

Where Do We Go from Here?

MOST OF US know that the USGA Green Section, which was formed on November 30, 1920, has contributed a great service over the years toward improved grasses, materials and maintenance practices that are now standard on golf courses. The Green Section was born when E. J. Marshall, an attorney who was then Green Committee Chairman of Inverness Club in Toledo, Ohio, brought together the USGA and the United States Department of Agriculture. They have been collaborating ever since. From this relatively obscure beginning, the Green Section has developed into an impartial and authoritative golf turf research and advisory agency.

In more recent years golfers have demanded higher standards of maintenance for the golf course. To meet these demands the Green Section has attempted to bring to the course superintendent and club management the latest information and research regarding plant nutrition, plant pathology, entomology, weed control, watering techniques and plant life in general. Our most pressing concern, however, has been how to distribute this information and research to the maximum number of golf clubs and courses in the United States. A study undertaken by the USGA indicated that we must redirect our basic concepts and procedures. Given this conclusion, where does the Green Section go from here? Basically, the study determined that the Green Section should adopt new procedures. A plan was adopted.

The plan is to provide a simple, economical package that concentrates solely on providing service to our constituency — USGA Member Clubs and Courses, and all of those persons interested and responsible for the proper conditioning and maintenance of golf courses. The plan embraces five basic concepts:

- Truly open the service to USGA Member Clubs and Courses on request.
- Realign the responsibilities of our agronomic staff to improve service.
- Establish a standard fee for Turf Advisory visits.
- Provide regional turf conferences to achieve broader exposure for the Green Section and its turf advisory role.
- Provide each Member Club with an additional copy of the *Green Section Record*.

The plan is to be put into effect in two phases. Phase I began on January 1, 1978. It consists of two features: the addition of a sixth regional office and the scheduling of 10 regional turf conferences, two in each of the five regions that existed in 1977.

All the turf conferences have been completed. They were informative and were well received. In

1979 we hope to increase the frequency of regional conferences and expand their content by covering such subjects as the proper procedures for marking a golf course for play, basic relationships between the Rules of Golf and the conditioning and marking of a course, and developments in the area of implements and ball. In addition to the regional conferences, each of our agronomists has been authorized to schedule informal conferences if a particularly serious turf problem exists over a reasonably wide area within his region. The purpose of the informal conference is to gather the maximum number of superintendents in one location to discuss the problem, its cause and solution.

The new Green Section region is known as the Mid-Continent Region. The former Mid-Continent Region is now the North-Central Region. The accompanying map illustrates each of the six regions.

The Mid-Continent office is in Dallas. Dr. Douglas T. Hawes, the Director, worked as a Green Section agronomist in the Northeastern Region in 1968 before he received his graduate degrees. Dr. Hawes is eminently qualified in agronomy and has experience with both cool- and warm-season grasses. His most recent position was with the University of Maryland.

Because the size of the Southeastern Region has been increased, a new agronomist, Donald D. Hoos, has been added to the staff to assist the Director, James B. Moncrief. Hoos received his masters degree in agronomy from Oklahoma State University.

The purpose of the reorganization is to permit the Green Section to provide closer contact with Member Clubs and Courses and to improve services. The goal is to give each regional director maximum consideration concerning his workload and to assign states to regions so that the regional office is as centrally located as possible, thus minimizing travel. These factors provide the potential for increased flexibility, easier and more efficient scheduling, less dilution of effort, and better service.

Consideration was given to some Member Clubs' reliance on a long-term relationship with a particular agronomist. In taking this into consideration, however, we decided that we would have to assume that risk and adopt the new program. We can only assure our Member Clubs that there will not be a diminution of service because of this change.

We also considered what impact the change would have upon those Member Clubs that consistently subscribed to the Turf Advisory Service over a period of years. We have appreciated their support, and we look forward to their continued association with the Green Section. They will continue to receive our individual attention under the new program. In fact, through our current invoicing

procedures, those members will again be given an early opportunity to request a continuation of the Turf Advisory Service at their course.

Additionally, because of the reorganization, Alexander M. Radko, the National Director of the Green Section, will be relieved of all extension responsibilities except those at the sites of some USGA Championships, and will be able to devote more time to his growing administrative and research responsibilities. He will move his office from Highland Park, New Jersey, to Golf House.

