

# NEED H VOLUNTEERS

**O**ften during the busiest times, we wish that there were a few more hands around to help with some of the tasks or chores that need done. Volunteers might be the answer to your needs. However, efficient and effective volunteers do not just fall from the sky. It takes planning and management to have volunteers that do not consume all of your time, and who stay consistent with your goals and mission.

First you must understand why people volunteer. Some want to help build a better community; others want to give something back to their community. Recognition is what drives some; others want to have the feeling that they have personally achieved a task, or have perhaps brought about social change. Yet others volunteer just because someone asked them to, or to help out a friend, or show support for a given cause. In the end it doesn't matter if they meet the goals that they have for themselves and the organization.

On the other side, volunteer complaints include: not being called back, not being available at the needed time, not being given anything to do when they show up, feeling "in the way," being forced to fund-raise only, never being thanked, and not receiving enough guidance.

You need to manage your volunteers so that they don't have these thoughts.

Designing a work plan for volunteers' needs to be done carefully and with some forethought. Simply allowing people to do as they please will not only frustrate you to the "doing it yourself would be easier" mentality, but also people will begin to shy away from helping productively.

There are countless places and organizations for people to volunteer their time. You want to make each volunteer experience as positive as possible, so people will return time after time to lend a hand. To help make your volunteers' experiences a success, give them clear, concise and meaningful work. Explain your expectations and provide them with the proper training and tools to do the job. Have a training day to show volunteers what you want and how you want it done. Do not give them work that you would not do yourself. Be organized and prepared. Nothing will kill the passion of a volunteer faster than if they arrive and find staff ill prepared for the event. This is a bit like having a friend ask you to help them move, and when you show up to help, you end up packing boxes before you can load them in the truck.

Have job descriptions and always have a to-do list for volunteers. Job descriptions help you and the volunteer better understand what you want them to do. Having a to-do list will help you answer quickly that unexpected call asking "Is there something I can do to help?" You always want to have a task for this volunteer, saying "no" will only delay the question in the future.

Give volunteers meaningful work that can be accomplished in the time that they have. Do not give them more than they can handle. Know your volunteers and their abilities. If they have one hour a week to volunteer, do not give them 10 hours of work and expect them to complete it. Allow them to complete a job and then express your appreciation for the work they completed.

Communicate with your volunteers. Do not limit communications to only what needs to be done and always say "thanks." Always be timely and return calls or e-mails.

Another great way to recognize volunteers is by feeding them. During a workday serve lunch, or have a recognition dinner for them at the end of the year or season. Communication needs to be a two-way street. Volunteers should feel free to talk to



# ELP?

BY JEFF FOWLER

## MIGHT BE THE KEY

you about what they think needs done as well. Consider forming a volunteer council and giving them an avenue to not only communicate with you, but with each other.

Do not let it be said that a volunteer is forever and can not be "fired." If you have outlined a job description and the mission of your organization and tried to work with a person who continues to work independently of you and others, it is your responsibility to ask them to find another organization to volunteer for. Remember you should make it a privilege to volunteer for your organization not a right.

Volunteers can be used not only to do many of the tasks that you cannot get done, but also to assist with many of the everyday tasks that need completed. For example, teach your coaches and managers to drag the infield the proper way and

tarp homeplate and the pitcher's mound every night after practice or a game. Show volunteers the correct method to repair clay in batters boxes and mounds so that they can help maintain those areas regularly.

If you follow these basic steps when working with volunteers, you will not only accomplish more work but, you will have people taking personal pride in your facility and helping in ways that you never thought possible. If people see that they will be a valuable addition and feel like their time and talents are appreciated, volunteers will become a priceless commodity around your facility.

ST

Jeff Fowler, a SPORTSTURF Editorial Advisory Board member, is an extension agent for Penn State, and co-owner of Grass Stains Productions. He can be reached at [jtf2@psu.edu](mailto:jtf2@psu.edu).

