JJPDA Sports Field Spring 2025 Managers Association of New Jersey Vol. 25, No. 1

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pring Field Day

Wednesday, April 23, 2025 at the beautiful

Goffle Brook Park Passaic County Parks & Recreation

Hawthorne, NJ

See Inside For:

Spring Field Day Schedule Victory on the Pitch Happy Silver Anniversary SFMANJ! 2024 Field of the Year Winners



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Welcome! New and Renewed SFMANJ Members for 2025

We have 103 new & renewed members for 2025. Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey has generated invoices for 2025 membership dues to all current members. If you did not receive an invoice, please contact us at 856.514.3179 or download the membership form available at www.sfmanj.org. Mail membership dues direct to SFMANJ, PO Box 205, Pennsville, NJ 08070.

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Jason Lenmann	Barrington BOE
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This newsletter is the official quarterly publication of the **Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey.**

For information regarding this newsletter, contact:
SFMANJ at (856) 514-3179 or Brad Park at (848) 932-6327
Editor: Brad Park, Rutgers University, email: bradley.s.park@rutgers.edu
Layout and Design: Debra Savard, email: mail@sfmanj.org

SFMANJ does not necessarily support the opinions of those reflected in the following articles.

Getting to Know Your Board of Directors

Last November SFMANJ sent out a ballot for this year's six openings on the SFMANJ Board of Directors. The board is made up of twelve individuals, half of the group being up for election every other year.

Continuing for the second half of their term are Zack Holmes as president, Rich Watson as Vice President, Jessica Phillips as Treasurer, Matt Olivi, Brad Park and Craig Tolley as Directors.

Re-elected for a two year term are Scott Bills as Secretary, Virgil Caputo, Joe Guanill and Tim Hamfeldt as Directors.

We also elected two new Board members this year. Please see their Bios below.

DAVE JUNKERMAN

Dave Junkerman is currently the grounds lead with Aramark Corp. overseeing the entire Winslow Township School District in Atco, NJ. He maintains approximately 30 acres of athletic fields in addition to supervising and coordinating grounds maintenance for 11 school buildings daily. He has held this position for nearly 2 years and has worked within the public schools for a total of over 15 years. Before starting at Winslow Township School District, Dave spent 2 years as an Athletic Field Technician with SJ Turf Consultants. He attended Rutgers Continuing Education Turf Program from 2018 through 2021. Dave's knowledge and expertise in

grounds ranges from installing new sod to building a pitcher's mound and everything in between. Dave passion is laying out and painting all types of athletic fields from start to finish. In his personal time, Dave is a single father to his daughter. He can often be found along the New Jersey coastline either fishing, kayaking or boating. His love for the outdoors has no end.

CHRIS VANCE

Hi, my name is Chris Vance. My journey in the green industry began in 2008 when I started my lawn maintenance business. In 2016, I joined Princeton University's Grounds Department, and by 2019, I transitioned to the Athletics Department to pursue a career in sports field management. This past summer, I was honored to take on the Lead role for Natural Grass Management within the Athletics Department.

I live in Hightstown, New Jersey, with my wife, Olivia, and our daughter, Lilah. When I'm not at work, you'll likely find me hiking or mountain biking, enjoying the outdoors.

We want to welcome Dave and Chris and we are looking forward to their contributions to the SFMANJ Board of Directors.

Debbie Savard is Executive Secretary of the Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey

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2024 Field of the Year

By Scott Bills, CSFM

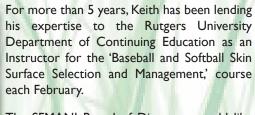
Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ) received entries from three sports managers for five different fields for the 2024 Field of the Year.

The list of entrants included one 60/90 high school baseball field, one high school softball field, one little league baseball field and two soccer fields.

The SFMANJ Board found all the applicants deserving but settled on the Al Kunzman baseball field at Al Leiter Ballpark at Central Regional High School, 509 Forest Hill Parkway, Bayville, NJ. Supervisor of Grounds, Keith Fisher explained the field was renovated several years ago within the first year that Keith started working for the Central Regional School District. The renovation work including amending the existing infield mix, regrading, reconstruction of the pitcher's mound and batter's boxes, regrading and resodding the outfield, plus constructing a warning track with crushed red stone. Despite the overall scope of work Keith was

Keith is no stranger to receiving awards and accolades for his work. Within the last 5 years, Keith has won the national Sports Field Management Association (SFMA) Field of the Year award for Al Kunzman Field and the varsity baseball field at East Brunswick Vocational School when he was the grounds supervisor for the Middlesex County Vocational School District. Being honored as a national field of the year winner allowed Keith the opportunity to present a program at the Sports Field Management Association conference in Salt Lake City in January of 2023.

