

LIBERTY CORNER, N.J. (March 10, 2021) – The United States Golf Association (USGA) will invest \$1.8 million into more than 70 separate research grants in 2021 through the Green Section’s Turfgrass and Environmental Research Program (TERP).

The annual investment in the program is part of the USGA’s continuous efforts to use science and innovation to support the long-term health and sustainability of golf and saves the industry an estimated \$1.8 billion in operating costs annually.

During the Green Section’s 100-year history, the USGA has invested more than \$46 million in critical research aimed at improving the golfer experience while reducing the consumption of critical resources. The program, which serves thousands of golf courses and millions of golfers each year, represents the largest private turfgrass and environmental research effort in the game’s history.

The [2021 grant recipients](#) – including 16 new projects – will receive an average of \$25,000 in funding this year. Notable projects include an innovative multi-year effort with the University of Minnesota to more efficiently irrigate golf courses based on site-specific data, while ongoing support to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln will advance the creation of new cultivars of buffalograss that require fewer resources to deliver satisfactory playing conditions.

Additionally, \$25,000 will be invested in a collaborative effort between North Carolina State University, Purdue University and the University of Georgia-Tifton to develop new cultivars of zoysiagrass that improve the stress tolerance and resource-use efficiency of roughs in varying climates.

Since the founding of the Green Section in 1920, the USGA has led the effort to enhance golf course sustainability through the development and support of research that produces a healthier environment and improved playing conditions.

“The research program plays a critical role in the USGA’s ability to empower a more sustainable future for the game both environmentally and financially,” said Mike Davis, CEO of the USGA. “It is encouraging to see the impact that the grants continue to have on the industry and gratifying to know that our investment returns real cost saving solutions for golf as well as other sports.”

Through the program’s emphasis on sustainable turfgrass management and environmental protection, combined with research and educational efforts, the USGA has improved the efficiency of key areas of golf course management. These areas include advances in putting green construction methods, the use of naturalized rough, precision irrigation strategies, and best application practices for fertilizers and pesticides, all of which have been adopted at an estimated 40-50 percent rate on U.S. golf courses.

The efforts have contributed to a 19 percent reduction in water use from 2005-2013, a 37 percent decrease in fertilizer use from 2006-2014, and the development of more than 30 turfgrass cultivars that use fewer resources and have been implemented worldwide at major golf courses, sports facilities, general grounds and even home lawns.

To view complete summaries of current research projects, see [here](#). Summaries from research conducted in 2020 will be added in April.

Led by Cole Thompson, Ph.D., the research program is one way in which the USGA brings to life its mission to champion and advance the game. Universities and research companies submit grant applications that are reviewed by 17 scientists on the TERP committee. In addition to the TERP, the USGA invests in research that benefits other areas of course sustainability and golfer experience.

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