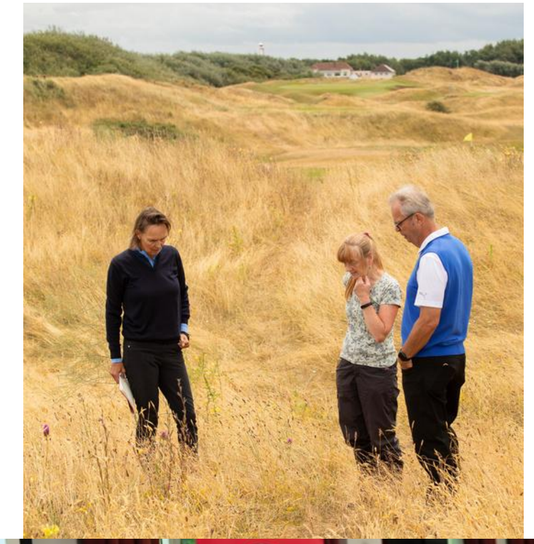
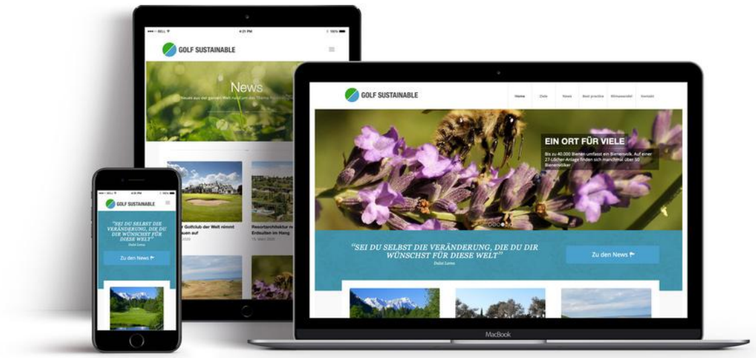
Who Trusts Golf?

Strengthening Credibility with Data, Dialogue and Transparency





About me and Golf Sustainable

- More than 20 years as sportswriter, editor-in-chief and book author in professional golf
- Golfer
- Founder of Golf Sustainable
- More than 200 course visits regarding sustainability in the last six years
- Member and advisor in different expert groups for sustainability in golf

Agenda

01

The Greenkeepers Association as a communicator

02

Golf’s specific challenges

03

Key factor credibility

04

How to start - practical tips for a better communication

01

The Greenkeepers Association as a communicator

UMN Turfgrass <turf@umn.edu> 3.11.2025 17:30

WinterTurf newsletter

An petra@golfsustainable.com

View this email in your browser

WinterTurf Project

November 2025

The WinterTurf project is led by the University of Minnesota, in collaboration with University of Wisconsin-Madison, Michigan State University, University of Massachusetts, Iowa State University, Oregon State University, Rutgers University, Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research, and hundreds of golf course superintendents across North America and Europe.

Welcome back to the WinterTurf newsletter. This newsletter will bring you project updates, new resources, and event announcements. For more background about the project, see press releases from the University of Minnesota and Michigan State University.

We need your help!

Communication with a purpose

- Building long-term relationships
- Focus on communicating content and engaging in dialogue with target groups
- Image cultivation and building trust

Greenkeeper Federations

Direct Communication:

- Newsletter
- Social Media
- Workshops & Events

Media:

- Print & Online
- Podcast
- Events

PR Agency:

- Placement of messages
- Discuss credibility risks

Target groups

Greenkeeper

Golfer

Public

Law makers

Sponsors

02

Golf’s specific challenges

Image problem

Sustainability under pressure

Climate change means fast and unexpected changes

Credible communication of sustainability topic is immediately and in the long term indispensable for golf

03

Trust - the cornerstone of successful communication

In times of fake news and AI trust is the gold standard in communication...

...but how do you increase credibility?

Biodiversity project - wild bees - University of Freiburg

Independent
Reliable
Reserch

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Grassland Resea

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Quantifying golf course water use efficiency using three water balance models of varying complexity

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Abstract

Background: Three water balance models were used to quantify water efficiency on 71 golf courses in the United States. The golf courses were s arated into five geographic regions.

Methods: The United States Golf Association (USGA), Tipping-Bucket (T and Agro-IBIS (AG) water balance models were used to estimate golf cou water requirements. Actual water use was divided by the water requirem from each model to generate three water efficiency scores for each golf cou (WES_{USGA}, WES_{TB}, and WES_{AG}).

