

TALK TURF

Official publication of the Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association

VOLUME 18 ISSUE 1 | SPRING 2017

Winter Conference Review *including NEW 2017 Board Members*



2017 Board Members Left to Right: Bart Bartelme, Jake Hannes, Pete Bemis, Ron Novinska, Mike Krupke, Scott Johnson, Trenton Waters, Michael Boettcher, & Mike Miller

The 9th Annual Winter Conference for the WSTMA was judged a success by recently elected President Bart Bartelme! Over 70 people were in attendance at NeuroScience Group Field in Appleton, home to the Timber Rattlers professional baseball team. Our host, Vice-President/Treasurer Jake Hannes of the WSTMA and Head Groundkeeper for the stadium, and the other staff at the stadium did a terrific job of providing a quality venue with excellent food and service.

Our now Past-President Michael Boettcher welcomed all the members and guests to Appleton and then turned the program over to our new President, Bart Bartelme of the Green Bay Packers. A number new Officers and Board of Directors changes have been voted and approved by our membership. Through the use of on-line voting we received more votes that any of the past years.

The first speaker was Brian Storm of Fields, Inc. who presented relative and current information on

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Hello from the Frozen Tundra! It is my pleasure to be leading the WSTMA as your new President. We are off to a very good start to our season with our winter conference which was held in Appleton at Neuroscience Group field, home of the Timber Rattlers. We had great presentations and plenty of networking time for our members and vendor partners. It was great to see new faces and old friends.

First and foremost, I want to say thank you Michael Boettcher for your commitment to the WSTMA. Michael has done a great job leading this organization in the right direction, and we are much better off with the hard work and dedication he has put forth in his President's role.

As I am writing this message, I'm looking out the window, and it is hard to believe our growing season is right around the corner. I know I Am itching to get back outside. Mother Nature gave us a bit of a tease with 50-60 degree weather, then smacked us with two snow storms. I hope all of your fields come out of this winter/spring great, with minimal damage.

Spring is a time for new beginnings, new life and new challenges. We will all be faced with new challenges, but know, we will overcome these obstacles and achieve our goals!

The WSTMA is here to help educate and give our members opportunities for growth, both personally and professionally. As our year is planned out, we want to provide quality meetings, field days, and networking among our peers.

July 25th will be the WTA field day at the OJ Noer facility, which is always a great day. Your board is working on an event in the Milwaukee area for this fall, just a heads up! I know we are all very busy, but I encourage every one of you to try and attend these events. We are always looking for feedback and want to give you the information you want and deserve.

Thank you for the opportunity to lead such a great organization, and I look forward to working with all of you in the future. I hope everyone has a great spring start up, and have a successful growing season. I believe in process.

I believe in four seasons. I believe that winter's tough, but spring's coming. I believe that there's a growing season. And I think that you realize that in life, you grow. You get better. - Steve Southerland

Bart Bartelme



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KEEP IT SIMPLE

Josh Viet

In an ever-changing environment with increasing responsibility and decreasing budgets, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. It's important to note, even the smallest tasks can make a huge difference—so protect your investment! Add thirty minutes of maintenance to your day and reap the benefits.

First, each organization has its own challenges and therefore will need to prioritize to their own individual needs. Know what your priorities are and communicate that with your coaches and staff.

These are examples of small tasks that reap big benefits:

- » Edge your infield. (If time is limited, just do one edge per day.)
- » Hole repair on mound and batter's box. Tarp mound and plate after each use no matter what.
- » Increase mowing frequency.
- » Add a consistent fertility treatment to your maintenance program.
- » Proper and consistent watering infield skins, mound, home plate and on the turf.
- » Seeding wear areas on the turf.
- » Keep low wear areas level on infield skins.

These are small tasks that can be tackled in thirty minutes or less per day. Prioritize these within the specific needs of your organization and add one of these tasks to your daily maintenance.

Thirty minutes a day will go a long way towards better playability and longevity of your field as well as increase the visual appeal. Invest in a field you will be proud of.



