

# The Reporter

From the Rocky Mountain Chapter of GCSAA  
Growing Green Since 1936



The Club at Crested Butte

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Flatirons Golf Course

# President's Message

Every “off-season” in the Rocky Mountain Chapter brings its own challenges and perspectives. Depending on where your course is located, Superintendents and their teams either endure the challenges of the “off-season” or embrace the blankets of snow. Some Superintendents may be grooming their courses for cross-country skiing while others are hand watering or chipping ice off their greens! These regional differences and the individuals tasked with caring for turf in these conditions are just a small part of what makes our Chapter so amazing! Regardless of your conditions right now, we are headed towards another great golf season in the Rocky Mountain Chapter!

I can remember a time when I was so excited about the change in weather and while I still get pumped to see snow fall on the front range, I find myself ready for the impending season more and more. There is just something more comfortable when grass is growing, and water is running through the irrigation lines. As I put this article together, there is another steamer of a day ahead with a high temperature forecasted around 14° and a very dry snow falling on a dry course. We are blessed to have some frost-free hydrants around our greens to help with winter hydration, but have I mentioned that I am ready for the grass to start growing again...

Nothing gets me more amped for another golf season than the National Conference. The educational events are great if you find something that you are really interested in, and the tradeshow has all the cool gizmos and gadgets that you want but most of us don't have (yet). The golf opportunities where there is some green grass get you thinking about your own course and how close you are to mowing again. My old Super, Bob Kinder would always start telling us as we got into late January or early February, “we are only six weeks away from our first mow, you guys better get prepared.” If you asked my team, I must have been paying attention a little bit, because I just walked out of a morning meeting discussing the winter equipment clean up list and said, “less than 45 days until we historically have our first mow.” Then you come back to reality that we have a lot of cold weather and our snowiest months ahead...oh well, back to tree work and detailing equipment for just a little while longer, I guess.

# President's Message

The National Conference also gives you a chance to have a beverage with friends and reconnect, which is important this time of year. Most of us aren't our playing golf with our buddies like we do in the summer or getting to our favorite fishing hole as often. That time to reconnect brings smiles and laughter back to your face when maybe the course isn't providing it! It was so great to see so many Rocky Mountain Members in San Diego at the Conference and especially at our Chapter Event on Wednesday evening. Thank you for taking the time to attend and a huge thank you to our sponsors! We have such amazing members, and I can't wait to see you all at some upcoming events! Please spend some time getting your BMP's done with the BMP Hero Tool (<https://www.bmphero.com/>) and reach out to me if you have any questions! This is an important initiative that we are focused on completing to protect our ability to care for our courses and advocate for the continued stewards that you all are! Have a great start to the season or enjoy the snow, but either way, thank you for your investment in our Rocky Mountain Chapter! The people are and will always be what makes this association so outstanding!



*Aaron Fankhauser*

President, *The Club at Rolling Hills*

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# Meet the 2025 Board of Directors

**Overview:** Get to Know the 2025 Board of Directors



## **Aaron Fankhauser, CGCS, President, *The Club at Rolling Hills***

Aaron has worked at The Club at Rolling Hills for the last 20 years. Beginning as a seasonal, Aaron is now a CGCS Director of Agronomy/Assistant General Manager for the Club. Originally from Kansas, Aaron has been in Colorado since 2004 and is a graduate of Metropolitan State University. Aaron currently serves as the President of the RMGCSA and has been involved with the Board of Directors for many years. Aaron and his wife, Melissa, have 3 kiddos, Drake (14), Emma (12), and Brody (7). The family is rounded out with two goldendoodles that go to the course almost every day!



## **Joe Kunze, CGCS, Vice President, *City of Arvada***

Joe Kunze was born and raised in a small town in central Wisconsin by families who worked hard and were skilled in farming and carpentry. This background sparked his interest in working outdoors, performing agronomic practices, and taking pride in building things with his hands. In March of 2012, Joe and his wife, Laura, decided to spread their wings and move to Colorado. They have two dogs, Maxx and Marlo, who are always by their side during their hobbies, including golf, hiking, hunting, fishing, and camping.

Joe's experience working on the farm made working on a golf course especially appealing from a young age, as it allowed him to be outdoors without the responsibility of caring for livestock. He was far more interested in running equipment than caring for animals. His turfgrass career began in 1996 at the age of 14 at a small 9-hole golf course in Neillsville, Wisconsin. After high school, Joe studied Soil Science at the University of Wisconsin and worked as the Assistant Golf Course Superintendent during a full course grow-in at the *Oaks Golf Course* in a Madison suburb. In 2004, he returned to Neillsville Country Club as the Golf Course Superintendent. In 2012, Joe and Laura moved to Colorado, where he worked at *Green Valley Ranch*, *Fossil Trace*, and *Lakewood Country Club*. Joe also obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Turfgrass Management and Science from Penn State University, which led him to his current role overseeing maintenance operations at *Lake Arbor* and *West Woods Golf Clubs* in the City of Arvada. He became a Certified Golf Course Superintendent in January 2023.

A passionate advocate for greater participation in the Rocky Mountain Golf Course Superintendents Association, Joe is proud of the network he has built and looks forward to continuing to work with his peers and generating excitement for the association. He became a member in 2014, served on the Assistant Superintendent Golf Tournament Committee in 2018, was part of the Educational Committee in 2021, and became a Director in 2022. Joe is excited to serve as Vice President starting in 2025 and as President in 2026. He will work with the executive committee to plan for the association's future, involving new ideas for its growth, prosperity, and success.