Results: The mean WES_{USGA} was 1.16, the mean WES_{TB} was 1.25, and mean WES_{AG} was 1.17. Thus, golf courses in this study used between 16% a 25% more water than predicted by the three models. The coefficients of v iation of WES_{USGA}, WES_{TB}, and WES_{AG} were all 0.45 or higher, indicat that some golf courses used significantly more or less water than predicted the models. Rooting depth, irrigated area, and soil texture were especi important modeling parameters for the golf course water requirem calculations.

Conclusions: While onsite evaluation should still be carried out to verify assumptions made by the water balance models, the models are promis tools to quickly identify golf course superintendents who are likely to be us water efficiently and those who could use less.

KEYWORDS

golf course, irrigation, modeling, resource use, turfgrass, water

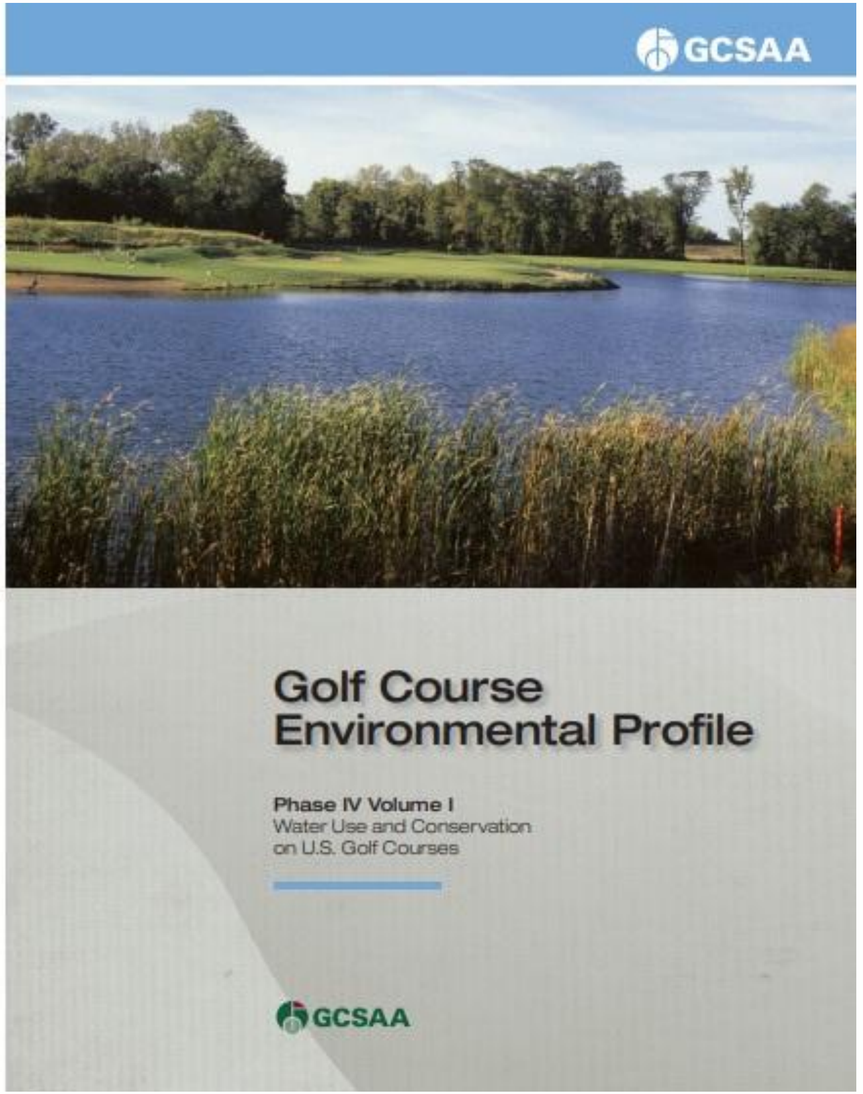
INTRODUCTION

Water is perhaps the most vital resource that golf courses use, making it especially important to understand water use efficiencies on golf courses. Golf course water use is especially concerning to state and local governments in arid regions of the United States, where climate change is

resource research in the region to determine how courses could be irrigated more efficiently or coul irrigated using effluent or reclaimed water (Benl et al., 2017; García-González et al., 2015; Or et al., 2015; Perea-Moreno et al., 2016; Salgot et al., 2

Water use data on United States golf courses been collected primarily by a series of surveys

Water project - Texas A&M - University of Wisconsin Madison



Solid data is the basis of every argument and discussion.