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Craig Schlender - Manager

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WSTMA 9th Annual Winter Conference Review

Continued from front page

the field construction process, showing slides of many of his successful projects. He did emphasis the different means of field construction, including: Engineered, Modified, and Sand Based. Mr. Storm encouraged the creation of performance specifications and third party product testing during the construction process. It was noted that it is imperative to the future maintenance of a quality sportsfields that the manufacturers and designers provide maintenance specifications and proper maintenance equipment as part of the project to ensure a high quality field in the future.

After a coffee break lunch and a visit with the vendor-Industry Partners, the second speaker of the day was Tom Rychlik from Gewalt Hamilton Associates from Vernon Hills, Illinois. Again we were treated to an experienced and successful company and speaker who have completed many successful site construction projects. Mr. Rychlik showed how site drainage, both surface drainage and sub-surface drainage techniques are imperative to successful sports field construction, which will minimize future maintenance concerns.

Following an excellent lunch provided by our hosts we were treated to several speakers with tremendous experience in turf management. Mark Grundman from Jacklin Seeds and Wayne Horman form Landmark Turf and Native Seeds, along with Paul Huggert of Paul's Turf and Tree Nursery combine to provide decades of experience to share with our members. Mr. Grundman and Mr. Horman shared their knowledge of the importance of the selection of seed for quality turf, at any and all levels of play. They emphasized that the knowledge and scientific research is readily available and if a manager is not comfortable with the seed selection process that plenty of help is



Top, Left to Right: Mark Grundman, Paul Huggert, and Wayne Horman
Bottom: Wayne Horman



available. Mr. Huggert's presentation centered on the processes for growing quality sod (which starts with quality seed selection) and how sod is produced from seeding to rolls ready for the sports fields.

New Chapter Manager, Pete Bemis, requested that members contact him with an email to inform him of topics that members would like more information on. As we line up speakers and articles for the educational needs of the members it would be very helpful to

know what topics the members would like us to address. Forward your thoughts and recommendations to pbemis@WSTMA.org

The WSTMA membership would like to thank its partners for their continued support and dedication to keep our organization growing and advancing! We will continually look to increase our membership and the quality of meetings with the investment you have made in us!

Photo credit clockwise: Tom Rychlik, Brian Storm, and Paul Huggett.



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Improve Efficiency with Plant Growth Regulators

Bart Bartelme

As we all know, our workloads are increasing but the amount of time in a day isn't.

So I started looking for ways to be more efficient with my time and improve the turf at the same time. After researching and gathering information on Plant Growth Regulators (PGR) for a few years, I decided to incorporate their use into my turf management program. On June 15th of 2015, I applied my first application of a PGR to our stadium field and continued throughout the summer. My final application for the year was on July 30th, about three weeks before the first home football game. I wanted the "rebound" effect to happen a week or so before the first event. I applied the PGR at half rate about every 14 days or so, based on GDD tracking. During this 6 week period, I averaged about eight less mowings than normal, mowing once a week verse the normal 2-3 times a week. I did notice the turf was thicker, more dense and an increase in rooting. The field held up really well for the remainder of the fall sporting season.

I didn't use a PGR before last year, because soccer was played on our stadium field in Spring and Fall. I needed the turf to be constantly growing and repairing all year long. A marching band competition was also hosted at our stadium with 6-8 bands in June, but now that event is held in August. Now that there is no spring soccer this year, I am looking at starting my PGR program in mid-May. I may end the program by the end of July, so I can get the "rebound" effect around the time of the marching band competitions in early August.

In mid September last year, I added PGR to my paint, and painted a 3 foot football sideline and the numbers (see pictures) I used the label recommended 1 oz of PGR per gallon of paint, but I believe this was too high of a rate.

After talking with colleagues, I will use a 1/2 oz per gallon or less the next time. Another reason to reduce the rate, is that when painting numbers and 3 foot sideline, you do overlap and/or apply 2 coats of paint. Even in late November, you could still see the effects of the PGR on the turf even though the paint was gone. I had back to back home games a week apart, and I didn't need to paint the numbers or sidelines for the second game, just a few touch

up areas. Using a PGR in your paint, does extend the life of the paint, and you're not mowing off the paint.

