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FORUM

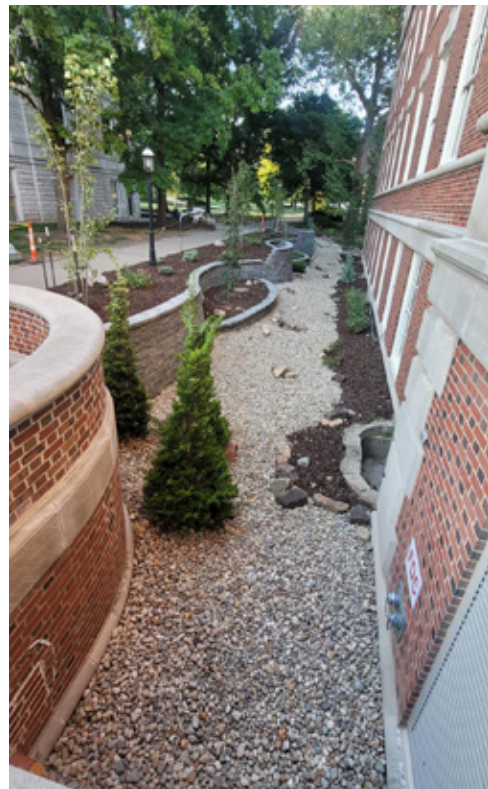
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2025 | VOLUME 49 NUMBER 5



PGMS® 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

TRANSFORM

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

MICHAEL GILDEA, CGM

“OUR STRENGTH LIES IN THE CONNECTIONS WE MAKE AND THE KNOWLEDGE WE SHARE TO ELEVATE OUR PROFESSION.”



PGMS® is entering an exciting chapter, and I'm pleased to share updates on our progress, upcoming events, and new initiatives.

While this is our last year for the foreseeable future in Louisville, Kentucky, the Education Committee listened to your survey responses and has implemented many of your suggestions to put together a truly memorable program. Here are a few highlights:

- Our education sessions have been expanded from 13 to 20 so you have even more options.
- Our Women’s Forum has been re-branded to the GROW Forum, sponsored by Hunter. The Forum will continue to emphasize the importance of a welcoming and respectful work environment.
- Our Service Project at the Waterfront Park gives us an opportunity to tour the beautiful park near the Galt House while also giving back to the community of Louisville and work alongside Project Evergreen and the Olmsted Foundation. We encourage you to sign up during conference registration.
- Our “Breakfast of Champions” is “Adapting to Change, a Journey through Team, Turf and Tough Decisions” presented by John Ledwidge, the head of Grounds and Landscape for Manchester City Football Club and sponsored by Stanley Black and Decker.

We value your feedback and appreciate the time so many of you took to fill out our surveys. Your honest and constructive feedback is key to providing the programing you expect.

The board is developing our plans for the 2026 conference and we are exploring several options. One of our strategic pillars is to build innovative and collaborative partnerships and our hope is to partner with another green industry association so we can continue to have the trade show that is such a valuable component of the EQUIP Expo. We hope to share an update soon.

The feedback we received on the June conference in Cleveland was overwhelmingly positive. The education program, the tours, and the time with our Partners in Professionalism and fellow members were extraordinary. Plans for our 2026 conference in Philadelphia, PA from June 15-16 are well underway. The Philadelphia Branch planning team has accepted the challenge to exceed the high expectations set by our other regional conferences. I encourage you to mark these dates on your calendar now and plan on attending.

The Forum Newsletter is published six times a year by the **Professional Grounds Management Society.**
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Our September Webinar “Hiring and Retention Challenges” by Rollin Heassler, sponsored by Rainbow Ecoscience will focus on ideas to attract and retain top talent. This is an area where many of us struggle. Please be sure to continue to send us your ideas for webinars.

Registration for the LEAD program is open now and I encourage you to apply. This is an excellent program for both industry veterans and emerging leaders in the green industry. Everyone who has completed the program agrees that they are a better and more empathetic leader now. If you are considering applying, I encourage you to reach out to learn more. I am confident you will find the investment worthwhile.

It is time again to renew your membership. We understand budget constraints, but we believe your PGMS membership offers unmatched value through education, networking, and professional growth. We are made better through our active members who share their knowledge both formally and informally. While our education programs are great, our members consistently say that informal networking is where they gain the most value. Please let me know if you feel we can improve the value of membership in any way.

In closing, I am excited to announce our new partnership with the Talley Management Group, which started on September 1, 2025. The team at Talley is professional, forward thinking, and offers a fresh perspective on our organization. Talley understands PGMS's unique needs and is committed to helping us expand our brand and strengthen our presence in the green industry.

Let’s continue building a stronger PGMS together—your voice and participation make all the difference. I look forward to seeing everyone in person in Louisville where we can share ideas and fellowship.

Warm regards,

Michael Gildea, CGM | 2025 PGMS® President

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PGMS® NOMINATION AND ELECTIONS REPORT



As required by the PGMS® Bylaws, once the Board of Directors has accepted and endorsed these nominees for open Board positions, their names will be presented to the voting members of PGMS® along with information on how additional nominations may be offered. Additional nominations may be made provided that they are made in writing, endorsed by at least ten (10) voting Members in good standing, with the written consent of the nominee and received by the Secretary of the Society not less than thirty (30) days in advance of the annual meeting. The Secretary shall be responsible for seeing that all those members with the privilege of voting are notified of any additional nominations, in writing, immediately. There shall be no nominations on the floor unless an unopposed and announced candidate should withdraw his or her name from consideration.

