

Many good ideas have emanated from grillrooms, where a number of spirits — or should I say “tools”? — are available to stimulate the imagination. Seldom, however, do the ideas literally come out of the grillroom or clubhouse as this one has. Pat Kriksceonaitis, grounds manager at Essex County Club (Manchester, Mass.) conceived the idea in the act of enjoying a lunch and favorite beverage in the grillroom, and it involves the club’s paper place mats, which provide a scaled map of the golf course.

The place-mat maps have found many uses in the maintenance program. Reduced-size copies of the maps are given to new employees to familiarize them with the golf course and guide them to their assignments. The small maps are especially helpful when language barriers make verbal communication difficult.

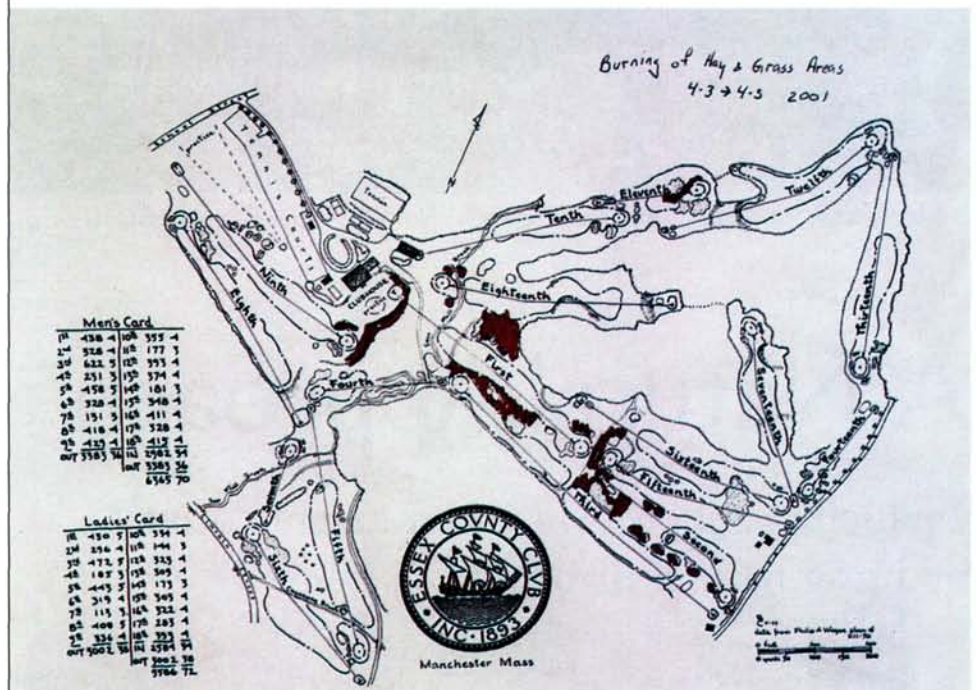
Full-size copies of the maps and hole location sheets for the greens are also used. The maps and hole location sheets are made available in the break room for the entire staff to record any irregularities observed in the field. The staff member simply circles or marks the area on the sheet that corresponds to the irregularity they observe. The sheet is initialed and left on Pat’s desk so that he or an assistant can later check on the area. Pat relies on his staff’s observations and feels that the system is effective because it provides a less intimidating means for employees to provide input to the operation.

The maps also are used to coordinate a wide array of operations throughout the property. Everything from tree removal, bunker work, controlled burns, drainage, and pesticide and fertilizer applications are diagramed on the mats. The visual image provided is a more effective and straightforward guide than a written list alone. This is especially true with the holistic management philosophy that is used on the environmentally sensitive site, where blanket applications of fertilizer or pesticides are rare.

Grillroom Technology

Simple mapping technology to improve communication.

BY JIM SKORULSKI



The place mats at Essex County Club (Mass.) are used to reference the naturalized rough areas that were burned in spring. The visual reference is useful for planning a wide range of operations and serves as a historical record.

Another important use of the maps is charting pest activity, pesticide and fertilizer applications, renovation work, and other projects to provide a historical reference. Local conservation committee members and municipal authorities find the maps to be a useful reference tool when evaluating management programs or proposed project work on the golf course. The maps also are used to clearly illustrate and coordinate project work and maintenance activities with the membership.

Mapping is a valuable and multi-faceted tool for any golf course operation. The simple map derived from

the place mats at Essex County Club has proven to be a very effective and inexpensive tool for training new employees, improving communication, eliciting staff input, documenting maintenance activities, and working with local conservation and municipal authorities. Obviously, maps can be derived from a wide array of sources, so explore your options for tapping into this useful tool. The grillroom just might be a good place to start.

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