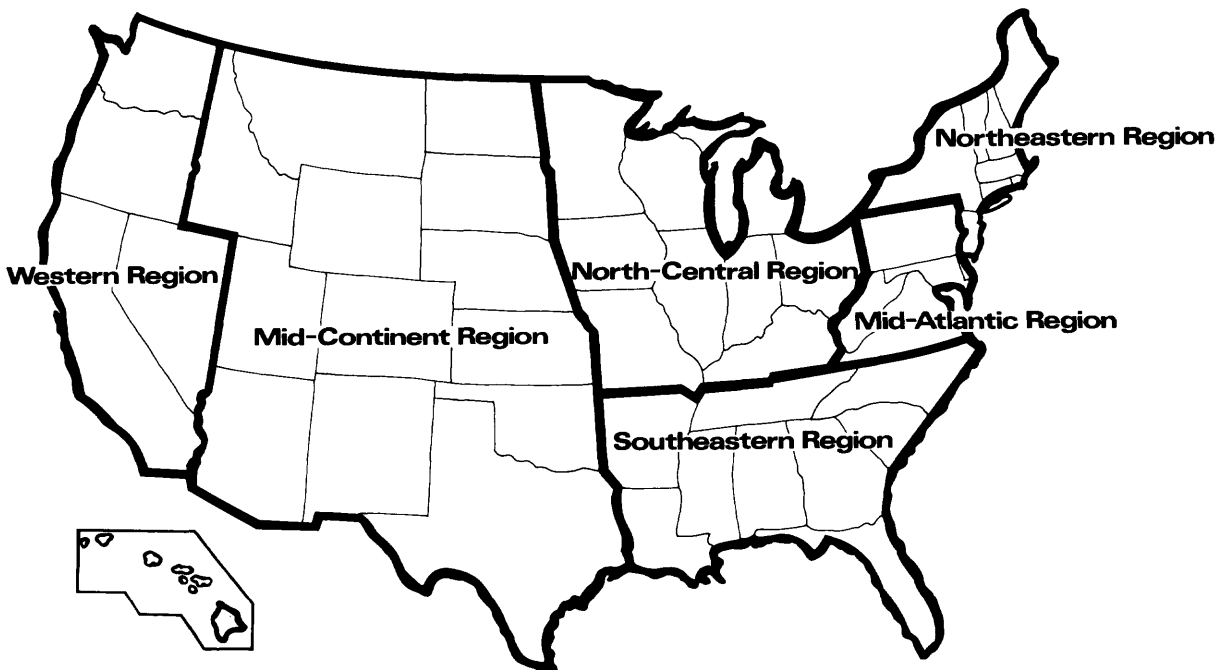
Phase II of the plan will become effective on January 1, 1979. Its implementation will be facilitated by the steps already taken this year. The principal goal of the plan is to open the service — make it more readily available to all USGA Member Clubs and Courses. As you might expect, most subscribers to the Turf Advisory Service have consistently been the private and semi-private clubs. We believe that the service should also be made attractive and easily obtainable for the smaller, less affluent golf course. To achieve this we will discontinue annual subscriptions to the Turf Advisory Service. Our agronomists will be available, on request by a USGA Member, for turf advisory visits for a standard fee of \$200. This is a one-half day on-the-site consultation and inspection. The addition of a sixth region and two more agronomists provides an improved base upon which to build if Phase II becomes as successful as we anticipate. In no instance will requests for visits be declined nor will the conduct of a visit be given less than the necessary attention. We are prepared to take on additional agronomists if necessary.

However, with the exception of bona fide emergencies, we might not be able to accommodate requests for visits on specific dates.

The final aspect of the plan to become effective in 1979 provides each Member Club and Course with two subscriptions to the *Green Section Record* as part of its annual membership dues. The second subscription will no longer be contingent upon a subscription to the Turf Advisory Service. One copy of the *Record* will be sent to the club and the other to the course superintendent at the club address.

The Green Section's only mission is to serve the best interests of golf. It is a vast clearinghouse of knowledge and experience built up over the years. It is our responsibility to make this information more readily available to all USGA Member Clubs and Courses that are interested in maintaining the best possible golfing turf for their membership. It is the only agency in the country devoted solely to golf course turf, its playing conditions and its management. We bring experience, research and ideas developed by other courses directly to your superintendent.

The Turf Advisory Service is a balanced program of on-the-scene consultations followed by a detailed written report from the regional agronomist. It is a valuable management tool for the superintendent and club officials. If you are interested in knowing more about the Turf Advisory Service for your club or course, please contact the Green Section Director within your region. His address and telephone number may be found inside the front cover.



The new areas where the six Green Section offices are located.