



CHIPS & PUTTS

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2013 Pocono Year in Review



This year I thought I'd take a brief look back at 2013 at some of the noteworthy events. As with most years, there were both highs and lows in the turf world. We lost colleagues and peers this year, from legends in the turf industry like Dr. Joe Duich at PSU and John Patterson whose family was instrumental to the PTGA, to long time crew members like Mike (a mechanic fixture at several courses in the Lehigh Valley) and Nancy (at Southmoore GC for 19 years), to member spouses (John Chassard and John Bodock). And those lows were tempered with highs as well. Merion CC hosted the US Open in our backyard, with the other 3 US Majors hosted by PSU alumni. Glen Oak completed a total bunker renovation, the Pocono team finished strong in the MET tournament at Mountain Ridge CC, and we had a great season of monthly meetings and speakers. While this industry can be taxing on both our physical and mental strength it can also be equally rewarding watching the sunrise over a spot on golf course. Enjoy the "off season" because soon enough it will be time to go at it again!!



Here's to a Great 2014!





President's Message.....

As a new year begins I appreciate the opportunity to serve as president of this great Association. It is my hope that all are and will continue to benefit from membership in the PTGA. In many ways it is true that you get out of it what you put into it. Please feel free to contact me personally if there is anything I can do to help you benefit more fully from your membership or if you have any questions or concerns.

In the upcoming year we are looking to make several changes to the way the Association functions to improve our service to the membership and to encourage your participation in the Association. The most notable change is that we will be having our Annual Meeting and Election in August in conjunction with the Clambake. It is hoped this will increase attendance and participation by having the meeting and election during our best attended event. We are adjusting our fiscal year so that we can present a meaningful and up to date picture of our financial situation at the Annual Meeting. We have also developed a revision of our Bylaws which will be published in the next three newsletters along with an explanation of the changes. The amended Bylaws will be on the ballot for your vote at the Annual Meeting. Please take a little time to look over the proposed changes when they are published and feel free to contact me or any of the other directors if would like to comment on or discuss the matter.

The PTGA has a rich history of service to the golf community, and it is my desire and the desire of the Board to continue that tradition. I sincerely wish all in the Association a happy, healthy and prosperous year.

Ray Waddell

Editor's Notes.....

I know I'm running a little late on this one, but I have all my excuses lined up....hunting season, work, family, holidays.

There are many announcements and condolences (sadly) to acknowledge in this newsletter (some happening recently and some a few months back) that I want to make you all aware of.

Finally, thank you all for the pictures over the course of the year. They are a lot of fun, and I think we all like to get to the page in the newsletter that has them. Hoping everyone had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!

Brian Bachman



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Ten Ways to Reduce Environmental Risk & Liability at the Golf Course and Clubhouse

By

Kevin A. Fletcher, Ph.D., President & CEO, e-par USA, Inc.

Golf and country clubs across the country are facing the "new normal" of reduced budgets, strained resources, and the need to operate leaner and smarter. It's no wonder that the concept of *sustainability* has held fast. After all, sustainability, in part, is about doing more with less. Yet, there are a few key elements of operating more sustainably that, if not addressed, can crumble the very foundation of any club's sustainability efforts, including: addressing regulatory responsibilities, managing environmental risks, containing potential environmental liabilities, and minimizing the odds of an environmental incident or accident.

An Environmental Management System (EMS) can help club staff better-manage these areas of concern—leading to an overall better-managed operation. An EMS relies on a comprehensive 'plan, do, check, act' approach. As an added bonus, federal and state environmental agencies generally support EMS adoption by organizations. However, if you don't have an EMS in place yet, at the very least consider the following questions to get you moving in the right direction:

1. Do We Really Know What's Going On?

The very first step to reducing overall environmental risk and liability is to conduct a basic self-assessment of the facility and your operations. Do you know how your chemicals are being stored and used on the course and in the clubhouse? Are your clubhouse and pro shop operations asking the right questions to gain a handle on potential hazards?

2. Do We have Full Management Buy-In?

The best environmental management approaches are completed on the ground, but supported from the top. Are your club Board, President, or key leadership aware of the environmental stewardship responsibilities of the golf course operations? Are environmentally-related risk issues discussed at senior management team meetings? Has leadership signed off on various environmental policies and plans at the highest level?

3. Have We Established a Facility-Wide Environmental Policy?

Writing and making public the organization's commitment to protecting the environment is an important early step to take. It is a pledge to protect the natural elements of the game, acknowledgement of the importance of pollution prevention, and your commitment to continuous improvement.

