

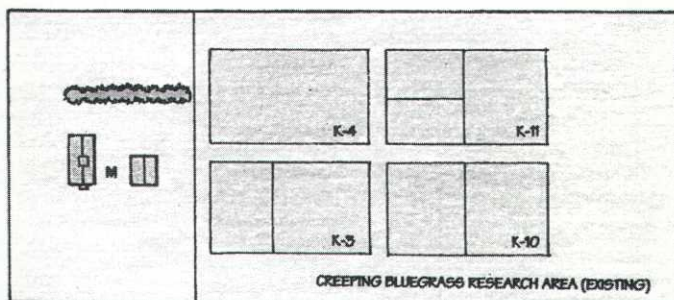
World Renown Facility Breaks Ground

By Jack MacKenzie CGCS, Superintendent North Oaks Golf Club and
Dr. Brian Horgan, Turfgrass Extension Specialist, University of Minnesota

Vision: The University of Minnesota will be recognized for its leadership in environmentally sound and responsible turfgrass systems. An aggressive statement? Perhaps. But the quest of a determined group of turf scientists to become leaders in the industry will not be stopped. Through dedication, promotion and implementation, the University of Minnesota is in the process of developing a program worthy of national and international acknowledgement.

During a period of time when the U of M has been rocked by sports scandals and an almost across the board budget reduction, one specialized group in the university system stands alone, unscathed and even growing. The Turfgrass Working Group, comprised of faculty from the departments of Agronomy and Plant Genetics, Plant Pathology, Entomology, Soil, Water and Climate and Horticultural Sciences, has made an incredible move forward in the progression of turfgrass science. This diversified collection of departments recently acquired the space necessary to move ahead with the development of a new turfgrass facility on the St. Paul campus.

Up until the early part of April, the University's only



dedicated turfgrass research facility was located on 4.5 acres of the St. Paul campus. While very nice to have, this area was barely large enough to adequately support a limited research program. For the past few years the site has been dedicated to a creeping bluegrass breeding program. Additional space was needed to create the program envisioned by the Turfgrass Working Group.

A diligent search located 16 acres of terrain off Cleveland Avenue and near the existing research facility. In order to procure the property, a plan had to be developed which provided a framework for the creation, occupancy and construction of the new Turfgrass Research, Outreach and

Education (TROE) Center. Four programmatic research themes, (1) alternative plant materials, (2) general production, (3) pest management and (4) environmental quality, were created to help define the importance of the TROE Center.

After a broad description had been created, the Turfgrass Working Group identified specific needs:

+ 5.9 acres to be used for short term (< 2 years)

+ 6.4 acres to be used for medium to long term (2-5 years)

Outreach programming and undergraduate and graduate education

+ 2.2 acres for the undergraduate outdoor laboratory which will include a shade research area

+ 1.5 acres of land would provide infrastructure such as parking, buildings and wash areas

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TROE Center-

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Once compiled, the information was condensed into a 27-page report and presented to the Dean and Associate Deans of the College of Agriculture, Food, and Environmental Sciences. The presentation did not just focus on the TROE Center, it described a process to attract new undergraduate and graduate students, develop innovative outdoor applied laboratories, further develop outreach and extension activities, and intimately involve the turfgrass industry. And approve they did, embracing the idea and dedicating over 16 acres of University property to the TROE Center project.

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Timing is everything. Already, because of the Drive For The "U" Program, industry leaders, individual members of the Minnesota Golf Course Superintendents Association, and members of the Minnesota Turf and Grounds Foundation have contributed in-kind donations of over \$115,000.. This program, the catalyst for the TROE center, began two years ago with a prophetic vision of the development of a first class research facility dedicated to turf related studies.

And even timelier, phosphorous pollution concerns have prompted political action. During the most recent Legislative session, both the house and senate have reviewed bills designed to reduce the potential for phosphorous pollution perceived to be contributed to by the application of fertilizer upon turfed surfaces. As part of the

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B. PESTICIDE STORAGE OUT-BUILDING	K-4. GENERAL RESEARCH
C. GAS TANKS	K-10. LITTLE BLUESTEM
D. MATERIALS STORAGE BINS	K-11. CREEPING BLUEGRASS / GREEN / TEE
E. ENTRANCE SIGN & GARDEN	M. STORAGE BUILDINGS
F. TEE BOX	
G. FAIRWAY	
H. 1 ST CUT ROUGH	
I. WILDFLOWERS (NON-TRADITIONAL ROUGH)	
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proposed law, the golf course industry will be required to develop and monitor a fertilizer application program and create a location for the development of a phosphorous run off research program.

What an exciting time for the University of Minnesota, the MGCSA and homeowners in the state. The results of dedicated individuals have created a facility sure to educate private individuals and the industry alike. Soon the University of Minnesota will be renowned for its prestigious Turf Program and research projects implemented at the TROE Center.

Watch for upcoming articles relating to specific research projects and funding information.

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