- Current Nominations are:**
- President (2nd term)** - Michael Gildea, CGM
President-Elect (2nd term) - Donald Bottger, CGM
Vice President (2nd term) - Vincent Jagodzinski, CGM
Treasurer (2nd term) - Phil Richey
Director-At-Large - Michael Weikamp
Director-At-Large - Brandon Haley, CGM
Northeast Regional Director (1st term) - Matt Tobin
Southeast Regional Director (1st term) - Bill Quade

Questions? Please contact PGMS® headquarters at 443-966-3852 or info@pgms.org.

2025 PGMS® BYLAWS SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CHANGES

To reflect the current structure and needs of the Society—such as updated membership categories and modern governance practices—the PGMS® Board of Directors convened a Task Force to conduct a comprehensive review and revision of the PGMS® Bylaws.

The Task Force was composed of the following members:

- Michael Gildea, CGM, President
- Roger Conner, CGM, CGT, Immediate Past President
- Sandra Obenour-Dowd, Southwest Regional Director
- Bill Quade, Director at Large
- Joe Fearn, Member
- Brett Ganas, Member

As part of the review process, the Task Force engaged legal counsel to evaluate the Bylaws for compliance with Maryland nonprofit corporation law (PGMS® is incorporated in Maryland) and to align the document with nonprofit governance best practices. Legal counsel also recommended updates to accommodate modern organizational needs, including provisions for electronic voting, virtual meetings, and flexible meeting protocols.

All proposed revisions were carefully reviewed and unanimously approved by the Task Force. The revised Bylaws were also presented to the PGMS® Board of Directors for approval. With Board approval, the updated Bylaws are now submitted to the PGMS® membership. As per the current Bylaws Article XII, Section 1201, these By-Laws may be amended at any annual meeting of the society by a 2/3 (two-thirds) vote, providing that notice has been sent to each member in the official publication at least 90 (ninety) days prior to the meeting, for final ratification.

This represents the 90-day notice.

At the October 23, 2025, PGMS® Annual Business Meeting in Louisville, the members in attendance can vote to approve these amendments.

A summary of the proposed amendments is provided below. To see the current bylaws visit: pgms.org/page/missionandbylaws.

Article I – Name, Purposes, and Offices

- Change article name to "Names, Purposes, and Offices"

- Additions to 101:
 - Add “a Maryland not-for-profit corporation”
 - Add “Inc” after “Professional Grounds Management Society”
 - Add “or the Society” after PGMS®

- Delete sentence referencing the National Association of Gardeners

Add new Section 103 stating PGMS® shall maintain a registered office and agent in Maryland

Article II – Membership

- 201 Deletion: Remove subjective approval clause for membership applications
- 203 A Changes: Language updates, due process for expulsion added
- 203 B Changes: Clarify resignation process and financial obligations
- 204 Title Update: Rename section to clarify membership type and rights
- 204 A-F Updates:
 - Clarify that Active/Affiliate are members who are engaged in or support grounds management
 - Align membership categories with website
 - Add: Organizational, Branch Local Supplier
 - Combine: Active, Affiliate, Organizational
 - Add: Educator and combine with Student for Educator/Student membership
 - Change: Sustaining → Supplier
 - Remove age reference under Emeritus
- 204 E & F Changes: Minor terminology updates
- 205 A-E: Delete section and incorporate into 204
- 206 Renumbered to 205 and updated for automatic Branch assignment

Article III – Dues

- 301 Deletion: Remove Board’s discretionary hardship waiver on dues

Article IV – Meetings of Membership

- 401 Deletion: Remove fixed location reference ("at a conference")
- 401 Additions:
 - Allow meetings outside Maryland
 - Permit virtual meetings
- 402 Changes: Clarify and limit notice timing (30–90 days)
- 403 Changes:
 - Clarify process for calling special meetings
 - Add required notice language
- 404 Update: Update membership categories and terminology
- 406 (New Section): Allow action without meeting or via electronic ballot
- 407 Renumbered due to added section
- 407 Changes: Update Robert’s Rules reference and clarify governance

Article V – Board of Directors

- 501 Updates:
 - Include Immediate Past President
 - Treasurer becomes Secretary/Treasurer

- Capitalization corrections
- 503 Updates:
 - Terminology updates
 - Allow President to call special meetings
 - Add waiver clause for Director attendance
- 504 Change:
 - Clarify that two Regional Directors and One Director at Large are elected by the membership each year
 - Update “overlapping” to “staggered/consecutive”
 - Remove reference to mail ballot
- 505 Changes:
 - Clarify resignations vs removals
 - Add removal procedure
- 506 & 507 Updates: Terminology; clarify Board authority over Executive Committee
- 508 Addition: Clarify regional Board elections
- 509 (New Section): Add Board written consent process
- 510 (New Section): Permit virtual Board meetings

Article VI – Officers and Their Duties

- 601 Additions/Updates:
 - Add Immediate Past President
 - Secretary/Treasurer title & capitalization fixes
- 601 B (New Section): Officers serve until successors qualified
- 601 C-D Renumber & Change: Clarify term limits and board references
- 602–604 Changes: Grammar fixes, succession clarification, update responsibilities
- 603 B & 604 B: Clarify Education Committee roles of VP and President-Elect
- 604 C (New Section): Add VP's additional duties
- 605 (New Section): Define Immediate Past President's role
- 606 Renumber & Update: Define Secretary/Treasurer duties in detail
- 607 (New Section): Add officer resignation/removal policy

Article VII – Executive Director

- 701 D Deletion: Remove bonding requirement
- 701 E-I Renumbered/Additions: Expand Executive Director role description

Article VIII – Elections

- Change article name to: “Nominating Committee and Elections”
- 801 Relocate: Nominating Committee (previously Section 902) from Article IX to Article VIII, new Section 801
- 801: Capitalization and language clarity
- (Newly named section 801) H: Remove reference to mail ballot
- Combine: Previous sections 801-803 into Section 802 Elections A-D
- Update: Capitalization fixes
- 802D (New Section): Allow flexible election methods permitted by law