Keith's journey as a sports field manager started in minor league baseball with the Atlantic City Surf and Lakewood Blueclaws. That experience allowed Keith the opportunity to work on the grounds staff of the New York Yankees. In recent years Keith has been able to work closer to his home for school districts in Toms River, Middlesex County and currently for the Central Regional School District.



The SFMANJ Board of Directors would like to congratulate Keith, his staff and the Central Regional School District for their efforts to renovate and maintain Al Kunzman Field at Al Leiter Ballpark and being selected as the 2024 Field of the Year.

A runner-up and Field of Distinction in 2024 was Field #4, a 50/70 baseball field at Mountain View Park, Hillsborough, NJ, owned by the Somerset County Parks Commission and maintained by Rick DeLeon, Head Groundskeeper and his staff.

Rick stated the field had been upgraded by amending the infield mix and adding warning

track around the whole field. The field is also completely enclosed with the outfield fence distances are 225' all the way around the field.

Rick described his turf program that includes regular fertilizer applications, schedule pest controls and additional field materials as needed. The field is irrigated. Rick has added quick connect couplers behind the pitcher's mound, 1st base and 3rd base for watering the skin surface.

Daily, Rick and his crew mow, clean the grass edges, nail drag, level, rake, edge, groom and repair the pitcher's mound and batter's boxes.

Rick stated, "With so much tournament play on the weekends all the batter's boxes and the mounds, including the bullpens, more



left with some additional issues to deal with including an outdated irrigation system and grade issues that were not solved during the renovation of the outfield.

In the past several years Keith has increased his cultural practices to deal with some of the grade issues, including regular aeration, verticutting, topdressing and overseeding. Keith also oversaw the replacement of the irrigation system in the summer of 2023.

Keith's normal seasonal program includes six turf applications that include fertilization and weed control, topdressing the skin surface with an infield conditioner, maintaining the pitcher's mound and batter's boxes with moisturized clay, mowing the grass daily at 2 inches, edging the grass borders bi-weekly, blowing out the grass edges after every game and raking the warning track. Keith estimates his material budget is approximately \$10,000 for the year.

Continued on page 15



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SFMANJ: We Blinked and the Association is in its 25th Year!

By Brad Park

Take a quick glance at the front page of this issue of SFMANJ Update - You'll notice the Volume number is 25. Yes, SFMANI Update is beginning its 25th consecutive year of publication. The first issue was published in July 2001 and consisted of two pages of material (one piece of paper; printed on front/back). Images of the first issue are presented with this article - We will highlight various back issues in our Summer, Fall, and Winter 2025 editions of the newsletter. Issues from July 2001 through Winter 2023 are accessible via the Michigan State University Library System and its Turfgrass Information Center (see: https://archive.lib.msu.edu/tic/

updat/browse.html). I strongly encourage you to

browse this database.

Let's get bigger picture and focus on broader organization: Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ). How old is our Association? What did the beginnings of the Association look like? We attempted to answer these questions when I delivered a Historical Report during the Association's Annual Business Meeting at Turf Expo on Wednesday, December 11, 2024 in Atlantic City. This article serves as a summary of my Historical Report.

The individuals most influential in the development of SFMANI were Ms. Eleanora Murfitt and Dr. Henry Indyk (deceased; 2005). Ms. Murfitt was a Director of Parks and Recreation for a New Jersey municipality and she attended the Rutgers NJAES-OCPE Athletic Field Maintenance

and Construction course in early 1999. Dr. Indyk, retired from his role at Extension Specialist at Rutgers, continued to serve as a Course Coordinator and Instructor in the Continuing Education Course and had deep roots in sports field management both in New Jersey as well as nationally (Dr. Indyk was the recipient of the Sports Field Management Association [SFMA] Harry C. Gill Founders Award for 1994). Dr. Indyk connected with Ms. Murfitt at the Rutgers Continuing Education Course and followed-up with a signed letter to Ms. Murfitt dated March 3, 1999 expressing his willingness to assist her with the development of a local SFMA (then Sports Turf Managers Association [STMA] Chapter. This letter documents the first mention of a concept that ultimately became what is now SFMANI; we hold this original letter in the Association's archives.

