

2014

The winter of 2014 was one of the coldest on record with the highest snowfall. The total snowfall was over 60 inches, which is two feet more than our average of 38 inches. The cold weather was hard on exposed plants. This was seen in the plant death that occurred in trees and bushes following the cold. The term polar vortex was used to describe this weather pattern. During the coldest 5-day period, the high temperature was zero degrees. This weather saw the Great Lakes 90% ice covered. The cooler weather set up to be the theme for the year. As winter subsided, temperatures were slow to recover. Through March and April, wet, cold weather persisted. The last snowfall of the season occurred in the first week of April. Following the thaw, weather improved. Despite temperatures running below-average, conditions were favorable for golfers. The pattern of below-average temperatures continued throughout the season. When November arrived, so did the chill. November saw uncharacteristic cold weather set in. Temperatures remained below freezing for one week prior to Thanksgiving.

The weather of 2014 created changes in the plant life throughout native areas. Spring phlox that blossomed in areas did not bloom. Coneflowers south of #4 tees flowered in August for a very short time before fading. There were no fall asters to be seen this year. One event occurred that was spectacular: the crabapple trees along the entrance drive bloomed with full white blossoms following the Memorial Day. Many trees turned autumn color quite early. Oak trees began dropping acorns in early September and changing leaf color shortly following. Not only the oak trees changed early, all the trees began ahead of schedule due to cooler temperatures. This season we began manual removal of olive bushes, cockspur hawthorns and willows. These evasive plants were starting to crowd out desirable plants in the native areas. This fall we have also begun transplanting sapling oak trees in native areas to desirable. We planted two in front of clubhouse, another in native area northwest of #1 tee.

Wildlife at Oak Grove saw many struggles in 2014. The winter thaw saw abundant bushes and trees with their bark removed. Animals were eating the bark for survival through winter months. The deer population is solid. The wild turkeys are commonly seen along with sandhill cranes. Many smaller animals such as skunks, raccoons and opossums appeared to be less numerous. It is believed that the harsh winter claimed many of these animals.

Turf health in 2014 was excellent. The weather was cooperative for turf growth. The most difficult aspect was keeping up with mowing. The only issues were moss that developed on the greens from being cool and moist, and a slight dry spell that occurred in late July through mid-August. Overall, Oak Grove was in excellent condition.