STMA ANNOUNCES REGIONAL
STMA CONFERENCE IN PHILADELPHIA

By Don Savard, CSFM, CGM

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.

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

THINGS I TRIED THAT DIDN’T WORK...AND WHY!!!

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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. 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.

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