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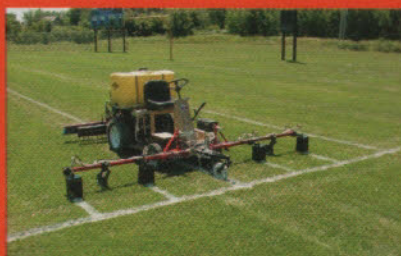
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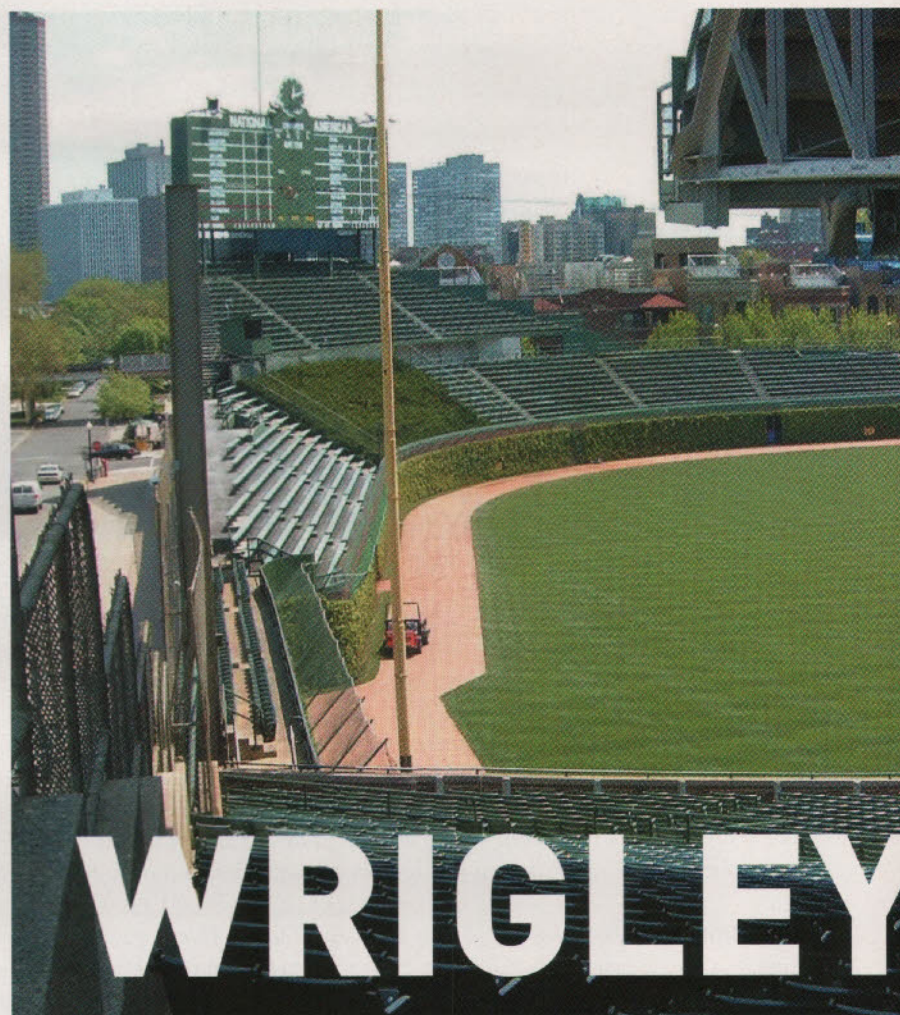
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**around the grounds**



**D**uring 2002 Rathje tried a few tricks to defeat the pigeons. "First, we tried using treated corn," he says. The kernels contain a substance that is supposed to annoy the pigeons by disrupting their equilibrium. The effect, if any, was undetectable. Next, Rathje and his crew tried applying a sticky gel on the trusses to discourage landing. But, says Rathje, there were too many trusses and beams to get sufficient coverage. They tried plastic owls to bother the birds to no avail.

In spring 2003, Rathje investigated a sonic device for deterring birds manufactured by Chicago-based Bird-X, Inc. Bird-X in turn referred Rathje to a bird-deterrence consultant, Kevin Connelly, GM of Premier Pest Elimination.

"Food service and pigeon excrement don't mix," Connelly says bluntly. Health issues abound. "When 40,000 fans come to an outdoor venue and you have bird droppings, the probability rises geometrically that someone will be affected by contaminants," he says. Also, he adds, the cost of cleaning up resistive bird residue on the seats and in the stands before and after each game is considerable.

Connelly met on-site and explained the options, including installing extensive netting in Wrigley Field's vast superstructure to restrain the birds from roosting. This would require much longer than 2 weeks to install properly. Even more to the point, it would break Rathje's budget.

Rathje preferred Connelly's other proposal: installing ultrasonic devices to get the most bang for Wrigley Field's buck, and the most coverage considering the expanses to be protected. The two men worked out a plan to install seven Bird-X Ultrason X units and seven Super BirdXPeller PRO units in the trusses under the upper deck and in the lower deck corners.

