

The Reporter

From the Rocky Mountain Chapter of GCSAA
Growing Green Since 1936



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[Pinehurst Country Club](#)

President's Message

Joe Kunze, CGCS, City of Arvada, RMGCSA President

Each year, the Rocky Mountain Golf Course Superintendents Association (RMGCSA) proudly offers a variety of awards and scholarships to benefit our membership. These opportunities are funded directly by your membership dues and are a valuable benefit of belonging to our professional association. As members, it is our responsibility to promote, nominate, apply for, and pursue these awards. These awards play an important role in professional development and resume building. Nominating a colleague not only helps them achieve personal and professional goals, but also shines a spotlight on the dedication, leadership, and excellence within our industry.

New Member Stipends Coming This Year

This year, the RMGCSA will also finalize and introduce three new member stipends. Members will have the opportunity to apply for financial assistance to attend:

- The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America National Conference and Trade Show
- The RMGCSA Annual Educational Conference
- National Golf Day in Washington, D.C.

These stipends will be funded through the RMGCSA budget using dues revenue—another strong example of how the association continues to reinvest in and provide tangible value to its membership.

These scholarships, awards, and stipends represent the meaningful benefits available to every member of the RMGCSA. Please visit the [website](#), connect with the Awards Committee, or reach out to a Board member with any questions, comments, or nominations. I encourage each and every member to nominate someone who could benefit from these outstanding opportunities. Let's work together to ensure these awards are fully utilized and continue to elevate the professionalism and success of our association.

Joe Kunze, CGCS

President, City of Arvada



Superintendent Spotlight

By Keenan Lilyquist, Class A, Red Sky Ranch

Describe Your Facility

Red Sky Ranch and Golf Club is in wonderful Wolcott Colorado, just a few short minutes west of Beaver Creek Resort. A Resort/ Private club opened in 2001 offering 36 holes of breath-taking mountain golf, tennis and hiking trails. Architects Greg Norman and Tom Fazio have created two unique layouts to challenge golfers of all abilities.

What is the most significant challenge you encounter at your facility?

The most significant challenge we face here at Red Sky is moving water through out the facility. There is over 1000ft of elevation gain, and 6 pumps/motors throughout the course. We supply water to both golf courses as well as the water treatment facility for Residential use. At 25 years old, our 16” mainline that feeds the Fazio course as well as the transfer line to the upper Norman course, requires several repairs per season. When repair is required, all water movement on the Fazio course stops, and Norman course has roughly 2 nights of water in reserve.

How many years have you worked in the golf industry and how did you enter the profession?

I got started in the golf course industry raking bunkers and walk mowing at the Town & Country Club in St. Paul Minnesota. From a young age I knew I was meant to work outdoors and after a few years on the crew, I realized this was the career path for me.

How many years have you worked in the golf industry and how did you enter the profession?

I got started in the golf course industry raking bunkers and walk mowing at the Town & Country Club in St. Paul Minnesota. From a young age I knew I was meant to work outdoors and after a few years on the crew, I realized this was the career path for me.

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In your view, what is your facility doing particularly well?

Our facility does many things well, but I believe our safety program is one of the best. Daily safety meetings provide a valuable time to proactively engage in the dangers associated with our profession. But also, it is a regular opportunity for staff to bring observations, ideas or simply questions to the table.

What do you find most rewarding about serving as a Superintendent?

With great challenges come great rewards, and this profession has no shortage of either. Enjoying some of the best sunrises (and sunsets) mother nature has to offer. Watching a new task finally “click” with a new trainee. Global networking, how cool is it that our profession is in almost every corner of the earth? And so willing to share information and collaborate!

What is your favorite hole on the course?

My favorite hole on the golf course has to be the 14th. Nestled back in the aspen trees, it offers almost a complete view of the Vail Valley from the second shot. The greens complex is narrow and offers a multitude of ways to play each shot.

Without compromising yourself or others, what is the most humorous or ill-advised situation you have experienced on the job?

During the final stages of a pond restoration project (course was closed), the liners and rip rap edges had been installed, and we began to fill the pond using a mainline drain that was built to outlet into the pond. After returning from the pump station to ensure proper pressure, I noticed the two crew members who were meant to be installing the re-vegetation irrigation around the perimeter, were swimming in the middle of the pond.

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What is the most recent book that you have read?

Extreme Ownership. Jocko Willink & Leif Babin

How do you prefer to spend your time away from work?

Time away from work is spent with the family, preferably doing anything outside.

What is your favorite film?

It is a three-way tie: The Blues Brothers, Snatch, and The Big Lebowski

Which tool in your cart do you consider indispensable?

