

# Turf's Up in the Inland Empire

Winter 2017

## Spring Meeting Conference Focuses on Northwest

Yeah, it can be tough to compete for your attention with the excitement surrounding the start of a season. But, since your facility is the true benefactor of your participation at the Spring Meeting, March 19 & 20 - we are making it worth your attendance. The inaugural participation of two of our speakers is the result of recommendations by your fellow members.

Alec Kowalewski, PhD., Turfgrass Specialist, Oregon State University, will offer Fungicide Alternative Management of Microdochium Patch and Management of Anthracnose. Another presenter with interesting topics and a great rapport was brought to our attention a couple of years ago. Located in Richland, Wash., is Allan Felsot, PhD., with three impressive responsibility titles that include Entomology & Environmental Toxicology with WSU.

More information about our three additional speakers and about this event to be held at MeadowSprings Country Club will be available late January.

## Send Now! (Seriously, send now)

Our silent auction for rounds with carts will take place at the Spokane Golf Show. Every submission helps and we appreciate all donations. Proceeds from this auction help fund our continuing education and research programs. Proceeds also keep our user fees from increasing at a rapid rate, as association expenses continue to rise. The auction makes a huge impact!

Why send rounds directly to Jake Leiser now? We need your rounds in hand prior to the event to disclose any restrictions. Some rounds that arrived onsite, or after the fact, last year resulted in refunds to the bidders due to undisclosed restrictions.

Please include a scorecard with your donation. You can download a letter to support your participation from the event calendar on the website. Mail your certificates to: Jake Leiser, 785 S Manor Heights Dr., Post Falls, ID 83854. Questions? Call Jake Leiser, (208) 912-2869 or Jacob Teaford (509) 499-4119.

## Expectations Exceeded for Northwest GCSA Turfgrass Expo

Three years plus in planning, the Chapters of the Northwest made its inaugural (and highly memorable) showing at the Coeur d'Alene Resort. With nearly 300 in attendance, 2/3rds of the completed surveys said the meeting exceeded expectations and 1/3 said the meeting met their expectations.

Numerous people and companies are deserving of our thanks, but it is important to acknowledge our Ultimate Support Sponsors lead by Hunter Golf, our Diamond Sponsor.

We look forward to gathering for the second Northwest GCSA Turfgrass Expo. While the date and location is TBA, we are leaning towards another offering in four to five years.

Please be sure to express your thanks to these 2017 high-level supporters, as well as all sponsoring companies.

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A publication of the Inland Empire Golf Course Superintendents Association

Inland Empire Chapter  
**GCSAA**  
GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

# Downriver Pollinator Project Summary

**Mike Greene, Downriver Golf Course  
Spokane, Washington**

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I spent a fair amount of time reflecting this past winter on my first year as superintendent at Downriver. Like many first years, there were highs and lows, but the area I wanted to challenge myself to improve the most was fungicide inputs as well as promoting some of the things we were already doing in regards to IPM. I believe in a “big picture” approach to disease management. Turf species/cultivars, air movement, shade/sunlight issues, mowing height, rolling frequency, topdressing practices, aerification practices, balancing fertility, moisture control, establishing thresholds and scouting are all part of a complex IPM program.

In 2016 Downriver turned 100 years old - along with original push up Poa greens. Over the years, significant shade issues from mature ponderosa pines have developed. The BCSR (Base Cation Saturation Ratio) of the soil was out of whack, the pH was elevated and the greens were under almost constant assault from Microdochium.

Despite my efforts in these areas, there were only so many ways I was able to affect the disease triangle in 2016. There were only so many trees we could remove and rebuilding greens was not an economically viable option; we had to keep looking. We applied for, and received, a \$2500 “Feed-a-Bee” Grant from Bayer Crop Science to create about 50,000 sq. ft. of wildflower and pollinator habitat. We established a buffer around these areas and started brewing Compost tea as an organic fertility source. This started me thinking about



trichoderma, mycorrhizae, organic fertilizers, biostimulants and beneficial microbes to enhance the rhizosphere. After a few applications, we really started seeing results. YTD we have reduced fungicide applications by 50%, and we have used about 20% less water on greens without sacrificing quality or playability, all while saving money overall. (*applying compost tea to pollinator habitat*)



As you are probably aware, bees are in trouble as a species. Their habitat is scarcer than ever. Something like one out of every three bites of food we eat as humans is made possible by honeybees. I originally ran the pollinator project idea past the golf committee/park board this past winter and they welcomed my suggestion. I told the golf committee I applied for the grant from Bayer Crop Science, but wanted to do the project whether we received the grant or not. The Bayer program was titled, “Feed a Bee,” and was launched to increase honeybee awareness, as well as additional bee habitat.