The balance of 1999 and the first half of 2000 constitutes what I would describe as the Association's organizational run-up period. Notable activities during this time included remarks on STMA Chapter formation delivered by Mr. Steve Trusty (then Executive Director, STMA) at the conclusion of an Athletic Field Session at the NJ Turfgrass and Landscape Expo in Atlantic City in 1999,

circulation of a STMA Chapter Charter petition (signed by New Jersey sports field managers) to develop a New Jersey Chapter formally aligned with STMA, attendance of key future SFMANJ personnel at the national STMA Conference and Exhibition in St. Louis, MO (January 2000), and formalization of a Chapter name (Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey) during spring 2000.

The first mention of 'Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey' in which I have come across was in a letter authored by Ms. Murfitt dated April 12, 2000 and addressed to Dr. Richard Caton, then Executive Director of New Jersey Turfgrass

> Association (NJTA). She noted the following in the letter:

"An organization known as the Sports Field Managers Assoc. of New Jersey (SFMANJ) is in the process of becoming organized as a State Chapter affiliated with the Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA), a national organization representing the interests of Sports Field Managers. The objective of SFMANJ is to improve the safety, and cooperative relationship with NJTA."

playability and appearance of athletic fields at all levels though educational programs, field demonstrations, publications, and networking ... As we continue to become fully organized and active, we look forward to an interactive

Jersey (SFMANI) formally aligned itself with [national] SFMA on July 24, 2000 when Eleanora Murfitt (President), Larry George (Commercial Vice-President), James Gavigan (Secretary), and Dean Marzocca

(Treasurer) signed a STMA Chapter Charter Agreement. Among the conditions of SFMA alignment codified in this document were SFMANJ agreeing to maintain a membership of a minimum of 25 active members and comply with the procedures and by-laws established by the STMA [SFMA].

Our Association filed for Incorporation by virtue of the New Jersey Nonprofit Corporation Act during summer 2000. The document signed by Eleanora Murfitt (President) and Dean Marzocca (Treasurer) and dated August 21, 2000 indicated that the Purpose for which this corporation is (are) as follows: To gather people in the athletic field for training. The Certificate of Incorporation indicated that the first Board of Trustees shall consist of a minimum of three Trustees; the three listed trustees included Gene Huntington, Fred Castenschiold, and James Rohl. The first publication of the SFMANJ Board of Directors in SFMANI Update occurred in the December 2001 edition and listed Fred as a Board Member. Fred was the

Continued on page 18



SFMANJ Poetry – 200 I "NJ Turf Expo Athletic Field Educational Session" A Great Success!

Editor's Note:This poem ran in the Jan./Feb. 2002 edition of SFMANJ Update; author is UKNOWN

Twas the 12th day of December and everyone was there, Bud Perdon, Steve Chirip, Henry Indyk, and Cher.

Equipment was positioned throughout the Show with care, in hopes that new budgets would be there.

The Turf Mangers were nestled all snug in their beds, while visions of core points danced in their heads.

When at the Grand Reception there rose such a clatter, was Dr. Caton on stage? I thought my glasses would shatter.!!

El and Dean had all the speakers ready, we were moving along fine, until we noticed our last, was scheduled for two talks at one time.

From one of the seats at the top of the class, Henry rose up to save our as... ah, butt. He spoke with authority, he spoke with conviction, he spoke for so long-lt was time for eviction!

He spoke with love, he spoke with passion, the audience appreciated and expressed satisfaction.

The attendees at Expo had positive comments and good things to say, let's give them one better, let's add another day!! ;)

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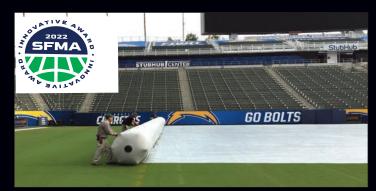
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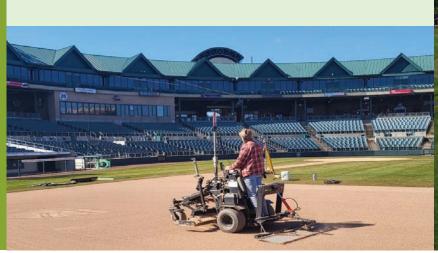
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Victory on the Pitch: How Dundee Island Parks Soccer Field Beat the Odds

By: Miguel De Jesus

Nestled along the Passaic River, Dundee Island Park is a sanctuary for recreation in the heart of Passaic, New Jersey. Among its many attractions is a well-loved soccer pitch that has long served as a hub for community activity. However, this field, maintained by

the diligent efforts of the Passaic County Parks Department, faced a perfect storm of challenges-flooding, compaction, and overuse—that threatened its very existence.