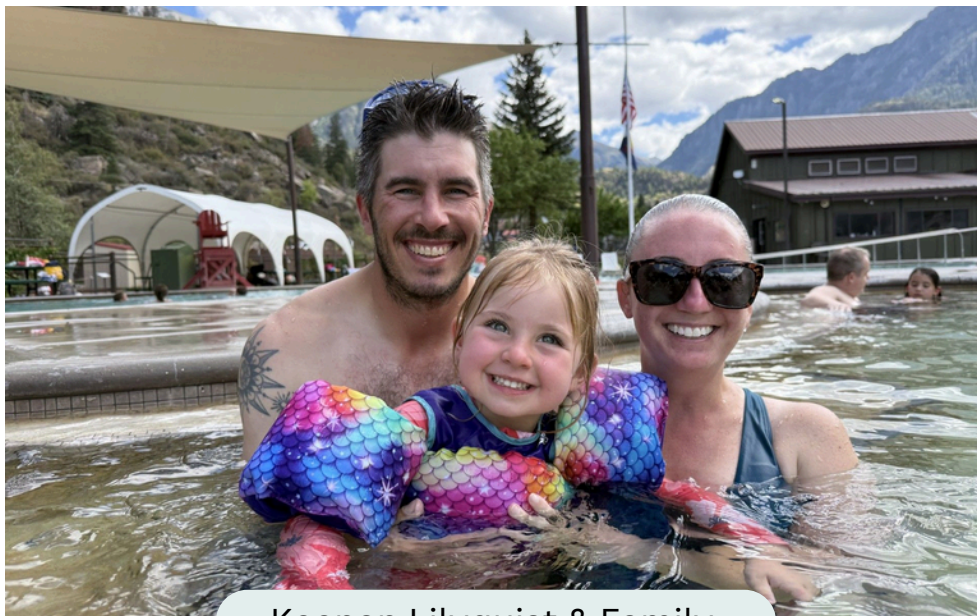
Channel locks

Do you prefer to wear shorts or pants while working?

Pants! (unless afternoon watering)

Which sports teams do you support?

All Minnesota Sports



Keenan Lilyquist & Family

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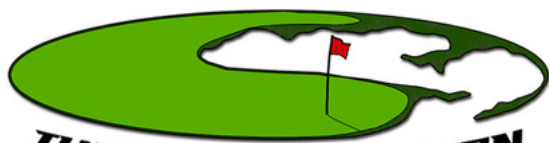
From High Desert to Inland Northwest: A Three-Year Reflection

By Zach Bauer, CGCS, Class A, Coeur d'Alene National

It's hard to believe it has already been three years since I left Colorado for a new job opportunity in North Idaho. I wanted to share some experiences, along with the differences I've observed between growing turf in Colorado versus Idaho. Even though I'm no longer a resident, I still value my RMGCSA membership and enjoy staying connected through colleagues and The Reporter to see what's happening back "home."

I started in March of 2023 at CDA National Reserve in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, following 17 years in Colorado. My new club had received over 100 inches of snow and experienced 130 days of snow cover; dramatically different from the Front Range, yet in some ways like Colorado's high country. On average, we receive between 60 and 120 inches of snow annually, though totals always depend on weather patterns. Annual precipitation is another major difference: North Idaho sees roughly 22–28" per year, most of it falling between September and May. Beginning in June, we enter the classic Pacific Northwest dry season that lasts through mid-September, with very little rainfall—and often very few clouds.

At 2,800 feet, the course sits at a much lower elevation than anything I worked on in Colorado. Summers are generally mild, with highs in the 70s and 80s and lows in the 50s. However, intense heat waves do roll into the PNW, sometimes lasting multiple weeks and pushing temperatures into the mid-90s and occasionally near 110 degrees. Even with these heat events, evapotranspiration rates are significantly lower than what I was accustomed to in Colorado. Over the past two years, the highest ET I've recorded is 0.24, with typical summer averages between 0.15 and 0.18. I attribute this difference largely to lower elevation and higher humidity compared to Colorado. In 2026, our club recorded 24.75 inches of ET and 23.25 inches of precipitation—numbers that contrast sharply with Colorado's high-desert climate. These conditions have led me to adopt different water management principles and, overall, significantly reduce water usage. Continued on Page: 8



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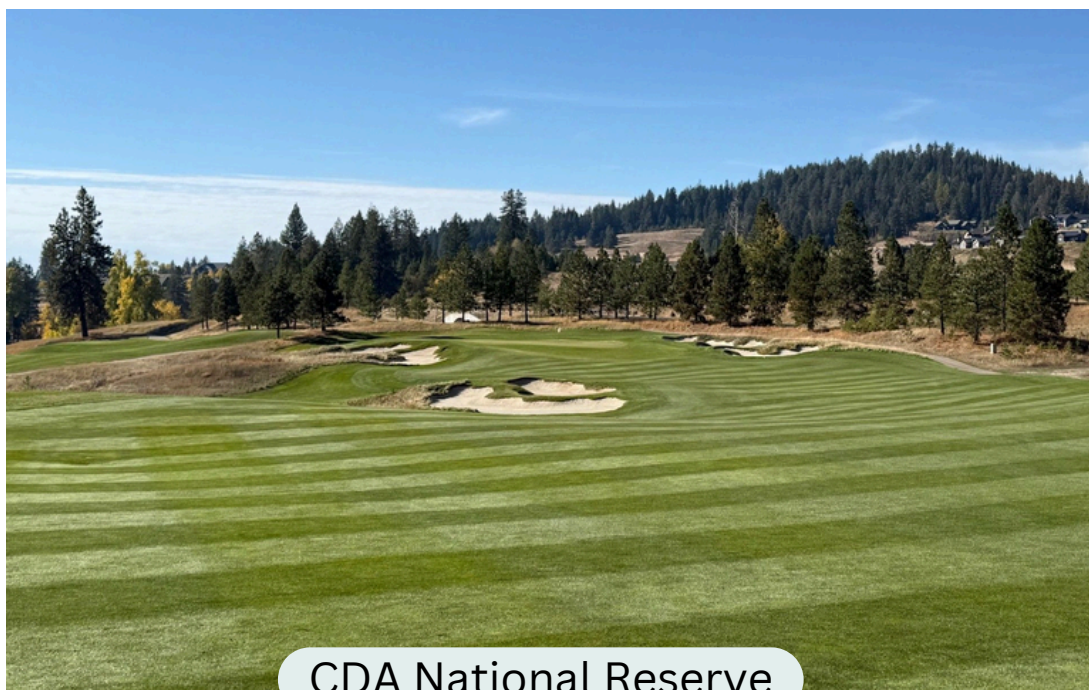
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One of the biggest differences between Colorado and North Idaho is that winter watering simply isn't necessary here. In Colorado, winter watering is essential, and every facility has its own approach to keeping turf hydrated during dry conditions. In the Coeur d'Alene area, consistent rain and snow throughout the winter eliminate that need entirely. That said, we receive far less winter sunlight than Colorado. Winters here are dark and wet, with sunrise around 7:35 a.m. and sunset as early as 3:45 p.m. on December 21. This changes dramatically in the summer, when sunrise comes before 5:30 a.m. and sunsets stretch close to 10 p.m. Being roughly 600 miles farther north has a noticeable impact on sun angle and day length, and it took some time to adjust.