About 50% of the way through the project, Bayer notified us that we were awarded the \$2500 grant. We placed three hives of bees out there with help from a local beekeeper, Will Olsen. The project consisted of creating approximately 50,000 sq. feet of native wildflowers, as well as a small 6,000 sq. ft. vegetable



what we were doing to promote beneficial microbes on the putting greens and my short answer was, “We could do more.”

We started making compost tea using more humic acids, kelp extracts,



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***“A healthy stand of turf acts as a giant filter for storm water pollutants and unwanted nutrients such as phosphorus in our groundwater.”***

Overall, close to two acres of the golf course has been converted into pollinator habitat with the “Feed-a-Bee” grant. We planted 25 species of Pacific Northwest native wildflowers and added three hives of honeybees to the course, so that they could forage on them. We were able to harvest 24 pints of honey from our hives this year. The proceeds will be used to purchase more wildflower seed for 2018 and establish more beneficial pollinator habitat. Will Olsen was a great help on the project and will be taking the hives down to California to work almonds and blueberries until next spring.

Through the news of getting this grant and seeing the golf course change, it spurred positive media stories/interviews from several local sources including: The Spokesman Review, The Inlander, KHQ, KXLY, KAYU, City Cable 5 and some national cross-marketing areas from Bayer, such as Yahoo Finance. The Spokesman article really kicked the whole thing off and they

garden. The garden is planted and the project complete. The wildflowers are northwest native and the garden was primarily pumpkins, which were grown and used to decorate the course and serve as temporary tee markers for our annual Halloween Open golf tournament.

actually listed some facts in there that highlighted positive impacts golf courses have on the environment such as:

1. A healthy stand of turf acts as a giant filter for storm water pollutants and unwanted nutrients such as phosphorus in our groundwater.
2. Slowing runoff from storm water prevents erosion, and allows for greater infiltration into the soil, which recharges natural groundwater/aquifers.
3. Healthy turf around buildings, the Downriver neighborhood lowers the average high temperature through evapotranspiration in the immediate vicinity by 7-14 degrees reducing AC needs by up to 25%.
4. Healthy turf removes the greenhouse gas CO2 from the atmosphere, converts it to beneficial organic matter for the soil and gives off a lot of oxygen. Not counting trees, shrubs and flowers, the turf alone at Downriver is currently producing enough oxygen for approximately 150,000 Spokane residents every day.

I'd encourage you all to take a look at your properties and see if there are areas that are “just because,” or out of play, and see if you can use them to your benefit.

***Michael Greene receiving Mayor's coin award presented by Spokane Mayor David Condon***





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# Change is Inevitable...

## A Year in Perspective

James Curdy, Desert Aire Golf Course, Mattawa, Wash.

2017 started out with a most challenging board embarking on an enormous project, without understanding the scope - all while we were finishing a big capital project. Going into spring aerification in April, I had to make a bold move for the good of the company, which wasn't popular with all. In early May, our irrigation tech decided to move out of the area just as we were in the final phase of replacing our back-nine irrigation system.



The most difficult blow was still to come. Esteban Hernandez, my long time equipment manager and friend, was diagnosed stage with four cancer and with little hope. We embarked on a number of avenues taking him from Seattle to Chicago trying to save him, but in the end it wasn't God's plan. By July 13, he was unable to work and passed away 10 days later, one day shy of 40. Things like this can really turn your world upside down and make you look at what's important.

Without an assistant superintendent, equipment manager or irrigation tech, the rest of the crew really had to step up and that they did. I was fortunate to hire a couple of older guys and a high school kid, which we hadn't had on staff in years. The young guy turned out to be a great worker and spent many hours learning irrigation maintenance and even earned some equipment time, while the older crewmembers picked up the incidental projects due to their diverse backgrounds. In the end, we finished out the year with a course in great condition and rave reviews from various events.

I now have another long-term employee who wants the opportunity to move into the assistant's position, so we are giving him the chance. I have been provided many opportunities over the years to grow and learn by past supervisors and I like to continue the mentor tradition.

