

# Turf's Up in the Inland Empire



Spring 2022

## First Green June 2

Would you like to offer hands-on assistance at a First Green event before hosting your own? Or, perhaps you would like to volunteer simply because you know your help is needed? Join Jeff Gullikson, CGCS, and Kalispel Golf & Country Club, on June 2 for a First Green event, 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Volunteers are needed to assist with the learning stations. Contact Jeff (509) 842-8434 to participate. To learn more about turning your golf course into a learning lab, visit [www.thefirstgreen.org](http://www.thefirstgreen.org).

## Rebuilding Year for the Board of Directors

Our board may experience a change in any given year due to a member's employment change or relocation. 2022 is proving to offer more opportunities than usual for board service — with three openings available since the first of the year. If you have considered contributing to the development of the chapter's mission, please contact Lori or a board member. *"The Inland Empire GCSA is established to serve members, advance the profession and promote the enjoyment of golf through responsible golf course management practices."*

## A Toast to Our Host

When we scheduled our 2022 Spring Meeting at Meadow Springs Country Club, little did we know Mark Dalton, CGCS, would announce his retirement weeks before our arrival. Dalton is one of many superintendents in our region who will, or already have, retired in a somewhat short period of time. What is special about Dalton's upcoming retirement is that we saw for ourselves the respect the facility has for Mark professionally and personally. The general manager addressed Mark's retirement and proposed a toast — supplying our conference attendees with an appropriate beverage. We thank both Mark and the facility for their hospitality and we are thankful for our timing.

## Great Outcome in Teamwork

The silent auction for rounds is successful thanks to both the golf courses in our region supporting our programs through their donations, and our team, who tirelessly collect the rounds, creatively organizes our booth, and spends the weekend representing our association. Even at that point, the work isn't complete! Next step is to contact the winning bidders. We offer sincere thanks to our committee chair in the forefront, Kal Zaranec, Circling Raven Golf Course, and also to retired superintendent, Mike Kingsley, for all of their time ensuring a successful 2022 event.

We also offer our appreciation to Jake Leiser, Nufarm; Dan Frederikson, The Club at Black Rock; and Bryce Weber, The Club at Black Rock, for representing the association in the booth.

Also making a huge impact are the volunteers for the spring meeting silent auction. Our allied members are incredible with their support and Mike Bednar, Palouse Ridge, and Mike Kingsley make it happen!

Way to go teams!

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# The 50-Inch Storm

**Ivan Gibbs, Superintendent**  
**Leavenworth Golf Club, Leavenworth, Wash.**

Perhaps you heard about the January 2022 winter storm that hit Leavenworth, Wash. It was not a misprint or an overstatement. It was an event where our mayor was correct in calling for a state of emergency and requesting the National Guard. Leavenworth is used to plentiful snowfall, almost famous for it; this was different. In the 38 years I have lived here, I have never experienced anything like this, even in 1996.

We knew the storm was coming and we knew it was going to close the passes. I was the designated snow driver to shuttle my wife and her parents to a cancer treatment for my mother-in-law at the UW. We planned on staying in Seattle for two nights to allow for the passes to clear. Then it snowed 50 inches and blew everyone's plans out the window. Five days later, with no open passes, we ended up driving around via Portland, a 9.5-hour journey.

By the time we got home, I was five days late to the party. I missed all wonderment of an epic snowfall. I came home to a mess right before it started raining. Luckily, I have two brothers who kept my driveway passable, so we were able to get home safely. After two days of digging out at home, I finally made my way to the golf course to check on the maintenance facilities. In the days I had been home, it had rained several times then froze creating a breakable crust. It took me 20 painful minutes to walk the 100 yards from our parking lot to my shop.

This was the first time I have ever tried to plow that quantity of snow all at once. Let's just say it was more than my John Deere with turf tires could handle. After an hour, I found myself stuck with my front tires over the edge; I had only cleared about 1/10th of the area necessary. I was as stuck as I could ever imagine and nobody could get to me. My first thought was to call on a family friend who lived nearby. He is a member of the golf club

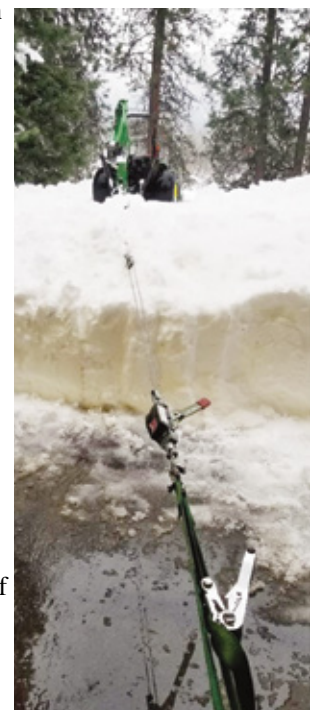


with a tractor-mounted snowblower. Of course, he was up for the challenge and showed up within 20 minutes. He made quick work of the drive. The problem was the steep approach down to where my tractor was hanging over the edge. Once he made it to the downslope, he got his tractor stuck. Now we have two tractors stuck. What do we do? Luckily, with a little creativity we were able free his Kubota, but that was clearly the end of that attempt.

