

Minnesota Turf and Grounds Research & Education Center

An Update and Review of Its Purpose and Mission

By **BOB MUGAAS**
Coordinator—TGREC

The College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences (COAFES) has long had an integrated set of research, teaching and education programs in turfgrass development/management, landscape ecology, urban entomology and landscape materials development. These programs are carried out on the St. Paul Campus at the Landscape Arboretum and at other sites around the state.

The Turf and Grounds Research and Education Center (TGREC) is being proposed for an approximately 1200-acre parcel located primarily on the Rosemount Research Center property in Rosemount, Minn. TGREC has several unique partnership possibilities between the University of Minnesota and other organizations and businesses. These potential partners include the Minnesota Turf and Grounds Foundation, the Minnesota Golf Association, the United States Golf Association and several area businesses. As the programs and facilities are developed, there is likely to be other important partnerships formed that will help support this facility on into the future.

Related more specifically to the turf industry, a unique feature of the proposed Center will be its fully functional playing fields and golf courses that will allow for the study of various turf uses under conditions encountered in the "real world." Of the proposed golf courses, one 18-hole course would be designed for normal play with minimal disruption for research purposes and one 9-hole "research" course. In addition, areas will be set aside for more traditional research methods and projects. While these particular facilities are focused on the turf industry, they will also provide opportunities for short and long term evaluation of "sustainable" landscape design, landscape restoration, tree and shrub maintenance practices and IPM strategies for woody and herbaceous landscape plants.

Continuing education for practicing professionals in the turf and grounds industry will be fostered through conferences, workshops and seminars conducted at the Center. There will also be formal degree programs offered through COAFES. There may be additional programs conducted in partnership with other area and regional colleges as well.

Following are a few brief examples of the types of projects to be undertaken at, or issues addressed, through the TGREC:

- Turfgrass variety development, pest and cultural management strategies for golf courses, parks, sports fields,

sod and seed producers, cemeteries and residential and business lawns.

- Landscape plant development, pest and cultural management strategies, including irrigation technology, for the same groups as mentioned above along with the arboriculture and nursery and landscape industry.

- Recreational facility management practices and their potential to impact ground and surface water resources.

- Containment systems for fertilizers and pesticides to eliminate any adverse impacts to surface and ground water resources.

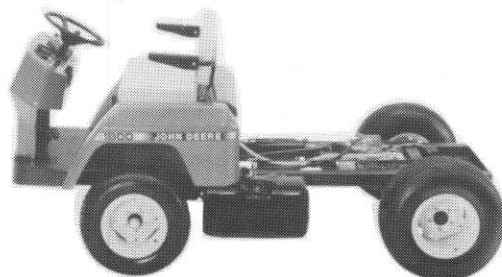
- Environmentally friendly and sustainable recreational and research facility design.

The creation of TGREC will provide a focal point for the
(Continued on Page 7)

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TGREC—

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College's current programs. The specially designed facilities will greatly expand the capabilities of current faculty and staff. Beyond this obvious benefit, several others should also occur:

1) The Center will enhance our ability to attract external support and will provide the College with the only such facility in the nation. This will firmly establish the significance of the University of Minnesota as an international leader in northern climate landscape material development and management. The potential partnership with the USGA will affirm the stature of our turf programs and further strengthen our abilities to compete for grants and contracts.

It is only through the combined efforts of everyone's support that TGREC will become a reality.

2) The availability of the Center will allow the College to conduct workshops, environmentally related youth programs, seminars attracting partnerships and general conferences from around the nation and the world.

3) The Center will positively influence our recruiting of both undergraduate and graduate students interested in turf management, nursery management, landscape construction and maintenance, urban forestry/arbiculture

and related degree programs. For example, a two-year degree, offered in cooperation with area Technical Colleges (and perhaps others), will act as an additional source of four-year majors.

4) Net revenues from the Center's operations will help support research and teaching programs consistent with the mission of the College. This will have significant potential to reduce the dependence on recurring public dollars for support for the Center's programs.

As you can see, the research, education and outreach programs of this Center contain something for everyone in Minnesota's Green industry. Whether you are a park superintendent, arborist, cemetery grounds manager, golf course superintendent, grower and/or seller of landscape plants, sod grower or involved in the lawn and landscape service industry, this Center will be a mainstay for current, relevant applied research and education for your profession. However, it is only through the combined efforts of everyone's support that TGREC will become a reality.

Stay tuned for more information about this Center and how you and your organization can help make it a reality that benefits Minnesota's entire turf, landscape and grounds maintenance industries.

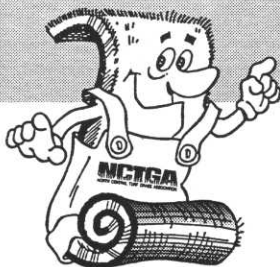
If you have any questions or would like more information about the TGREC project, please contact me, Bob Mugaas, Coordinator for TGREC. I can be reached by phone at (612) 625-9234 or fax at (612) 624-4941. My address is University of Minnesota, 422 Alderman Hall, 1970 Folwell Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108.

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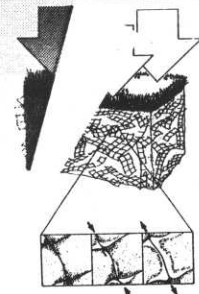
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