fortunate to have a snow cat for maintenance of a Nordic ski trail in winter. Though the voles can chew through valve box lids, plastic catch basins and sometimes concrete, it seems they are unable to burrow through the ice wall created by the groomer. As soon as there is enough snow, we will loop the perimeters of each golf hole where the slope and access permits the groomer or a snowmobile. We will mark grass lines with pin flags before snowfall. If you allow any bluegrass on the wrong side of the trail and voles can access it, damage will be worse than if there wasn't a trail.

#### **The "Boom-Boom":**

This is the best one of all. Results are immediate. It's not as effective as C-4 explosives, but almost as fun. Developed by a rancher in Nevada fed up with prairie dogs, it kills instantly, is painless, humane, all-natural and buries the pest in its hole. The device has a long handle with an electric igniter on the end. Oxygen and propane tanks feed fuel in proper proportion through hoses and out the bell end into the rodent hole. Upon igniting, a small explosion resembling a rifle blast sends a 500-psi shockwave through the tunnel system. After mowing the native and before patrolling with the poison, we patrol with the "Boom-Boom." It also works great on pocket gophers, muskrats, badgers or any other tunneling mammal. It is labor intensive but 100% effective assuming the pests are in the hole. This year we are going to try a vole mega-plex

to allow "Boom-Boom" use all winter. In a notoriously problematic area, 200' of poly pipe with open ends, bait and three riser pipes should do nicely.

I refuse to think vole damage is something we "just deal with" or "is part of growing grass in the Rockies." The amount of labor required for spring cleanup, cost of extra fertilizer to grow damaged areas back in, labor to mow the ensuing hay, and the evidence all summer of munched turf makes it worthwhile to be proactive all season and especially in the fall. I've read that vole populations increase continually year to year then naturally crash every three-five years. I've been chasing voles for six years and still awaiting a crash. Until then, I plan to keep experimenting until we find the best way to keep the turf looking and playing its best. Happy hunting...



**Save these dates! See calendar event of [idahogcsa.org](http://idahogcsa.org)**

**October 2 & 3, 2023**

**Fall Meeting & Silent Auction - Juniper Hills Country Club  
(Board meeting Oct 1)**

**January 31, 2024**

**Chapters of the Northwest Hospitality Room - State 48**

**February 20 & 21, 2024**

**Idaho GCSA Spring Meeting & Trade Show - The Riverside  
(Board meeting February 19)**

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