Higher humidity also brings increased disease and insect pressure, requiring adjustments to our management programs. While fungicide applications were rare for me in Colorado, Idaho requires a much more proactive fungicide-focused approach. Our snow mold program closely mirrors those used in Colorado's mountain regions, with a pre-treatment around the first week of October and a final application in early November. Golf in this region is highly seasonal—public and private courses alike close for the winter. At CDA National Reserve, our season typically runs from May through October.

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CDA National Reserve

Seasonal growth and turf transitions in North Idaho differ significantly from Colorado, particularly in spring and fall. Spring growth tends to be slower and more gradual due to cold, saturated soils and limited sunlight, whereas Colorado courses often experience a rapid green-up and growth once soils warm and temperatures increase. In the fall, Idaho turf does not harden off as cleanly because of persistent moisture and reduced light. These conditions also influence overall playing characteristics. Colorado's arid climate naturally produces firm, fast surfaces with minimal input, while North Idaho courses tend to play softer, especially in spring and early summer. Achieving firmness in Idaho requires a deliberate approach through consistent cultural practices such as venting, topdressing, and improved drainage rather than relying on climate alone.

Another key difference is tree density. North Idaho courses typically have far more trees, which limit sunlight and airflow, extend surface moisture, and increase disease pressure. As a result, tree management decisions are often driven by turf health and playability rather than aesthetics. These environmental factors also shape golfer expectations.

In Colorado, players generally associate quality conditions with firm, fast, and dry surfaces, while in North Idaho, lush, green, and receptive turf is often viewed as the standard. Ultimately, the transition between regions requires a shift in mindset as a superintendent. Colorado emphasizes drought management, water conservation, and stress tolerance, while North Idaho demands patience, precise timing, and restraint, with greater focus on long-term planning and adapting to consistently moist conditions.

Ultimately, the move from Colorado to North Idaho has reinforced that successful turf management is never a one size fits all. While principles of agronomy remain the same, the environment dictates how those principles are applied. The transition has expanded my perspective as a superintendent, and it continues to remind me that learning and adapting are essential parts of this profession. If anyone finds themselves in the Spokane or CdA area, come on by and say *Hi!*

Assistant Spotlight

By Eric Platt, Class C, Flatirons Golf Course

Describe your Facility?

18-hole municipal course in Boulder was built in 1938. Large trees, narrow fairways, several creeks and ponds, push up greens. Beautiful views of the Flatirons and surrounding mountains.

What is the biggest challenge you face at your facility?

Although I am familiar with the course as a player. Being new to the facility and team, my focus is being a sponge and absorbing all the facility and course information, learning the personality of the property. In addition to building new relationships within our operations, just enjoying taking it all in and embracing a new challenge.

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What do you enjoy most about your team?

A real sense of family and camaraderie. Everyone supports one another and picks each other up when needed. This fosters a good team environment when we treat each other like family.

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Eric Platt & Family

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What is the most rewarding part of being an assistant?

Working with people and building lifelong friendships. I've been fortunate to make some good friends along the way. The grass doesn't drink beer or catch fish so that's a challenging friendship to build, for me it's important to build friendships with people.

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

26 years. I started at Twin Peaks Golf Course in Longmont Colorado as a high school seasonal. My parents told me to get a summer job so I thought this would be something cool to do outside. On my first day I learned that the greens were real grass! I always thought it was fake as a kid. My interest grew more over the years and here I am today back in the town I was born in working in golf.

What do you enjoy doing when you're not at work?

Spending time with my wife Courtney, our son Logan and our dog Hops. Gardening and cooking together. We like to travel, camp, fish and go to sporting events. Looking forward to some fun fishing trips this summer in Colorado, Wyoming and Lake Tahoe.

What is your favorite hole on your course, and why?

Hole #4, a par 3 with a great view of the Flatirons in the background

What's the last book you read?

Stalking Trophy Brown Trout

Favorite restaurant?

Il Pastaio in Boulder or Rosa Cantina in Longmont

Shorts or pants?

"Jorts! Cuz Jorts are hilarious."



Snow Cover on Greens: When Winter Protection Turns into Ice Damage

By: Alex Kosel, Class B, Breckenridge Golf Club

For superintendents in the Rocky Mountain region, winter turf survival often comes down to a deceptively simple question:

Is snow helping us—or hurting us?

Most of us know the answer from experience. Snow is usually beneficial. Ice is not. The challenge lies in managing the transition between the two.

Snow Is (Usually) Your Friend

Consistent snow cover acts as a natural insulator. Just a few inches of dry, uniform snow can moderate soil temperatures, reduce crown desiccation, and protect turf from extreme cold and winter winds. Greens with consistent snow cover often survive prolonged cold snaps better than exposed turf, particularly in our high-elevation, high-radiation environment.

