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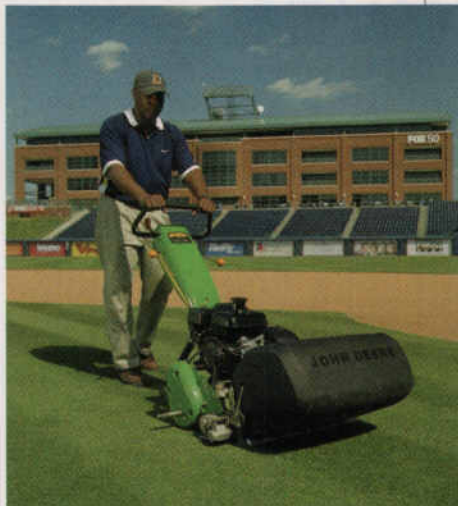
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Bobcat/866-823-7898

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Pond Management 101

BY JEFF STELZER

When looking to address pond problems, there are three words you need to keep in mind: restoration, management, and protection. Restoration is defined as using ecologically sound principles to attempt to return a water body as close to its original condition as possible. Management is improving the lake or reservoir to enhance stated uses, such as water supply, swimming, fishing, or wildlife habitat. Finally, protection is what you do to prevent adverse impacts. All three of these can be readily interchanged and intertwined within pond management. For example, a pond once restored will often require continued management and possible protection to stay in that condition.

Before we go any further it is imperative to determine one extremely important piece of the puzzle: What is the function of the pond? Is it serving as an aesthetic centerpiece of a property? Maybe the main goal is to attract wildlife or provide trophy-fishing opportunities. These will ultimately determine the restoration, management, and/or protection measures you need to apply to get the most out of the water feature.



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Restoration

Depth will ultimately dictate the types and amount of rooted aquatic growth. Ponds should be constructed with a minimum depth of around 10-12 feet. Steep slopes should also be considered as they help to prevent excessive growth by limiting sunlight penetration.

There are many potential problems for a shallow pond. As the summer months progress, the sun can heat up a pond. Generally, warmer water holds less oxygen than colder water. The resulting oxygen depleted water can slow down beneficial microbial activity, stress and potentially kill fish, and increase potential for algae growth. For shallow ponds, restoration such as dredging may be the only way to



Proper management does wonders for this subdivision pond.

improve current conditions (see photo).

Management

Unlike years ago, there are now many different management strategies available for pond managers, each with different benefits, side effects, and limitations. None are suitable for every pond or for all problems. Below are some of the tools including aeration, aquatic plantings, beneficial microbes, fish stocking, light-limiting dyes, and plant elimination/removal.

A properly aerated pond will reduce algae production by binding phosphorus with naturally occurring metals. It will help to maintain a firm, organic free bottom by providing the oxygen necessary to allow natural microbes to break down decomposing plant matter. Aeration will also increase the habitat that fish have available to them in the summer months.

Another important aspect is choosing the correct plants not only for the shoreline area but also for in the pond itself. Shoreline plants such as bulrush, arrowhead, pickerelweed, and iris can provide aesthetics while also stabilizing shoreline sediments. For in the pond, I recommend chara (plant-like, but actually an advanced form of algae). Think of chara as turf. When maintained properly, it helps to crowd out less desirable plants while providing outstanding fish habitat. And because of the algae characteristics, it filters its nutrients from the water column resulting in clearer water and less floating algae.

Beneficial microbes are a fairly new management technology. These microbes come in many different formulations and are usually added once or twice a month during the growing season. Some aim at reducing the amount of phosphorus in the water column while others reduce the organic matter (muck). The different brands all have one goal: to reduce algae or organic matter while providing a healthy, naturally sustaining pond.

Stocking fish also works a little like the bacteria. Phosphorus, the main source of food for plants and algae, is a component in all fish. It goes like this: algae uses phosphorus, which is eaten by tiny zooplankton, which are eaten by minnows and

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panfish, who are eaten by game fish that can then be removed through fishing thereby removing all accumulated phosphorus. Care has to be taken in stocking the best species for the pond. Largemouth bass, hybrid bluegill, and fathead minnows are usually a great combination.

