golf alliance utah

PGA Utah Section

Utah Golf Association

Utah Chapter GCSAA Golf Course Superintendents Association of America

Being Good Stewards of Water

The October 2021 educational conference of the Utah chapter of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (UGCSAA) reported that superintendents do a lot more than merely hope for help from Mother Nature.

Utah's golf course superintendents are well equipped to deal with difficult weather challenges and can point to considerable evidence of their good stewardship, amid popular misconceptions of golf courses' water usage.

A UGCSAA list of methods employed by Utah's superintendents to reduce golf course water footprint:

Secondary Irrigation:
Many golf courses in the state use secondary water sources (non-potable) for irrigation. Secondary water is untreated, unfiltered water, mainly gathered through runoff.

Monitoring Weather/Turf Water Loss:
Through a variety of weather programs both real time and predictive, superintendents are adjusting watering schedules based on turf water loss and upcoming weather potential. Advanced weather stations that record temperature, humidity, UV index, precipitation, and wind speed are used to adjust the amount of water applied daily.

Fertility Programs:
Not all grass is green simply due to water. Superintendents are using an extremely precise, balanced fertility program based on their individual site. Creating a dense stand of turf that is vigorous and healthy helps grass maintain its color and withstand the stresses of reduced watering.

Wetting Agents:
Wetting agents are products used to make watering more effective. They reduce natural tensions in the soil and allow water to penetrate more efficiently from the surface. This allows for less water to be applied to achieve the same soil.

Establishing Higher Mowing Heights:
Longer grass equals deeper roots. Superintendents are selecting new areas around the course for higher mowing heights. These areas require less maintenance, less inputs and less water.

Selection of Grass Varieties:
Grass varieties are constantly being evaluated and put into use that possess greater drought tolerance. Yearly overseeding with grass species that have proven themselves in the Intermountain west is an ongoing practice.

Irrigation Audits/Upgrades:
Golf superintendents are constantly evaluating/reevaluating their irrigation system. Routine audits make sure each irrigation head is applying water appropriately.

Sand Topdressing:
Sand topdressing is utilized to encourage deeper rooting leading to a reduction of water.

The 2014 Golf Alliance for Utah report pointed out, golf courses use relatively far less water than residential lawns and gardens. Overall, Utahns need to know how thoroughly their course superintendents study this subject and what they're doing about it.

Utah Golf Water Facts

Percentage of Golf Course Irrigated Acreage Change 2016-2021

52%	No Change
44%	Decreased
4%	Increased

Percentage of Golf Course Water Source

48%	Open Water (Lakes or Ponds)
41%	River, Stream, Creek
22%	Canal
30%	Well Water
11%	Reclaimed Water
22%	Municipal Water
11%	Other

Percentage of Golf Course Water Conservation Measures Employed

100%	Wetting Agents
59%	Secondary Water
78%	Weather Monitoring Stations
67%	Higher Mower Heights
30%	Use of Drought Tolerant Turf/Plants
63%	Irrigation Audits and Upgrades
74%	Sand Topdressing
38%	Other

Percentage of Determining When to Water

74%	Moister Meters
74%	Visual Superintendent Inspection
62%	Evapotranspiration

44%

of Utah golf courses have reduced their irrigated acreage over the last six years

30%

of Utah golf courses have increased the use of drought tolerant turf/plants

Nearly **60%** of Utah golf courses employ Secondary Water irrigation practices, over **70%** use weather monitoring stations and sand topdressing, **100%** use wetting agents

Wetting Agents, Secondary Water, Weather Monitoring Stations, High Mower Heights, Drought Tolerant Turf/Plants, Irrigation Audits and Sand Topdressing:

Investments Utah golf industry is employing to maximize water management.

Utah Chapter
GCSAA
Golf Course Superintendents Association of America

ONLY

4%

of Utah's turf grass is found on golf courses

Less than

22%

of potable water is used to irrigate Utah golf courses

How does the Utah Chapter of Golf Course Superintendent Association of America help?

We organize and lead golf and water education throughout Utah to reduce the game's water footprint.