



Turf Times



The newsletter from the Northern Michigan Turf Managers Association

Bi-Monthly Update May/June Volume 33, No. 2 [2004]

President's Message



Over the past two years your NMTMA board of directors has been working on a strategic master plan for the association. These written plans consist of a mission and vision statement, current strengths and weaknesses as well as current and future goals.

In short, here are some of the highlights from our discussions.

The Mission of our association:

The Northern Michigan Turf Managers Association facilitates the exchange of information and education between members in order to enhance the golf industry in Northern Michigan.

The Vision of our association:

By 2008, the Northern Michigan Turf Managers Association plans to enhance the value of membership to the golf course industry by:

1. Providing personal and professional development to its members.
2. Promoting the high level of professionalism to employers, golfers and communities.
3. Being a leader in technology.
4. The NMTMA will also welcome participation of all turf managers in this region.

Working Goals

1. Develop a master membership plan to help retain our current members and to search potential new members
2. Assist members with understanding PDI and how to communicate its value to their employers
3. Work with GCSAA to develop a public relations plan and create a PR committee
4. Offer more business management education programs
5. Strengthen the web site
6. Discuss an association name change
7. Develop a First Tee liaison and participate in the program
8. Create a "value of membership" resource for current and potential members and their owners

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LEADERSHIP

The Ultimate Management Tool

As the players again flock to your course, for an enjoyable round with their family or friends, they will bring a list of new demands concerning playability and course conditioning for this season. An important perspective for our business is to meet these demands in order to retain your customers. The improvements and changes implemented last season have now been integrated into your routines, and now it is time to prepare for the new demands that are soon to come. Often times we look for little tricks or techniques that allow us to provide additional services to meet these new demands without adding to our workforce. These demands cause us to juggle too many tasks at once and create considerable stress in the work environment, because it is only a matter of time before one task gets dropped. We need to develop a solid system to delegate and manage the increasing demands of our jobs. Leadership is the fundamental tool in developing that system.

Leadership can be looked at as a development of your coaching and mentoring skills. As in sports, it takes a team of players to accomplish the task of winning, and on our courses it takes a team of employees to accomplish the task of readying the course for daily play. It would be impossible to do it all yourself. By empowering your employees and building a strong sense of teamwork, you can develop a management structure to handle every task. The goal is to have your workers make the right decisions at the right times. The key for creating such a competent workforce is the development and growth of your leadership abilities.

Leadership has many elements that all need to be addressed in order for any manager to be successful. We need to develop clear lines of communication between both our workers and our superiors. We need to develop a positive work environment based on trust, honesty, and respect. We must set a clear vision for what the current and future goals are for the golf course and instill a positive "can-do" attitude with our employees. We must build relationships and recognize accomplishments to raise performance levels. All these elements start at the top, with us.

As a leader your first step is to establish all of these characteristics in yourself, and become a model for others to follow. Then, build the team around you to strive for these same goals. Assemble a team of quality people around you that can handle the responsibility of minor tasks that do not require your full efforts, and free yourself to work on the major decisions affecting your operations. Once you have invested the time to develop the people around you, others can handle many of the lesser tasks. You will soon discover that through developing your leadership skills, you can construct a management plan to tackle all the requests that are sent your way.

Most of us have a firm grasp of the skills required to grow grass. Focusing on developing your business and leadership skills is an important area for personal growth. There are many resources out there to facilitate this such as buying a book on leadership or attending a seminar. Be willing to invest time in yourself and the people around you to develop the leadership skills required for success. Do not wait for someone to do it for you. Start it today.

As a final note, when a request is made of you do not be afraid to delegate the task to someone else. Trust that the other person will do the job well, maybe even better than you would have done.

Thanks Paul, for letting me write this letter for you.

Don Roth – Assistant Superintendent, Crystal Downs C.C.

9. Continue to grow the education for mechanics

Please feel free to contact me or any of your board members if you have any questions or would like to discuss any of the strategic plans listed above.

There is still room for you and your group to play in this year's MTF fundraiser at King's Challenge. It's a five person scramble on June 8th check out the web site for more info. Also if you can, please remember to bring a raffle donation.

The technician's seminar during the mini-conference was a huge hit. The next event planned for them is July 28th at Forest Dunes. The education of the day will be hydraulic system troubleshooting and electrical system testing and troubleshooting. Golf will follow the education and lunch for those interested; see the website for more details.

