

The Future Starts Today

TROE Center, Headquarters for Minnesota Turfgrass Professionals

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So what the heck does TROE really mean? No, it isn't a fancy Scottish term for a chili dip wedge. Nor is it Minnesota speak for advancing a ball. But rather, TROE stands for Turfgrass Research, Outreach and Education. And TROE Center stands for the basis of an up and coming University of Minnesota program focused on the future of turf management.

Research will concentrate upon the environmental impacts of general turf management. This will include the evaluation of alternative materials for use as low input turf. These materials will be monitored to develop management strategies that will include mowing frequency, nutrient and water use efficiency and the cultural practices necessary to promote healthy turf.

A second objective of research is to completely understand the impacts of fertilizer and pesticide applications on general turf. This may include fertilizer and pesticide runoff and leaching potentials as effected by common cultural practices used by homeowners and turf managers. And the research may evaluate the impacts of natural and organic products and how they affect the management of a low input turf.

There are also numerous other environmental quality issues that need to be addressed for the professional turf manager. Research at the TROE Center may include the effect of sand-based root zones and the movement of nutrients and pesticides, pesticide resistance issues and genetically modified grasses. The effects of modern technology and its application to the use of nutrients and pesticides may be evaluated. And the advances in GIS and GPS mapping may be presented in a comprehensible format to better understand its application to golf course pest management.

The TROE Center will be the industries "new" research facility, one that is flexible, comprehensible and progressive. In addition to the evaluation of breeding materials developed at the University of Minnesota, National Turf Evaluation Program (NTEP) trials will be conducted at the research facility.

The NTEP trials are collaborative efforts that incorporate cultural aspects and pest (disease, insect etc...) management. The information generated from these studies serve

as groundwork for the generation of information to be distributed by extension programs.

Outreach efforts focused through the TROE Center will target specific audiences as well as be multifaceted in their educational design. That is, information and educational activities such as field days, research tours, workshops and field-based classes will be targeted to professional turf managers such as those associated with the MGCSA and the MTGF.

The TROE Center will serve as a convenient gathering place for educational programs conducted for legislature and other public decision-makers. This will allow them to become acquainted with the diversity of turf, turf management and the importance of research and continuing education.

Education of current and future industry leaders is of great importance at the TROE Center. The Center will provide an outdoor laboratory for undergraduate students studying turf and turf-related issues. This laboratory will enable faculty, graduate students and staff from across the University and within industry the opportunity to apply experiences related to design, construction and maintenance.

Students who attend the University of Minnesota Turfgrass Program will gain the skills needed to be exceptional professionals. Some will go on to the graduate program to further their education and opportunities. Graduate students will have the opportunity to conduct research to increase knowledge of production practices, cultural systems and the environmental impact of turf grasses and landscape management.

The breadth and depth of research and education needs related to professional turfgrass management, as well as those

related to general turf, continues to grow and expand. TROE Center will meet and surpass these demands by creating an environment for research, outreach and education that will benefit the industry for many generations of turf professionals.

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