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Alex Kosel & Jack 🐾

Ice Is the Problem

Issues arise when snow melts and refreezes, or when rain or freezing rain seals greens beneath ice. These conditions commonly follow mid-winter warm spells that quickly turn cold.

Extended ice cover can cause several types of injury:

- **Anoxia (oxygen depletion):** Ice restricts gas exchange, disrupting respiration and leading to turf decline or death. Research and field experience indicate **Poa annua** may begin to suffer injury after **30–45** days of continuous ice cover at soil temperatures near **32°F**, while creeping bentgrass can often tolerate longer periods under similar conditions.
- **Crown hydration injury:** Turf absorbs water during thaw periods above 32–40°F, which then freezes inside plant tissue when temperatures drop rapidly.
- **Direct freezing injury:** Dense, clear ice lacks insulating air pockets and can expose turf crowns to lethal temperatures. *Poa annua* injury has been observed when crown temperatures fall below approximately –5°F, while creeping bentgrass typically tolerates colder conditions, often down to –10°F or lower, depending on acclimation.

Ice damage rarely results from a single event. More often, it develops from repeated weather cycles combined with site-specific vulnerabilities such as poor drainage, low spots, excessive thatch, or high *Poa annua* populations.

Management and Expectations

Proactive snow management—particularly timely action before melt-and-refreeze cycles—remains one of the most effective tools for reducing risk. Decisions should be guided by turf species, forecasted temperature trends, and the historical performance of individual greens.

Ice injury often becomes visible only after winter, showing up as thinning turf, delayed green-up, soft areas, or uneven putting surfaces.

In most Rocky Mountain winters, snow is an ally—until it turns into ice. Managing the shoulder seasons, when fluctuating temperatures create the greatest risk, can make the difference between a smooth spring opening and months of recovery.

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Superintendent Takeaway:

Protect consistent snow cover whenever possible but closely monitor prolonged ice encasement—especially on Poa-dominated greens—before freeze-thaw cycles turn winter protection into spring turf loss. Here at Breckenridge Golf Club, this season we cleared greens after every snow event as the heaviest amount was 4” or 5”.

This snow was followed by consistently warm temperatures in the mid-40s to 50s for several days. In a “typical” year, they have 2 feet + for most of the winter, and they stay insulated with less risk of ice forming at the surface of the green. In this instance, we still check the greens surface regularly to ensure no ice has formed.

Although we risk severe cold temperature injury keeping them clear, after what occurred in the 2020 season with ice damage over all the greens, we stay pro-active and clear if we have even the slightest risk of ice due to high temperatures and minimal snow coverage. Overall, I believe we managed snow removal appropriately in this very strange winter climate, and we are excited to roll some smooth putts come Spring time!

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Directors Corner

By Kevin Abila, Class A, Club at Crested Butte

When it comes to our competence and success in our journey through this crazy adventure we call life, there will most likely be some very influential people throughout that adventure. For most of us that credit weighs heavily on the people that raised us. But how about once we leave the nest? Many of us leave school with an exact idea of where we would like to spend a majority of our effort when it comes to where we see our future going. Others are influenced heavily by the people we surround ourselves with as we grow our careers. If you run into an individual who is willing to go out of their way for your happiness or personal improvement, that is a special kind of person, consider yourself very lucky. Those individuals are willing to put aside their personal commitments to help another human being get through life a little easier. These selfless people really help this world go round, it's one thing to help out a person here and there, but it's a whole other level of strength to assist people on a continual basis without the potential of retribution.

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“Do you know someone who goes above and beyond?”



Kevin Abila & Family

Some people help others because there is the potential to reap the benefit of their growth via an added capable staff member or to prepare them to replace yourself. To truly be available for people just to see them succeed with no benefit to yourself is truly a sign of excellence. With this in mind, I'm sure we have witnessed or met individuals who consistently strive for success through their work and the people they encounter.

That is why the RMGCSA has a few awards that are available to certain classifications of our membership. Do you know someone in our association that is constantly going out of their way just to help make things a little easier for everyone they encounter without any consideration? Well, now you have the chance to recognize that individual by nominating them for one of the four awards presented annually by the RMGCSA.

The Distinguished Service Award is designed to acknowledge the demonstrated outstanding contributions by RMGCSA members for the benefit of the association. This award is intended to encourage professional development and improve morale by honoring sustained contributions made by selected individuals. The contributions should not be limited to service to the RMGCSA but should include activities in other turfgrass organizations and should emphasize contributions to the Golf Course Turfgrass Management community at large. This award's criteria are typically based on significant contributions over a period of time and this award is not typically given for a single contribution. This award is given to one individual.

Equipment Manager of the Year Award will be presented annually to the equipment manager who has demonstrated dedication to their job over the past year.

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The guidelines are as follows:

1. Must be a member of the RMGCSA Chapter (Class EM); in good standings.
2. Represents organization to the highest degree professionally and individually.
3. This award shall be governed by the equipment manager’s achievements in any of the following.
 - Competent in mechanical skills.
 - Utilizes problem solving in an effective and efficient manner.
 - Assists course preparations if needed
 - Applies fiscal responsibility
 - Goes “Above and Beyond” to “Help the Cause.”
4. These accomplishments must have occurred in the current year

Assistant Superintendent of the Year Award recognizes the specific achievements of a golf course assistant superintendent whose performance and contributions to the success of the facility go beyond those that would normally be expected. The award is to be presented to an individual who has contributed to his or her golf facility in a significant way and who has demonstrated professionalism, leadership, innovation and a team approach in their work.

