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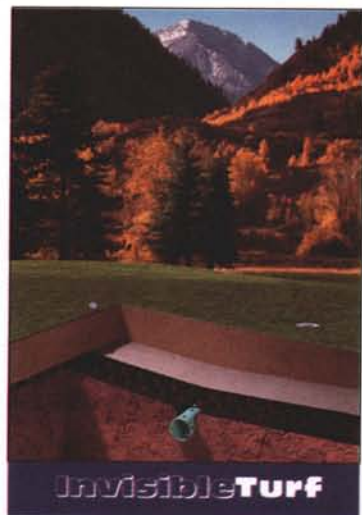
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Participants were prepared for a practical, down-to-earth learning experience on May 15 when the Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization (KAFMO) held its first of two Field Days with Floyd Perry. The participants weren't disappointed.

This event, held in Harrisburg, central Pennsylvania, was followed by a second field day the next day in Slippery Rock, in western Pennsylvania. Members of the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society were invited to attend either of these chapter-sponsored events.

Attendance at each field day was limited to 50, and 50 people turned out

STMA in Action!



STMA Executive Director Steve Trusty (right) presents a gavel to Dan Douglas, president of KAFMO. Photos courtesy: Trusty & Associates.

Field Day with Floyd Perry

on the cool, sunny morning of May 15.

Perry, *sportsTURF*'s 1996 Man of the Year, literally "wrote the book" — three of them in fact — on field maintenance techniques and vital issues of safety and liability. He also provides field-day training sessions across the country.

The May 15th session opened indoors as Perry moved through a series of topics to get the mental muscles working.

He talked of the importance of instilling pride in your facility, your people and the users and showed slides of various ways of doing that, including the use of logos on the field and putting up plaques thanking donors and special people and honoring the employee of the month. He emphasized the need for "curbside appeal," keeping everything the public can see looking sharp. He also pointed out that keeping the shop, office and other behind-the-scenes work areas clean helps employees remain enthused about keeping everything else in top shape.

He noted that every facility needs time for quality repair. It helps to communicate to the users upfront that there will be times when — to maintain the quality and good looks of the facility — fields must be taken out of play.

Perry brought up his "There Ain't No Rules" theme. While much in baseball is laid out in rulebooks, the bottom line is you do what you have to do to get the job done. You and your staff are the most valuable people at your institution. You need to believe that and in your actions show other people that you're valuable. Whatever the task may be, if you don't do it, and do it right, who will?

Perry pointed out that the ability to make do with what you have or can get — the ingenuity of the sports turf manager — always amazes him.

Next came "Ideas You Can Use," featuring slides of facilities from all over the country that provided suggestions worth sharing. These included lots of tool options, both purchased and homemade, old garden tools, farm implements, and pieces of this-and-that that could be adapted.

Before the morning session concluded, STMA Executive Director Steve Trusty addressed the audience.



Floyd Perry demonstrates multiple field-care hand tools.

KAFMO had recently completed its affiliation requirements and was approved and welcomed as an affiliated chapter by the STMA Board. During the morning session, Trusty officially presented the chapter gavel to the chapter's president, Dan Douglas.

After lunch, the group moved out to Creekview Park, part of the Hamden Township Parks and Recreation facilities. Parks Maintenance Supervisor Neale Magill was the host.

With the park's baseball field for a demonstration area, Perry showed field preparation techniques and various tools at work. Some of the atten-



Perry explains the steps of skinned area preparation.

dees also talked about things they had made, taking one of Perry's demonstration tools and pointing out how they had made something similar. Long-time member and retired extension specialist Don Fowler brought along an antique garden cultivator that he had made work for edging baselines and trimming grass encroaching on skinned areas.

Perry also urged turf managers to take lots of pictures of their facilities. The purpose is to create your own photo resumes to document conditions, both good and bad, and show what you are doing. Include things that are damaged, what happens if a field is overused and how you've been able to turn a bad situation into a good situation.

As the field day drew to a close, participants were buzzing with ideas they planned to take back to their own facilities — exactly what this event had planned to accomplish.

STMA Chapter News

Minnesota Chapter: The Minnesota Chapter will hold its 3rd Annual Workshop on Wheels on July 16. Participants will gather at Midway Stadium, then board the bus for McMurray Fields, where vendors will show their aeration equipment in action in a mini-aeration clinic. The group then reboards the bus for tours of the City of Plymouth Athletic Facility, Goodrich Field, Anoka, Minn., where they are constructing a high sand based field; Blaine Sports Center, the site of USA Cup Soccer; the Turfco factory; Bethel College; Urban Ventures; and the Rice and Arlington Sports Dome. The workshop

will wrap up with a tail-gate party back at Midway Stadium and a St. Paul Saints game.

