Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) is planning a 1-day Regional Conference to be held at the Philadelphia Eagles’ Lincoln Financial Field and the Phillies’ Citizens Bank Park in Philadelphia, PA on Friday, June 27, 2008. This event is open to all sports turf managers and crew members as well as others involved with athletic field management.

The program will feature stadium tours, presentations of both warm and cool season turfgrass management, an interactive “chapter challenge” contest and demonstrations.

Join your peers for a full day of education, professional development, and networking. Take back to your facility the newest practices for managing turfgrass in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast.

This program is supported by the following STMA-affiliated Chapters:
1. Chesapeake Chapter of STMA
2. Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization
3. Sports Field Managers of New Jersey
4. Sports Turf Managers of New York
5. Virginia Sports Turf Managers Association

Stay tuned for more information about this event at www.sfmanj.org and by mail.

Don Savard is a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) and Certified Grounds Manager (CGM); Director, Athletic Facilities and Grounds, Salesianum School; and a member of the SFMANJ Board of Directors.

**STMA ANNOUNCES REGIONAL STMA CONFERENCE IN PHILADELPHIA**

By Don Savard, CSFM, CGM

**DID YOU KNOW?**

The term soil formation refers to the development of a soil from an unconsolidated mass of material called parent material.

**SOMETHING I TRIED THAT DIDN’T WORK...AND WHY!!!**

By: Don Savard, CSFM, CGM

Several years ago I had a number of puddles or “birdbaths” on a sports field. Every time it rained, water would collect in these low areas and would remain for up to 5 days. In order to make the field playable, I would pump the water out the puddle with a hand powered “puddle pump.” Then I would run a leaf blower over the wet spot to dry it. Sometimes I would add calcined clay on top to help absorb the moisture. The problem was not getting better and I really needed a better solution.

One summer day, I had a dump truck load of screened topsoil delivered to my school. With a borrowed tractor, I set out to fix these puddles once and for all. Using the front end loader, I shuttled bucket load after bucket load of topsoil to the biggest and deepest puddle spots on my field. I dumped the topsoil right on the surface and worked the topsoil in, leveling and compacting the soil with the bucket and tractor wheels. I hand raked and smoothed each area. The next day I installed sod over each spot and began irrigating. We were careful not to traffic the sod with mowers or feet when it was wet.

As the summer progressed, the sod became established. The field was looking pretty good. About a week before the football preseason was to begin, we had several heavy thunder showers. I was trying to mark and paint the field. As I was traversing the field with tape measure and string lines, I kept noticing that the new sod areas were really soft and mushy. A couple of days later, these areas were still wet but the surrounding areas were firm. After subsequent rainstorms, these problem areas became worse. Football practice turned these areas into quagmire. After all that work and money spent, the repair was a failure.

**HERE IS WHAT HAPPENED AND WHY:**

1. The sports field had been poorly graded and some settling had occurred following reconstruction 2 years previously.
2. The existing sports field soil texture was a silt loam. The screened topsoil that we brought in was a sandy loam soil.
3. The screened topsoil was not blended with the existing soil, rather piled on top.
4. Light frequent irrigation was applied only on the new sod for establishment.
5. Soil saturation was not observed until the period of heavy thunder showers.

Here is what was happening. I had created something similar to a bowl of wet oatmeal but with grass growing on top! This “bowl” retained water longer than the surrounding soil. And because this “bowl” had sides, it could not drain laterally. I had placed a layer of sandy loam on top of a layer of silt loam. Unfortunately, the silt loam underneath would absorb the water at a much slower rate.

**YOUR “ONE-STOP SOURCE” FOR AMERICA’S BASEBALL & SPORTS TURF SURFACES & SUPPLIES!**

A SUPPLIER TO EVERY MLB TEAM, OVER 750 MINOR LEAGUE TEAMS, OVER 700 COLLEGES AND THOUSANDS OF TOWNS & SCHOOLS WORLDWIDE!

**800-247-BEAM (2326)**

www.BEAMCLAY.com

**OUR PRODUCTS INCLUDE:**

- Field Building Materials & Turf Surfaces
- Craft Equipment & Merchandise
- Irrigation Equipment & Accessories
- Lighting Equipment & Accessories
- Paving Equipment & Accessories
- Swimming Pool Equipment & Accessories
- Turf Care Products & Accessories
- Water & Waste Equipment & Accessories

**HERE’S WHY WE’RE THE BEST:**

- The broadest selection of turf surfaces & supplies
- The largest inventory of turf surfaces & supplies
- The most knowledgeable staff & service
- The best pricing & delivery

“Nothing but the best, nothing but the best.”

- George Iова

**5000 WALTERS STREET, PARSIPPANY, NJ 07054**

**800-247-BEAM (2326)**

www.BEAMCLAY.com

**5000 WALTERS STREET, PARSIPPANY, NJ 07054**

**800-247-BEAM (2326)**

www.BEAMCLAY.com
The field day then changed venues to Monmouth Park Race-track where attendees were treated to lunch as they overlooked the racing surfaces and infield from high above in the grandstand’s Turf Club room. The lunch was sponsored by Tuckahoe Turf Farms, Inc. After a good meal with good company, attendees were introduced to Steve Fischer who is the Turf Track Superintendent at Monmouth Park. Mr. Fischer, who has a lifetime of experience maintaining the facility, graciously narrated a tour of the turf track that has recently hosted events such as the 2007 Breeders’ Cup. During the tour, attendees were afforded the opportunity to view and ask questions about irrigation equipment and techniques, aeration techniques, pest control issues and even general information about horse racing. A large topic of discussion during the tour was the recent turf renovation project at the track that was the result of a collaborative effort between the track management and Rutgers University. Fortunately, members attending the tour were able to have their questions answered first-hand by individuals who worked directly on the renovation. Dr. James Murphy and Brad Park from Rutgers assisted Steve Fischer in providing valuable insight as to the scope and duration of the renovation project.

Overall, the SFMANJ Spring Field Day was a great success. Many members of the organization participated in the discussions and showed great enthusiasm about learning new techniques to experiment with on their own turf facilities. All members of the organization can exchange a great deal of insight and knowledge between their peers in the turfgrass industry at events like this. The Spring Field Day was proof that all SFMANJ members and anyone interested in sports field management should try to take advantage of these valuable networking opportunities whenever possible.

Matt Olivi is Sports Turf Manager, Piscataway Board of Education, Piscataway, NJ; and a member of the SFMANJ Board of Directors.

The problem was solved when we renovated the field. First we stripped the sod off the field. Next we loosened the rootzone depth with a box scraper equipped with ripper teeth. We purchased a silt loam soil that was specially blended to match our soil and spread it on our field. Then, we laser graded the field at a 1 to 1.5% slope for positive surface drainage and to eliminate the “birdbaths.” Finally, we installed sod that was grown in silt loam. We grew it in and managed the traffic on it. The result was the elimination of virtually all of the birdbaths. Because the soil is relatively homogeneous, it drains at a consistent and acceptable rate.

The lesson learned was that layers of dissimilar textured soils do not drain consistently. In some cases they do not drain at all. Now when I purchase soil, I make sure that I obtain a physical soil test so that what I buy will be similar to what I have.

Don Savard is a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) and Certified Grounds Manager (CGM); Director, Athletic Facilities and Grounds, Salesianum School; and a member of the SFMANJ Board of Directors.