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In The Field!

The Assistant Superintendent of the Year Award is open to RMGCSA member Assistant Superintendents, with a minimum of two years of experience working as an Assistant Superintendent. Nominations must be made by the superintendent or general manager at the facility at which the assistant is currently employed. The nominee must be an Assistant Superintendent member of the RMGCSA.

Superintendent of the Year Award is given to an individual who has expressed outstanding dedication, care and commitment to the Rocky Mountain Golf Course Superintendents Association, GCSAA, the golf industry at large, and his/her community. Any member of Rocky Mountain GCSA may nominate an individual starting in May and ending October 1st. Evidence of substantiation must accompany the nomination.

Current members of the Board of Directors and their immediate families are ineligible to receive the Superintendent of the Year Award. Rocky Mountain GCSA Board Members, their immediate family members, or immediate staff members are not eligible to receive awards. Nomination forms can be found on the RMGCSA website along with application forms for scholarship programs sponsored by the RMGCSA as well. Yes, you read correctly, the RMGCSA also offers two different scholarship opportunities for students to further their education.

The RMGCSA Legacy Scholarship Award offers education aid to the children and grandchildren of RMGCSA voting members. An annual award of \$2500 to two applicants will be funded by the RMGCSA and administered by the Board of Directors of the RMGCSA. The Rocky Mountain Environmental Institute Memorial Scholarship Program was developed to recognize outstanding students at an accredited institute of higher learning who are planning careers in golf course management. An annual award of \$2,000 will be funded by RMEGI and administered by the RMEGI Board of Trustees. Applications can be found on the RMGCSA website along with requirements associated with each scholarship.

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Please nominate a colleague this season and keep in mind, awards validate hard work, talent and commitment. Recognition does not only affect the recipient, but it also influences observers as well. Individuals who see colleagues celebrated may envision similar paths for themselves.

The visibility of achievement expands what others believe is possible. Giving awards is not merely about handing out medals or trophies.

It is about acknowledging dedication, reinforcing values, motivating progress and building togetherness to help shape behavior and inspire excellence. *Thanks for your support!*



RMGCSA Chapter Hospitality – Orlando, Florida

by Jake Jacobs, Class A, Flatirons Golf Course

On February 4th, the Rocky Mountain Golf Course Superintendents Association (RMGCSA) hosted its annual Chapter Hospitality event at Twin Peaks in Orlando during the GCSAA Conference and Trade Show. With 210 RMGCSA members traveling to Orlando to attend the National Conference, it was great to see 165 members gather for an evening of camaraderie, networking, and reconnecting with colleagues from across the region. The event provided a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere for members to share experiences from the conference, discuss industry trends, and strengthen professional relationships.

Chapter Hospitality continues to be one of the highlights of the week, offering members a chance to connect outside of the busy conference schedule. The strong attendance once again reflects the engagement and dedication of RMGCSA members, and the value placed on building relationships within our association.

Thank you to our sponsors, everyone who attended and all who helped make this year's hospitality event a success. We look forward to continuing this tradition at future conferences. Continued on Page: 22



Chapter Hospitality 2026



Recap of GCSAA 2026 Orlando

By Ben Getman, Class A, Denver Country Club

The chilly weather might have been the only disappointment at GCSAA 2026 Orlando this past February. The GCSAA is celebrating its Centennial year, and they did their best to go all out.

Our two RMGCSA chapter teams battled through the unseasonably cold and windy conditions. Although they did not win, they can confirm they had a good time despite the chill.

The Opening Session on Monday afternoon concluded with the first day of educational seminars and interactive learning opportunities. Hosted by Golf Channels Lauren Thompson, the event showcased several awards and recognition including tributes to GCSAA founder, Col. John Morley, a robust representation of Past Presidents, this years Old Tom Morris Award winners, and many others who are doing meaningful work in our industry.

Tuesday was capped off with the Centennial Celebration at ICON Park. Several sponsors set up in a handful of different dining venues throughout the park. Attendees were encouraged to move from place to place for food, drinks, and banter amongst the 1000's of GCSAA members. There was plenty to eat and drink, and it was a big party thrown to commemorate a century of leadership in golf course management.