Article IX – Committees

- 901 Update & Addition: Update “Chairman” to “Chair,” add committee list
- 902 Relocate: to Section XIII, A-G
- 903 Renumber (to 902) and Change: Clarify committee appointment process

Article X – Branches

- Change: The name of the Article to “Branches”
- 1001 Deletion: Remove official publication clause
- 1002 Renumbered & Updated: Align Branch requirements with new policy

Article XI – Financial Management

- 1102 Deletion/Change:
 - Remove deficit spending clause
 - Update reserve fund usage policy
- 1103 Changes:
 - Clarify records and inspection rights per law
- 1104 Deletion: Remove required fund transfer to AHTA upon liquidation
- 1105–1108 (New Sections):
 - Add sections on audits, contracts, checks/payments, and depositing funds

Article XII – Bylaws Changes

- 1201 Update: Specify amendment process, 90-day notice requirement

Article XIII – Indemnification and Insurance (New)

- 1301 Addition: Add new article ensuring indemnification and insurance

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CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW CERTIFIED
GROUNDS TECHNICIAN


Jason Philips,
CGT 280

Louisiana Tech University
Ruston, Louisiana



SCHEDULE

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21

6:30 a.m.	Informal Run/Walk Meet in the Galt House Lobby
8:00 – 8:45 a.m.	Coffee & Networking
8:15 – 9:00 a.m.	LEAD Cohort Program Breakfast and Networking (invitation only)
	Sponsored by: 
9:00 – 10:15 a.m.	EDUCATION SESSION 1 <i>"Life Lessons On and Off the Field"</i> David Mellor
10:30 – 11:45 a.m.	EDUCATION SESSION 2 (choose one) <i>"Numbers are the Universal Language"</i> Shane Richards <i>"Ecological Principles of Turfgrass and Landscape Management"</i> Paul Johnson <i>"Consistent Sports Fields, Confident Athletes"</i> Chase Straw, PhD

12:00 – 12:15 p.m.	LEAD Cohort Certificate and Pin Ceremony
	Sponsored by: 

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

The Galt House Hotel will host many of the PGMS® Annual Conference education sessions, breakfasts, awards ceremony and celebration, and networking events.

Special Room Rate

PGMS® has a limited number of rooms available at the special rate of \$235 per night, plus tax. To receive the special rate, make your reservation by **Friday, September 19** and request the "PGMS" or "Professional Grounds Management Society" rate.

Phone: 800-THEGALT (800-843-4258)
Reserve a Room Online:
bit.ly/PGMShotel2025

PGMS® reserves the right to cancel any room reservations for individuals who reserve a room within the PGMS® room block and are not registered for the Annual Conference.

Airport & Ground Transportation

For those who are flying, the Louisville International Airport (SDF) is only minutes from downtown and offers easy access to the Galt House Hotel by shuttle, taxi, or ride share.

12:15 – 2:00 p.m.

EDUCATION SESSION 3



"Building Stronger Teams: Practical Strategies for a Better Workforce"
Panelists: Meg Smolinski, Sun Roesslein, CSFM, and Warren Gorowitz Moderated by: Paula Sliefert
Sponsored by:



2:15 – 3:15 p.m.

EDUCATION SESSION 4 (choose 1)
"The Purdue Arboretum: A Living Laboratory"
Paul Siciliano and Kirby Kalbaugh

"Multifunctional Green Stormwater Infrastructure: Does it Work?"
Wei Zhang, PhD

"Building a Fertilizer Program for Turfgrass"
Tyler Carr, PhD

3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

EDUCATION SESSION 5 (choose 1)
"Weed Warriors on Campus: Engaging Student Volunteers to Combat Invasive Plants"
Meg Smolinski, BCMA and Thomas Adams

"What's Killing Our Trees? The Top 5 Revealed"
Lindsey Purcell, RCA #673

"Smart Irrigation and Data Analytics: Enhancing Labor and Water Efficiency in Modern Landscapes"
Keith Schweiger

4:30 – 5:30 p.m.

CGM® Reception (must be a CGM® - invitation only)

5:30 – 7:00 p.m.


Annual Welcoming Reception

Sponsored by:


6:30 – 9:30 p.m.

Equip Exp Welcome Reception at Churchill Downs

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22

5:30 a.m.	Informal Run/Walk Meet in the Galt House Lobby
7:00 – 8:30 a.m.	EDUCATION SESSION 6: BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS <i>“Adapting to Change, a Journey through Team, Turf, and Tough Decisions”</i> John Ledwidge Sponsored by: 
8:45 – 10:00 a.m.	EDUCATION SESSION 7 <i>“Stronger Together: Let’s Change the Game on Silo Mentalities”</i> Mark Kenny
10:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Travel to Kentucky Exposition Center
11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	EDUCATION SESSION 8: EQUIP EXPOSITION OPENING KEYNOTE Jesse Cole
12:00 - 5:00 p.m.	Explore Equip Expo
12:45 - 3:30 p.m.	PGMS® Service Project Meet in the Galt House Lobby
7:30 - 9:00 p.m.	4th Street Live! Party

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23

5:30 a.m.	Informal Run/Walk Meet in the Galt House Lobby
7:00 – 8:00 a.m.	Annual PGMS® Business Meeting & Breakfast (open to all conference registrants)
8:15 – 9:15 a.m.	EDUCATION SESSION 9 <i>“Is There a Market for Sustainable Lawn Care?”</i> Gregg Munshaw, PhD
9:30 – 10:30 a.m.	EDUCATION SESSION 10 <i>“A Decade of Meadow at Glenstone”</i> Matthew Partain, CGM
10:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Travel to Kentucky Exposition Center
1:00 – 2:15 p.m.	EDUCATION SESSION 11 <i>(choose 1)</i> <i>“What’s the Role of Incident Command and How Can it Help You in Emergencies?”</i> Bill Quade <i>“Replacements for Glyphosate: Weed Control After Roundup”</i> David Gardiner, PhD