## **Jake Jacobs, Secretary/Treasurer, *Flatirons Golf Course***

Jake Jacobs is currently the Superintendent at *Flatirons Golf Course* which is owned and operated by the City of Boulder. A proud graduate of Boulder High School and Front Range Community College, Jake was inspired to pursue a career in Turf Management after working for *Flatirons Golf Course* as a seasonal employee during his time in high school. All of Jake's tenure has been with the city and *Flatirons Golf Course*. The city promoted him to a full-time employee in 2001 and then became Superintendent in May of 2018. In his free time, he can be found playing golf, going to CU games, and hanging out at home with his wife (Ariel), daughter (Paisley), 4 horses, a mini horse, 2 goats, 3 chickens, and 2 cats (Apple and Onion).

# Meet the 2025 Board of Directors



## Chad Gilkison, Director, *The Club at Pradera*

Chad Gilkison is very excited to be a part of the RMGCSA Board. He is currently the Golf Course Superintendent at *The Club at Pradera* in Parker, Colorado, a position he has held since December of 2022. Chad and his family moved to the Denver area a little over four years ago when he became the Golf Course Superintendent at *Cherry Creek Country Club* in Aurora, where he held the position for 3.5 years. Originally from the Kansas City area, Chad had lived there for 20 years after graduating from Kansas State University. He has been in the Golf Course maintenance industry for over 15 years. While working as an Assistant Superintendent and eventually a Superintendent in Kansas City, Chad was very involved with the Heart of America Golf Course Superintendent Association, holding several different positions during that time. When not on the golf course, Chad and his family enjoy golfing, tennis, attending sporting events and concerts. During the winter months, they try to ski as many days as possible. Chad has two boys who are active in sports, so they spend a lot of time at the ball fields and pool.



## Ben Getman, Director, *Denver Country Club*

Ben Getman grew up in Greeley, CO, and studied Landscape Architecture at Colorado State University before changing his career path to Horticulture and Turfgrass Management. He began his golf course career working as a seasonal employee at *Ptarmigan Country Club* in 2001. Ben moved to Denver in 2003 and worked a season at the *Ranch Country Club* while finishing his academics at Front Range Community College. In January 2004, he was hired at *Denver Country Club*, where he has spent the past 20 years. He has been in his current role as Golf Course Superintendent since November 2014. Ben is an 18-year Class A member of both the RMGCSA and the GCSAA. He looks forward to giving back to the association and its members who have provided him with great support over the past two decades.



## Kevin Abila, Director, *The Club at Crested Butte*

Kevin is originally from Boulder, Colorado, and graduated from Boulder High School. After high school, he attended the University of Northern Colorado for two years before taking a semester off to snowboard for a winter in Crested Butte. The following summer, he got a job at the golf course in Crested Butte, which was then called *Skyland Golf Club*. The facility has since changed names and is now *The Club at Crested Butte*. Kevin graduated from the Rutgers certificate program in 2007 while still employed at the club. His mentor, Steve Rau (Class A), retired in 2019, and Kevin was hired as the superintendent during the transition. Kevin enjoys outdoor activities such as snowboarding, mountain biking, fishing, and of course, golf. He enjoys attending functions hosted by the RMGCSA and looks forward to helping maintain and promote the growth of the RMGCSA.



## Kevin J. Malloy, CGCS, Director, *TPC Colorado*

Kevin is a second-generation golf course superintendent with a deep passion and commitment to the profession. When not working, he enjoys golfing, skiing, working out, and spending time with his wife, Katie, and their kids, Clare (7) and Jack (2). He looks forward to working with other members to help the association continue to serve its members and be one of the best chapters in the country.

# Meet the 2025 Board of Directors



## **Mitch Savage, CGCS, Director, Commonground Golf Course**

Mitch Savage, CGCS is the Golf Course Superintendent at *CommonGround Golf Course* in Aurora, CO. He is a 22-year member of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America and has been involved with the Rocky Mountain Chapter board of directors since 2016. While serving on the RMGCSA board, he has helped spearhead various government affairs efforts and has testified at the Colorado state capitol numerous times. Savage has served on several GCSAA committees and task groups and is currently volunteering on the association's Government Affairs Committee and Centennial Celebration Committee. He is also actively involved with the GCSAA First Green program, which teaches STEM education to students on golf courses. Mitch and his wife, Missy, along with their children Max and Bella, reside in Aurora, CO.



## **Joel Beach, Class C Ex Officio, Walnut Creek Golf Preserve**

Joel has been in the golf industry since 2019 after making the switch from construction management in the cell phone tower business. He grew up in West Virginia and attended Virginia Tech, majoring in Mining Engineering. An avid golfer since he was 10 years old, Joel found that making the switch to the golf industry allowed him to feel comfortable in a new career. He started working at *Legacy Ridge Golf Course* and later moved to *Walnut Creek Golf Preserve* when the opportunity arose to advance his position and continue learning.