Light-limiting dye reduces plants and algae by inhibiting light penetration that in turn stops plant photosynthesis. Typically blue, these dyes produce a pronounced and aesthetically pleasing color in the water column. They are only effective at shading out growth in over 4 feet of depth. Dyes can also mask otherwise unpleasant algal blooms and are very efficient at eliminating planktonic algae. Plant elimination and removal can be achieved either mechanically or through the use of herbicides and algaecides. Mechanical removal is beneficial because nutrients within the extricated plant material are no longer in the pond. This method is very labor intensive and time consuming. Herbicides and algaecides on the other hand are usually fast acting. This can be a great management tool, but it's a Band-Aid and not a solution. These treatments, no matter how effective, leave decaying plant material in the pond where it recycles the nutrients for more growth. It is imperative to have some type of management plan in place to reduce treatments in subsequent years.

Protection

Okay, so you've planned some restoration and/or management techniques for the pond. But have you taken the steps to reduce the previous problems? Some of the common protection methods include reducing the watershed size (if possible), assessing the water source, reducing phosphorus fertilizers, and maintaining a pond buffer.

Limiting the watershed of the pond can be an extremely effective technique to limit potential contaminants from entering. A watershed is a drainage area or basin in which all land and water areas drain or flow toward a central collector such as a stream, river, or lake at a lower elevation. It is essential to understand that a pond is not an isolated body of water, but part of a larger picture that includes all land uses within its watershed. It is possible to reduce the watershed of a pond to almost nothing by putting a berm around the pond. This ensures that the runoff from surrounding land does not flow directly to the pond, thereby reducing the chance for sedimentation and nutrient loading.

Assessing the water source for the pond can also have multiple benefits. Unless the pond was created for some type of wildlife purpose, surface water should not be used. Why? Well just as discussed above, every water body has some type of watershed. That watershed, depending on the slope of the surrounding land, may be hundreds of square miles. If this surface water source with a large watershed is used, it may bring with it large amounts of contaminants. Pond water levels should also be maintained during periods of drought. If not, water levels drop meaning more sunlight penetration, higher concentrations of nutrients, warmer water temperatures and obviously, more plant growth.

Think about it this way. Let's say that you have X amount of the nutrient phosphorus in your pond and you lose half of the pond volume to evaporation. Remember that evaporating water does not take nutrients or anything else with it. So even though you still have the same amount of phosphorus in your pond, now you have effectively doubled the concentration!

So here we are back to phosphorus again. One-way phosphorus moves into the pond is through poorly timed, aimed, and/or excessive fertilizer application. Look at using phosphorus-free fertilizer or at least a fertilizer where the phosphorus is minimal.

The second way phosphorus can move is through erosion or runoff. We've already talked about some beneficial shoreline plants, but it's also important to limit runoff into the pond. This can be accomplished by growing a buffer, which is an unmowed area around pond. Ideally, one should aim to have a buffer that is anywhere from 1-30 feet out from the edge of the pond. **ST**

Jeff Stelzer is Aquatic Biologist with Lake and Pond Solutions LLC, a lake and pond management company based in Hortonville, WI, www.lakeandpondsolutions.com.

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And this is a great time to join. The National Association and its affiliated Chapters offer a special promotion to new members joining during the last quarter of the year. Join any time after October 1, 2004, through December 31, 2004, and your membership begins immediately and runs through December 31, 2005. That's up to 15 months of membership for the price of 12 months!

Check out the website at www.sportsturfmanager.com to sign up on line, use the application form inserted in this issue, or contact STMA Headquarters at 800-323-3875 for further details.

Mark your calendar now for STMA's 16th Annual Conference & Exhibition, January 19-23, 2005, at the Hyatt Regency Phoenix hotel and the Phoenix Civic Plaza Convention Center.



chapter news

Minnesota Chapter STMA: The Chapter will hold their Fall Workshop October 6 at the City of Apple Valley Park Maintenance Facility. Events will include: a drainage presentation, vendor presentations, a facilitated round-table discussion, and turf and ground equipment demonstrations.

For information contact Jeff Hintz, Bethel College & Seminary, St. Paul, 651-638-6075 or e-mail: j-hintz@bethel.edu or check out www.mstma.com.

Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey: Rutgers University will be hosting a Sports Turf Workshop in conjunction with SFMANJ on from 11:00 am to 3:30 pm on October 7, at Hort. Farm II in North Brunswick. Highlights include field

tours of turfgrass traffic tolerance research and variety trials.

