

## News Notes

### DERF SOLLER AND BRIAN WHITLARK JOIN THE GREEN SECTION STAFF

**T**he Green Section is pleased to welcome agronomists **Fred “Durf” Soller Jr.** and **Brian Whitlark** to the staff, filling vacancies in the Northwest and Southwest Regions.

Between 1998 and 2006, Durf served as the grow-in superintendent and later the golf course superintendent at the Jack Nicklaus Signature 27-hole Breckenridge Golf Club in Breckenridge, Colorado. Prior to that, he was involved for three years with the design, construction, grow-in, and establishment of the Old Works Golf Course, a Nicklaus Signature golf course and the first course to be built on an EPA Superfund site. From 1985 to 1995, Durf was the assistant golf course superintendent at the Breckenridge Golf Club.

Durf has been very active in regional, state, and national organizations, and is a 22-year member of both the GCSAA and the Rocky Mountain GCSA, having served on its board for five years and as its president in 2003. He also has served on GCSAA's Environmental Stewardship Committee, Environmental Programs Committee, and the Wildlife and Habitat Committee, serving as its chairman.

Durf is a graduate of Miami University (Ohio) and the University of Massachusetts turfgrass program. His family includes wife Terri and sons Danny and Kevin. Durf and family will be based in Grand Junction, Colorado, and he will make Turf Advisory Service visits in Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho, Montana, and Utah in conjunction with Green Section regional director Larry Gilhuly.

Prior to joining the Green Section, Brian Whitlark worked for four years for the Target Specialty Products Company, based in the Phoenix, Arizona, area. His role in the company involved providing site-specific soil agronomic evaluation and recommendations for golf course superintendents, course officials, sports turf facilities, and other landscapes, covering a territory that included Arizona, California, Nevada, and Portland, Oregon. He is a frequent speaker and writes extensively for practitioners in the areas of soil, water, and interpretation of soil test results.

From 2001 to 2004, Brian served as the assistant golf course superintendent at the Talking Stick Golf Club of Troon Golf Management in Scottsdale, Arizona. Prior to that, he worked for ISA Laboratories, evaluating soil test results and conducting field visits in the sports-turf industry. Since 2000 to the present, Brian has been an adjunct professor of soil science and soil fertility, conducting classes for students at the Mesa Community College in Mesa, Arizona.

Brian received B.S. and M.S. degrees from the Department of Soil, Water, and Environmental Science, with an emphasis on turfgrass science, at the University of Arizona at Tucson. He was raised in the Bay Area and enjoys golf, soccer, and football, and he has completed seven marathons over the years. He and his wife Vanessa and 10-month-old daughter Lily will be based in the Phoenix area, and he will be making Turf Advisory Service visits in Arizona, Nevada, and California with regional director Pat Gross.

Recently, two members of the Green Section staff, **Matt Nelson**, Northwest Region senior agronomist, and **Jim Baird**, Northeast Region agronomist, have left the staff to pursue new and exciting opportunities. Matt is in the process of establishing a bentgrass sod farm, and Jim has joined the turfgrass faculty at the University of California at Riverside. The Green Section staff thanks them sincerely for their many contributions over the years, and wishes them well in their new endeavors.



Fred “Durf” Soller Jr.



Brian Whitlark