## **Tyler Gillette, Affiliate Representative, Buffalo Brand Seed**

Tyler Gillette was born and raised in the NW suburbs of Chicago and is a lifelong Chi-town sports fan. After high school, he attended Miami University (Ohio), where he graduated with a degree in Business, majoring in marketing. After college, Tyler relocated to Northern California, where he spent just over a decade between Sacramento and the East Bay. During that time, he entered the seed industry and met his now-wife, Jennessa. The couple relocated to Denver in the fall of 2015. They had their daughter, Rory, in 2019, and also have a Goldendoodle named Winston. Tyler joined the team at *Buffalo Brand Seed* at the beginning of 2022 and is embarking on his fourth full season in outside sales. He is passionate about the game of golf and enjoys working closely with many superintendents and courses across Colorado. When not out talking seed with customers or spending time with his family, Tyler enjoys playing golf, traveling, and attending live music events. As the Affiliate Representative for 2025, Tyler is eager to help improve the experience for vendors associated with the Rocky Mountain chapter.

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# Become a Certified Golf Course Superintendent

**Overview:** *Why and How to Become a CGCS*

**What:** Certified Golf Course Superintendent is the highest professional designation possible to be earned through the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. When a Golf Course Superintendent has accumulated 20 points that are based on experience, education, and service and continuing education credits, you earn the status of Class A. This system also has a sliding scale where for example if someone has many years of experience, the educational requirement is lower to meet the necessary overall score. See the Class A eligibility scale [here](#). Once Class A status is obtained, you can apply to become a Certified Golf Course Superintendent.

**How:** Once you apply for certification, the process is very smooth. This process includes three proctored exams, verifying the communication requirements, and a course visit during the growing season by two of your peers who have been certified. The schedule of taking the exams and having the site visit done is flexible. You may do these in any order, as long as you first apply for certification and the site visit is done during the growing season. The communication requirement consists of completing three of the following: a site-specific BMP, hosting a First Green Event, writing an article for *The Reporter*, or serving on the RMGCSA's Board of Directors as some examples. Renewal of the designation is on a 5-year cycle that includes keeping a recent pesticide applicators license or having passed the GCSAA IPM exam, plus earning a combination of 15 service and continuing education credits. One of the most important items to remember about going through the certification process is that you as a Golf Course Superintendent are being evaluated, not the property. For example, you will not be evaluated on whether or not you have clover in your roughs. You will be evaluated on how well you know how to identify and manage the clover or any other challenge that your property presents to your operation and level of expectation.

**Why:** Having this designation is extremely valuable when trying to achieve professional goals in your career. Whether it is for a national GCSAA board position or obtaining the next position that one has set forth as a goal, having CGCS after your name sets you apart from others. For example, when one has aspirations of running for a national GCSAA board position, it is nearly impossible to win that election without CGCS designation. When trying to obtain more desirable positions that have a lot of competition, one has to have the best resume, experience, and professional development compared to others. When only 10% of golf course superintendents are certified, this designation can help set you above many others early during an application process. Since 2020, 9 members of the Rocky Mountain Golf Course Superintendents Association have become Certified Golf Course Superintendents.

# Become a Certified Golf Course Superintendent

Once certified, the benefits are fantastic. Besides setting yourself above others in professional development and possibly earning higher pay, being an attestor is another phenomenal benefit. You get to visit other golf courses and get a very deep look into another superintendent's operation. You can ask questions about products they use, timing for cultural practices or chemical applications, how they manage and recruit for their teams, and anything else that you would like to learn about. The tips and tricks you can learn from other superintendents are amazing. Whether it is getting information on a company that specializes in native area weed management, seeing irrigation heads being marked with shaving cream or a greens mower attachment that has had wonderful results, the amount of information that is learned during one of the visits is incredible.

If you have questions about the process of becoming certified or want to know more, please send me an email at [jkunze@arvada.org](mailto:jkunze@arvada.org) or reach out to another Certified Golf Course Superintendent. There is also some excellent information for [certification exams](#). If you have a friend who is certified, ask them about the process and what benefits they have experienced from earning it. It's a challenge and a goal that many should have, no matter what property you manage.

**Certification News**  
**Congratulations to new and renewing CGCSs!**  
 Be the first to congratulate fellow members in your chapter.

**Recertified Members**  
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 Rocky Mountain GCSA

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# Superintendent Spotlight

**Overview:** An Interview with Zac Cummings, Columbine Country Club



Zac Cummings

## Describe your facility

Columbine Country Club features 27 holes of golf, including the Championship Course, originally designed by Henry Hughes and later remodeled by Rees Jones. In 1999, a links-style Par 3 course was added, designed by von Hagge, Smelak, and Baril of Houston, Texas. This walking-only Par 3 course provides members with a dedicated space to refine their short game and plays a key role in supporting our nationally recognized junior golf program.

## What's the biggest challenge you face at your facility?

The biggest challenge I face is getting to know the full scope of this expansive property. With over 2,400 irrigation stations, 189 homes pulling from our irrigation system, and six well pump stations, there's a lot to learn-and that's just the irrigation side! Absorbing all the details and intricacies of the property will take time, but it's an exciting challenge that keeps me engaged every day.

## What do you like about your team at your facility?

First and foremost, the team has been incredibly welcoming, making my transition seamless. Many of our core team members have been at Columbine for over 12 years, and their knowledge of the property is invaluable. Their experience and dedication create a strong foundation, making it a great environment to be a part of.

## Shorts or Pants?

Pants have always been the standard at every course I've worked on. But I might try to sneak in a Maintenance Monday with shorts-Have to get some sun on my legs so they don't end up looking like out-of-bounds stakes!