For information on the Chapter, or upcoming events, call SFMANJ at 908-730-7770 or Eleanora Murfitt-Hermann at 908-236-9118; or e-mail to HQ@sfmanj.org or visit www.sfmanj.org.

Texas Sports Turf Managers Association: The Chapter's 2nd Annual Scholarship Golf Tournament will be held October 20 at the Mill Creek Golf Club & Inn in Salado. For more information contact the TXSTMA office at the Phone/Fax number: 866-TXSTMA1 (866-897-8621) or email T. J. Thompson, Treasurer, at: TXturfmanager@prodigy.net.

Iowa Sports Turf Managers Association: October 31, 2004, is the deadline for entries into the Iowa Chapter's Field of the Year and Turf Manager of the Year programs. Applications can be downloaded from the Chapter's website: www.iowaturfgrass.org.

For information on the Chapter, or upcoming activities, contact Jeff Wendel of The Turf Office at tel. 515-232-8222, or fax 515-232-8228, or e-mail: Jeff@iowaturfgrass.org.

Kentucky Sports Turf Managers Association: The Chapter will participate in the Kentucky Turfgrass Council Conference and Trade Show to be held November 9 - 11. A special Sports Turf Track will take place November 10.

chapter news

For more information, check out the website: www.kystma.org or contact Tom Nielsen at TNielsen@batsbaseball.com or Donnie Mefford at dbmeff00@email.uky.edu or call him at 859-257-1451.

Florida Chapter # 1: The Chapter will hold a November 16 meeting at Sable Pines Park in the City of Coconut Creek. The topic is Total Park Maintenance from Fence to Fence. Equipment demonstrations also will be showcased.

For information, contact John Mascaro at 954-341-3115 or STMA@Turf-Tec.com.

Midwest Chapter STMA: The Chapter is offering scholarships and Field/Facility Awards to its members. Applications for each were sent out in the August Newsletter. Copies are available by contacting Libby Baker as shown below. The scholarship is \$750 and can be used for attending the National STMA Conference in Phoenix, January 19-23, 2005. The awards and scholarships will be presented at the Illinois Professional Turf Conference (IPTC) scheduled for November 30 to December 2.

For information visit the Chapter's website, <http://mcstma.org/>, or call Libby Baker at 847-263-7603 or email Bake60ft6in@aol.com.

Colorado Sports Turf Managers Association: CSTMA will again participate in the Rocky Mountain Regional Turfgrass Association Conference and Trade Show. This event will be held December 7-9, 2004, at the Holiday Inn-DIA, in Denver. For details of the Conference check out the RMRTA website: www.rmrtat.org.

For information on the Chapter, or upcoming activities, visit the Chapter's website—www.CSTMA.org—or call the CSTMA Chapter Hotline at 303-346-8954, or contact Chapter President Ryan Jensen at 303/464-5687 or rjensen@ci.broomfield.co.us.

Ohio Sports Turf Managers Association (OSTMA): Mark your calendars now for the 38th Annual Ohio Turfgrass Conference & Show December 7-10, 2004, at the Greater Columbus Convention Center in Columbus. OSTMA will hold their annual meeting as a lunch event December 9 in conjunction with the Conference. There will be a silent auction along with the annual meeting to help raise funds for the Chapter's education scholarship fund.

For information, call OSTMA Headquarters at 888-824-9805 or 419-824-9805 or Boyd Montgomery, CSFM, at 419-885-1982; or visit the chapter's website at www.ostma.org.

Sports Turf Managers Association of Arizona: For information on the chapter, or upcoming events, contact Chris Calcaterra at e-mail:

chrisc@peoriaaz.com or tel. 623-412-4231 or Bill Murphy, at e-mail: bmurphy@ci.scottsdale.az.us or 480-312-7956.

Northern California Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the Chapter, or pending events, call Janet Gift at 530-758-4200.

Southern California Chapter: SoCal STMA will hold a Golf Tournament at Chula Vista Golf



Course on October 15. Sign in begins at 7:15 am with a shotgun start at 8:15 am. Singles, Twosomes and Foursomes are encouraged to sign up now to reserve their spots.

For information on the Southern California Chapter, or pending activities, call Michael Tarantino at 858-679-2526 or MTarantino@powayusd.com.