This fall we were able to complete two green approaches and a full surround and bunker renovation in four days - with only five staff members. The crew has really pulled together. They continue to do a great job and we are proud of what they accomplished this past year. Doing more with less seems to be the mantra these days and we certainly had to go with it for a



Brian Woster (right) thanks James Curdy for years of service number of reasons. Once you get everybody working together and headed in the right direction, it's amazing what can be done.

I wouldn't want a repeat of this year, but it did allow the crew's full capabilities to shine - something that hadn't been done in some time.

I now have a board that is more aware of reality and focused on helping to get things back on track, making this a good place to both work and play.

While putting up the lights and getting ready for the holidays, I must say I am most thankful for my family and all the good people around me who have been there through it all. I hope everyone else is as fortunate.

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# 2017 Northwest GCSA Turfgrass Expo

Kevin Hicks, Regional Agronomist, Earthworks  
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

After three years of planning, assembling the right list of speakers, and coordinating a major event between three chapters, the Northwest Expo finally came to fruition in October, and, by all accounts, was a huge success. Final numbers aren't in yet, but suffice to say that given attendance of over 190 (far beyond projections) for education, and an additional 100 manning 54 booths during the trade show, all three chapters can consider this event a great success.

During the education sessions, we heard the latest from some of the industry's



top researchers and experts.

Dr. Brian Horgan's first talk was a potpourri of research topics including winter recovery, bentgrass germination data (for when you don't get winter recovery), ice abatement from putting surfaces, and the impact of wetting agents on spring green up and surface hardness. Each of these could have been a one-hour talk so he moved at a pretty rapid pace, still providing great information. He also gave a "big picture" talk on the value of turf and golf as a sustainable turfgrass system within a given community. Definitely food for thought when defending our industry and courses in the public eye.

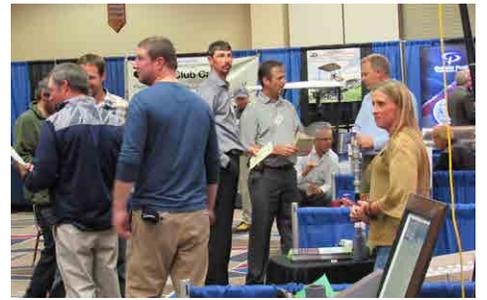
Dr. Thom Nikolai discussed some new (and old) cultural and mechanical practices that work and don't work for modern management programs. He also discussed counterintuitive research results related to rolling and pest control that sparked many questions from the group. As usual, Thom's delivery and content were right on



the mark, while keeping the audience entertained and engaged.

Dr. Micah Woods covered some of his unique experiences in Asian turfgrass management as well as the methods and value of measuring clipping yield in order to make informed decisions on fertility, growth regulator application, and even the scheduling of topdressing applications.

Rhett Evans, CEO of GCSAA, gave an inspirational talk on "Positioning for Success" as leaders in the turfgrass indus-



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Golf Course, and was hosted by superintendent Tom Walker. While the weather was far from ideal, those who braved the wind (and falling trees) had a great time. Thanks to Tom and his staff for having the course in great condition.

Of course, an event of this scale and complexity could never succeed without the help of so many great people and corporate support. We never could have pulled it off without all of our sponsors, including our Ultimate Diamond Sponsor, Hunter Golf Irrigation (represented locally by 2M Company, H.D. Fowler, and Silver Creek Supply). Ultimate Gold Sponsors included Simplot Partners, C&B Operations, Pacific Golf & Turf, and Stoltz Equipment. Ultimate Silver Sponsors included AMVAC, Rain Bird, Grigg/ Brandt, Midland Implement, Turf Star Western and Turf Equipment and Irrigation.

Thanks to all of those organizations for their tremendous support throughout the year, but especially for this event.

Of course, none of this would have

happened without the support of the boards of directors of the Peaks & Prairies GCSA, Idaho GCSA and Inland Empire GCSA. Ironically, many of the board members of the individual chapters who got the ball rolling had completed their board service by the time the event came to fruition, so a special thanks goes to the executive director of all three chapters, Lori Russell. The amount of organization and information that had to be pulled together to make the event what it was could not have been accomplished without Lori. Being (almost) the host of the event, I speak from experience that Lori worked tirelessly for three years to make the Expo a memorable event for which the entire organization could be proud!

**Editors note:**

We thank our moderator, Kevin Hicks. Kevin has the knack to remain comfortable in front of a large group – a handy skill. His great rapport with the speakers, knowledge of the event details and uncanny ability to tell time, kept the event on schedule.

Thank you for the added level of professionalism you brought to the event as moderator, Kevin!



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