

SAFE Foundation Update

People Solve Social Problems - They Don't Solve Themselves

Have you ever wondered how charitable institutions like the March of Dimes or the Arbor Day Foundation got started? When most of us were growing up, these icons of American philanthropy were already firmly established. Did they just appear one day with the rising sun? The fact is philanthropy doesn't just happen. It begins with a small group of people concerned about a particular societal problem.

March of Dimes Foundation

The March of Dimes, originally the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, was founded in 1938. In the first 17 years, it focused on funding research to develop a vaccine against polio. While researchers worked tirelessly in their labs, volunteers helped polio victims and their families around the country. In 1948, with Foundation funding, Dr. Jonas Salk found a cure and it became a standard fixture among childhood immunizations.

The SAFE Foundation

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." - Margaret Mead

SAFE had its defining moment in May of 1999, when Dr. Jim Watson voiced his concern over the shortage of research specific to sports fields and recommended that an organized effort

be launched to improve the body of knowledge for sports turf management. With that vision, the Foundation for Safer Athletic Field Environments (SAFE) was born to provide research, educational programs and scholarships geared to sports fields.

STMA Members resoundingly agree with Dr. Watson's assessment. In a 2001 survey of STMA Membership, 94% suggested that STMA pursue more technical research and 98.4% stated that it is important to offer educational programs. The need has been identified and a group of thoughtful, committed people have spoken in favor of the SAFE mission. Now is the time for changing how the world looks at SAFE.

The Past Will Continue

SAFE inherited the STMA Scholarship Program which, since its inception has provided over \$35,000 in tuition assistance and STMA conference expense assistance to over 42 people. The benefits of scholarships have a multiplying effect as time goes by, because those who have received help are giving back to the sports turf family. Many have become educators or professional sports turf managers.

The Future is Ours to Create

You have witnessed the punishment your fields endure and do everything in your control to prepare the fields for play. SAFE would like to make your efforts more productive with solid research on which to base decisions. The research efforts of SAFE were initially based on attendee feedback received by Dr. Tony Koski at the 13th Annual STMA Conference in Las Vegas. Listed below are the top 10 of 26 research topics.

1. Modification of native soil sports turf
2. Annual & Perennial weedy grass management/control
3. Optimal texture for sand based, "manufactured" root zones
4. Use of field covers, tarps to promote establishment, recovery of injured fields
5. Overseeding effects on species composition of sports turf
6. Types of cultivation equipment and frequency of cultivation
7. Use of organic and biostimulant products vs. "commercial" fertilizers
8. Topdressing materials and frequency
9. Use of ceramic and other manufactured amendments
10. Relative cost, safety, and reliability of rubber in-fill systems (compared to grass)

We recognize that turf-related research is being conducted, however, athletic fields are seldom the focus. The activities played on athletic fields are very rigorous and demand a unique body of knowledge to properly establish and maintain the playing surface. SAFE will disseminate the research findings and provide educational resources to the volunteers who help care for sports fields.

SAFE is a charitable organization that relies on contributions from like-minded individuals who believe in safe playing surfaces for all levels of play. To invest in a sports turf revolution, contact Rich King, 800-323-3875 or by email at SAFE@sportsturfmanager.com.



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