2:30 – 3:45 p.m.	EDUCATION SESSION 12 <i>(choose 1)</i> <i>“Managing Natural Turfgrass On High Traffic Common Grounds”</i> Bradley Park <i>“IPM Strategies with Pesticide Restrictions in Turfgrass”</i> Zachary Holm, CSFM
5:45 – 7:30 p.m.	Annual Awards Celebration Sponsored by:



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24

7:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Travel to Kentucky Exposition Center & Enjoy Equip Expo
2:00 p.m.	Conference Concludes

PEOPLE, LEADERSHIP AND CULTURE SESSIONS

Wednesday, October 22 | 7:00 - 8:30 a.m.
Adapting to Change, a Journey through Team, Turf, and Tough Decisions
John Ledwidge, Head of Grounds & Landscaping, Manchester City Football Club

Change is unavoidable, but how we respond to it defines our path and our journey. In this powerful session, John Ledwidge will share with you his remarkable professional story and transformation detailing his ascent to the top of his field with one of the leading football clubs in the world. With authenticity and transparency, he will share how life’s toughest moments became the greatest possibility for growth—and how embracing change, rather than resisting it, led to a successful career.

You’ll learn how to develop a transition mentality mindset that sees change as a powerful opportunity rather than an obstacle. Discover the basics of the transition mentality and how mastering them will provide you with the tools to build a culture that thrives through change. Whether you’re navigating uncertainty, facing a big adjustment, or simply ready for a fresh perspective, this session will leave you motivated, energized, and equipped to face change now and in the future.

Wednesday, October 22 | 8:45 - 10:00 a.m.
Stronger Together: Let’s Change the Game on Silo Mentalities
Mark Kenny, Author, Speaker, and Strategic Advisor

Many teams—especially in results-driven environments like grounds management —struggle with silo mentalities that stifle collaboration and create an “us vs. them” mindset. Friction between grounds teams, office staff, and other departments leads to misaligned goals, communication breakdowns, missed deadlines, and mounting frustration. As a leader, you see how these barriers drain energy and disrupt operations. When silo mentalities persist, you risk costly delays, frustrated crews, and compromised standards. Like sports teams, your teams must practice working together to succeed.

In this lively, no-nonsense session, Mark tackles these challenges with his conversational style and practical solutions you can use immediately.

See conference brochure for more sessions!

THANK YOU TO OUR PARNTERS IN PROFESSIONALISM

Please take time to visit our partners at the PGMS® Annual Conference "Transform" & Equip Expo. Their booth numbers below.



Booth #28022



Booth #5116, 7822D



Booth # 5068, 8000D



Booth #7148, 7600D



Booth #1110, 7834D



Booth #1064, 7422D



Booth #5112, 7451D



Booth #357



Booth #112TC, 9094



Booth #11080, 6148D

We also thank the following Partners for their support.



SESSION SPOTLIGHT

ECOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES FOR TURFGRASS MANAGEMENT

By: Paul Johnson; Utah State University

"Grass grows in spite of us." -Dr. Donald B. White

Turfgrass is often treated as something separate from nature. Maybe that's because we don't see pristine lawns or athletic fields in wild landscapes. Turf areas are created and managed to survive the stress of urban environments and the wear of human use as well as meet visual expectations.

Because of this separate from nature view, turf is too often managed by cookbook methods—"apply this and expect that"—without a real understanding of the plants or the larger systems they're part of. Even though turfgrasses are sometimes highly managed, they still follow the same ecological patterns as other plants. They interact constantly with their environment, with us, and even with each other in fascinating ways.

My own perspective on turf comes from my PhD advisor, Dr. Donald B. White, who framed turfgrass management through ecological principles. His approach continues to shape how I research, teach, and care for turf. Ecology isn't just about untouched nature—it's about the web of interactions in any environment, even in a stadium or city park.

In this talk, I'll share how viewing turfgrass systems ecologically leads to better understanding, smarter decisions, and more creative problem-solving in turf management.



REPLACEMENTS FOR GLYPHOSATE: WEED CONTROL AFTER ROUNDUP

By: David Gardner, The Ohio State University

Glyphosate has been an important herbicide for use in landscape weed management. Though it is non-selective and thus great care must be taken to avoid contact with desired ornamental plants, glyphosate has many advantages. In addition to controlling many weed species, it binds tightly to soil, which greatly reduces the likelihood of off target injury due to leaching or runoff post application. It is particularly advantageous for the control of perennial broadleaf weeds and others growing near desired ornamentals.

The use of glyphosate has become controversial due to concerns about its potential carcinogenicity. Because of this glyphosate-based products in the U.S. residential lawn and garden market were replaced with alternative products beginning in 2024. It is still available in the professional and agricultural markets. However, in places where the use of glyphosate is not preferred, there are many alternative herbicides to consider.

This conference session will focus on the use of glyphosate replacements in the landscape, including what they are and potential alterations in how these products should be used compared to glyphosate. Since many of the replacement options are selective, weed identification is essential, including weeds known to have acquired resistance to at least one of the registered herbicides for landscape use.

It is also important to know the life cycles of the weeds and the importance of proper timing of either pre- or post-emergence herbicides to optimize control. Another important factor is the use of proper cultural practices which can reduce weed populations.



