

LIBERTY CORNER, N.J. (March 20, 2025) – The United States Golf Association (USGA) has released its Water Conservation Playbook to the golf industry, a comprehensive effort to provide courses with the latest tools and techniques to more effectively manage water utilization.

The digital publication, written by the USGA with 12 contributing experts, can be downloaded at [usga.org/water](https://usga.org/water), free of charge. It is a noteworthy, tangible outcome of the USGA's 15-year, \$30 million investment to help golf courses reduce their overall water usage.

"Golf is currently in a time of great growth, but the threat of water availability and cost, combined with changing weather patterns, poses long-term threats to our playing fields," said Mike Whan, CEO of the USGA. "We want to put the best intelligence into the hands of those who are making decisions and working on courses every day, and spur innovation toward a more sustainable game."

The book combines the USGA Green Section's 100+ years of expertise in agronomy with research from leading universities and the working knowledge of superintendents, architects and golf course maintenance workers. Its practical approach gives operators insight to better inform decision-making at every level, while maintaining the best possible playing conditions.

"Golf courses account for about 1.3% of irrigation water use in the U.S. annually, and total golf course water use has declined by almost 30% since 2005, mostly due to improved irrigation practices," the book's introduction reads. "However, there is no question that many opportunities exist for golf courses to use less water and there are many potential benefits in doing so. Continuing to advance water conservation in golf will require collaboration between superintendents, researchers, regulators, golfers and communities. It is a constant but necessary pursuit, and we hope this playbook will help."

It is structured in three sections: fundamental irrigation stewardship (basic maintenance best practices that every golf course could employ); advanced irrigation techniques and conservation strategies (including sensor and irrigation technology) and water sourcing and stewardship (including irrigating with reclaimed or recycled water).

Each section includes:

- expected costs
- implementation considerations
- potential water savings and other benefits (such as improved turf quality)
- regions where the highest impact can be made
- photos that demonstrate installation and results
- step-by-step implementation notes and tips for success

"The level of collaboration we've received to bring this to life has been incredible, and it's now our job to share this tool far and wide," said Matt Pringle, Ph.D., managing director of the USGA Green Section. "If you work on a golf course, deliver or sell water, build irrigation systems, design facilities or are part of the golf community, we encourage you to download and distribute the link to your colleagues."

The USGA currently has 47 ongoing projects that advance water conservation. They include research on topics such as precision irrigation, drought-resilient grassing, reducing irrigated acreage, mitigating water quality challenges and subsurface drip innovation.

The work is conducted at universities across the U.S., with demonstration projects in California, New Mexico, Nevada, Texas and Arizona. The USGA has also led or contributed to dozens of educational seminars and programs in

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collaboration with the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), water districts and providers, architects, owners/operators and state golf alliances.

“It is critical to the long-term sustainability of the game that golf demonstrates its commitment to the responsible use of resources,” said Rhett Evans, CEO of the GCSAA. “The USGA’s water playbook is a great tool that provides our members effective, practical solutions to conserve water through best management practices.”

The playbook’s release is the latest in a series of publications delivered since 1920 by the USGA and its Green Section team. The USGA’s Green Section Record has been distributed since 1921, delivering practical advice, expertise, research summaries and case studies, based on work of the team’s Course Consulting division. Publications include the USGA Recommendations for a Method of Putting Green Construction, widely recognized as an authoritative guide used worldwide.

In addition, the USGA’s Mike Davis Program for Advancing Golf Course Management has distributed more than \$50 million in grants to universities and dedicated research programs to propel the science of agronomy and turfgrass maintenance, funding over 800 projects since 1983.

The USGA-supported Turfgrass Information Center at Michigan State University Libraries, the deepest repository of turfgrass research, has been free and accessible to the research community since that time through a collaboration with Michigan State University. There are more than 250,000 peer-reviewed publications, technical reports and conference proceedings currently recorded in the database.

Led by the USGA’s numerous staff agronomists, the USGA also provides course consulting services to golf courses across the United States. These services will help facilities navigate the information in the playbook and adopt practices that improve the efficient use of water in golf.

To learn more about the work of the USGA Green Section, visit [usga.org](https://usga.org).

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