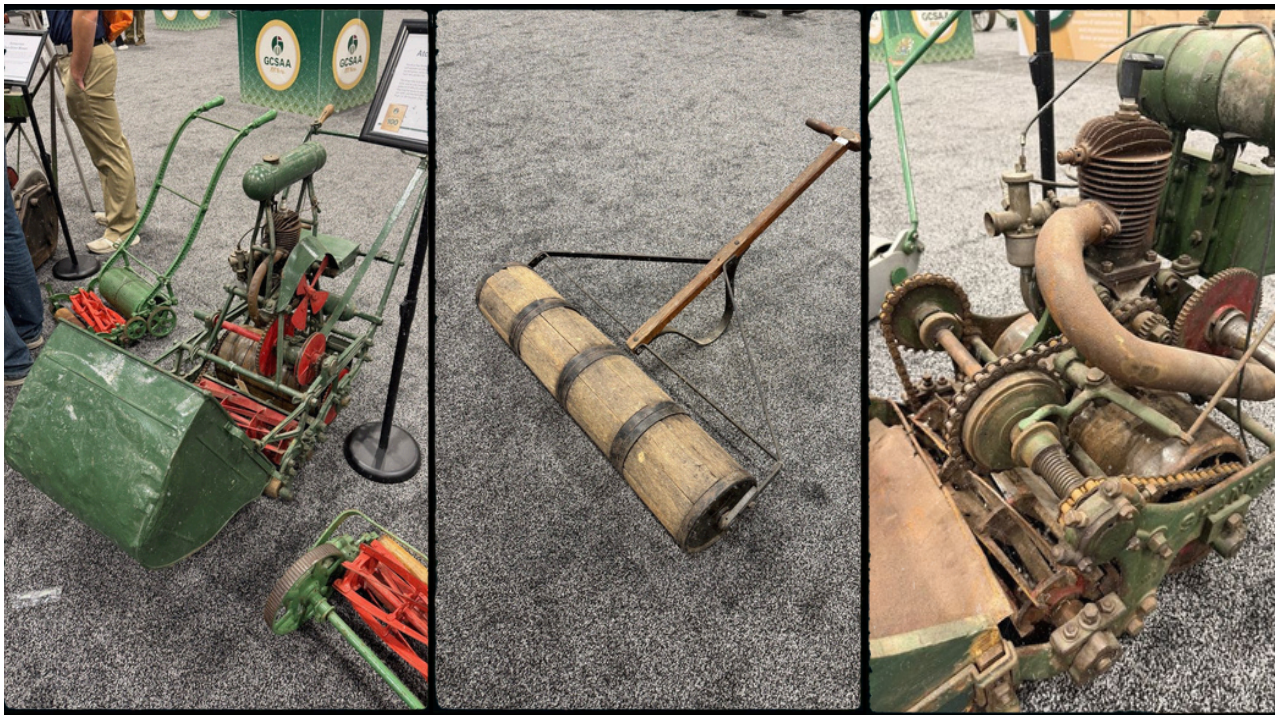
Wednesday was dominated by the Trade Show and the GCSAA Centennial Experience. It's always great to walk the floor, check out new products, lust over fancy equipment, and most importantly catch up with colleagues. The Centennial Experience was a unique look back at the past 100 years of golf course maintenance, and the old equipment and tools on display were mind blowing. It was amazing to see the relics and early innovative tools used by those who came before us. Hope those who made it to the show floor remembered to grab their GCSAA Challenge Coin. Continued on Page: 23



The Rocky Mountain chapter had 225 members attend the conference and activities, including several of our local vendors. We had 166 members attend the sold out RMGCSA Chapter social event at Twin Peaks Wednesday night. It is always great to have a strong representation of our chapter, and we hope to top that number next year in New Orleans. If you have never attended the GCSAA Education Conference, it is a worthwhile experience and certainly recommended. The RMGCSA has scholarship opportunities for 1st time attendees that can help with the cost.

On Thursday, the entire week was championed by the election our current past president, and longtime industry leader Aaron Fankhauser to the GCSAA National Board of Directors. Many of us already know of Aaron's steadfast commitment to excellence in our industry, his unwavering devotion to his team, and his passionate dedication of the Rocky Mountain chapter. We are extremely fortunate to have him as our ambassador at the national level and look forward to his continued representation of the RMGCSA.

“No life is, or can be, self-existent. We depend upon each other”
– Col. John Morley, GCSAA Founder



Affiliate Angle

By Zack Carnes, Husqvarna

I'm pleased to have the opportunity to introduce myself and share a bit about my background and purpose here today. My name is Zack Carnes, and I currently serve as an Account Manager in the Golf and Sports Turf division at Husqvarna Group. I'm based in Denver and work closely with Colorado Golf & Turf, supporting customers throughout Colorado and Wyoming, as well as parts of the West Coast, primarily California and Nevada. I stepped into this role just under a year ago, which brought me up here last July. Before transitioning into account management, I spent nearly three years in my hometown of Dallas working hands-on as a technician for Husqvarna robotic mowers. That technical experience has proven incredibly valuable as I continue to grow within this industry, giving me a practical understanding of the equipment and the challenges our customers face day to day.

A little more about me before I begin my talk: I graduated from the University of Arkansas in 2023 with a degree in Recreation and Sports Management. Since college, my life has revolved around a handful of passions; golf, downhill mountain biking, water and snow skiing, plus hunting and fishing. Needless to say Colorado has been a perfect fit. If any of you share those interests, I'd love to connect.... I should also apologize for bringing some Texas-style weather with me this winter, it seems to have followed me north. Most of my family is still in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, where I grew up. And for the record, I'm only a Cowboys fan when they're good... and I'm not afraid to admit it. Continued on Page: 25



Zack Carnes

Husqvarna has been a leader in robotic mowing technology since the 1990s, and it's exciting to see that long-standing innovation being adapted for golf course applications. Through our partnership with Colorado Golf & Turf and our involvement with the RMGCSA, my focus isn't just to introduce new technology, it's to build relationships within the superintendent community and help make day-to-day operations more efficient. Even in my relatively short time in the golf industry, it's clear that labor availability remains one of the biggest challenges.

There's never enough time in the day. As the game continues to grow, many teams are exploring ways to supplement labor and increase productivity without simply adding more hours or staff. Automation has become a common, and important part of those conversations. It's been rewarding to see Husqvarna evolve its proven robotic technology specifically to support these real-world needs on the golf course.

This year, my goal is to stay active in RMGCSA meetings and events and continue building meaningful relationships throughout the region. I understand our solutions may not be the right fit for every course or every situation, but when there is interest, I want to make sure I'm a friendly and familiar face. Y'all are a close-knit group and if I can help compliment that, I will consider it time well spent.

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The Board Welcomes Tyler Miget

Joe Kunze, CGCS, City of Arvada, RMGCSA President

Welcome, Tyler Miget!