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MANAGING NATURAL TURFGRASS ON HIGH TRAFFIC COMMON GROUNDS

By: Brad Park



Turfgrasses are established on common areas in parks and institutional grounds settings; turfgrasses stabilize soil (Environmental benefits) as well as provide aesthetic value and offer a space for relaxation, outdoor exercise, recreation, or outdoor gatherings (Societal [Cultural] benefits) (Braun et al., 2024).

Repetitive foot traffic, large gatherings, and sports activities (organized or pick-up) are examples of events that impart traffic stresses on natural turfgrass common grounds and can reduce turfgrass cover and quality and adversely affect the ability of turfgrass systems to provide the previously described benefits. There is a rationale to protect turfgrass systems from excessive traffic and actively manage these systems in a manner that mitigates the negative effects of traffic.

This talk will describe beneficial roles provided by natural turfgrass common grounds (Beard and Green [1994] and Braun et al. [2024]) and present various non-agronomic tactics that may reduce traffic events in both quantity and severity such as landscape design and limiting location access through fencing, signage, and permitting. The presentation will examine times

during the year when cool- and warm-season grasses are most sensitive to and tolerant of traffic stresses and agronomic strategies (e.g. turfgrass selection and management) that can reduce the impact traffic stresses have on turfgrass quality and cover.

Bio: Brad Park is Research & Outreach Agronomist, Rutgers University. Brad previously worked as a Research Support Technician at Penn State University and received a Master of Science in Agronomy from the same institution. Since coming to Rutgers in 2003, Brad performs traffic stress research on cool-season turfgrass species commonly established for sports fields and routinely visits athletic facilities in New Jersey to assist turfgrass managers in solving problems associated with high traffic sports fields. Brad annually participates as an Instructor and Curriculum Coordinator for multiple sports field classes offered by Rutgers-New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station Office of Continuing Professional Education and was recipient of the New Jersey Turfgrass Association's Recognition Award in 2016 and the Sports Field Management Association (SFMA) 2024 Dr. William H. Daniel Founders Award.

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SESSION SPOTLIGHT

A DECADE OF MEADOW AT GLENSTONE

By: Matthew Partain, CGM



Tales from the Trenches: In Pursuit of an Organic Silver Bullet

At Glenstone, a modern art museum nestled on 360 acres in Potomac, Maryland, we strive to seamlessly integrate art, architecture, and nature. That mission extends into every corner of our landscape—native, organic, and sustainable.

But with every ideal comes a challenge. Ours has roots—literally.

Enter *Cirsium arvense*, better known (and loathed) as creeping thistle. Ranked #7 on Mother Earth News's list of the "10 Worst Garden Weeds," it claims #2 on my personal list, just behind Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*).

A Meadow Reborn—and Invaded

The heart of Glenstone is a 45-acre native seeded meadow, nurtured over the last decade. This spring, a construction project denuded two acres along its edge,

giving us the rare opportunity to restart the meadow establishment process from scratch.

But this time, it came with baggage: creeping thistle rootstock, already lurking on the perimeter and it wasted no time exploiting the open space. Meadow establishment is a long game—three to five years of careful stewardship. We knew early suppression of aggressive perennials would be critical. With traditional acid-based burn-down products off the table, we opted to trial a new OMRI-certified, eugenol-based (clove oil) systemic herbicide. A promising—but unproven—option.

And yes, for all the botany nerds out there: it requires two separate components, precise pH adjustment to 5.3, and a bit of mad scientist energy to prepare.

"How 'bout a Little Fire, Scarecrow?"

I couldn't help but channel The Wizard of Oz while applying it. But theatrics aside, the real question remains: will it work?

Our initial results are cautiously optimistic. Many thistle plants are visibly damaged—some are gone altogether. Unlike contact herbicides that scorch plants on impact, systemic herbicides “kill from within” and after a few weeks it appears to be working, albeit slowly. A second application is underway to target surviving growth.

Still, skepticism lingers. A similar clove oil-based product was pulled from the market in 2020 after it was found to contain undisclosed synthetic ingredients like glyphosate and diquat. We’re watching closely and asking tough questions.

The Silver Bullet—TBD

So, is this Glenstone’s silver bullet for organic perennial weed control? The verdict’s still out. But this experiment, like all our work in native meadow restoration, is a blend of science, patience, and calculated risk. If you’re interested in the full story—thistles, trials, triumphs, and all—join me this October in Louisville for “A Decade of Meadow at Glenstone.”

I’ll be the one with the clove oil.

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Leadership Education Cohort Program Powered By PGMS



PGMS® is now accepting applications for the 2025-2026 LEAD program. For details and to apply, visit pgms.org/page/LEAD. Applications accepted through October 31.

PGMS® offers the LEAD program to empower grounds professionals and foster leadership. This initiative provides comprehensive training, education, and guidance that cultivates the next generation of sustainable leaders. Now in its fourth year, LEAD aligns with PGMS’s mission to empower professionals and develop leaders for the future.

This transformative 13-month journey combines training, education, and mentorship to develop resilient, empathetic leaders who foster positive workplace cultures.

Tuition

BASE PACKAGE:

- PGMS® Members - \$999
- Non-Members - \$1,099

Base Package includes:

- All Virtual LEAD programs (total of eight 2-hour sessions via Zoom), featuring top management and leadership speakers, and small group discussions.
- Access to the LEAD discussion group on the PGMS® website (discussion forum and video recordings)
- Opportunity to earn CEU’s through LEAD presentations.
- LEAD certificate upon completion of the 13- month program.