July also brings the MTF Field Day on the 21st at the MSU Hancock Research Center and stay tuned for information on our August 12th event with education and golf at Gaylord Country Club, of course check out the website for more information, blah, blah blah.

Have a great summer and while you are planning your staff's work schedule be sure to plan a couple of employee cook-outs. Burgers and dogs go a long way for the guys and gals that work for you.

Steve Hammon

Attention Members

If you have any problems with receiving e-mails, invoices, Turf Times, meeting notices etc., please contact Kay Patrick at 517-327-5474 or e-mail her at nmtma@comcast.net. Her information is only as current as you keep it.

Your 2004 NMTMA Directory should have arrived. If you have not received one please contact Kay Patrick at (517) 327-5474 or at nmtma@comcast.net to have her send you one. Many THANKS to the Vendors for advertising in this years directory. Without you the quality of our directory would not be possible.

If you are interested in signing up for events early for 2004 you may do so online at nmtma.org.

Applications for the 2004 Members Scholarship are now available. Please contact Jim Bluck for further information.

Groundwater Conservation Advisory Council Update

By Craig Hoffman, The Rock

Last fall Public Act 148 was passed by Legislation and signed by Governor Granholm. Act 148 came from Senate Bill 289 (SB 289) which Greg Lyman spearheaded, representing the golf industry throughout the state. Due to Greg's efforts and the recognition of the Michigan Environmental Stewardship Program, I was elected to represent the golf industry.

The Stewardship Program and DEQ Director Steven Chester appointed me to this council in November 2003. The council consists of ten voting members and three non-voting members. Three voting members were appointed by Senate Majority Leader, Ken Sikkema, three were appointed by Speaker of the House, Rick Johnson and the remaining four by DEQ Director Steven Chester.

Act 148 requires the Council to do all of the following:

Study the sustainability of the state's groundwater use and whether the state should provide additional oversight of groundwater withdrawals.

Monitor Annex 2001 implementation efforts and make recommendations on Michigan's statutory conformance with Annex 2001, including whether groundwater withdrawals should be subject to best management practices or certification requirements and whether groundwater withdrawals impact water-dependent natural features.

Study the implementation of, and results from, the groundwater dispute resolution program created by Public Act 177 of 2003. This act is in the Saginaw County area.

Although our first meeting was in January of this year, these past five months have seen many changes to these issues. At our first meeting in January, DEQ Director Steven Chester gave a brief outline of what the Advisory Council mission is and what lies ahead. Initially, quarterly meetings were scheduled and later changed to monthly. The Council voted on receiving all information via email and setting up a web page through DEQ to make all information available to the public. Currently, the Council is working on the groundwater Legacy Act, which is a 26-page document that has amendments to state laws that already exist. All this information can be found at www.michigan.gov/deq, once into the site click on "water". The Advisory Council is listed with agendas, minutes, upcoming meetings and sites, along with press releases.

At the April meeting, Ron Van Til from the water division of DEQ, gave us a briefing on the Water Use Reporting Program. On a positive note, Ron stated that golf courses have a 99.9% reporting rate, which put us on top compared to all others reporting. Under the new law, we now have to GPS our wells and a fee increase from \$50 to \$100. I was aware of these changes. They have since added a new twist; static water levels of wells. I did not know of this when Public Act 148 was put into place, the price of this test can run anywhere from \$300 to \$600 per test. This was a surprise to many of us, as we are now looking at revamping this-stay tuned.

There are some interesting pie charts and graphs that Ron showed us. They cover Great Lake Management Michigan Water Use and also have total water withdrawals by each sector in Michigan, from thermoelectric power generation, public water supply, self-supplied industrial and irrigation. This data is from 1997-2001 and can be found at www.michigan.gov/deqmichiganwateruse.com.