In 2017, I may try to use a PGR on our two baseball fields, in late summer and throughout the fall. Research has shown good results with early spring green up when using a PGR the previous fall. Which as you know is a good thing to have going into the early spring baseball season in Wisconsin!

If looking at using a PGR, make sure you look at the research and determine if it's right for you. There are different classes of growth regulators. I used a post-patent product with the same active ingredient, but cost less than the traditional products. I can see an improvement in the turf after one season of use. I'm excited to use it on our baseball fields, and to see if I really get a nice spring green up. I did a lot of research and was nervous using a PGR for the first time, but am so far very pleased with the outcome. If you are not sure, try a test area or a field that is not heavily used.

Keep up the great work on your fields, people do notice!



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PGR Application on the Stadium

1. PGR added to paint and applied on Sept. 23rd picture taken 10 days later, after 2 mowings
2. PGR applied to entire field from June 15th – July 30th
(Cost = 1.08 oz. – 44 oz. a month = \$47.52 cost per month)
3. Reduce mowings by avg. 7/8 @ ½ hr mowing time = 4 hrs. less mowing+ fuel savings
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SAY HELLO...

We're highlighting WSTMA Board Member Mike Miller, UW-White Water Recreation Sports & Facilities Grounds Crew Lead.

What first sparked your interest in Turf Management?

I had an interest in lawn care since I was a small child. I would watch my father mow our lawn with the big lawn tractor (8 hp, 36" Wheel Horse), and wished I could do that. It was not long after, with my father's guidance, that it was my responsibility to maintain our two acre property. Eventually I was managing four more of the neighbor's lawns. I was 8 years old at the time; little did I know that there was much more to turf maintenance than cutting the grass.

What is your biggest challenge in maintaining UW-Whitewater Fields?

Undoubtedly our budget is one of our biggest challenge. Secondly, our staff is comprised of student employees. Every semester I have a different group of students working our athletic grounds. Because of the ever changing staffing patterns I am constantly training and orienting. With any luck I will have 4-5 returning veteran students from the prior semester. Students typically work in blocks of 2-3 hours a couple days a week. Managing 52 acres of varsity, practice, and intramural fields, and the venues associated with each field, can be challenging.

What do you like best about your job?

Nurturing young minds; think of your son, daughter, niece, or nephew who may be my next student employee. I like the opportunity to teach these young minds a few lifelong lessons. This includes teamwork, responsibility, accountability, and the basics of equipment use and maintenance. Half of my student workers have never driven a manual transmission utility vehicle, or basic push mower, or the advance dynamics of a zero turn mower. They will have these experiences to



enhance their academic experience, as well as provide the groundwork for basic life skills.

What has been the most memorable moment of your career?

I can't say that I have just one memorable moment to recall. However, I receive great satisfaction from student workers who have graduated with a bachelor or master degree. When they return to campus, they make a point to visit me and share their successes. I am proud to feel a part of their achievements.

What do you wish other people knew about the turf industry?

I think it would be great for people to understand the dedication and art of turf maintenance, and realize that the goal is to provide an optimal playing surface to enhance peak performance and safety for the athlete.

Who has been your biggest influences/mentors?

I have many mentors. To name just one would be difficult. I absorb as much as I can attending any function with the WSTMA, or continued education courses. If I've asked you a question, or we've had a conversation about turf, YOU, have influenced me. You didn't even know it did you.

When you're not working, what do you like to do?

My wife and I enjoy traveling when we can. I am currently restoring my 1975 Nova SS. This is the same kind of car I had in high school, it was my first. I also enjoy bicycle riding, skiing, and scuba diving.

If you were not in the turf industry, what would you want to do?

Fly planes, and drive fast cars.

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AVOID UNWELCOMED PESTS IN YOUR FIELD

Tim Gagnon

As the winter snow melts, certain pests can leave an unwelcome surprise in the spring. Voles (also called Meadow Mice) can cause significant damage under the protection of snow cover, digging holes, gnawing on plants, and leaving trails of chewed up tissue and grass clippings behind.