Leadership Areas addressed include:

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Creating a Positive Work Culture | • Conflict Resolution |
| • Dynamic Team Leadership | • Managing Stress & Burnout |
| • Mental Health in the Workplace | • Effective Communication |
| • Building Collaborative Networks and Relationships | • Embracing the Diversity in Your Team |

Requirements for LEAD applicants include:

- Ability to attend all education sessions. The program includes a total of eight virtual sessions (two hours each) held via Zoom in November, December, February, March, April, June, August, and September. Sessions are normally held mid-week at 12 noon ET (9 am PT, 11 AM CT). For participants who elect to attend the PGMS® Annual Conference, there may be additional programming during that event.
- Completion of a brief form after each session, highlighting how the session impacted you.

The 2025-2026 LEAD program has limited capacity. Preference is given to PGMS® members.

Program support underwritten by:



2024 Green Star Grand Award® Winner



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY - SAN ANTONIO UNIVERSITY & COLLEGE GROUNDS – SMALL (0 - 200 ACRES)

The SSC Grounds team at Texas A&M University-San Antonio plays a vital role in creating a campus environment that is safe, inclusive, and welcoming for students, faculty, and staff. As part of a proud Hispanic-Serving and Military-Embracing Institution, the team supports the university's mission by maintaining landscapes that reflect the culture and history of San Antonio while also meeting modern conservation standards.

By prioritizing native, drought-tolerant plants and efficient irrigation practices, they balance beauty with sustainability. Their work enhances a rapidly growing campus community with over 25,000 students, which is poised to become one of the fastest expanding universities in the nation.



Limestone rock borders these manicured landscape beds. Sage, yaupon holly, and Asiatic jasmine make up most of this landscape bed. Our grounds team receives many compliments for the way they manage this busy section of campus. Pruning is done at times that will not disturb classes and events that border this area.

All grounds staff is trained on the specific pruning needs of these plants and are given safety training on PPE required to accomplish each task.



SUSTAINABILITY

Water conservation is used as much as possible throughout campus. This is one of two 55,000-gallon cisterns. These holding tanks collect water runoff from the Madla and Central Academic buildings and help facilitate our campus fountain and irrigation system on campus.



CHALLENGE

The ground team navigates strict, year-round water restrictions in San Antonio by implementing drip irrigation, high-efficiency turf heads, smart weather-responsive systems, and flow meters to maximize conservation and efficiency. They also prepare for future sustainability by installing purple pipe for eventual effluent water use. Additionally, they address tree stress caused by decomposed granite through aeration with an air spade and soil enrichment techniques to promote long-term tree health.



Mowing, edging, and trimming are performed weekly on campus. Appropriate PPE is utilized, and all safety standards are put in place to ensure that staff, students, and faculty are kept safe while the grounds team performing a service to the campus community.



Groundskeeper Rudy Castro (left) is shown mowing the narrow greenspace along University Way. Grounds Supervisor Cosmo Roman (right) plants Vincas at the main entrance of campus. All seasonal plants receive liquid fertilizer combined with liquid wetting agents periodically to assist with growth and moisture retention. Shrubs and perennials in this area are pruned regularly to ensure they do not block university marquis.

AWARDS SUBMISSION COMPILED BY:



MICK DEEDS
Facilities Director,
SSC Services for Education

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL ROULETTE



Renew Early, Win Big.

It's time to spin and win with PGMS® Membership Renewal Roulette! This make renewing early more rewarding—the sooner you renew, the more chances you'll have to win exciting prizes. **Five drawings will take place the first week of January 2026.** Log into your account to get started.

- Renew by October 31 - 3 entries
- Renew by November 30 - 2 entries
- Renew by December 31 - 1 entries

The prizes include:

- One all-expense paid trip to the 2026 PGMS® Annual Conference.
- Four all-expense paid trips to the PGMS® Regional Conference in Philadelphia, PA.



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Explore the Line-Up at [JohnDeere.com/groundscare](https://www.johndeere.com/groundscare)



A few things you may have missed going on in the grounds management industry.

Industry News

GROUNDS MANAGEMENT TODAY: INNOVATIONS & INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS

As 2025 progresses, two dominant trends continue to reshape grounds management: the shift toward **battery-powered and autonomous equipment**, and the rise of **robotics and AI** in landscape operations. Many firms are piloting battery power systems not only for their environmental friendliness but also for regulatory compliance and performance efficiency.

Highlights

- **Hustler and Cub Cadet, Stanley Black & Decker:** Awarded a Sourcwell cooperative purchasing contract for grounds maintenance equipment, making it easier for public agencies and educational institutions to access pre-vetted, competitively priced tools.
- **Echo:** Secured its own Sourcwell contract, providing public sector customers access to its range of battery and gas-powered outdoor power equipment.

These developments underscore a shift toward smarter, more sustainable operations—driven by advanced battery tools, autonomous systems, and strategic industry partnerships. As procurement becomes more streamlined, grounds teams have greater access to innovative equipment. Meanwhile, investment in growth signals continued modernization and expansion across the sector.

CIRCULAR PARTNERSHIPS: A MODEL FOR THE FUTURE

PGMS® is proud to be supported by **Kawasaki Engines**, a division of Kawasaki Heavy Industries, Ltd., a global leader in advanced technologies. In Japan, Kawasaki is playing an active role in the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI)'s "Circular Partners" initiative—an effort that unites industries, academia, and government to accelerate progress toward a circular economy.

As part of this initiative, Kawasaki has committed to ambitious goals by 2030, including reducing hazardous substances, expanding the use of recycled materials, improving manufacturing processes, and developing innovative solutions that minimize environmental impact. By leveraging expertise across sectors such as energy, robotics, railways, and hydraulics, Kawasaki demonstrates how open innovation and collaboration can transform sustainability from vision into action.

For grounds professionals in academic settings, this model highlights what is possible in the United States. Universities and colleges are already advancing eco-conscious practices on their campuses, and partnerships like METI's offer a framework for deeper collaboration between schools, industry leaders, and public agencies. Just as Kawasaki is doing abroad, American institutions can benefit from working across sectors to build a more resilient, sustainable, and circular future.