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OPEN LETTER OF APPRECIATION TO THE MEMBERS, STAFF, AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE NMTMA

From Jon Scott, Past President and Honored Recipient of the 2004 DSA

To those who were present at the NMTMA Mini Conference and more importantly, to those who were by either choice or circumstance not in attendance, I want to offer my most sincere and heartfelt thanks for your bestowing on me this great honor. Being a Michigan native son, and having had the great pleasure to work with many of you for what was a very satisfying and exciting five years in Northern Michigan, I can't find ways to express how much this means to me. Michigan, and especially Northern Michigan, will always be my home. I may reside in Florida, but I live in spirit and mind in Traverse City. I look forward every summer to coming back to our home in Hammond Highlands for a recharging of my soul. While it is never long enough, I could not do the job I do now without it. My biggest regret is not having time to make the rounds and see my old friends. Tom Reed has given me a standing invitation to ride with him any day I wish, but as Dave Longfield can attest over these many years since I've been gone, it is pretty hard to get me back on the road during my stay. I have occasionally taken Tom up on his offer and enjoyed every minute of it, so don't be surprised if I drop in unannounced this summer to offer my thanks in person.

I had prepared a long and windy acceptance speech, but after Dave Longfield's excellent discourse on the history of the NMTMA, followed later by Jeff Holmes moving introduction to my presentation, it was obvious that all that needed to be said about our accomplishments was done so, admirably better than I could. That left me with one message to offer, and as I looked around the room at the faces and names of those who make this great Association work and those who laid the foundations for it in the past, I wanted to speak for all of them. The message was Giving Back.

All through my life and my career, I have had people take an interest in me and my future and be there to help me out. Of course it starts with my family, as it does with most of us, and I am eternally grateful for the support and good values they instilled in me during my youth. But once the string is cut, you begin to see others step into the void that are more than willing to provide continued support and inspiration. They do this at some sacrifice with a goal of nothing more than seeing you succeed. They ask only for a sincere student who really cares about the world and the role that he or she may play in making it better for everyone. You know who they are, and like me, you know you would not be where you are today without them. My career has not been without trials and tribulations, including some pretty painful lessons in job insecurity and dealing with family strife. But each time I stumbled or got knocked down, there was someone there ready with a hand to grab and pull me back up. When I got my feet back under me and started walking, then running forward again, they were content to watch me disappear into the distant haze of the future, knowing that there was someone else waiting for the same hand. Fortunately for both of us, we never forgot one another.

As Jeff said during my introduction, I now sit arguably at the top of this profession. I still am in awe of where I am and humbled by the tremendous responsibility that goes with this job. I truly feel that my mission is to ably facilitate and represent the very best of what we can do as allied turf managers, industry sales representatives, consultants, and golf course superintendents. What you see every weekend on TV is the product of that mission, and if I and my staff have done the job right, you never know we were there. The question I often ask myself is "how did I get here?" The answer I always come up with is really pretty simple. I had a lot of help and support when opportunities were presented to me. What follows is not as simple. How do I pay this back?

In this world today we tend to think in terms of personal achievement, and our success is measured in dollars and material gains. It never seems to be enough, and we are driven to seek higher goals and more substantial rewards when we get there. We pay a high price for this, but those who make it are looked up to

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Grounwater cont.

After much discussion and difficulty in choosing a chair for the council, the council agreed on three chair persons which are:

Jon Allen, of Consumers Energy Company-representing utilities and appointed by Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema.

Kurt Heise, Director of Wayne County Dept of Environment-appointed by Speaker of the House Rick Johnson.

Jim Cleland-Assistant Chief Water Division of the DEQ

A list of council members can be found on the web page mentioned above. Since Public Act 148 became law, there has been new legislation coming forth from the governor's office, State Senator Liz Brater (D-Ann Arbor) and State Representative Chris Kolb (D-Ann Arbor) offices, all showing support. The Advisory Council is still reviewing House Bill 5634 (HB5634) and Senate Bill 1087 (SB1087). Currently the house bill is dead. The governor's press release is also on this web page and you can find current bills at www.michigan.gov.

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Many thanks from Jon Scott

as great leaders and inspirational motivators for the rest to follow. There is little time to reflect on the past and current achievements fall quickly into that category of history as more and ever higher goals are set. There never seems to be a lack of those good people I spoke of previously to step forward and help us clear the new bars. Again, how do we ever repay them?

