

LIBERTY CORNER, N.J. (June 9, 2021) – To celebrate the legacy of its outgoing CEO, the USGA has renamed its most impactful sustainability initiative as the Mike Davis Program for Advancing Golf Course Management.

Formerly the Turfgrass and Environmental Research Program (TERP), the longstanding initiative represents the single largest private grant program in golf dedicated to advancing innovation in sustainability and improving the on-course experience. The USGA annually invests nearly \$2 million in the program (\$45 million to date), which has resulted in better playing conditions, dramatic cost savings and a more environmentally friendly game.

The new title will honor Davis, who joined the USGA in 1990 and has made a consistent, positive impact on the game in his 31 years of service while positioning it for long-term success.

“Throughout his time at the USGA, Mike Davis’ vision to lead the game forward through golf course sustainability has propelled the success of this program, ensuring that every golfer has a great playing experience and every owner has access to the latest innovations to manage their course,” said Stu Francis, USGA president. “With his passion for golf courses and data-driven decision-making, we could not find a better program to share his name and inspire a sustainable future for golf.”

Founded in 1920, the USGA Green Section has initiated and fostered sustainable practices that have benefited the entire game. Through it, the USGA has dedicated golf’s largest investment toward research focusing on science-based management practices, turfgrass innovation and environmental stewardship. Land-grant universities and researchers from California to New Jersey, and from New Zealand to the United Kingdom are among the primary recipients of the 50-70 Davis Grants dispersed annually.

The research program has significantly contributed to the development of sustainable golf maintenance practices that have driven a 20+-percent decrease in water usage and a nearly 40-percent decrease in nutrient usage in the last decade. They have also led to an estimated \$1.86 billion in savings each year by incorporating more natural areas on golf courses, effectively managing water, developing best practices that reduce pesticide use, and standardizing putting green construction, among others.

Widely used golf turfgrasses such as bentgrass and bermudagrass were first selected and improved through the USGA program, in an effort to improve drought resistance, promote recycled water and smart irrigation use and improve playing conditions on golf courses and playing fields worldwide.

The published research is directly shared through the free USGA Green Section Record as well as through Course Consulting Service visits by USGA agronomists and at regional and national industry conferences.

Mike Davis joined the USGA as the assistant manager of championship relations in 1990, and he assumed the role of senior director of USGA Rules and Competitions in 2005. He became the USGA’s seventh executive director in 2011 and was named CEO of the association in 2016.

A native of Chambersburg, Pa., Davis was the 1982 Pennsylvania State Junior golf champion and played NCAA Division I golf at Georgia Southern University. In September 2020, he announced his intent to leave the organization’s top post to pursue a personal career goal in golf architecture and design, with plans to depart the organization at the end of June 2021.

Those who apply for a USGA Davis Grant must demonstrate how their work will achieve one of the three main USGA strategic program objectives: 1 – optimizing sustainable golf course management and playing conditions; 2 – protecting and conserving water resources; or 3 – identifying and developing novel plant materials. The program is managed by Cole Thompson, Ph.D., director of USGA turfgrass and environmental research. The current deadline for grant funding is June 25, 2021. More information can be found here: [Grant Application](#)

Through the USGA Green Section, the USGA brings to life its mission to champion and advance the game of golf and realizes its vision for a more welcoming, sustainable and thriving game.

For more information: Janeen Driscoll (jdriscoll@usga.org)

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