



CGSA Members,

The past 12 months have been extremely challenging to the golf industry in Canada and to professional golf course superintendents across the country. As people in the golf industry know, the success of any particular golf season is very much subject to the weather that is experienced during that season. Just as the weather differs from region to region across the country, so does the impact of that weather on individual golf courses. Last summer we saw the devastation of flood events in both Alberta (Calgary area) and Ontario (Toronto area) which had a significant impact on many golf facilities. This spring, we are experiencing the now, well-documented turf carnage that followed a winter that was probably the harshest that has been experienced in southwestern and central Ontario in the past two decades. Turf loss is also reported on a large scale in southern Quebec and Alberta. Widespread turf damage on many golf courses has resulted in delayed openings and the situation has been exacerbated by colder than normal temperatures, reducing the speed and the extent of turf recovery. All of these situations have had, and potentially will continue to have, a significant economic impact on the golf industry in the noted markets for some time to come.

The recovery process for winter damage has been well documented by many sources as has the reasons why this winter was particularly harsh in southwestern and central Ontario. As noted above, the damage was not confined to that area of the country nor is winter damage something that only happens occasionally. Winter damage happens annually to golf facilities in Canada. This year it was particularly severe in a highly populated part of the country and, as such, it generated a great deal of media attention. For more details on the reasons and the possible recovery options, please see the links at the bottom of this letter.

Other weather related issues such as extreme heat and humidity for extended periods, excessive moisture, excessive drought conditions and many others can similarly cause turf damage and result in significant impacts on a golf facility. There are usually many resources available to assist with recovery from these types of situations. What has not been discussed but needs to be acknowledged is the stress and pressure that the above noted events have had on a segment of the superintendent profession. Almost every professional superintendent in Canada has or will experience a significant loss of turf as a result of winter weather. When this is combined with the almost constant pressure to provide playing conditions that meet heightened golfer expectations, pressure to operate with fewer resources while providing those conditions and other weather related events such as last summer's floods, the burden can be significant. In these circumstances each of us has a responsibility to our professional colleagues to reach out to ensure that they have the support they need to get through this stressful period. A telephone call, a short visit or even an email message to let a neighbouring superintendent that is experiencing stress know that you understand and that you want to help in any way that you can is important. We are all busy. It would be easy to put our head down and just keep working at this time of the year but your colleague needs your support. Call, write or visit and make sure you check back next week, next month and for the next several months, just to let that superintendent know they are not alone.

At every club in the country, touched or not by these events, there will be talks of the difficulties experienced. I believe that it is every superintendent's responsibility to educate his or her members to the reality of Canadian winters. Get the word out that what might work in one part of the country and in one particular year will not necessarily work in another and that superintendents are best positioned to decide on how best to protect their courses. These catastrophic events, although hard to deal with, are a great opportunity for all of us to reach out to



golfers, one on one or in club publications, to provide the facts behind golf course maintenance and why a professional turf manager is a valuable asset.

Help your professional colleagues “weather this storm”. We will all be stronger for it as new research, new methods, new practices and a new understanding of the challenges of golf course management in Canada will be the end result.

Be present for your fellow superintendents.

Sincerely,

Christian Pilon, MS

President, CGSA

#### Related Links

[http://www.usga.org/course\\_care/regional\\_updates/regional\\_reports/northeast/The-Silver-Lining---April-2014/](http://www.usga.org/course_care/regional_updates/regional_reports/northeast/The-Silver-Lining---April-2014/)

<http://canadiangolfer.com/g4g/2014/04/25/ontario-courses-with-poa-greens-struggle-to-deal-with-cold-weather-carnage/>

<http://turf.unl.edu/2014GolferFAQGreatLakesRegion.pdf>

<http://turf.unl.edu/2014MarchCompWinterkill.pdf>

[https://storify.com/adam\\_stanley/ontario-golf-superintendents-take-to-twitter](https://storify.com/adam_stanley/ontario-golf-superintendents-take-to-twitter)

<http://www.turfdiseases.org/featured/episode-36-winterkill-and-recovery-turfchat/>

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/sh3b66maudr8yqe/O9psmFvmpe>

<http://www.turf.msu.edu/winterkill-of-turfgrass>

<http://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/naylor/GOSS0109/#/18>

<http://golfsupers.com/en/communication/turf>