HUSTLER HONORS HEROES AT NALP'S RENEWAL & REMEMBRANCE



This summer, the National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP) brought together nearly 400 volunteers from 30 states for its annual Renewal & Remembrance event in Washington, D.C.

As a proud sponsor, Hustler joined more than 150 landscape professionals in spreading woodchips, pruning trees, and removing stumps at **Arlington National Cemetery** and the **Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial**.

Aaron Griffith, Director of Professional Dealer Sales for Hustler, shared, “Personally, it was my first opportunity to contribute at Arlington National Cemetery—a truly humbling experience that deepened my appreciation for the care and reverence dedicated to this hallowed ground.”

For many, Renewal & Remembrance is more than a day of beautification—it is a tradition of service, camaraderie, and reflection. Jeff Foster, Professional Product Support Manager for Hustler, noted, “This marked my fourth year participating, and I had the privilege of working at the FDR Memorial. Witnessing the collective effort—especially from those who typically work behind the scenes—was truly inspiring.”

The gratitude expressed by all, and the lasting impact of the volunteers' efforts, stand as a testament to the enduring spirit of community that defines this meaningful event. PGMS® is proud to be supported by Hustler and looks forward to connecting with members at ELEVATE, presented by NALP, where PGMS will be an exhibitor.

This article was adapted from Hustler. Photos courtesy of Hustler Turf Equipment.

Share Your Expertise with the PGMS® Forum!




Are you passionate about the green industry?

We're inviting members and industry experts to contribute articles to upcoming issues of the PGMS® Forum. Whether you have insights, tips, or success stories, we'd love to hear from you!



Submit your article or ideas to info@pgms.org.

Let's grow together and inspire our community!




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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 17, 2025
PGMS® Webinar
Hiring and Retention Challenges
Presented by Rollin Heassler, Human Resources Director, Rainbow Companies

September 18, 2025
2025 Georgia Branch Fall Meeting
Pine Mountain, Georgia

October 21–24, 2025
PGMS® Annual Conference & Equip Expo
Louisville, KY



November 2–5, 2025
ELEVATE - The National Conference & Expo
Presented by NALP.
Phoenix, AZ
Be sure to visit our booth!

November 12–13, 2025
The Landscape Expo
Anaheim, CA
Be sure to visit our booth!

November 19, 2025
PGMS® Webinar
Safety Leadership Snapshot
Presented Phil Snyder, Vice President, Health and Safety, The Davey Tree Expert Company

Submit your events via e-mail to info@pgms.org.

PGMS® SUPPORTS SEED YOUR FUTURE AS THEY INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION OF HORTICULTURE PROFESSIONALS



PGMS® is proud to support Seed Your Future, a national nonprofit dedicated to inspiring students to explore and pursue rewarding careers in the vibrant field of horticulture. By showcasing a wide range of career paths—from working directly with plants, flowers, trees, and produce to roles in marketing, technology, graphic design, accounting, and sales—Seed Your Future helps students understand the diverse and exciting opportunities in horticulture. Seed Your Future envisions a world where the arts, science, technology, and business of horticulture are celebrated as essential and thriving career pathways. Seed Your Future Programs include:

National Art Contest for High School Students: This nationwide contest invited students to express their creativity while exploring the vital role of horticulture in their lives. The theme for 2025 was "The Importance of Horticulture in My World," challenging students to illustrate how plants, flowers, and green spaces influence their daily lives.

Seed to STEM: This 2025 program offered an opportunity for 30 math, art, and English teachers to integrate horticulture into diverse subject areas, fostering creativity, critical thinking, and environmental awareness in the classroom. Seed to STEM empowers high school educators to introduce students to the many career opportunities within horticulture. With growing demand for creative approaches to STEM education, this year’s initiative will focus on how math, art, and English can serve as entry points into the fascinating world of plants.

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SHOULD BE
EXCEPTIONAL



It's why any engine that earns the Kawasaki Critical Power title must adhere to strict rules set out by SAE—among the tightest in the lawn-and-garden industry.

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EVEN MORE EZ SCAPES™

Proven Winners® ColorChoice® Shrubs are joining the EZ Scapes™ landscape design program, making it easier than ever to make landscapes look their best. With options for every challenge from sandy soil to deer pressure to high heat, these recipes offer interest all year long. Professionally designed and tested, they're composed of varieties that naturally grow well together for easy success. Find local suppliers of Proven Winners® plants at pwwin.rs/PGMS and learn more about EZ Scapes at ezscapes.com.



The 25 lessons from the 2024 Seed to STEM are available for free download here:

drive.google.com/file/d/1Y6RvN_CrsDxpNpTLs42IsVTrLtmT0_9V/view

Green Career Week (October 6 - 10, 2025): is a national initiative led by industry professionals to increase awareness about green industry careers and help build relationships with local schools, colleges and universities

During Green Career Week, participating businesses and organizations connect with local schools, colleges and universities to showcase the various career paths at their business. For more information: seedyourfuture.org/green-career-week.

For more information on these programs and to learn how you can get involved, visit: seedyourfuture.com.

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WELCOME RECEPTION

AT CHURCHILL DOWNS
Tuesday, October 21, 6:30 p.m.

Sponsored by:



THURSDAY CONCERT

KENTUCKY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER
Thursday, October 23, 7 p.m.



Sponsored by:



OPENING KEYNOTE

KENTUCKY EXPOSITION CENTER
Wednesday, October 22, 11:00 a.m.

