I was invited by Corning Country Club (CCC) superintendent John Hoyle, CGCS, to join him for Alison Hunt’s visit to the club on Friday August 23rd, and fortunately was able to attend.  Hoyle and I met on Thursday afternoon to discuss items that might benefit the industry and be of interest to Hunt and Rep. Reed.  I completed some research on Reed’s legislative track record, finding he was a member of the Ways and Means Committee and also supported the H2A temporary labor program legislation as a co-sponsor.  Hunt is active in local politics as well, and is a Penn State alum, as is Hoyle!  We discussed the work being done at CCC and emphasized the importance of Hoyle telling “his story.”

The tour of the facility with Hunt included work Hoyle and CCC have been doing converting fairways to a newer variety of bentgrass. They have completed 6 total in the last two years and will be renovation the remainder of the course the end of August this year.  While the newer turf type has benefited playability, it has also led to a large reduction in water usage and fertilizer/chemical inputs.  Savings in inputs this year alone netted $8,000, not counting water related savings.  Hunt got a tutorial in moisture meter use, and we visited two fairways that had been aerated that morning.  Hoyle discussed the benefit of cultural practices over chemical use, leading to a robust discussion on the New York Golf Courses Best Management Practices website, and development of BMPs nation-wide.

Hunt asked what policy related issues were relevant to CCC and the golf industry.  We discussed the importance of H2B workers, and in particular the need for returning worker exemption.  Also discussed was the inability of the golf industry to qualify for federal disaster relief when enacted by Congress.  Along the Chemung river, part of the Susquehanna river basin, golf courses in Reed’s district have been among those stricken by flooding in the past few years.  The 23rd district is extremely rural, and nearly all golf courses in the district are single owner/daily fee operations.  Hoyle’s ability to relate specific damage done to area golf courses in Reed’s district aided in getting the message home.  Hunt took notes explaining the “broken” H2B program needing overhauling and her not realizing golf was unable to benefit from disaster relief.   We were told she would forward these concerns to the policy team in D.C.

**Kevin Doyle**

**Northeast Region Field Representative**