

Money-saving tips from parks & rec pros

IN CELEBRATION OF NATIONAL PARK AND RECREATION MONTH, STMA has asked several sports turf managers who work in parks and recreation to share their top tips for cost savings and effectiveness.

➤ SHARE EQUIPMENT

“Working in the public sector definitely has its challenges. The greatest and most obvious is the ever-shrinking budgets and the chore of doing more with less as members of the community still demand services at the highest possible level. One way to help us achieve the continued high level of service

is by reaching out to other municipalities in our area by primarily the borrowing of



equipment. Whether it is a tractor or an aerator, this practice has been done with 4-5 communities in the greater Portland, ME area for the past 10 years. Individually each community cannot have all the necessary equipment but together it is surprising what is available just by picking up the phone and asking. This version of networking with other communities has helped each community in which they need help to achieve their goals in providing quality services. I would strongly urge other communities to start reaching out to others, whether other parks and rec or even golf courses. Again, communities don't want to lose services, so it is our job to think outside of the box and keep services at the level community members expect.”-Rick Peruzzi, CSFM, CPRP, Wainwright Recreation Complex, South Portland, ME

➤ BE TRAINED IN TREE REMOVAL

“One way we save thousands of dollars throughout the season is through tree removal. I was lucky enough to be trained by a highly skilled tree feller at my old job at a golf course. Since then, I have also taken a 40-hour training session through Stihl Corporation. I have now trained my staff in the proper techniques to fell live, dead and storm damaged trees. Other than situations near power lines, we pretty much handle everything in house.”-Shane Young, CSFM, Prince William County Park Authority, Woodbridge, VA

➤ INSTALL FENCING FOR SAFETY

“When fencing [for] athletic fields is installed, make sure the mesh fabric is fastened on the inside or field side of the posts. This is to soften the blow when contact is made by the player. Also on Little League and baseball fields, the outfield and foul territory fencing should be a minimum of 6 feet high, and the higher the better. This is all to help prevent serious injury from occurring when

participants come in contact with fencing.”- Stephen G. Matuza, CGCS, Master Greenkeeper, CSFM and much more, for The Farm at Oyster Bay, Syosset, NY

➤ USE VOLUNTEERS

“I do make extensive use of volunteers in the sports organizations for some maintenance like raking the baseball infield areas. And some volunteers have businesses that are willing to donate grass seed and fertilizer throughout the year.”-Dudley Rice, CPRP, CPSI, Solebury Township Parks & Recreation, Solebury, PA

➤ COMMUNICATE TO REDUCE WASTED TIME

“Good communication and proper planning with your staff results in the desired result of the work that is to be done. Communicating with your staff about what needs to be done and the time frame that is expected will reduce the amount of wasted time by not having the right tools and equipment for the task. And it will reduce wasted trips back to the shop for anything that was forgotten. Lack of communication results in work not being done to the standard that was expected, along with having to take more time to redo the task.”-Jason Moore CSFM, Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District, Beaverton, OR

➤ GOING GREEN SAVES YOU GREEN

“Convert outside area/security lighting to solar lighting. We are in the process of even placing solar up-lighting at flagpoles. Reduce maintained turf areas to minimize costs (mowing, fertilizer, irrigation, etc). Even categorize the remaining areas as athletic use, multi-use, and passive use to justify changes in maintenance practices.

Reduce the amount of overhead irrigation where possible, use micro irrigation. Change out interior lighting, HVAC, etc to more efficient modern models. There are several grant opportunities still out there for energy conservation.

Stop using huge trucks (3/4 ton and larger) for every job. Replace what you can with smaller trucks and alternative fuel and hybrids.”-Joel McKnight, CGCS, CPRP

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