After he was gone, I glanced at my tractor and noticed that it had continued to slip down over the bank. As the warm tractor melted the supporting snow underneath it, the further it would fall. I wasn't just stuck; I was at risk of losing it into the abyss. I decided to round up every piece of chain I could find, a 20 ft. tow strap, and a come-along to tie it to my shop. The only point to tie from was the steel post inside the shop. The garage door was wide open overnight for 60 feet of chain that was banjo-tight. Not my finest moment, so not sure why I am even admitting this.

The next morning, I met the guy who operates the groomer for the Leavenworth Winter Sports Club. They groom a ski track around the golf course and leave a snow cat here. He agreed to pull my tractor out with the Pistenbully snow cat. After all those hours of fighting the snow, he had me out of there in about 35 seconds. Then he attempted to plow my maintenance yard, but got his groomer attachment wrapped up on top of the track and punctured a hydraulic line. I had to chain the attachment to my tractor bucket, freshly out of the snowbank, and yard it off the snow cat track. The sight of the bright red hydro fluid on the snow made me think, "I wish it were that easy to spot on the grass, my operators would see a hydraulic leak right away." It turned out to be an easy repair for the sports club, and I got my tractor back. After all this it still took me six more hours to plow the rest of the snow, normally a two-hour job.

I am still looking for the moral of this story. Don't be late to the party? Invest in some chains for my turf tires? Always have a come along handy? Cancer sucks!?





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# From the Golf Course to the Sod Farm

Jessica Lenihan, Green Valley Turf

When I thought about leaving Hayden Lake, the last place I thought I would end up would be a sod farm in Northern Colorado. I was never planning on leaving — after being at



location of Green Valley will go through 150 pallets of bluegrass sod. The retail location is in Littleton, about an hour south of the sod farm. It's a more residential area than where we are located, so the access is a bit easier for people. During season, the crew harvests during the night and starting at about 3 a.m., the sod gets trucked down south for the day's sale. I used to think that the equipment we use on the golf course was expensive until I learned about the Firefly sod cutter. Everything completely automated, it's incredible and really takes the guesswork out of the job.

As with Nathan's operation at Desert Green, probably the coolest part of the job is all the special projects and major league



Hayden for 10 years, I had found a great spot where I had a supportive superintendent and a well-balanced management team. Call it a desire not to settle or a quarter-life crisis, but the opportunity to grow bentgrass sod in Colorado just kind of fell into my lap and I couldn't say no.

Here at Green Valley Turf, we manage approximately 1000 acres of grass: 500 blue, 300 fescue, 100 Bermuda, 50 buffalo and 30 bent. I came into Green Valley to grow in and maintain the bentgrass since I've got the golf background. The biggest "sticker shock," so to speak with everything, has been the absolutely massive scale everything is done. Everything, when it comes to farming and maintaining sod, is GPS controlled, so it makes things really simple. What surprised me about the company is that the "bread and butter" of the operation is actually the pallets of sod that go out to homeowners and landscape companies throughout the year. On an average summer day, the retail



continued page 8

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# 2022 Spring Meeting!



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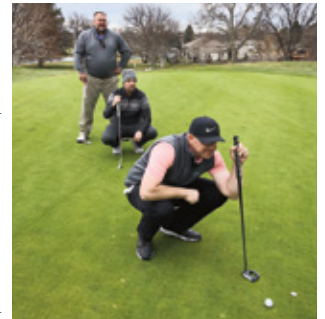
## Golf Results

*Net:*

- #1 (47) Haynes, Bednar, Walker, Newman
- #2 (48) Gabriel, Becker, Allen, Hughes
- #3 (52) Baker, Austin, Otto, Bowen

*Gross:*

- #T1 (65) Gabriel, Becker, Allen, Hughes
- #T1 (65) Gibbs, Centero, Radford
- #3 (66) Haynes, Bednar, Walker, Newman



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# The 2022 Chapters of the Northwest Hospitality Room in San Diego!