The Rocky Mountain Golf Course Superintendents Association is pleased to welcome Tyler Miget, CTEM to its Board of Directors.

Tyler serves as the Head Equipment Manager at Harmony Club and is a Certified Turf Equipment Manager (CTEM) as well as the Founder of Rock Coast Golf Company. He joins the Board in an Ex-Officio position, where he will serve as a liaison for equipment managers and help the Board more fully represent the diverse membership of the association.

Each year, the Rocky Mountain Golf Course Superintendents Association (RMGCSA) strives to increase involvement from Equipment Managers across the region. Tyler brings a strong vision to this role, including:

- Elevating recognition for Equipment Managers within the industry
- Strengthening relationships between Equipment Managers and Golf Course Superintendents
- Creating more opportunities for networking and professional development among Equipment Managers
- Increasing engagement through surveys and other outreach efforts to better understand how this Board position can serve the membership most effectively

An important component of Tyler's new role will be developing a succession plan for the Ex-Officio Equipment Manager position to ensure long-term success and continuity. To accomplish this, he will be forming a committee to help guide these initiatives and determine how RMGCSA can best support and advance these goals.

If you are interested in getting involved or serving on this committee, please reach out to Tyler directly at tyler.miget@gmail.com or visit the RMGCSA website to express your interest.

Please join us in welcoming Tyler to the Board and supporting his efforts to further engage and elevate Equipment Managers within our association.

Joe Kunze, CGCS

President, City of Arvada



Tyler Miget

2026 RMGCSA Facility Tour Highlights Collaboration and Innovation

By Nate Lundy, Class C, Flatirons Golf Course

The second annual RMGCSA Facility Tour brought together equipment managers, assistant superintendents, and superintendents for an in-depth look at maintenance operations across the region. The event created a platform for idea-sharing, and discussion around the challenges and efficiencies within maintenance facilities. Each stop offered their perspective on equipment storage, workflow design, and operational logistics.

The Club at Pradera

The tour began at The Club at Pradera, where Superintendent Chad Gilkinson welcomed attendees and provided insight into the club's history and operational structure. The maintenance complex features a central equipment barn connected directly to the equipment manager's shop, creating an efficient transition between storage and service areas. The shop houses lift and grinding equipment, while a covered pull-through area and four material storage bays enhance functionality. Additional outdoor equipment storage further supports daily operations.

Continued on Page: 28



Club @ Pradera

Colorado Golf Club

The next stop on the tour was Colorado Golf Club, where Head Groundskeeper Steve Eller welcomed the group inside the facility’s main storage barn and outlined the operation’s primary challenges. The space includes three large overhead doors and three designated work areas along the rear of the building, each accommodating ongoing projects. Outside, the property features a sizable yard with additional outdoor equipment storage and material bays. One of the facility’s most significant concerns is the amount of equipment that must be stored outdoors and exposed to the elements throughout the year.

Continued on Page: 29



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Saddle Rock Golf Course

The final stop brought the group to Saddle Rock Golf Course, where Superintendent Kevin Kallas highlighted the realities of managing a municipal operation. Similar to the other facilities, the mechanic shop connects directly to the main equipment storage area, improving workflow and accessibility. Adjacent to the shop is a spacious yard used for material staging and outdoor storage. The visit reinforced both the shared challenges and unique considerations of municipal golf maintenance



Saddle Rock Golf Course

Common Themes and Takeaways

Across all three facilities, consistent themes emerged: the importance of adequate covered storage, functional breakroom space for staff, and expansive outdoor areas capable of accommodating equipment and materials. More importantly, the tour underscored the value of collaboration among industry peers. Participants left with fresh ideas, renewed perspective, and practical solutions to enhance their own maintenance programs.

Preparing for Drought: What It Means for Superintendents

By Dan Sprague, Class A, Willis Case Golf Course

The 2025-2026 winter has brought record-breaking warm and dry conditions across the Front Range and throughout Colorado. Snow water equivalent currently sits at roughly 53% of median. This tracks as the worst winter to this point since SNOTEL tracking began in the 1980s and among the bottom ten years in more than 50 years of recordkeeping¹. Reservoir conditions vary widely. Denver Water reports its system is relatively healthy right now, with most reservoirs above 80% capacity². In contrast, Aurora's system is more stressed, with storage closer to 60%³. For superintendents, that means proactive steps should be taken now to prepare for potential restrictions and shortages later this summer.

After a recent meeting with Denver Water staff, Denver Golf is preparing for a potential 10% reduction in irrigation from our 5-year average. A Water Shortage Watch may be called triggering proactive conservation measures and outdoor watering restrictions.

At Willis Case, we have pressurized our irrigation system nearly a month earlier than normal due to the dry conditions. Because we operate on potable water, every gallon is tracked. A 10% reduction equates to roughly 7 million gallons annually.

At Breckenridge Golf Club, Superintendent Alex Kosel depends entirely on snowpack runoff. Once snow melts run out, he relies on a 10 million gallon holding pond. As levels decline, irrigation will be cut strategically: first the driving range, then rough, followed by fairways. His model reflects the same priority-based approach many of us may need this season.

The lack of winter moisture, combined with heavy play due to unseasonably warm weather, has already stressed turf across the Front Range. This has led Denver Golf, along with many other facilities, to restrict golf cart usage to reduce stress. Despite this, and consistent winter watering with nurse tanks and frost-free systems after irrigation shutdown, turf loss has occurred that will become more evident this spring.

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THE REPORTER

For most courses, a 10% reduction cannot be achieved simply by trimming runtimes across the board. Facilities already operate lean irrigation programs, and broad cuts will quickly affect playability. Instead, reductions must come through refinement.

