

Industry News

POSA EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES & SUPPORTING RURAL AREAS

POSA Summer Operational Forum a Success

THE 5TH ANNUAL PARKS AND OPEN SPACE ALLIANCE (POSA) Summer Operational Forum was presented June 22 at the St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canals Centre. The theme was “The New Face of Parks and Open Spaces.”

The keynote speaker was Debbie Whitehouse, Senior Director Guest Relations – Gardens & Nature, The Niagara Parks Commission (NPC). I was pleased to be the chair of the day and welcome and introduce Debbie who I have known for many years.



Debbie Whitehouse & Jay Kivell, POSA Summer Forum.

Paul Ronan, Executive Director of OPA, Vic Hergott, parks sector professional and Rolf Huber of Everplay Installation all spoke about the Good, the Bad and the Ugly. Two issues addressed were the impact of the AODA Legislation and the popularity of outdoor gym equipment being installed in parks. The AODA Legislation can easily be dealt with by referring to the CSA Standards for Play Equipment that has a section on the AODA. As for the gym equipment, standards are required and industry experts

are working together with the CSA to establish them. As well, more users, less budget dollars and the challenge of finding trained staff is difficult. Not much has changed over the past 40 years.

Ministry of Labour and Frank Cowan Company representatives spoke on the risks, responsibilities and benefits of using volunteers. Volunteers need to be given an orientation to the job and worksite, be given adequate and job specific training for the job that they are doing and be given an adequate performance appraisal. There is a fine balance between an acceptable volunteer and a diligent operation. We were challenged to find that balance.

Throughout the morning and during lunch we had an opportunity to visit the exhibitors and find out about their products and services. After lunch we had an opportunity to discuss open forum topics of interest including dog off leash parks, splash pads and wading pools, and outdoor ice rinks.

The next educational opportunity presented by the coalition is the Introduction to Synthetic Turf and Maintenance workshop, November 10, at Oshawa's Civic Recreation Complex. Visit www.POSAlliance.ca for details and registration.

— Jay Kivell, Jay Kivell & Associates, POSA Committee Member



POSA Fall Forum

INTRODUCTION TO SYNTHETIC TURF & MAINTENANCE

Date: November 10, 2011

Place: Civic Recreation Complex, Oshawa, Ontario



Following up on last year's highly successful professional development opportunity, this repeat session is offered under the leadership and co-ordination of the Parks and Open Space Alliance and brings together leading industry speakers on the topic of synthetic turf and also provides practical hands-on turf maintenance opportunities.

Program

- The Municipal Perspective
- Understanding Construction
- Synthetic Turf Maintenance
- Meet With Exhibitors
- Optional Facility Tour

Visit www.POSAlliance.ca for complete details and online registration.

Turfgrass Education Initiative to Help Rural Communities

JULY 29, 2011. Safe school grounds and high-quality municipal sports fields maintained without traditional pesticides are the focus of a new University of Guelph-based initiative. The Turfgrass Outreach Project (TOP) supports rural groundskeepers across southern Ontario, providing workshops, training programs and an online knowledge centre.



The project is run by scientists and educators from the Guelph Turfgrass Institute and is supported by the Knowledge Translation and Transfer program, a new initiative under the University's partnership agreement with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

(OMAFRA). That program funds projects that turn research knowledge into use in the agricultural, food and rural sectors.

Without cosmetic pesticides (banned since 2009), rural groundskeepers have had to make major changes to manage school and municipal sports fields. But so far, public outreach has focused on the impacts on residential lawns and urban sports fields. This project is looking to address rural sports fields, said Eric Lyons, a professor of plant agriculture and TOP project manager.

"Urban areas have often had municipal restrictions in place for a while, but in many cases, rural communities have had to adapt very quickly to managing turf without cosmetic pesticides," Lyons said. "The education and outreach to deal with that just isn't in place in rural communities like it has been in urban centres."

In response, TOP is pulling expertise from the Guelph Turfgrass Institute, U of G's Ontario Agricultural College and its School of Environmental Design and Rural Development, and OMAFRA to create accessible educational opportunities for rural groundskeepers. It's also partnered with the Sports Turf Association.

"We welcome the chance to learn more about the specific challenges faced by rural schools and municipalities," said Nicole Markwick, TOP's project co-ordinator. "For example, the safety of sports fields is important because they are used year-round for various sports and events that impact rural communities economically, socially and environmentally."

TOP also aims to foster stronger networks for continuing education on sustainable resource management for rural turfgrass managers. It has also partnered with community organizations. More information about the Turfgrass Outreach Project is available online at www.uoguelph.ca/turfgrassoutreach. You can also contact Nicole Markwick at 519-824-4120, Ext. 52251, turfgrassoutreach@uoguelph.ca.



Sports Turf Association's

Sports Turf Management and Maintenance Course

1/3 required courses for the Parks & Open Space Professional Training Program (Level 1)

April 30 to May 3, 2012

University of Guelph

For more information: 519-763-9431

www.sportsturfassociation.com/POSA/Prof Training Program