JESSE COLE



Sponsored by:



WELCOME

PGMS® New Members

New Members since September 5, 2025

Paul Andersen

City of Omaha Parks, Recreation
and Public Property

Erik Boley

Simplot

Rebecca Grubbs Bowling

University of Tennessee

Gregory Carbone

Bartlett Tree Experts

Jeff Chambers

Missouri State University

Steve Corcoran

LawnStarter

Melissa Dombrowski

Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional Program

Sarah Evans

Gwinnett Technical College

Brendan Fink

Kutztown Area School District

Elizabeth Ginter

Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council

Shereen Hughes

Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional Program

Alex Isaacs

Tiny Mobile Robots

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Jason MacKay

Harvard University

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David Pellegrine

Arbortech Tools

Brandon Pezzino

Katie Pinkham

Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council

Trevor Seguin

Saratoga Springs Public Works

Erik Skall

UC Davis Medical Center

Anna Strack

Rain Bird

Know someone who isn't a member?



Help spread the word about joining PGMS®. Membership details can be found on the website at www.pgms.org.

Find up-to-date job listings on our website at www.pgms.org and click on Career Center.

Classifieds

Director of Landscape Sales and Operations Hershey's Mill Landscape

The Director of Sales and Operations is responsible for overseeing daily operations across landscape and maintenance projects, including design work, sales and customer relations. The role manages field crews, ensuring projects are completed on time, within budget, and to the highest quality standards, while maintaining a safe work environment.

Responsibilities:

- Utilize time efficiently between design work, sales, and customer interaction
- Extensive knowledge of horticultural practices, landscape maintenance, and ornamental, native and invasive plants, and their cultural condition
- Able to generate proposal
- Able to design/draw and sell landscape installations.
- Improve, create and maintain a consistent standard of work for crews
- Monitor the process of getting crews out to their assignment at the start of the workday and managing workloads and scheduling needs.
- Scheduling of contracted work and follow up with residents/customers
- Participate in hiring of foreman/crew members
- Direct supervision of landscape staff including establishing goals and expectations, performance management, corrective action, and training
- Effectively and professionally communicate with foreman, landscape crews, office staff, and customers
- Enforce Company safety standards. Report unsafe conditions and conduct research to improve service quality and safety standards
- Lead by example in all tasks, always showing attention to detail and setting high expectations for new and existing crew members
- Keep current with industry best practices
- Thorough understanding of landscape construction with the ability to estimate job costs
- Coordinate with landscape foreman for installation of design
- Assist landscape foreman with proper installation of plant material

- Willing to assist with all aspects of full-service landscape company
- Able to understand cost analysis along with staying within budget
- Maintain proper working condition of equipment/vehicles by ensuring fluid levels, checking tire pressure and overall working condition, and relaying any concerns to mechanic
- Perform other incidental and related duties as required

See job posting for more!

Lead Landscape Technician - Brush Abatement

UC San Diego

Under general supervision assist in the scheduling, assigning and coordination of the work of one or more teams of Landscape Technicians. Assist with determining duties; utilization of materials and equipment; development of work methods. Inspect work assignments for quality control and completion of tasks. Receive equipment and supply requests from crew. Process requests through campus procure-to-pay systems for purchases up to \$5,000. Pick up and deliver supplies. Maintain equipment and supply records. Verify electronic submitted time and material records in timekeeping and Computerized Maintenance Management Systems for accuracy. Maintain accurate records for Landscape Services projects.

Qualifications:

- Demonstrated experience in landscape maintenance work including knowledge of methods, tools, materials and related equipment. At least two years recent and direct experience working as a Landscape Technician or Groundskeeper at a University, College, Hospital, Municipality, and/or other large commercial facility or a combination of education and experience.

See job posting for more!

Landscape Technician

UC San Diego

Under supervision, perform a variety of skilled and semi-skilled landscape maintenance duties in the care of the University's landscaped areas; provide a safe and appropriate environment, facilities and outdoor classrooms for the use and enjoyment of students, faculty, staff and visitors; perform maintenance and repair functions in the care of landscaped areas and related facilities. Job functions include but are not limited to: maintaining and repairing irrigation systems, conducting brush abatement services (brush management/vegetation management/modification), properly operating and maintaining a variety of landscape maintenance power equipment and machinery and, selective pruning of shrubs, trees and any other plant material, fertilizing, planting, turf maintenance and litter pickup. All work to be completed in accordance with University policy, requirements and guidelines.

Qualifications:

- Demonstrated experience in landscape maintenance work including knowledge of methods, tools, materials and related equipment. At least one year recent relevant work experience or a combination of education and experience as a Landscape Technician or Groundskeeper at a University, College, Hospital, Municipality, and/or other large commercial facility.

See job posting for more!

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PGMS® MEMBERSHIP

The Professional Grounds Management Society® (PGMS®) is an individual membership society of grounds professionals advancing the grounds management profession through education and professional development.

Key membership benefits include: Annual conference and Green Industry Expo, bi-monthly newsletter, membership certificate, certification programs (Certified Grounds Manager and Certified Grounds Technician), free educational manuals, local branch meetings, "Who's Who in Grounds Management" membership directory, site awards, free industry magazine subscriptions, etc.

The Society believes that there are four (4) essentials to remaining a professional in the industry:

1. Being a member of the appropriate membership organization or organizations.
2. Attending educational conferences in the field.
3. Reading industry publications.
4. Becoming certified at the level you wish to operate.

Other Key Facts About PGMS®:

- It is the only membership organization for institutional grounds managers.
- It is the only membership organization serving the breadth of the service arm of the Green Industry which professionals can join as individuals.
- It is the oldest individual membership organization for grounds professionals.
- For membership categories and to sign up as a member, please visit pgms.org/page/Membership.

We offer Green Industry Suppliers the opportunity to meet their marketing needs by becoming a **PGMS® Partner in Professionalism**. For more information, visit pgms.org/page/Partners.