## What's your favorite tool in your cart?

I'd have to say my favorite tool isn't in my cart-it's in my pocket. My phone has become an essential part of my daily routine, allowing me to stay efficient and connected. Whether I'm using Lynx Mobile for irrigation management, TaskTracker to adjust assignments on the fly, or the USGA Deacon app for data-driven decisions, there's rarely a day that goes by without relying on it for something agronomically related.

## Favorite sports team?

Born and raised just outside of Buffalo, NY I am a die hard Bills fan. Go Bills.

## What's your favorite hole on your course and why?

Having only been here for a few months, it's tough to pick a favorite just yet. But for now, I'd have to go with Hole #5-I've always loved an island green (Thanks Cherry Hills). There's something about the challenge and visual appeal that makes it stand out.

# Superintendent Spotlight

## How many years have you worked in golf and how did you get started in the industry?

I've been involved in the golf industry for as long as I've been able to work. I started as a cart attendant at my local course, where I spent seven years and eventually transitioned into the pro shop and golf operations. A few years later, I decided to gain experience on the agronomy side, thinking it would be beneficial to understand all aspects of the industry-and I ended up falling in love with it.

While attending Rutgers, I completed an internship at Cherry Hills Country Club, which further solidified my passion for turf management. After graduating in 2020, I made the full-time move to Colorado, accepting a position at Meridian Golf Club. In the summer of 2024, I took on my current role at Columbine Country Club.

## What's the most rewarding part of being a superintendent for you?

As I step into my new role as Superintendent, the most rewarding aspect is the opportunity to continue learning. I'm fortunate to work under Hugh Lynch, the Director of Grounds who has been in the industry for many years and has been at Columbine since 2007. The knowledge and experience I can gain from him will be invaluable. Additionally, building connections with other superintendents in the area and through RMGCSA will further support my growth. Looking ahead, I hope to not only develop as a superintendent but also help mentor and grow my assistants and AAs. Encouraging the next generation to pursue careers in our industry is something I'm passionate about, and I look forward to playing a role in that.

## What's your favorite hole on your course and why?

Having only been here for a few months, it's tough to pick a favorite just yet. But for now, I'd have to go with Hole #5-I've always loved an island green (Thanks Cherry Hills). There's something about the challenge and visual appeal that makes it stand out.

## What would you tell someone that is interested in getting into golf course management?

The golf course management industry offers countless benefits, from working outdoors to building strong connections and friendships both on and off the course. My biggest advice-well, maybe two pieces of advice-would be to get as much hands on experience as possible and to always ask "why." Being actively involved in daily operations will accelerate your learning, and asking questions will deepen your understanding of the many complexities of course management. These two habits have played a huge role in my own career growth and have helped me find answers to things I didn't even know I needed to ask.

# Affiliate Angle

*Overview: An Interview with Mark Shoemaker, Dryject Colorado*



*Mark Shoemaker*

## **What is your current affiliate company and your position? How long have you been in this position?**

I am the owner of Dryject Colorado. I bought the business in 2019, and we are starting our 6th season. We inject sand, profile, or other amendments into greens, approaches, tee boxes, fairways and sports fields. Our water blast technology allows us to penetrate up to 12" deep, fracturing the soil structure, and providing a playable surface within hours.

## **Where are you based out of and what territory do you cover?**

We are located out of Lakewood and Tabernash, and we are the franchise owner for the state of Colorado, but also do work in Wyoming, Nebraska, and Kansas.

## **What are the responsibilities of your company to our industry, and how is your company involved with RMGCSA?**

Our job is to efficiently mobilize our machines to your course, inject sand or amendments at the depth, and spacing required by the Superintendent, quickly and efficiently. We have 4 machines and can usually complete most courses with 20-22 greens in one day.

# Affiliate Angle

## **What might we be surprised to know about your company?**

Our team of Christian, Ryan, Adriana and Jacob started with us in the spring when COVID began, and all of us are returning for spring 2025.

## **Did you go to college? If so, where and what major did you graduate with?**

Yes, 1991 Colorado State University grad in Economics. Too many years of sitting at a desk and a stress related heart attack brought me to this business that I truly enjoy.

## **How and when did you begin working in the golf industry and what do you like most about it?**

I was introduced to the Golf Industry when I bought the business. Interesting learning curve for sure. Prior to that I have been involved with numerous start up businesses, from LED lighting manufacturing, uniform manufacturing, to diabetic monitoring devices.

## **Tell us a little about your family, and what hobbies or activities you participate in when you are not at work?**

I am the proud father of Zach 28, Jacob 25 (who you see operating a DryJect machine) Riley 22, and my wife Sue who I have been married to for 33 years. We enjoy skiing, biking, fishing, camping, hiking, and of course golf.

## **What are the most important changes that the company has seen the past 5-10 years?**

The biggest improvement for DryJect is our ability inject damp sand. Prior to that kiln dried was required. Now just order your normal top dressing sand from Eric at G&S.

## **Do you regularly attend RMGCSA meetings or events, if so why are they important?**

If we are not on a job, we attend RMGCSAA events. RMGCSAA has been absolutely integral to our business growth, networking, and stability. Plus, it has helped us build so many relationships/friendships.

## **You know a lot of people in our industry. What are they saying are the biggest obstacles to overcome for them to be successful?**

Labor, labor, labor. I think the small group of contractors that service the RMGCSAA, can have an impact on helping get projects done.