4. Have We Ever Conducted a Risk Assessment?

Have you conducted a risk assessment to identify where your improvement areas and weak spots are in your operations? This includes a hard look at all of your relevant activities, an assessment of how frequent those activities take place, and the potential environment impacts of those activities.

5. Do We Have a Sense of Our Risk Profile?

Once the risk assessment is completed you'll have a better sense of where potentially severe or catastrophic risks are in your golf facility operations—your risk profile. Knowledge is power. Knowing

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your risk profile will allow you to prioritize corrective actions and be better prepared for when the worst might happen. Have you're a prioritized set of improvements in mind?

6. Have We Developed Written Environmental Action Plans?

Have you taken the time to develop and write down Environmental Action Plans with input from relevant staff? These plans can both address what your need to do, as identified in the risk assessment, as well as the environmental improvement and enhancements you want to make at the facility (i.e., nest box projects or energy efficiency upgrades for clubhouse lighting).

7. Do We Have A Person Assigned to Each Action?

Who's going to get that done? For each action item or improvement project, be sure to assign an individual as "responsible party" for completion of the task. A great idea without someone responsible to complete it will likely remain, simply a great idea. Also remember to include project completion deadlines.

8. Do We Understand the Value of Written Standard Operating Procedures?

Along with written Action Plans, it pays to have sets of written Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for each risk area identified. Let's assume that "Delivery of Chemicals" is an activity identified as potentially risky (i.e., due to a spill event). A simple SOP outlining to process to allow vendors to deliver, unload, and store chemicals is a terrific way to document that your club facility has its act together. With training it can help avoid an incident, and if something should go wrong, you have documentation to show due diligence.

9. Do We Provide Initial and Ongoing Environmental Training?

You want to have your policy in place, clear procedures, and practices identified to be address. That's good. Yet, it's the people that make things go right—or wrong. Do you have an environmental training schedule in place? Are golf course staff getting the education and on-site, on-the-ground training necessary to be ready for spill events, emergencies, and environmental incidents?

10. Finally... Do We Foster a Staff "Culture" of Ongoing Environmental Stewardship?

Do you support a culture of sustainability and environmental stewardship? Is good environmental management simply "the way we do things around here"? In the end, an environmental policy, environmental risk and opportunity assessments, resulting action plans, operating procedures, training, personal accountability, and top management team commitment is only useful if reviewed on a periodic basis. A bi-annual review of your processes and annual review and revision of your environmental management system, risk assessment, and associated action plans is ideal for keeping environmental protection, risk management, and sustainable club operations a top-line item throughout the organization. While the best option may be developing a comprehensive EMS, at the very least, assess where you are now against these ten elements and sleep a little easier at night by filling in the holes.

Bios:

Kevin A. Fletcher, Ph.D., is President & CEO of e-par USA, Inc., an environmental business strategy advisory firm helping golf facilities & clubs, sports facilities, and park and recreation facilities. He most-recently served as Executive Director for Audubon International, having worked for the organization for nearly ten years. In 2010, he was included among *Golf Magazine's* "Top 40 Most Influential People Under 40" for his work on sustainability in golf.



PTGA Proposing Bylaw Changes.

Keep an eye out for some updates and changes to our current bylaws that will be posted in the newsletter in upcoming issues for the membership to review. The Board is trying to keep them current and applicable as we continue to move forward. Thanks in advance for taking the time to review them.

Photo of the Month

We all see interesting things every day....wildlife (like bald eagles and bears), strange turf problems (like a lightning strike), an employee who stayed out too late the night before, etc. So if you have a great photo, send it to me (bbachman@genesisturfgrassinc.com) and share it for everyone to enjoy (or laugh at).



Nov/Dec Photo of the Month

This photo is courtesy of Mike Longyshore (TESCO) and Bill Parr (Country Club of the Pocono's).

On this beautiful fall day, the 17th fairway at CCP turned into an emergency landing pad for a MedEvac helicopter. An accident in front of the maintenance building left 2 seriously injured and in need of the helicopter. Thankfully, all were ultimately OK.

Chips & Putts

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The 2014 PTGA Membership Dues invoices have been mailed. If you would like to pay by credit card and your information is not on file, please contact Melinda at 570-388-2167 or mmel500@aol.com. Checks can be mailed to:

Pocono Turfgrass Association
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309 Terrace Avenue
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Deadline for dues is February 15.

If you have any changes that need to be updated for our membership directory, please contact Melinda as soon as possible.

Thank you!

PTGA SCHEDULE

Jan 7-8	Eastern PA Turf Conference Valley Forge
Jan 17	Nor'easter Ski Day
Jan 30	NE PA Turf Conference Woodlands Resort, WB
Jan 31	Annual PTGA Ski Day
Feb 3-7	GCSAA National Show

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