Many years ago, I made a decision. I would start paying back. I would make myself available to any upcoming turf professional who wanted to learn. I would give of what time I had to help anyone who called me for advice. I would write articles to share the years of accumulated wisdom (read mistakes) in the hopes that it would give someone a leg up on their career goals. I would give presentations at conferences, seminars, workshops, and meetings when I could work it into my schedule. I would talk to as many turf management classes as I could on request to share my career story and the lessons learned along the way. And, I would do my level best to make every turf professional that I encountered in my work look like he or she was tops in their field. I would make contributions to worthy scholarship and research funds, and I would serve on committees and boards as time permitted. And other than my salary, I would never take a dime of profit for my time. No, I'm not pushing for sainthood here, and I am not asking for further accolades. The satisfaction of knowing that I am contributing to the success of others is enough. The debt I owe is huge and can never be repaid in full. But like the payments on a fine house, I am striving to reduce the principle.

How about you? Are you making enough payments? You know whether you are or not, and you also know how much you owe this great profession. It doesn't cost much to start paying back or up the contribution. The satisfaction you will get from knowing that others are benefiting from your extended hand will more than justify the expenditure, especially if it is a gift of your personal time. We all love our work or we would be doing something else. Let's enable others to share in that love by giving back. The PGA TOUR's motto is "GIVING BACK, THE HEART OF THE PGA TOUR". I'd like to steal the idea with "Giving Back is the Heart of Turf Management". There is no limit to how much good you can do.

Thanks again, NMTMA, for this great honor. I have my plaque proudly displayed on my office wall for all to see.

Jon Scott

Crystal Downs Country Club Recognized for Environmental Excellence

FRANKFORT, MI - Crystal Downs Country Club has achieved designation as a "Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary" by the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System (ACSS), the educational division of Audubon International. Michael D. Morris, CGCS, Superintendent, has led the effort to obtain sanctuary status on this course and is being recognized for Environmental Stewardship by Audubon International. Crystal Downs Country Club is the 12th course in Michigan and the 459th in the world to receive the honor.

"Crystal Downs Country Club has shown a strong commitment to its environmental program. They are to be commended for their efforts to provide a sanctuary for wildlife on the golf course property," said Joellen Zeh, Program Manager for the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Programs.

"To reach certification, a course must demonstrate that they are maintaining a high degree of environmental quality in a number of areas," explained Zeh. These categories include: Environmental Planning, Wildlife & Habitat Management, Outreach and Education, Chemical Use Reduction and Safety, Water Conservation, and Water Quality Management.

"Pursuing the objectives of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System was a natural for us at Crystal Downs," stated Morris. "Our membership loves the beauty of the area, and the volunteers from our community who serve on our resource committee share that love and concern for our environment."

The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses, endorsed by the United States Golf Association, provides information and guidance to help golf courses preserve and enhance wildlife habitat, and protect natural resources. Golf courses from the United States, Australia, Canada, Central America, Europe, and Southeast Asia have also achieved certification in the program. Audubon certified courses in Michigan also include: Pointe Golf Club in West Bloomfield, Blackberry Patch Golf Club in Coldwater, Black Lake Golf Club in Onaway, Egypt Valley Country Club in Ada, Fox Hills Country Club in Plymouth, Gull Lake View Golf Club in Augusta, Lakelands Golf & Country Club in Brighton, Northville Hills Golf Club in Northville, The Legend in Bellaire, Tournament Players Club of Michigan in Dearborn, and White Pine National Golf Club in Spruce.

In addition to golf courses, the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System also provides programs for schools, individuals and businesses. For more information, contact Audubon international, 46 Rarick Rd., Selkirk, NY 12158, USA, (518) 767-9051, e-mail them via the Internet at acss@audubonintl.org, or visit their website at www.audubonintl.org.

NEW CSA Award

The 2004 NMTMA Board of Directors has decided that it is time to give back to the many people in our organization that give to so many others. The Community Service Award will be presented at the 2005 Mini-Conference to a member of the NMTMA that volunteers their time to a specific organization or community for no monetary value. The award winner will receive a **\$500.00** check made out to the organization of their choice in their name. The simple rules are as follows: 1. The person being nominated or applying for this must be a current member and have been for the past two years. 2. Must not receive payment for services they provide. 3. Must have been volunteering for the organization for two years, one including the present year. If you would like to nominate a person or would like to apply for this yourself, please contact Craig Hoffman @ (906) 493-5658 or Scott Pulaski @ (989) 732-6711 Ext. 2809 for an application.

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...and we encourage you to support them

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