## **You get to see many facilities and properties. What is an interesting new or innovative practice you have seen?**

We see so many innovative Superintendents, getting by with less resources, it will be interesting how the robotic/AI changes golf in the next few years.

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# Are You Going to the Golf Industry Show?

By: Kevin Abila

By the time this article is posted another Golf Industry Show will have come and gone. The question that seems to come up every year is “are you going to the GIS”? I always think of my first opportunity to attend the national golf industry show, and how important that was to my career path. I really feel like that was the moment when I decided that this could be a career for me. The first time I attended college I must have changed my mind 3 or 4 times about what I wanted my emphasis to be, so I left school to just enjoy life with no thought of the future. I already knew that I enjoyed golfing, but I had no idea how much I would enjoy working on a golf course. The next few years I just enjoyed life playing outdoors and working at a golf course, with no thought to a career. Working as an irrigation technician gave me the opportunity to have a full-time job and continue to have fun in a resort community. The superintendent, Steve Rau, that I was working under asked me if I would be interested in joining him at the national golf industry show. Seeing that it was a way to get paid and not be at work, I jumped at the opportunity to tag along with him. What an amazing eye-opening event to the golf course industry, that was the one single moment that stands out in my head as to what got me interested in the golf course industry as a career. Some people know what career path they want to pursue at an early age, but for others, a career choice can be quite a struggle. This was the case for me, and the golf industry show was just the spark I needed to realize that golf could be more than just something to pass the time. I met so many likeminded individuals interested in golf course management and was introduced to so many of my bosses’ colleagues, associates and friends that he had worked with for years. Many that I have had the fortunate opportunity and honor of working with to this day, especially from the affiliate side of the association.



I believe Orlando was the first GIS that I attended, and I know for many people the response might be “oh, Orlando? I’ve been there too many times”. The rotating location really is an added benefit we get in the golf course management side of the industry. Many other industry conferences are held in the same location year after year or can be in a cold climate during the middle of the winter. So, the opportunity to escape the cold weather in the middle of a Colorado winter is well worth visiting the same location every few years. I enjoy seeing the excitement and creativity that is generated by the event, especially with others on your team like assistant superintendents, equipment managers and Interns.

## Are You Going to the Golf Industry Show?

To witness their eyes light up at these events when seeing the new equipment and technology on the trade show floor is awesome. The trade show always gets my ideas flowing and raises my excitement for the upcoming season, the amount of creativity that comes back from the trade show is priceless. Education at the national is top notch and you can really get answers to tough questions that have plagued you the previous season, through education or networking with scholars, business representative and fellow colleagues. If your budget is lower than other facilities, there are plenty of free classes offered that are well worth the price of admission to the trade show.

I do thank Steve for getting the ball rolling for me to go to the event by advocating for another person to attend the conference, and our management for approving the increased spending. If you haven't made it to the GIS, give it a try and see if it gets the ideas flowing like it does for me. Or, if you haven't brought a coworker with you to the National, then this year might just be the year to try and push a little more money in your budget to bring an assistant, equipment manager, irrigation tech or just an interested worker with you. It might help solidify someone to a long-lasting career in our industry. Even better, make them members of the association and double the benefits that come with being part of this fun industry!

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# BMP Hero Launch

**Overview:** *BMP Hero Launches Across Colorado Golf Courses to Drive 100% Facility BMP Adoption*

RMGCSA, RMEGI, and BMP Hero partner to set a new standard for sustainability.

Denver, CO (Dec, 3 2024): BMP Hero, a revolutionary platform designed to simplify and streamline Best Management Practices (BMP) adoption, is now rolling out to golf courses across Colorado. The Rocky Mountain Golf Course Superintendents Association (RMGCSA) and the Rocky Mountain Environmental Golf Institute (RMEGI) have partnered with BMP Hero to spearhead the “Path to 100%” initiative, aiming to have every golf course in the state create and complete their facility-specific BMP guide.

With growing legislative demands around water, pesticide use, and sustainability, Colorado’s 236 golf facilities face increasing pressure to adopt proactive environmental stewardship practices. BMPHero.com answers this call by offering a user-friendly, mobile-friendly platform designed to make BMP adoption easy, simple, and enjoyable.

“This is a critical step for Colorado golf courses to elevate their environmental and operational impact,” said Aaron Fankhauser, Assistant General Manager & Director of Agronomy and President of the RMGCSA. “Golf courses in Colorado encompass more than 33,000 acres of green infrastructure, with nearly 12,000 acres of water, wetlands, and native rough supporting wildlife and pollinators. BMP Hero aids the process of protecting these vital resources while ensuring compliance and sustainability.”

“We are excited to be the first State to partner with Gina Rizzi and Radius Sports Group to provide BMP Hero to our RMGCSA members,” said Kyle Merritt, Superintendent Eaton Country Club, RMEGI President and RMGCSA Past President. “Not only did BMP Hero create a platform we needed for every course to create a facility BMP, but it also provides us an easy way to make future changes to our BMPs as technology, research, and legislation change over time.”

The RMGCSA’s statewide rollout of BMP Hero positions Colorado’s golf courses to take a bold step toward balancing operational excellence with environmental stewardship. The platform is tailored to help superintendents customize and efficiently adopt BMPs, with action planning for enhanced environmental management.