The double whammy on the birds was deliberate and logical. As Bird-X president Ron Schwarcz explains, "The area to control was large enough to require several sonic units. We selected two different types of units to produce greater variety of sound. This would provide immediate results while helping prevent long-term acclimation, since birds don't like surprises and unpredictable changes."

The Ultrason X product uses ultrasonic sound waves to repel birds and other nuisance critters. The basic technology isn't new; Bird-X incorporated it into its product line 40 years ago to deter birds in enclosed areas like warehouses and





loading docks, where walls and roofs could magnify the impact of the sound. In a recent breakthrough, Ultrason X is the first device to take ultrasonic sound OUT of doors.

The second type of deterrence device, Super BirdXPeller PRO, pushes the sound much farther and is ideal for large, open areas. It works on the bird's psychological state, as Ron Schwarcz explains: "The machine incorporates the birds' own distress calls to repel the 'usual suspects'—pigeons, sparrows, starlings and other common pests. Then we added the sounds of two predators, knowing that these cries would scare all birds universally." For maximum effect, the Super BirdXPeller is programmable to produce random timing, volume and frequency.

The big day came in late May 2003. When the Bird-X units were turned on, "The birds flapped out," Rathje says.

"About 90 percent of the birds left for good," says Connelly. It wasn't a total elimination, both men agree, but it forced the bird problem to fall within an acceptable tolerance range. That was the goal,

Connelly says, noting that realistic expectations and budgetary constraints are always factors in choosing solutions for large facilities.

"We're changing the habits of an animal," Connelly says. And sometimes that involves reasonable compromise. For example, the sonic equipment at Wrigley Field is turned off during home games because it was felt that the audible portion of the sound would disturb the fans. Consequently, some pigeons return while the units are turned off. Immediately after the game, the units are turned on again, to good effect. It's a compromise that works for Wrigley Field.

From the professional's point of view, bird deterrence pays for itself rapidly in reduced clean-up costs; but, says Connelly, the benefits of bird control go far beyond economics and into intellectual values of improved aesthetics, environmental safety and positive public relations. You can't put a price on those. **ST**

This article was supplied by Bird-X Inc., [www.bird-x.com](http://www.bird-x.com).

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(above right) PIAA AAA State Championship game at HersheyPark Stadium, Hershey, PA

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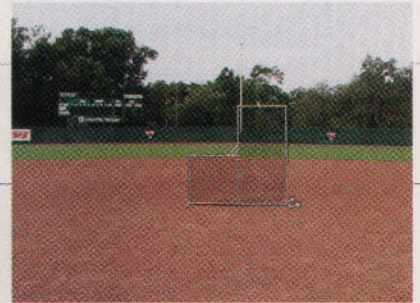
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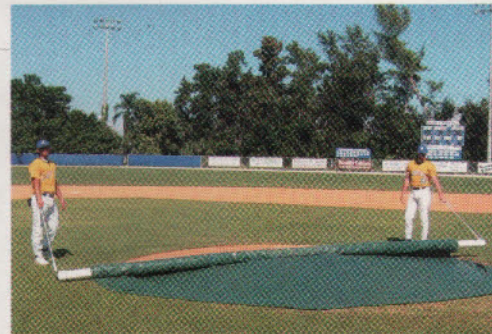


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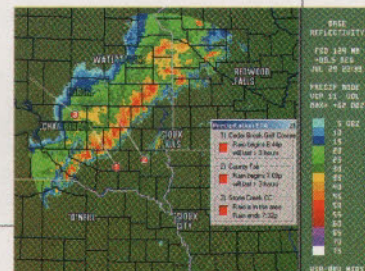
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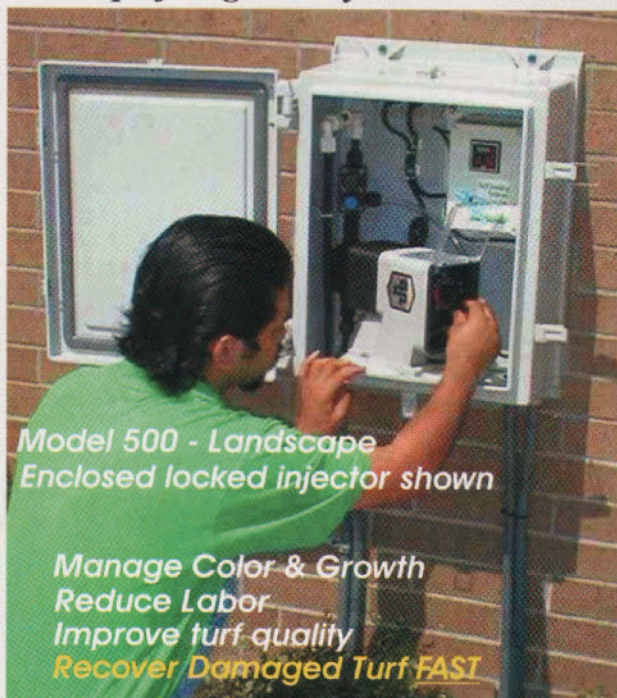
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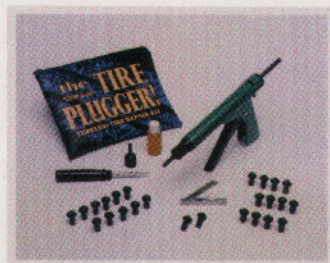