For years, the soccer pitch seemed doomed to a cycle of decline and repair. Located just yards from the Passaic River, it bore the brunt of frequent flooding, which led to severe soil compaction. Add to that the wear and tear from near-constant use by the vibrant but underprivileged local community, and the result was a field that struggled to stay playable. By 2023, the situation reached a

tipping point. The county was forced to resod the field, only to face the same dilemma again in 2024.

As the newly appointed sports field manager in 2022, I quickly realized that drastic measures were needed to break this unsustainable cycle. Our maintenance team was committed to finding a solution that would balance preserving the field's condition while meeting the community's needs. This was not just about turfgrass; it was about protecting an invaluable community asset maintained by Passaic County Parks Department.

A Collaborative Approach

The first step was bringing key personnel together. In 2024, we facilitated a series of meetings between the county's permitting department and the park rangers, two groups with significant influence over how the field was used but with differing priorities. The permitting department's focus was on maximizing access

for events, while the park rangers were tasked with policing the park and field itself to help the sports field maintenance crew in preserving the field's integrity. Aligning these perspectives was no small feat.



established clear guidelines to manage usage without excluding community. Permits were limited during high-risk weather seasons and event organizers were educated about the importance of field preservation. Additionally, park rangers began actively monitoring and enforcing usage rules to prevent overuse and abuse.

Proactive Field Maintenance

On the maintenance side, we implemented a more proactive and scientific approach. Aeration schedules were increased to address compaction, and we introduced turf-type tall fescue turfgrass species during the 2024 resodding. Soil health testing became a routine practice, allowing us to apply targeted treatments to improve drainage and resilience.

The 2025 Milestone

Fast forward to 2025, and the results speak for themselves. For the first time since I took over the field's management, the soccer pitch has survived an entire season without needing to be resodded. This success is a testament to the power of collaboration, thoughtful planning, and community engagement.

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SFMANJ Spring Field Day - Wednesday, April 23, 2025 Goffle Brook Park, Passaic County Parks, Hawthorne, NJ

Host: Passaic County Parks and Recreation

		SCHEDULE
7:	00 AM	Vendors may arrive and set-up
		Vendors park in Diamond Bridge Ave parking lot
		See: 40.947737, -74.160263
		Attendees park in Goffle Rd entrance parking lot
		See: 40.944196, -74.162740
7:30 –	9:00 AM	Attendee Registration and Trade Show – Field 1
9:00 -	9:30 AM	Pass-the-Mic Vendor Time,
		History of Goffle Brook Park – Field 1
		Isabella Costa, Dept. of Cultural and Historical Affairs
9:30 -	10:00 AM	Management of Sports Fields and Skin Surfaces and Fertilization Considerations at
		Passaic County Parks – Field 1
		Miguel DeJesus, Supervising Greenskeeper, Passaic County Parks Dept.
10:00 –	10:30 AM	Natural Turfgrass and Skin Surface Equipment Demonstrations – Field 1
	10:45 AM	Dog Park Considerations and Maintenance
		Angelo Burrafato, Projects General Foreman, Passaic County Parks Dept.
10:45 –	11:30 AM	Synthetic Field Considerations and Maintenance - Synthetic Turf Field
		Mark Troyer, SportCare
		Synthetic Turf Equipment Demos
11:30 -	11:45 AM	Walking Path Maintenance – Exercise Loop
		George Pasquella, Safety Specialist, Passaic County Parks Dept.
11:45 -	12:00 PM	Natural Turf Equipment Demos – Exercise Loop
12:00 -	12:30 PM	Goffle Brook Park Landscape Walk
		Kyle Kaps, Horticulturalist, Passaic County Parks Dept.
12:30 –	1:00 PM	Liquid Sprayer Calibration – Field 1
		Miguel DeJesus, Supervising Greenskeeper, Passaic County Parks Dept. &
		Brad Park, Rutgers University
	1:00 PM	Door Prizes, 50/50, Credits and Adjourn
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Continued from page 5

often than not have to be repaired/rebuilt every Monday or Tuesday. We hold anywhere from 40-80 games a weekend depending on the size of the tournament. Between Hillsborough Baseball League, who use Mountain View Park as their home fields, and the weekend travel

baseball tournaments. Mountain View Park hosts well over 1000 games a year."