“We are thrilled to partner with Colorado’s incredible golf community on this groundbreaking journey,” said Gina Rizzi, Founder of BMP Hero and President of Radius Sports Group. “Colorado is a state of pioneers, and we believe its superintendents will lead the way as the first to achieve 100 percent facility BMP adoption. This initiative underscores the critical role golf courses play in preserving Colorado’s natural beauty and promoting sustainability.”

Colorado superintendents are encouraged to get started by visiting [BMPHero.com](https://BMPHero.com) and claiming their facility. Together, the RMGCSA, RMEGI, and BMP Hero are paving the way for Colorado to achieve 100 percent facility BMP adoption while setting a national standard in golf course sustainability. Additional states will be launching on BMP Hero in 2025.

# BMP Hero Launch

## About RMGCSA and RMEGI

The Rocky Mountain Golf Course Superintendents Association (RMGCSA) was founded in 1936 and is dedicated to serving its members and improving golf course management practices through education, sharing knowledge, and networking. RMGCSA is the tenth-largest affiliated chapter of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. <https://rmgcsa.org/>

The Rocky Mountain Environmental Golf Institute is the philanthropic organization of the RMGCSA. Its mission is to foster sustainability through research, awareness, education, programs, and scholarships for the benefit of Colorado golf course management professionals and facilities. <https://www.rmegi.org/>

## About BMP Hero, LLC.

BMP Hero, based in Reno, Nevada, operates a cloud-based platform to provide support for golf course superintendents and golf maintenance facilities in the development, communication, and implementation of facility best management practices. BMP Hero is a sister company to [Radius Sports Group, LLC](#), a sustainability consulting firm that works across the golf industry to positively impact society, the economy, and the environment. <https://www.bmphero.com>

## For more information, contact:

Lauren Russell, Radius Sports Group, [lauren.russell@radiusportsgroup.com](mailto:lauren.russell@radiusportsgroup.com)

The graphic features a yellow background with a dark green header bar. On the left, a white circular logo contains a golf ball on a tee with two pine trees, and the text 'BMP HERO' below. To the right of the logo, the text 'Meet BMP Hero!' is displayed in white on a dark green background. Below this, a white box contains the text: 'A simple, efficient, enjoyable platform that helps golf course superintendents create, customize, and manage Facility BMP Guides with ease. Join the Path to 100% Colorado Facility BMP Adoption by Claiming Your Course at BMPHero.com today!' followed by a dark green arrow pointing right. At the bottom right, the text 'Claim Your Facility' is written in a white script font, with 'BMPHero.com' in a white sans-serif font below it. A QR code is located in the top right corner. A dark green bar at the top left contains the text 'PATH TO 100' with three white arrows pointing right. A white bar at the bottom contains the text: 'Easy Navigation • Mobile-friendly • Cloud-based • Real-time • Action Planning • Certificate of Completion • @BMPHeroLLC'.

# GCSAA Conference and Trade Show Recap

**Overview:** CGCS Achievement Luncheon and Hospitality Night Highlights

The recent CGCS Achievement Luncheon in San Diego was a resounding success, bringing together golf course superintendents, members, and affiliates to celebrate excellence within the industry. One of the major highlights was the special guest appearance of Dennis Lyons, CGCS, who was recognized for his outstanding 45 years of service as a Certified Golf Course Superintendent. His dedication and contributions to the field were truly inspiring to all in attendance.



The Leo Fesar Award, a prestigious recognition within the community, was also presented to Dennis Lyons for his lifelong dedication and impact on the industry. His mentorship, leadership, and unwavering support for the profession have made a lasting difference, and the award was a fitting tribute to his exemplary career.



In addition to Dennis Lyons' recognition, the event also honored several individuals with the CGCS Achievement Award. Congratulations to Aaron Fankhauser, Rob Flemming, Hunter Dorsey, and Scott Ellis for their remarkable achievements and contributions to the golf course management profession. Each of them was celebrated for their dedication and commitment to the industry.



# GCSAA Conference and Trade Show Recap

The event was followed by a lively and well-attended Hospitality Night at Whiskey Girl in San Diego. With over 200 attendees, it was an evening filled with networking, laughter, and camaraderie. A big thank you to all the members and affiliates who joined the celebration—your presence made the event even more memorable.



The Golf Championships were attended by eleven members of the RMGCSA. Torrey Pines and Omni La Costa were fantastic hosts for the Fourball, Golf Classic, Scramble and National Championships. We had two chapter teams competing, neither of which played very well. We will get after it again next year in Orlando!