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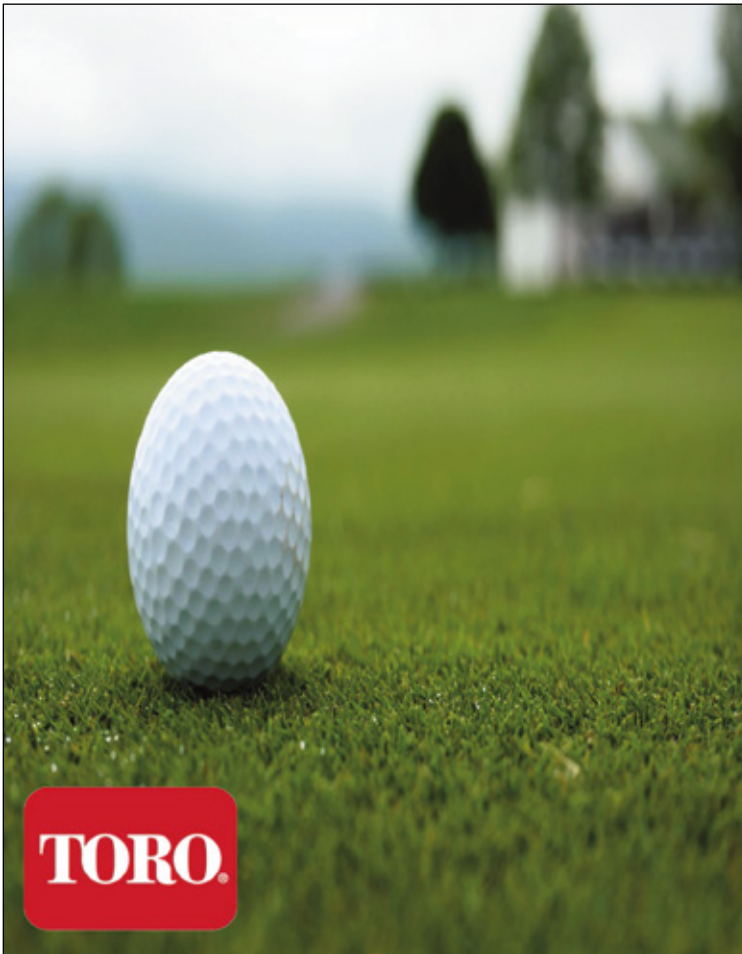
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# Today's CGCS

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.

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 Thayne 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. Thayne. 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.

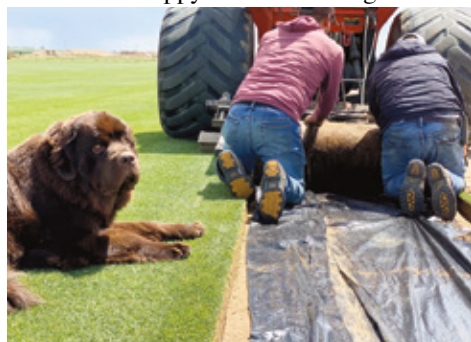
There are a few additional enhancements to the program:

- 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,



**Sod Farm cont. from page 4**

sports that we get to work on. Growing turf on plastic was something I had never really heard about, until I came here. For those unfamiliar, a layer of plastic is laid down, a few inches of spec sand, then grass is seeded. It's top-dressed heavily and maintained on the plastic for a couple of years before heading off, typically to, MLS/NFL/and MLB. Because it's grown on plastic, the roots are woven together and it's like a super thick carpet professional level sports can be played on immediately after it's laid. Once it is laid, the roots are so happy to see normal ground



they shoot right down. It also eliminates any layering issues once it's in its new home. Pretty crazy!

We currently have about 10 acres of bluegrass on plastic and a couple of bent.

The harvest isn't quite as simple with the turf on plastic — a few more people are involved — but because it's woven together so nicely it rolls up pretty easily. Overall the move to the sod farm has been a huge change from the course, but in a good way. The owner of the company has been in the business his entire life and most of the staff has been here for 15+ years. The hours are a bit different. When things need to get done, they need to get done and it can lead to some long days. But, I do not miss that 4:30 am alarm — that's for sure. Colorado is perpetually sunny and I was able to ski in October this year; I don't think that has ever happened!



Thankful for my time in the Northwest, Coeur d'Alene will always be home. But, I am thrilled to be doing something new in this turf world. Hope to see everyone around!

**Today's CGCS continued from page 7** 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 super-

intendent. 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



**Save the date:**  
**Inland Empire GCSA**  
**Fall Meeting & Trade Show**  
**November 14 & 15, 2022**



**Greg Baer**

Irrigation Consultant

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**2022 Chapter Symposium,**  
**Lawrence, Kansas**



(left) Mike Grilley, Inland Empire GCSA, pictured here with Lori Russell and Garrett Turner, Peaks & Prairies GCSA, and Jason Sigmund, Idaho GCSA

Are you employed at a municipality? Join the discussion with those with like challenges. Contact: [greg.vanhollebeke@seattle.gov](mailto:greg.vanhollebeke@seattle.gov) to be part of the emailing list.

*The Inland Empire GCSA is established to serve members, advance the profession and promote the enjoyment of golf through responsible golf course management practices.*