The second and third runners-up and Fields of Distinction winners are the Varsity Soccer Field at East Brunswick Vocational School and the Varsity Soccer Field at the Piscataway Vocational School, The



fields were entered by the Head Grounds Foreman, Mike Morvay,

who is a very experienced and highly respected Sports Field Manager. In fact, Mike has won several other Field of Distinction awards and has participated in field days for SFMANJ.

Regarding the soccer field in East Brunswick, Mike stated the field was originally seeded with five varieties of Kentucky Bluegrass and then re-seeded with a ryegrass blend in 2021. The fertilizer and pest control program starts in April

Mike offered the following details about the field. "Piscataway Vocational Schools baseball field was built in 2014 on native soil. The field was sodded with a blend of 5 different varieties of Kentucky bluegrass. The late summer/ early fall of 2021 we over seeded with a ryegrass blend

of 35% Revenge GLX, 35% Manhattan 5 GLR and 30% Paragon GLR. Our fertilizer plan starts on April 1st with a granular fertilizer

application with a preemergent herbicide control. May 1st we apply another granular fertilizer application pre-emergent with a herbicide control and a broadleaf weed control. May 15th a liquid application of iron and micronutrients is applied. In July we make a light application of a granular fertilizer with an application of insecticide or fungicide only if necessary. September Ist and November 1st we



finish out the year with granular fertilizer applications.

The field has a Hunter acc irrigation system that consist of 12 zones for the turf and 2 zones for the infield dirt. There is a quick connection behind the mound for hand watering if needed.

The infield dirt is a blend of Blend of 60% Sand, 18% Silt and 22% Clay which is manufactured by the DuraEdge Company. Pro's Choice

> infield conditioner is applied throughout the season to the infield surface. At the beginning of the season 30 bags are applied evenly on the infield surface and worked into the top profile of the infield dirt. 10 bags of conditioner are applied during the season every week to maintain a consistent layer. The mound and home plate areas consist of 100% clay. We repair the areas after each game to maintain the proper slope to the mound and a level surface at home plate. The infield and warning track are edged 4 times a year (March, April, May and October).

> Core aeration is done in April and September. The cores are vacuumed up after. Overseeding occurs after the cores are all cleaned up with a slice seeder after the fall aeration.

The rates of seeding changes year to year depending on how thin the turf is. We at the Middlesex County Magnet Schools take great

pride in the athletic fields."



The Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey Board of Directors would like to congratulate Mike, his staff and the Middlesex County Magnet Schools for their efforts maintaining the Baseball Field at Piscataway Vocational School at a high level and being selected as the 2023 Field of Distinction.

All entrants should be proud of their accomplishments and continued efforts to not only improve their own fields, but to be

an example of what it takes to be a 'Professional Sports

Field Manager.'

The SFMANJ Field of the Year program recognizes the efforts of member sports turf managers throughout New Jersey. Applications for the 2025 Field of the Year are due by the end of September 2025 and are awarded at the NI Green Expo in Atlantic City, NI in early December. In addition to a plaque, the winner will receive a complimentary registration to all education sessions, the two-day trade show, dinner, and one night lodging at the Borgata.

If you have any further questions regarding the program, please feel free to contact the SFMANI office.

Scott Bills is a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM); SFMANJ Board Secretary and Public Relations Committee Chairman; owner/operator Sports Field Solutions, LLC; and recipient of the 2024 Dr. Henry Indyk Memorial Award presented by SFMANJ







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Calendar of Events

SFMANJ Spring Field Day - 2025

April 23, 2025 Goffle Brook Park, Hawthorne, NJ Host: Passaic County Parks www.sfmanj.org

Rutgers Turf Research Golf Classic

May 5, 2025
Fiddler's Elbow Country Club
Bedminster, NJ
973.812.6467
www.njturfgrass.org