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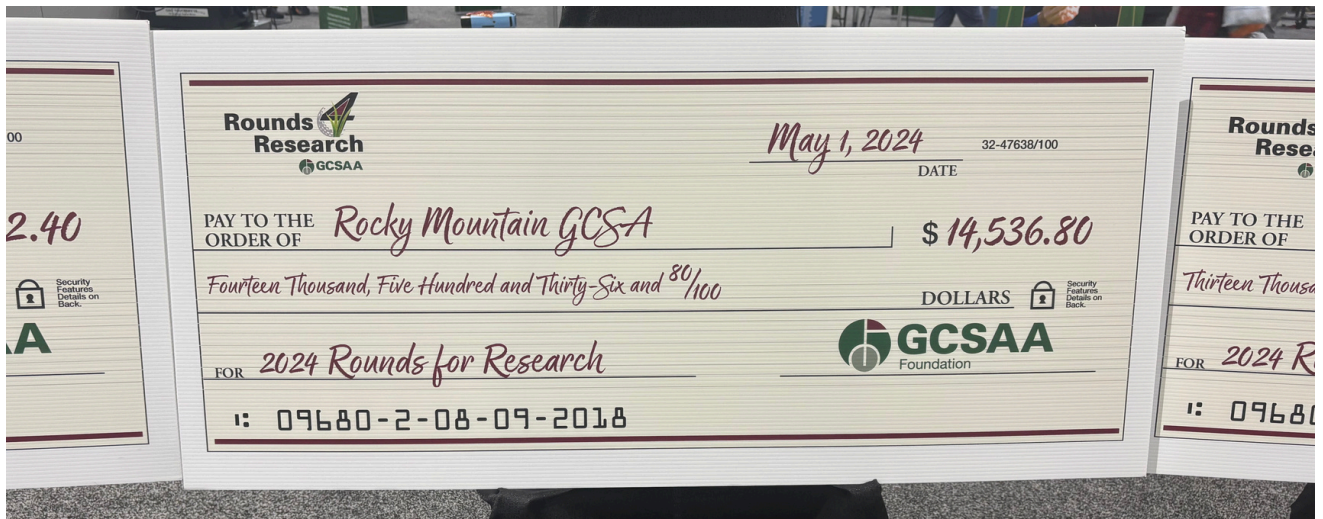
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# GCSAA Conference and Trade Show Recap



A huge thank you once again to everyone who made the CGCS Achievement Luncheon and Hospitality Night such a success. We look forward to seeing you all at future events and continuing to celebrate the hard work and dedication of golf course superintendents and industry professionals alike.

The Rocky Mountain Golf Course Superintendents Association finished 8th overall in the Rounds for Research with a total of \$14,536.80 raised for the Rocky Mountain Environmental Golf Institute.



CSU took 10th in the Turf Bowl!!

# Assistant Spotlight

**Overview:** An Interview with Tom Quade, Wellshire Golf Course



Tom Quade

## How many years have you worked in golf and how did you get started in the industry?

I am going into my 19th year of golf course maintenance. I started in 2006 working at Riverdale Golf course as a seasonal employee. I worked there while attending high school and college during the summers and after some time accepted a job at Legacy Ridge Golf course. I worked for Legacy Ridge until I got a full-time maintenance position at Westwoods golf course. I was ecstatic to finally work my way into a year-round position at a course and decided I would make this profession my career. After working at Westwoods for a couple years I moved to Colorado National Golf course to work with Rob Neuhauser as his Assistant. Rob was the superintendent at Riverdale in my early days

and I was excited to work with him again. From National I moved over to Wellshire which is where I work now. I have found a good home at Wellshire and enjoy my continued to grow and honing my profession.

## What's the most rewarding part of being an assistant for you?

The most rewarding part of my job is seeing my team execute tasks with efficiency and pride. There is nothing better than seeing a well-oiled group of workers go out at 5 am and complete the initial set up and mow for the course. Each employee individually contributes to the overall success of the day and their tasks come together to provide an outstanding product for the golfer to enjoy.

## What makes your facility unique.

What makes Wellshire unique is the age and history of the course and the fact it was designed by Donald Ross. There aren't many opportunities in the US to play at a municipal golf course that was designed by one of the legends of golf course architecture. Built in 1926 it is amazing that this place has been a staple of this community for so long, and has stood the test of time of history.

## Shorts or Pants?

I have always been a pants guy. You never know when you need to bust out the string trimmer and provide that extra detail for the golfer.

# Assistant Spotlight

## What would you tell someone that is interested in getting into golf course management?

I would tell them it is a great industry to make a career out of. I love the instant gratification of our line of work. The work you do directly impacts the satisfaction of your customers and you can see the results instantly. Whether it is spinning bunkers, mowing fairways, or anything, you see the before and after of your work and it is something to take pride in. Also, the benefit of working outside and soaking up rays of sunshine cannot be underestimated. The reason I chose this profession was to not be cooped up inside all day and to stay active. As long as you can handle the early mornings, it is a great profession to keep your body moving and to do something with your hands. Another great bonus is you get to see the sunrise everyday!

## Favorite movie?

My favorite movie has got to be Interstellar. Anything from the director Christopher Nolan I have watched multiple times and is at the top of my list.

## What do you do when you're not at work?

When I'm not at work I like to golf, go hiking, and play frisbee golf. I also like to play Nintendo Switch with my fiancé Kelsey. Nothing better than a round of Mario Kart or Overcooked!

## Favorite sports team?

I'm from Colorado so I love all the Denver teams. Although sometimes it can be a roller coaster, I feel like Denver sports fans have been blessed with some great teams throughout the years. I went to both the Nuggets and Aves championship parades recently and it was great experience.



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# The Core Toolbox to Grow Individual Intrinsic Value in the Workforce

**Overview:** Using your experience toolbox to develop a composting and cultivation program

My path to the golf course has been uniquely mine. The journey has involved athletics, the military, various mechanical opportunities, and those in the restaurant and brewery industries. With pensions nearly a thing of the past and more personal responsibility expected in terms of financial security, I never prioritized a 40 year career over personal growth and development. However, as the world often does, changes occurred which necessitated a look inside. What did I value about my current career? Where did I really want to be in the future? What did I want to accomplish? I had so many questions. It was then I realized this Journey had brought much joy and contentment as a flow of life and when opportunity rose, so too should I. Then along came a golf course.