How much data do you have?

to 2005, 2013, and 2020. This is not surprising as the very dry Southwest requires more water than other regions and the Southeast is home to over 20% of the golf facilities in the country.

- Water Sources
- Since 2005, a reduction in projected applied water was measured within each water source (**Table 12**).
- Generally, the percentage of water applied from canal, river, municipal, or well sources remained unchanged since 2005. The percentage of water applied from lakes and ponds declined and the percentage of water applied from recycled water increased since 2005. (**Figure 5**).
- Wells and lakes and ponds supplied 59% of the applied water in 2024, whereas wells and lakes and ponds supplied 63% of the applied water in 2005 (**Figure 5**).
- The percentage of golf facilities applying recycled water increased from 10.8% in 2005 to 13.7% in 2024 and was equivalent to 2013 and 2020 (**Figure 6 and Table 3**).
- The projected quantity of recycled water applied to U.S. golf facilities in 2024 was 296,454 acre-feet and was 15.7% less than that applied in 2005 (**Figure 7 and Table 3**).
- The top reason why some U.S. golf facilities did not use recycled water was that there was no source of effu-

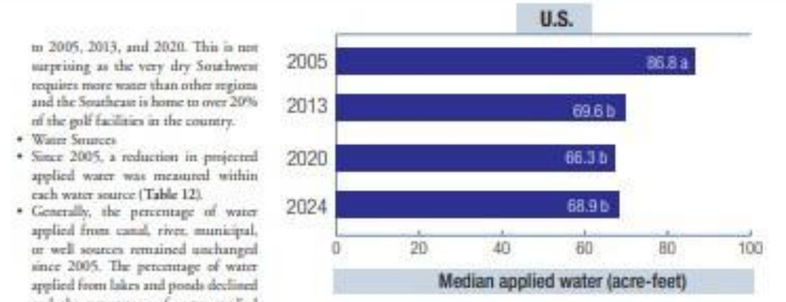


Figure 3. Median acre-feet of applied water on U.S. golf facilities in 2005, 2013, 2020, and 2024. Ref: Table 2

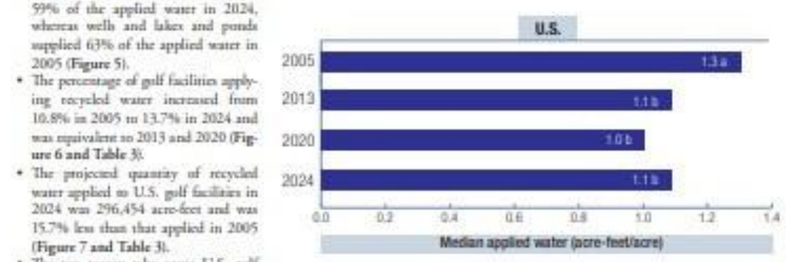
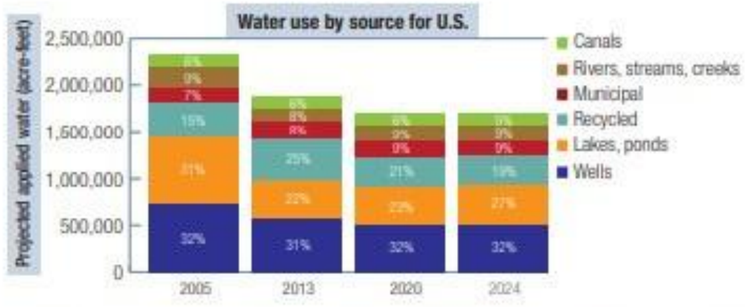


Figure 4. Median acre-feet/acre of applied water on U.S. golf facilities in 2005, 2013, 2020, and 2024. Ref: Table 2



Transparency is mandatory

But what does transparency mean?

04

How to start - practical tipps for better communication

First Questions

01
What is the one topic you want to communicate this year?

02
How solid is your data basis and your argumentation?

03
Who is your main target group ?

04
Which Ressources do you have?

05
Which potential collaborateur has the most credibility?

Biggest Mistakes

- Start without a strategy
- Many topics but no ressources
- Strategy without data basis
- Expensive PR consultant

but no data basis

Example:
Golf is good for biodiversity

- Collect reportings and data from scientific resarch programs
- Team up with a credible, nationwide known program or institution.
- Develop one communication project for both partners:
  - Press conference
  - Website and SM content
  - Include official authorities in your communication.

"The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place." –

George Bernard Shaw


Thank you!
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