Rutgers Turfgrass Research Field Days Golf & Fine Turf

July 29, 2025 Rutgers Hort Farm No. 2 North Brunswick, NJ

Lawn, Landscape, and Sports Turf Includes SFMANJ-sponsored Trade Show & Equipment Demonstrations

July 30, 2025
Rutgers Adelphia Research Farm
Freehold, NJ
973.812.6467
www.njturfgrass.org

New Jersey Green Expo Turf & Landscape Conference

December 9-11, 2025 Borgata Hotel & Casino Atlantic City, NJ 973.812.6467 www.njturfgrass.org

2026 Sports Field Management Association (SFMA) Conference & Exhibition

January 18-22, 2026 Fort Worth, TX 800.541.4955 www.sportsfieldmanagement.org

Welcome! New and Renewed SFMANJ Members for 2025

Adam Lieb	Springfield
Timothy J. Lomerson	Delsea Regional School District
Joe Lovallo	Voorhees Twp.
Bernard Luongo	Individual
Chris Lynch	New York Red Bulls
Kevin Malone, CSFM	The Landtek Group Inc.
Chris Marra	Syngenta
Dylan Martin	New York Red Bulls
Ryan Mason	Arborjet/Ecologel
	Greenwich Township DPW
Brian Meola	Washington Township
Dave Mitchell	Mitchell Products
	Somerset County Parks Commission
	Plant Food Company
	Players Development Academy
	City of Perth Amboy - Office of Recreation
	Fisher & Son Company
	Rutgers University
	Jersey Soil Blending, LLC
	Omega Turf Solutions
	Plant Food Company
	South Jersey Turf Consultants
	Fisher and Son
	Berlin Twp. BOE
	Plant Food Company
	Turfware, Inc.
	Somerset Patriot
	Advanced Landscaping Inc
	North Brunswick Twp.
	Syngenta
•	Ocean County Utilities
	City of New Brunswick
	, .
	Cherry Hill BOE
	Peddie School
	New York Red Bulls
	Somerset County Park Commission
	Somerset County Park Commission
	The Landtek Group LLC
	TinyMobileRobots
	Individual Member
	Sport Care Synthetic Field Maintenance
	Township Of Freehold
	Princeton University
	The Viersma Companies
	Laurel Equipment
	Raritan Township Public Works
	Maple Shade BOE
Paul Zaraza	Red Bull Arena

Victory on the Pitch:

Continued from page 13

How Dundee Island Park's Soccer Field Beat the Odds

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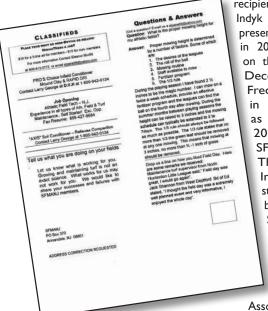
More than just a patch of grass, this field represents the spirit of Dundee Island Park and the community it serves. While challenges remain—including ongoing maintenance and balancing access—we now have a sustainable framework in place to ensure this vital resource endures for years to come.

As we celebrate this milestone, I want to thank everyone who played a role in this turnaround. From the permitting department to the park rangers, and most importantly, the community members who embraced the changes, this success belongs to all of us. Together, we've proven that even against the odds, we can protect the spaces that matter most.

Miguel DeJesus is Supervising Greenskeeper, County of Passaic — Department of Parks and Recreation

SFMANJ: We blinked and the Association is in its 25th year!

Continued from page 7



recipient of the Dr. Henry Indyk Memorial Award presented by SFMANI in 2016 and remained on the Board through December 2022; Fred remains active in the Association as of the Spring 2025 publication of SFMANJ Update. The Certificate of Incorporation is stamped as "FILED" by the New Jersey State Treasurer (Roland Machold) and dated August 28, 2000. A copy of this document is held in the Association's archive.

Happy Silver Anniversary, SFMANJ!

Brad Park is Research and Outreach Agronomist, Rutgers University; Editor, SFMANJ Update newsletter; a member of the SFMANJ Board of Directors; and 2024 recipient of the SFMA Dr. William Daniel Founders Award.

See you SFMANJ Spring Field Day Wednesday, April 23, 2025 Goffle Brook Park, Hawthorne, NJ

Go to the SFMANJ website at "sfmanj.org" to register as a vendor or attendee on line or download the paper form.

Call the office at 856-514-3179 with questions

Looking forward to seeing you there!









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