We will begin our season with an audit to verify that all head types, nozzle sets, radius are functioning properly, and are accurately programmed in the irrigation computer. Nozzle wear, pressure inconsistencies, and alignment issues can quietly waste significant water. Correcting those inefficiencies may offset a meaningful portion of required savings without sacrificing turf quality.

Evapotranspiration-based scheduling should already be commonplace for courses but refining that approach will be more important than ever. Leveraging on-site weather stations or reliable regional ET data allows irrigation to more closely match plant demand. In recent seasons, we have reduced watering to 50–55% of ET. We will try to stretch that even lower and supplement with targeted manual morning waterings and increased hand watering. We may also incorporate more surfactants into our program to prevent hydrophobic soils and help water move efficiently through the profile during peak stress.

Communication will be equally important. For many municipal and public facilities, turf color drives perception. Variation in color and firmer playing conditions should be framed as signs of intentional conservation and agronomic control rather than neglect. Transparent messaging around water stewardship strengthens credibility with golfers, water providers, and the public.



Dan Sprague & Family

**ELECTED TO THE GCSAA
BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR A
TWO-YEAR TERM!!!**

A portrait of Aaron Fankhauser, a man with a beard and mustache, wearing a dark blue suit, light blue shirt, and patterned tie. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. A small American flag pin is visible on his lapel.

**CONGRATULATIONS
AARON FANKHAUSER, CGCS**

The Club At Rolling Hills

“I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with the Rocky Mountain Board and helping grow the membership and to help deliver an outstanding conference each fall. The networking and understanding of the Association's needs have really helped my development as a Director and have, more importantly, grown my motivation to continue to be involved. We have an outstanding network of wonderful chapters that make up our National Association, and I desire to continue to foster the growth of the GCSAA for years to come!”

Why Walking-Only Golf Courses Make Sense in Times of Severe Drought

By Joey Velasquez, Class D, Petty Jewett Golf Course

Extreme drought puts considerable pressure on golf courses, creating both environmental and management challenges. Prioritizing water savings, protecting turf, and ensuring the course's long-term viability becomes essential. Many golf courses respond to these tough conditions by temporarily suspending golf cart use. Though this shift might be inconvenient for some, switching to a walking-only approach during drought delivers meaningful advantages for the course's health, longevity, and ecological responsibility.

The most immediate benefit of removing golf carts during drought conditions is reduced stress on turf and soil. Dry soil is far more susceptible to compaction, which occurs when repeated cart traffic presses down on already fragile ground. Compacted soil restricts root growth, limits oxygen flow, and reduces the turf's ability to absorb limited moisture. By eliminating carts, courses significantly reduce surface pressure, allowing grass roots to remain healthier and better able to survive extended dry periods.

Another key advantage is prevention of turf damage in sensitive areas. Fairways, approach zones, and roughs already under drought stress are especially vulnerable to rutting and thinning caused by carts. Even with cart-path-only rules, repeated entry and exit points can deteriorate quickly when grass lacks adequate hydration. Walking-only policies help preserve uniform playing surfaces and prevent long-term damage that can take months or even seasons to repair.

Removing carts also supports water conservation efforts. Turf damaged by cart traffic often requires additional irrigation to recover, which is counterproductive during drought restrictions. By minimizing damage, courses reduce the need for spot watering, reseeding, and sod replacement, conserving water while maintaining playable conditions. This approach aligns with municipal water-use guidelines and demonstrates responsible resource management to regulators and the community.

Continued on Page: 34

From a course maintenance perspective, a no-cart policy during drought leads to lower operational strain. Grounds crews can focus on strategic turf preservation rather than constant repair of traffic-related damage. Equipment use, fuel consumption, and labor hours associated with fixing ruts or worn paths are reduced, allowing staff to prioritize critical agronomic practices that protect the course's long-term health.

There are also environmental and experiential benefits for golfers. Walking the course encourages a deeper connection with the landscape and promotes a traditional style of play that many golfers value. During drought conditions, walking-only rounds reduce noise, emissions, and disruption to wildlife habitats already stressed by limited water availability.

Finally, eliminating carts sends a clear message of environmental responsibility and leadership. Golf courses are often scrutinized during droughts due to their water usage. Implementing walking-only policies demonstrates a proactive commitment to sustainability and preservation, reinforcing the course's role as a responsible steward of the land rather than a strain on natural resources.

In conclusion, removing golf carts during extreme drought conditions protects turf health, conserves water, reduces maintenance demands, and supports environmental sustainability. While temporary adjustments may be required, the long-term benefits ensure the course remains playable, resilient, and environmentally responsible well beyond the drought period.



Joey Velasquez & Family

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Upcoming Events



<u>Pesticide Workshops</u>	March 11th & October 22nd <i>*Webinars*</i>
<u>2026 West Slope Meeting & Sunday Social</u>	May 11th 7am, Tiara Rado Golf Course. May 10th 5:30pm, Pour Fellows
<u>2026 Memorial Tournament</u>	June 11th 7:00 AM - 3:00 PM <i>Walnut Creek Golf Preserve</i>
<u>2026 Futures Tournament</u>	June 23rd 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM <i>Mariana Butte Golf Course</i>
<u>2026 Affiliate Cup</u>	August 11th 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM <i>Pole Creek Golf Club</i>
<u>Fall Classic & Challenge Finals</u>	August 31st 7:30 AM - 5:00 PM <i>Pinehurst Country Club</i>
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From the Rocky Mountain Chapter of GCSAA

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