## TIRE PLUGGER

This tire repair kit can be used on the spot for any tubeless tire. Features spring-loaded gun that drives a plug into the hole; the plug's shaft expands under pressure to fill puncture, and its head seats on the inner wall to prevent leaks.

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# SAFE moves forward

**A**t the STMA Annual Meeting in San Diego, CA, on January 24, 2004, SAFE Chair, Mike Schiller, CSFM, reported on the SAFE Board of Trustees. He noted the Board consists of three STMA Board Members, three representatives of SAFE major contributors, three individuals in other sports turf related positions, and Executive Director, Steve Trusty. The 2003 Board consisted of Boyd Montgomery, CSFM; Dr. Tony Koski, and Monty Montague from the STMA Board; Tom Lynn of Jacobsen; Mike Scaletta of John Deere, and Dale Getz, CSFM, of the Toro Company, representing SAFE contributors; and Bob Curry of Covermaster, and Greg Petry of the Waukegan Park District, as well as himself, from the other group, and Trusty. Leaving the Board in January, at the end of their three-year terms of service were Monty Montague and Tom Lynn. Dr. Koski, who had completed his term on the STMA Board, was no longer eligible as an STMA Board representative, so was also leaving the SAFE Board. Chair Schiller thanked them for their service to SAFE.

Schiller said, "On behalf of SAFE, myself, and the other SAFE Nominating Committee members: STMA nominating Committee Chair Murray Cook, STMA President Bob Campbell, CSFM, and STMA Executive Director Steve Trusty, I place the following individuals into nomination to the SAFE Board of Trustees to be voted on by the corporate member, STMA: George Trivett, CSFM, and Lance Tibbetts, as representatives from the STMA Board, Trivett to be voted upon for a three-year term, and Tibbetts to be appointed to fulfill the remaining year of the three-year term in the position vacated by Koski, and Joe Zvanut of Jacobsen as a representative of the contributors for a three-year term, and Mike Schiller, CSFM, for another three year term as a representative in the 'other' category." Schiller called for a motion to accept the SAFE Board of Trustees as put forward and asked that they be elected by acclamation. Eric Adkins so moved. Monty Montague seconded the motion. The motion carried.

As the first action of the 2004 Board, Schiller noted that SAFE will accept any donation and urged all to get involved in giving. The major thrust for 2004 will be seeking greater funding for sports specific research, finalizing the research criteria and beginning assessment of research projects for funding.

Schiller reported that SAFE was off to a good start in 2004 and accepted a \$500 donation to SAFE presented by Darian Daily on behalf of the Ohio Chapter.

He thanked Jacobsen for their funding of the SAFE Golf Tournament, held in conjunction with the STMA annual conference, for the last three years. He reported that this year's participants had a great time playing the beautiful La Costa course and the 2004 Tournament netted over \$11,000 for SAFE.

He also reported that, in the area of scholarships, SAFE is doing well. Toro has established scholarships at the undergraduate and graduate levels in the name of Dr. Jim Watson. The silent and live auction and raffle funding have gone to the scholarship fund as well. He thanked Florida Chapter President and award-winning auctioneer, Tom Curran, for all his efforts and noted that the live auction raised \$3,600 and the silent auction \$4,200. He also thanked George Toma who willingly gave the shirt off his back for SAFE during the live Auction.

Schiller noted that funding for SAFE will help support research for better science, technology and equipment. And it will support the education and training of sports turf managers and aspiring sports turf managers. Most importantly, your donation will help provide the best sports surfaces for all levels of play.

A safe, playable field is the strong foundation of any game. Working together, we can build the SAFE Foundation into a strong resource for sports turf managers around the world. Contact Steve Trusty (Steve@st.omhcox-mail.com) for information on making contributions to — or receiving research endorsements from — the SAFE Foundation.