LIBERTY CORNER, N.J. (Jan. 23, 2024) – The United States Golf Association's Mike Davis Program for Advancing Golf Course Management has funded 15 new research projects to advance turfgrass science in 2024, taking the program's total investment in golf course sustainability over $50 million since 1983.

Aligning with the USGA's long-term $30 million commitment to reduce golf's use of water, more than 50 percent of active Davis Grants are focused on projects intended to drive efficiency, effective measurement, innovation and conservation of water on golf courses. They include multi-year studies on optimizing irrigation techniques, improving drought resistance for common fairway, rough and green turfgrasses, and advancing methods of renovating out-of-play areas to conservation habitat, among others.

Scientists from leading universities across the country, including Rutgers, the University of Florida, Texas A&M, New Mexico State, North Carolina State, Washington State and Kansas State, are conducting the multi-year research, which is helping to provide the game of golf with data-driven tools to improve playing conditions and optimize resource use.

With more than 60 projects in progress, the Davis Program continues to be the largest private turfgrass and environmental research effort in golf, led by the USGA's Green Section.

"Our Green Section team has some of the brightest minds in golf, and we're proud to continue forging a sustainable path forward, led by our Davis Program research efforts," said Matt Pringle, Ph.D., managing director of the USGA Green Section. "As a leader in advancing data-driven and research-based golf course management practices, we work side-by-side with the top universities and institutions across the country."

Other notable projects receiving funding this year include a pilot effort at Texas A&M University and the University of Tennessee to mine Google course review data to better understand what improves, and detracts from, the golfer experience.

The USGA is also continuing a longstanding collaboration with the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program and the National Turfgrass Federation to provide unbiased turfgrass performance data for end users and to advance federal and allied nonprofit organization funding of turfgrass research.

The resulting management practices born out of Davis Program research have contributed to a 29 percent decrease in golf's water use since 2005.

In total, the USGA's investment in course sustainability saves the golf industry an estimated $1.9 billion annually, including:

• $201 million from advancing irrigation with efficiencies in turfgrass water use;

• $529 million from advancing irrigation scheduling with soil-moisture meters;

• $469 million from advancing naturalized rough.

The USGA's Green Section was formed in 1920 to lead the game's efforts in improving golf course playing conditions and sustainability through research, education, course consulting, technology tools and championship agronomy. It includes consulting agronomists in each region of the country, providing localized and practical expertise to golf course owners and operators.

Formerly the Turfgrass Environmental Research Program, the initiative was renamed for Mike Davis in 2021 to highlight his continuous impact on the game during his 31 years of service to the USGA, including 10 as executive director/CEO.

For a full list of current research projects, this year's call for proposals and all other information related to the Davis Grants, click here.
