

# MTESP NEWS

## A WINNING COMBINATION: TPC ACTIVITIES GARNER ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS

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The Nicklaus-designed Tournament Players Club in Dearborn (TPC Michigan) is well regarded for its challenging layout and immaculate maintenance. But Superintendent John Kulka ensures theirs is not just "another pretty face," a.k.a. upscale golf course. As part of his maintenance program, Kulka undertakes a wide range of activities that benefit natural resources, from habitat enhancements to pesticide handling to green buying and recycling. Thinking "green" means more than grass at TPC! As a member of the Michigan Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Program (MTESP), TPC seeks to increase their protection of natural resources through business savvy choices that also help them comply with state and federal environmental regulations. Also since 1994, the course has been certified in Audubon International's Cooperative Sanctuary Program.

Kulka involves his staff in "green thinking," as well. They show a keen interest in alternative products that are less hazardous or toxic, and are quick to embrace new practices that protect the environment. The staff understands environmental stewardship is a part of their work, not just an extra duty. A recent MTESP site visit revealed a neat, safe and clean shop with various energy efficient measures. Their grounds include a top-notch mix/load pad and chemical storage facility, as well as buffer zones throughout the course.

TPC Michigan has earned public praise for its environmental work, also. In 1996, Audubon International deemed it a "model of ecological restoration" with the John James Audubon

Environmental Stewardship Award. More recently in 2002, '03, '06 and '07, their efforts garnered a Chapter or Merit Honor for the Environmental Leaders in Golf Award (ELGA), sponsored by GCSAA and Golf Digest. These accolades are due in part to Kulka's willingness to write about and promote TPC's environmental efforts. He says, "So many Michigan courses do so many good things! We aren't much different from the rest, we just seek out opportunities to showcase our work." Indeed, the work of Michigan turfgrass managers provides positive benefits to our natural resources. It is just a matter of publicizing that work! As part of its mission, MTESP recognizes environmental achievements and coordinates with various Michigan organizations to promote our members.

As for national awards, Kulka encourages all Michigan golf courses to apply for the ELGAs. He stated, "Compared to facilities around the country, Michigan courses are doing so much more than average; we should be dominating the ELGA lists!" ELGA nominations are due to GCSAA in October. Nominees are then notified and must complete an application form. More information is available on line at [www.gcsaa.org](http://www.gcsaa.org). "The application process isn't complicated, but I would be happy to share my experience with anyone who contacts me," Kulka volunteered.

If you are a turfgrass manager in Michigan, it is likely you already do many things that protect natural resources, benefit the environment, and make good business-sense. With just a little more thought and planning you can do so much more and receive recognition for your company.

Protect the environment, save money, good PR... a winning combination! Sometimes, the most difficult part is where to start. The MTESP is designed to make it easy to get going! So visit our website ([www.mtesp.org](http://www.mtesp.org)), or call the office (517.355.0271 x 145) to set up an appointment and get started today!