***“Life is Journey, not a Destination.”***

-R.W. Emerson

As I entered my first season on the golf course, I had minimal experience and a cautious demeanor. Yet, even in trepid circumstances, it became clear my previous careers had prepared me quite adequately. My experience rebuilding and testing earthmoving and mining equipment made even the largest mowers and tractors on property operable. My military experience had curated an exceptional eye for detail and integrity. These simple early tasks provided enlightenment and confidence. I had a diverse toolbox filled with my core experiences which could be applied on a journey which held high personal intrinsic value.

## **Walking the Path**

Let's move forward a year or so. As the economy opened back up I found myself walking a wide path which included the golf course as well as my previous ongoing career: Brewing beer. As a brewer one is always looking for ways to reduce, repurpose, or recycle the by-products of the brewing process. As I became more familiar with the course and its operations, I realized that the brewery's challenge was an opportunity for the course. Let's start a composting program! So, we did. It was not only a great idea for the course, but it was also great for me. The program allowed me to explore my knowledge base. What did I really know? How eclectic was my toolbox? The project incited extracurricular research and experimentation. I had found a way to tie my heart strings to the course and it altered my life's trajectory in the most positive of ways. While it is not a fully running program yet (we have our active soil ready for worms this year) it provided me with a big picture long term driver. It allows me to share unique insights with coworkers and customers and helps bind the community. It is one I feel passionate about on many levels and it makes me feel like a natural part of the course.

# The Core Toolbox to Grow Individual Intrinsic Value in the Workforce

## Felix the Rad

My position has now progressed to that of Assistant Superintendent and Equipment manager. This situation allows me to work with our Superintendent and crew members on a variety of tasks. This is the spice of the golf course and the challenge of every hiring season. As is standard, each year brings new opportunities with seasonal talent. What is the best strategy to extract said talent and how does one recognize it from each individual? This is when I like to dig for the individual's toolbox, coax out their passions, and try to apply them to activities which will grow them personally and have a positive impact on course aesthetic and playability. This can be very useful with a guy like Felix. He was so inquisitive and ambitious we had to find a way to slow him down without boring him out of the business. That would have been a shame. So, we opened his toolbox. What we found out is he really wanted to fight wildfires once eligible in addition to having a good amount of experience with the Job Corps working in rugged terrain. His ambition was now part of the team toolbox, and we had a great way to apply it. Our course is near the confluence of Gunnison and Colorado Rivers and is subject to many invasive and detrimental plants, specifically Tamarisk and Russian Olive. Therefore, we were able to Use Felix's intrinsic values and toolbox to free him into the project. He gained valuable experience, not only with the equipment, but as a leader of removal and mitigation crews. In turn, we gained a more beautiful course and a positive posture in regard to sustainability and environmental stewardship. Oh yeah, he killed the project and will be returning for another season.

## The Endless Journey

These experiences have altered how I view crew composition as well as my personal make up. I will no longer be focused on a destination, rather the collection of experience, skill, and interaction to create a holistic being. I now engage co-workers more personally so we can connect and reveal the things closest to us, our ambitions, experiences, and passions. I encourage all people to do the same. For unless you do so, you and your course may be missing out on an unrecognized opportunity.



Tom Quade

## About the Author:

Rob is the Assistant Superintendent and Equipment Manager at Redlands Mesa Golf Course in Grand Junction, Colorado. He is currently embarking on his fifth season on the beautiful, arroyo laced Jim Engh design.



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# The Future(s) is Now

Written By: Tyler Gillette

The Rocky Mountain Golf Course Superintendents Association puts on some great golf events every season where we get to check out many of the great public and private courses around the state of Colorado. I make a big effort to attend all these events as they are a great way to network with both customers and colleagues in the industry (and we get to play golf!).

If you attended last year's Future's Tournament, you probably agree that it was one of our best events of 2024. The weather was fantastic and Bernie Kubistek and his staff at West Woods Golf Club were great hosts for the day. This event has really grown the past couple of years and is becoming a one of the events I really look forward to each season.

One observation I have made is that not many affiliate representatives have been attending this event. I encourage more of you to sign up for this event. It is a great way to get to know some of the future superintendents and leaders in our industry. I have really enjoyed getting to know many of the assistants in the past couple of years and it is always exciting to see one of them take that next step in their careers.

I also encourage superintendents to send your assistants, equipment managers, interns, and other employees who are members of the RMGCSA to this event. I have seen firsthand how much it means to those guys to get out for a day of golf and networking with their peers. If you have not done this event or sent your assistant or other members of your staff, do it! This year it will be on Wednesday, June 11th at Flatirons Golf Course in Boulder. Hope to see many of you there!



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# Upcoming Events



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## COLORADO GOLF DAY

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## WEST SLOPE GOLF EVENT

April 28, 2025  
TBD

## FUTURES TOURNAMENT

June 11, 2025  
Flatirons Golf Course

## MEMORIAL TOURNAMENT

June 19, 2025  
Univ. Denver Golf Club at Highlands Ranch

## BEST TOURNAMENT EVER

July 18, 2025  
TBD

## AFFILIATE CUP

August 11, 2025  
Gypsum Creek Golf Course

## CHAMPIONSHIPS AND CHALLENGES FINALS

September 2, 2025  
Lone Tree Golf Club & Hotel

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE

November 17-18, 2025  
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## FALL PESTICIDE WORKSHOP

October 23, 2025  
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