STMA President Mike Schiller and Executive Director Steve Trusty will attend this event to make the formal presentation of Honorary Life Membership to Dick Ericson. Ericson was unable to attend the 1997 Annual Conference (one of the few he has missed),

when this honor was announced, due to the illness of his wife.

The Minnesota Chapter also will meet on August 11 at Winter Park, the Minnesota Vikings Training Facility, for a seminar and tour. More details will be announced soon.

Chapter contact: Connie Rudolph at (612) 646-1679.

Colorado Chapter: The Colorado Chapter of STMA will hold its Mid-Summer Workshop from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Friday, July 18, at Wagner

Park in Aspen, Colo., the home of the World Rugby Tournament. Workshop sessions will include field renovation and irrigation. STMA Certification Committee member Ross Kurcab will outline the developing certification program and give attendees an opportunity to add their input and ask questions.

Mark your calendar for the 2nd Annual Lawn Mower Man Open golf outing. This event is scheduled for August 5, 1997, at West Woods Golf Course in Arvada, Colo.

A Soccer Field Renovation Seminar will be

held August 13 at South Suburban. Sessions will focus on renovation, field preparation and field use issues. Attendees also will tour the facility and fields.

Due to snow in April, the Spring Vendor Expo was canceled and has been tentatively rescheduled for September 18, 1997, at Jeffco Stadium. Further details will be announced in August.

Chapter contact: 24-Hour CSTMA Chapter Hotline/FAX, (303) 438-9645.

Iowa Chapter: The Iowa Sports Turf Managers Association will hold a Baseball Workshop from 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on August 8 at Sec Taylor Stadium in Des Moines. Sessions will cover daily and post-season maintenance of the mound, plate and infield; fertility; building your own low-cost equipment; and repair of turf areas, including overseeding, seed pre-germination, sod and plugs.

The Iowa Turfgrass Field Day will be held August 14 at the Iowa State University Turf Farm. More details will be announced soon.

continued on page 27

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By Dale Ivan

In Moses Lake, Washington, a prime challenge is finding and keeping skilled, productive staff for a seasonal labor market that results in high annual turnover.

We tap all the traditional sources for finding employees: pitching the program through the youth employment service, using the city's employ-

sonnel, it is a recognized and appreciated benefit to full-time staff members.

More Effective Management

The second major challenge is having the resources, money and staff needed to keep facilities in top quality condition as required by administration, facility users, and our own demanding standards.

There's no one correct answer to more effective crew management. Much depends on your management style and commitment to your job. Maintenance standards, computer inventories, check lists, all take time to effect. I have seen crews lose produc-

same environment each day and help develop procedures to make tasks easier.

6. Whatever procedures you establish, explain why they are important. Then follow up to ensure they are being followed. For example, develop a checklist of materials the parks' clean-up crews need on their truck. Then do a spot check to make sure they have them and reward the crews that comply.

7. Identify the "sensitive" positions. Youth supervisors at the aquatic center must be skilled in dealing with both the public and a teenage staff, while managing multiple tasks. Attitude, personality and commitment are as

Managing Crews — Techniques That Work

ment development department, placing ads in the state newsletter.

Our most productive recruiting comes through the referrals of relatives and friends by current and past employees.

The signs of good employees, often noted during the interview process (attitude, interest and commitment in other areas), generally will be evident in the job they do as well. The students with good grades and involvement in several activities become the college students who commute on weekends to work those early- and late-season spots so hard to fill. It's easier to train people in specific job-related skills than it is to teach the work ethic.

Moses Lake doesn't face the high tech or high service job-market competition of larger metropolitan areas. But with pay rates average for the region and the physically demanding work, keeping employees can be as challenging as finding them. Though our turnover is in the average range for similar parks and recreation departments, we're always trying to do better.

The city does offer a full benefits package to all full-time employees and those seasonal employees working six months or more per year. It adds nearly \$3 per hour per participating employee to operational costs. While it hasn't been a very effective tool in recruiting and keeping part-time per-

sonnel because the paperwork system requirements allow them less time to do the hands-on work. Typically, the administration or agency sets the requirements in this area.

Here are some personnel tips that work:

1. Provide input, backed up with documented details, to help develop and implement the most effective procedures.

2. Seek personnel trained and proficient in office and computer skills. We have an excellent office manager who is able to take charge of much of our record keeping and paperwork flow.

3. Experiment to find the systems best suited to your crews. Compare the information you gather from a fill-in-the-blanks job work order to that of a prepared check-off format. Track the time difference between those crews gathering materials for a day's tasks that morning or the previous evening. Compare results when written work assignments are — and are not — reinforced with verbal explanations.

4. Refine your own communication skills. People process information differently, so don't get trapped in a single method. You may find it most effective to provide written notes to some personnel and communicate verbally with others.

