



(L-R) Kevin Doyle, Field Staff – Northeast Region GCSAA, & Al Schwemler, Retired Superintendent, OGSA Past President & Director discussing the Ontario BMPs at the 2024 Turfgrass Management Conference.

Best Management Practices (BMP) FOR ONTARIO GOLF COURSES

*Written by: Al Schwemler, Retired Superintendent, OGSA Past President.
Photos taken by: Meg Matera, Meg Matera Photography.*

The OGSA released their long-awaited Best Management Practices document at the Ontario Turfgrass Management Conference in Niagara Falls on January 16, 2024, during an introductory talk by Kevin Doyle (Field Staff – Northeast Region GCSAA) and Al Schwemler (Retired Superintendent, OGSA Past President and Director).

The creation of the Ontario BMP document is part of an initiative from the Golf Course Superintendents' Association of America (GCSAA) to develop Golf Course Best Management Practices for all 50 States by 2020. The OGSA, a founding chapter of the GCSAA, was approached to commence the production of a provincial document during a strategic planning session with GCSAA staff. The onset of Covid delayed production until February of 2022, and the document was officially published on January 11, 2024.

Best management practices are vital to provide the critical tools required to maintain golf course properties while complying with local, provincial, and federal regulations. They show a professional commitment to environmental sustainability, sound water usage and improved water quality, enhanced wildlife habitat, IPM, and act as a reference to science-based research/guidelines. BMPs will benefit golf course superintendents, golf course owners/decision makers, legislators and regulators, and community stakeholders. This document is what superintendents do!

Producing the BMP Document included the following processes:

- Introductory and logistics meetings with GCSAA staff
- Secure funding (GCSAA) and budgeting (OGSA)
- Formation of a BMP Steering Committee
- Hiring a project manager to facilitate the completion of the document
- Internal edits of the GCSAA BMP Planning Guide and Template (incorporating Provincial and Federal regulations and Canadian/Ontario content)
- Peer reviews from Ontario based experts and regulatory agencies

- Final edits and review by the Steering Committee
- Complete all inputs into the GCSAA BMP tool
- Publishing the document

The GCSAA BMP Planning Guide and Template was funded in part by the USGA and PGA Tour, through the GCSAA Foundation (formerly the Environmental Institute for Golf).

THE NEXT STEP – FACILITY BMP MANUALS

The Ontario BMP document, in addition to all 50 State BMPs, can be viewed on the GCSAA website. All provincial and state documents are open to public viewing on the GCSAA website, so outreach regarding our environmental efforts is key.

The next initiative is to produce a Facility Best Management Practices Manual. This document will be unique to individual facilities. The Provincial BMP guidelines provide the template to create facility manuals. Not all properties have the same infrastructure, maintenance procedures, water features, or environmentally sensitive areas; the facility BMP document can be customised to your specific property.

The Provincial BMP is a comprehensive guide covering:

- Planning, Design, and Construction
- Irrigation
- Surface Water Management
- Water Quality Monitoring and Management
- Nutrient Management
- Cultural Practices
- Integrated Pest Management
- Pesticide Management
- Pollinator Protection
- Maintenance Operations
- Landscape
- Energy

*Including live links to regulatory items!

The GCSAA has recently enhanced the BMP Planning Guide to streamline facility manual creation. **NOTE: You must be a GCSAA Member to access the Facility BMP Tool.**

As stated by Rhett Evans, CEO of the GCSAA, “golf courses are important community assets, and facility BMP manuals are a key element in demonstrating to legislators, regulators, and community members that the golf course industry is committed to environmental stewardship.”

Creating facility BMP manuals is imperative to the success of the GCSAA BMP program and their initiatives. The groundwork has been completed by the OGSA; the responsibility to complete the facility manual is now on YOU!

A special thanks is in order for the hard work of the Steering Committee, R.J. Burnside & Assoc. Ltd., Peer Reviewers/OGSA Associate Members, and the GCSAA for their funding, support and guidance.

For more information or assistance, contact the OGSA office or Kevin Doyle:
 Kevin Doyle, Field Staff, Northeast Region GCSAA
 kdoyle@gcsaa.org ■

TO GET STARTED:

- 1. Go to [gcsaa.org /bmp](https://gcsaa.org/bmp)** This is where you can access the Ontario BMP Guide (under “Find your state’s BMP manual” then click “Canadian Province BMPs”), FAQs, How-to-Videos, Webinars, etc. **It is highly recommended to review the Provincial BMP Document and watch the How to Videos and/or Webinars before starting your Facility BMP manual.**
2. Click on “Access the Facility BMP tool.”
3. You will be prompted to login with your GCSAA username and password.
4. Once logged in, you will find the Ontario manual and you can begin to customise it to your specific facility, including adding photos related to your property.



ACCESS THE ONTARIO
BMP MANUAL



ACCESS THE FACILITY
BMP TOOL



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Jonathan Albert
Territory Manager
jalbert@aquatrols.com
(438) 507-9088



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