Voles can be easily confused with ordinary field mice. Unlike mice, voles do not hibernate through winter and can continue to multiply. A female may have up to 5 litters a year with 10 young per litter. Voles commonly create a burrow system underground near buildings, decks, planting beds, and areas of dense vegetation.

Vole damage usually will appear as trails in the lawn, but can also girdle trees and shrubs, as well as some perennials and garden plants. A hardware cloth or plastic barrier can be placed around a tree base at least 12" high, or up to the height of the snow cover for protection from the voles, as well as rabbits.

One of the easiest ways to control the numbers of voles is to make their habitat less desirable. Clear away excess dead vegetation and overgrowth. Voles will not inhabit areas where there is no protection from predators. This includes burning ditch banks, right of ways, and underneath decks and near foundations. If the population of voles is relatively low, regular mouse traps with peanut butter/oatmeal mix placed perpendicular to the runway near the holes can work.

If the population of voles is relatively high, poisonous baits are the most practical option. The use of anticoagulant bait is available in most stores and is relatively safe for non-target animals. This type of bait requires multiple feedings and will kill the pest in a period of time. Another option is baiting with a field grain coated with zinc-phosphide. This will kill the voles with one feeding, but requires a professional exterminator with a license to apply.

Good luck, and let's get growing!



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Educational Opportunities Available

Peter Bemis

One of the main goals of the Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association is to promote and provide educational opportunities for our members. Many members may not realize that additional education is available from a number of resources close to their homes.

The Wisconsin Technical College System is comprised of 16 colleges, located at numerous facilities across the State of Wisconsin.

Many, but not all, of these campuses offer continuing education opportunities for our members. The programs can range from an associate's degree, to a technical college degree, to a certificate, or, just single classes. Teachers in the technical college system must not only have achieved their academic degrees, but must have years of practical experience be approved to teach at a technical college. This ensures that each instructor has a combination of academic education and practical experience in the field.

These colleges also offer a large array of courses that may be of interest to our members. Some of these courses might include; Turf grass Management, Horticulture Soils, Identification of Woody Trees and Shrubs, Survey of Herbaceous Plants, Plant Health Care (including the Pesticide Applicator Training within this course), Irrigation installation and maintenance, Landscape Maintenance, and Landscape Design courses. Every college has a different selection of courses, so it is best to check all your options and have a conversation with one of the teaching staff.

There are 11 technical colleges offer a variety of educational opportunities for our members. The colleges that offer course work in horticulture, golf, turfgrass, and landscape include: Western Technical College in La Crosse, Southwest Technical College

in Fennimore, Blackhawk Technical College in Janesville, Chippewa Valley Technical College in Eau Claire, Fox Valley Technical College in Appleton, Lakeshore Technical College in Cleveland/Sheboygan, Gateway Technical College in Kenosha, Mid-State Technical College in Wisconsin Rapids, Milwaukee

Area Technical College in Milwaukee, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College in Green Bay, and Southwest Technical College in Fennimore.

Another terrific resource for education is the national SportsTurf Managers Association website.

Anyone can go to the STMA website and select the 'Knowledge' button. Under this button is a

variety of resources to explore, thirteen topics in all. Some of the topics that I have investigated include; Turfgrass, Environmental Stewardship, Cultural Practices, and Continuing Education. I enjoy the opportunity to review presentations made at the past national meetings by outstanding experts from across the nation. There are well over 100 presentations at your fingertips!

Another topic located under the 'Knowledge' button is the University Publications topics. Here you will find listing of over 100 articles, neatly classified under general topics such as Soil Testing, Watering, Maintenance Calendars, Construction/Establishment/Renovation, Weeds, Diseases, Insects, and Calculations and Calibrations. There is no reason to reinvent the wheel, utilize this great resource of information. Many times the information will include something new, but at other times it is valuable to be assured that we following the current and best possible procedures.

Expand your knowledge of sports turf management by utilizing all these resources.



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