5. Understand that moving from site to site is more demanding on your employees than working within the

important as competence in the technical components of the job. Working independently requires a different set of skills, so does tackling the less challenging, highly repetitive tasks.

8. When possible, match people to the tasks they perform best. But also make sure all do their share of the "must-do, but don't-like" tasks.

9. Rotate weekend or other non-conventional work schedules so no one is consistently exploited. Include staff in the process when possible to develop the work schedules. We will work hours from 5 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. apart from holidays, weekends or call backs, so staff input is very important.

My management style is very direct and involved. We need to be quality consistent with quantity results. This takes a lot of hours to check on tasks and projects. Tasks have a tendency to be done differently from what was directed the further removed the manager is from their staff.

We use full-time staff to help supervise individual projects or assignments. We spell out details. When crews know where to go, what to do, what order to do it in and what results are expected, it reduces indecision and mistakes.

Cross-training works. The majority of our staff can move into several job slots and perform effectively. Rather than classify crew by career-ladder designations of 1 to 4, we use a desig-

nation of 2 for most personnel. (Our groundskeeper position is an exception.) This gives us more flexibility to switch crew members between tasks and eliminates any hidden resentment when a "3" is asked to do a "2" job.

Morale

Be proactive in your approach to problems. Look for what works and what doesn't rather than just waiting for complaints to be registered. Meetings and policy discussion sessions may merely be smoke screens clouding the real issues.

Crew morale can be a major problem in carrying out goals and objectives. I've found that people feel ownership in their tasks if they receive compliments and not just complaints. Take the time to say, "You did a great job out there. Thanks." And back it up with a letter of appreciation in the personnel file.

Also, a sense of humor exercised during hectic times will produce results.

The single most important factor contributing to productivity, reduced workers' compensation claims and a work force that demonstrates pride in its work is having the top person in that organization demonstrating that he or she cares. That top person (the owner, superintendent, director, city manager or mayor) sets the tone for the efficient and effective work force.

Tale of the Tape

Moses Lake, centered in semi-arid Washington State between Spokane and Seattle, has a population of approximately 12,000 with another 12,000 or so in its immediate service area. Though the city is relatively small, our services are equal to or exceed those of agencies three to four times our population. We are a full-service park and recreation department with numerous and diverse facilities.

Like other park supervisors, I have multiple areas of responsibility in the management of maintenance, budgeting and allocating of budgeted funds, and planning improvements and development of the facilities. I'm responsible for a trained staff that works seven days a week every day of the year. I directly supervise all maintenance-related staff

and hire, evaluate and set the wage for all non-union staff members.

In addition, I interact with the public, service groups, the Park Commission, various city council members, other city and state departments, and more.

Seasonal Demands

Our geographic location gives us an

ever-changing climate. The broad temperature range is from minus 20 degrees to an excess of 105 degrees. There are many days when heating kicks on in the morning and air conditioning in the afternoon. Seasons overlap. We may be trying to sweep leaves as the snow falls and freezes them in place. Irrigation systems are switched between winterization to in-use status

Q: What do all of these teams have in common?

Oakland A's
 Phoenix Cardinals
 San Diego Chargers
 Los Angeles Dodgers
 University of Texas Longhorns
 California Angels
 San Francisco 49'ers
 San Diego State University Aztecs
 Arizona State University Sun Devils
 San Francisco Giants
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 University of Southern California Trojans
 Oakland Raiders

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- Provide an interesting shirt if a uniform look is needed, but don't require a complete uniform.
- Provide out-of-town training and skills enhancement to full-time and part-time staff.
- Grant personal leave requests when submitted (even during busy times) to staff who have been consistent performers.
- Buy lunch for the crew 3 to 4 times a year as an informal meeting.
- Whenever possible, get crew members public recognition, such as photos or articles to the paper showing individuals at work.
- Use overtime or comp time as extra incentives for those individuals who respond to the extra time and money.

to keep turf going during the drastic temperature swings.

This poses numerous challenges such as trying to prepare frozen ballfields for use at the end of February; installing boat docks at four boating areas while disassembling our outdoor family ice skating rink; or trying to deal with special events, construction

projects and preparing our Family Aquatic Center, while at the same time trying to do regular maintenance and facing such issues as equipment breakdowns.

We currently are understaffed. Our dedicated crew consists of a full-time park foreman, five maintenance workers and one groundskeeper. Seasonal

temporary help averages about 15, including ballfield maintenance personnel, campground caretakers, equipment operators and more. Most of these positions last from 5 to 10 months. Our Family Aquatic Center has up to 26 grounds and facility workers, many of whom are between the ages of 14 and 18. □

Dale Ivan has broad experience in managing crews, having moved from the position of county park supervisor, development specialist for the County of Santa Cruz, California, to his current post as park supervisor of Moses Lake. In his seven years of involvement, the Parks Department has built an award-winning aquatic center, a skateboard park, completed a park amphitheater, and installed ADA-compliant playground equipment in all the parks. A five-field softball/baseball complex is in stage two of development. The city is negotiating with Little League Baseball Inc. to serve as a site for finals competition in 1999 or 2000. Ivan is a long-time member of the STMA.