South Carolina Chapter of STMA: For information on the chapter or upcoming events, contact Dr. Hale at 843-662-3526 extension 206 or by email at thale@clermson.edu or on the chapter's website www.scastma.org.

Chesapeake Chapter STMA (formerly called Mid-Atlantic Athletic Field Managers Organization - MAFMO Chapter STMA): For information on the Chapter, or other pending activities, call the Hotline at 866-818-8873 or email Nick Gammill, CSFM, at ngammill@american.edu.

Gateway Chapter Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the Gateway Chapter or upcoming events, call Mike Krone, Missouri Baptist College, 314-392-2328 or email krone@mobap.edu.

Georgia Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the chapter or upcoming events, contact Skip Kirby at 770-928-1580 or email skip@sportsturfmanagement.com

The Greater LA Basin Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the Chapter or pending events, call Eric Johnson,

University of Southern California, at 213-821-5654 or email ejohnson@busaff.usc.edu.

Indiana Chapter: For information on the Indiana Chapter, or pending activities, contact Stan Moscrip, Indiana University, at 812-856-2256 or smoscrip@indiana.edu.

Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization (KAFMO/STMA): For information on the Chapter or upcoming events, contact Dan Douglas, Reading Phillies Baseball Club, at tel. 610-375-8469, ext. 212; or e-mail to: kafmo@aol.com.

Michigan Sports Turf Managers Association (MiSTMA): For information on the Chapter or pending events, contact MiSTMA Headquarters at 517-712-3407, or email Amy Fouty, Michigan State University, at fouty@ath.msu.edu, or go to www.mistma.org to visit the chapter's website.

MO-KAN Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the Chapter, or upcoming events, call Mike Green at 913-888-8055 or email him at: mgreen865@earthlink.net.

Nebraska Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the Chapter, or upcoming events, call Loren Humphrey at: 402-461-2324 or email to lhumphrey@cityofhastings.org.

Pacific Northwest Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the chapter or upcoming events, contact: Bob Christofferson at bchristo@mariners.org.

Tennessee Valley Sports Turf Managers Association (TVSTMA): For information on the Chapter, or upcoming events, call Chapter President, Bob Elliott, Tieco, at 800-239-9547 or Glenn Lucas at 800-837-8062; email to Glenn@tvstma.org, or visit the chapter's website: www.tvstma.org.

Virginia Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the Chapter, or other upcoming events, contact: Bob Studholme, Fairfax County Park Authority via e-mail: Robert.Studholme@FairfaxCounty.gov or at 703-324-8590.

Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association: For more information on the Chapter, or other pending events, contact Chris Brindley at 715-346-3622 or cbrindle@uwsp.edu.

Forming Chapters:

North Florida STMA Chapter: For information on the newly forming North Florida Chapter, contact: Mark Clay at 904-633-6116 or Jay McCord at 904-448-2583.

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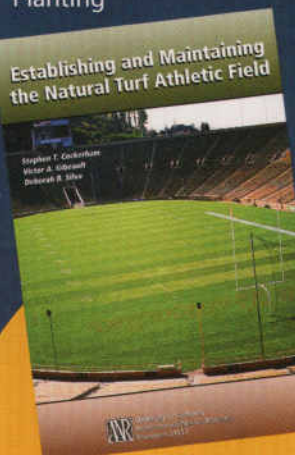
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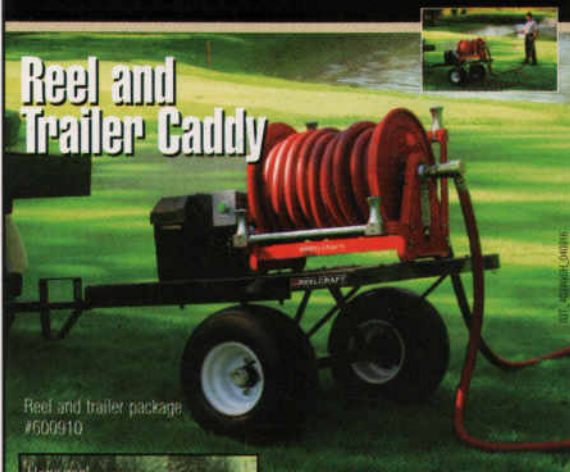
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