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STMA in Action*continued from page 23*

The chapter also will hold a Baseball/Football Workshop from 9 a.m. to noon on October 9 at Waldorf College in Forest City. Sessions will include general care of the baseball mound and home plate and general care of the football field.

Chapter contact: Lori Westrum at The Turf Office, (515) 232-8222 (phone) or (515) 232-8228 (fax).

Midwest Chapter: The Midwest Chapter of STMA will hold its first Seminar on Wheels Tour on August 12. Plan now to join this behind-the-scenes tour of the athletic fields of Northwestern University, Wrigley Field and Soldier Field.

Chapter contact: Chapter Hotline, (847) 439-4727.

KAFMO: The Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization is currently planning the chapter's Fall Field Day. More details will be announced soon.

Chapter contact: Dan Douglas, Reading Phillies Baseball Club, at (610) 375-8469, extension 212.

Southern California Chapter: For information on the Southern California Chapter of STMA or pending activities, contact Chris Bunnell at (619) 432-2421.

Florida Chapter #1: For information on upcoming events or the Florida Chapter, contact John Mascaro at (954) 938-7477.

STMA Chapters on the Grow

MAFMO: The Mid-Atlantic Athletic Field Managers Organization (MAFMO), an active group currently working toward STMA affiliation, will hold an August "Dinner and Game Meeting" at the Bowie Baysox Baseball Stadium. Date and time will be announced soon.

A Field Day will be held on September 18 at MacGruder High School in Rockville, Md. This will include a "Turf in Turf" stadium-turf renovation.

Chapter contact: the Hotline, (410) 290-5652.

Great Plains: For Information on the Great Plains Sports Turf Managers Association or upcoming

events, contact Mark Schimming, City of Wichita, at (316) 337-9123.

Nor-Cal News Flash!

Coming soon to a field near you!

A Northern California STMA Chapter is beginning to take shape as a core group of members have been meeting for several months to plan and discuss alternatives. The steering committee includes Sal Genito, UC Davis; Steve Abella, Delta Blue Grass; Sandy Jacobson, UC Davis; Bob Milano Jr., UC Berkeley; James Moore, B & B Concrete; Dave Patterson, Sierra Pacific Supply; Greg Roberts, Placer Union High; Tim Smith, Brown Sand; and Dennis Suit, San Jose State. Look for their "Grand Opening" and Charter Commercial Memberships later this summer.

For information, contact any of the committee members, or the UC Davis Grounds Office at (916) 752-5035. □

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APPLICATOR'S LOG

Do PGRs Fit Your Sports Field Program?

By Dr. Michael Goatley Jr.

The concept of applying chemicals for suppressing foliar growth and seedhead formation of turfgrasses goes back to the 1950s. But there has probably never been as much interest in plant growth regulators (PGRs) on turf as in the last couple of years.

This is especially true for sports

fields because of potential reduction in maintenance costs from less mowing and the potential for improved playing-surface quality. However, there are things you need to consider about PGRs before selecting one.

First, be aware of how the chemical enters the plant. This will indicate to you whether or not irrigation or rainfall is necessary or even desirable following chemical application.

Second, be aware of the strengths or limitations of the growth regulating effects. Some PGRs provide only seedhead or foliar suppression while others are capable of both.

Strengths and Weaknesses

There are three classes of PGRs according to their mode of action.

Class A PGRs interfere with the production of gibberellins (plant hormones that influence cell elongation, photoperiod response and chilling tolerance) late in their production pathway. These PGRs are useful on intensively managed turf areas, usually result in less phytotoxicity, and provide shorter periods of growth suppression activity. An example of this compound is Primo.

Class B PGRs interfere with gibberellin biosynthesis, but at earlier stages in the production pathway. They generally provide longer periods of growth regulation, but there is usually more concern with phytotoxicity on higher maintenance turf. Two examples of Class B materials are Cutless and Scotts TGR.

Class C compounds are mitotic inhibitors. They arrest new growth for a limited time and are noted for outstanding seedhead suppression, but they can initially cause significant turfgrass discoloration. Common Class C PGRs are Embark and Limit.

The growth regulating effect of these PGRs can vary from site to site based on the particular turfgrass treated, maintenance level of the turf, chemical-use rate, and degree of turf discoloration that is or is not acceptable for your situation. If used properly, some materials, such as Primo, can provide at least a 50% reduction in clippings over a 3 to 4 week period and minimal (if any) initial turf discoloration.

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