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Oh, by the way . . . Turfgrass sod does help filter runoff and does benefit the Chesapeake Bay.

[TPI Member offers a rebuttal in response to a reader's opinion.](#)

TPI member **Fred Moore Jr.** of Collins Wharf Sod Farm in Eden, Maryland felt enough was enough when he read the following comment in "Grapevine", a reader opinion column featured in the Daily Times (Salisbury, Maryland).

"I am very much concerned about the (Chesapeake) Bay, like anyone else, but I wonder how much monitoring is done with (turfgrass) sod farms on the shore? It takes lots of fertilizer and chemicals to grow sod. They use a lot of water; the runoff must be tremendous."

It is very much out of the ordinary for me to respond to comments in "Grapevine", but after the last two years and the comments made by the uninformed and misinformed about water usage and wells, I feel compelled to try to set the record straight.

We are regulated by the state of Maryland. We have a nutrient management plan like any other farm. I pay a professional nutrient management specialist to prepare this plan. Commercial fertilizers are not free and you do not apply them if they are not called for by the soil or tissue test. You may have observed

many applications of fertilizer on a given field because we apply smaller amounts more times to avoid the leaching of the nutrients beyond the shallower root zone.

Chemicals are also expensive and not applied without proper scouting of the fields to check to make sure established thresholds for insects and disease are met. Thresholds are established by universities and state and federal agencies to help ensure proper chemical use.

Water use for irrigation is regulated by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). A farmer must apply to MDE for a permit. He tells MDE the crops to be irrigated, the acreage to be irrigated and his possible sources of water. MDE intern tells him the amount of water that can be utilized for a given crop and acreage over a given amount of time.

These permits are given based on a worst-case scenario, not actual water usage. This means that unlike a municipal appropriation where water usage is almost constant, an agriculture appropriation may be fully

utilized only one year in 10. This allows for variations in rainfall, relative humidity and temperature, as there may not be a crop growing that needs water.

Our fields are again scouted before water is applied to determine the need. Fuel and electricity are expensive and the turf market is competitive in the mid-Atlantic area.

The best way to address runoff is with a quote by James Beard, professor emeritus, Texas A&M University:

"One of the key mechanisms by which turf grasses preserve water is their superior capability to trap and hold runoff, which results in more water infiltrating through the soil turfgrass ecosystem."

One of the best management practices established by the Maryland Department of Agriculture and others is the use of a grass buffer strip along ditches and waterways.



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TPI Membership Renewal

Your TPI membership has made a difference in helping TPI achieve the following activities in 2008/2009:

- New and improved website at that includes new features & content expanded to provide members with more resources, information, and user-friendly functions.
- Continuing efforts to educate your customers about the *Benefits of Turfgrass* with new PowerPoint presentation.
- Revised *Natural Grass & Artificial Turf: Separating Myths and Facts* booklet.
- New *Turfgrass Lawn Guide* with marketing and promotional brochures.
- New monthly TPI E-mail Newsletter.
- Through our lobbying efforts in Washington DC and collaboration with other green industry groups, TPI was able to get "turfgrass" specifically defined as a "Specialty Crop" in the 2008 Farm Bill. Turfgrass is now eligible for future federal funds including research grants, state marketing grants and other programs.
- TPI along with other green industry groups and Congress are working with the EPA to modify the proposed EPA *WaterSense* guidelines for new home construction. The current draft has provisions limiting the amount of turf in the landscape. TPI is requesting revisions based on sound science that will benefit the industry.
- TPI continues to make strides in our lobbying efforts for turfgrass with the National Turfgrass Federation and other groups.

- *Turf News* magazine content and design enhancements now provide members with more tools to manage their business.
- Continuing news releases educating the public/media on turfgrass benefits and research.
- The Lawn Institute (your foundation) awarded \$10,000 in scholarships to eligible family members of TPI companies.
- The Lawn Institute (your foundation) funded over \$55,000 in turfgrass research programs to benefit members and the industry.

By renewing your 2009/10 TPI membership in TPI you stay connected to the turfgrass sod industry.

Look for your annual membership dues renewal statement to arrive in your mailbox the first week of May. Please submit your dues payment by July 1, 2009.

You may renew your dues by personal check, cashiers check, credit card or by wire transfer.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact:

Susan Hall
 Membership & Marketing Manager
 Turfgrass Producers International
 Email shall@turfgrassod.org



Annual Membership Dues Renewal Statements Will Be Arriving This Month



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TPI President Speaks at Turf Producers Australia (TPA) Conference in Melbourne, Victoria

Turf Producers Australia (TPA) held its annual conference and trade expo in March, with over 140 delegates converging on Melbourne for the two-day event.

The special guest speaker was Turfgrass Producers International president **Randy Graff** (pictured right) who gave an update on the current economic climate in the United States and how that was, in some cases, having a significant impact on the

turf production industry worldwide.

Following the morning talks, delegates spent the afternoon touring three of Melbourne's premier sporting facilities – the MCG, Telstra Dome and Flemington. The final day of the conference saw Anco host the field day at its Cranbourne West Turf Farm which included a number of machinery demonstrations.



Randy Graff, speaking at the TPA Conference and Trade Expo in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

Don't Underestimate Public Misconceptions

Some people believe a turfgrass sod farm will eventually look like a strip mine because soil is depleted with each harvest.

As many turfgrass producers know there are more than a few people who have the misconception that turfgrass sod harvesting is a form of strip mining. They are convinced that topsoil is depleted each time turfgrass is harvested. Some people think turfgrass farms have to periodically bring in topsoil to replenish their field. What these people don't realize is that the lower portion of harvested sod isn't all soil, but a leafy portion attached to a thatch/root layer that normally measures 1/2 to 3/4 inches thick containing only a bit of soil.

Grass roots are continually developing, dying off, decomposing, and re-developing. Organic matter keeps soil microbes active and improves soil, chemical and physical properties. Turfgrass sod production actually improves farmland soil by adding organic materials and nutrients.

Dr. C. Richard Skogley's research at the University of Rhode Island showed that when sod is harvested, most of the grass root system is left in the soil.

This IS a strip mine



Researchers found that sod fields contained an average difference of 1.9% more organic matter. Work by Skaradowski and Sullivan found that sod production fields increased in organic matter with time. Assuming that a 6-inch depth of soil on an acre weighs 1,000 tons, then this represents 19 tons per acre returned to soil. Based on a five-year study, it could be concluded that the turfgrass sod operation had added the equivalent of nearly four tons of organic matter to the soil each year.

Skogley, C.R. and B.B. Hesseltine. 1978. Soil Loss and Organic Matter Return in Sod Production. University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI .

Skaradowski, S. and W.M. Sullivan. 1995. The Effects of Commercial Sod Production on Soil Dynamics. American Society of Agronomy. Madison, WI. R.I. Agricultural Experiment Station #3186.

This IS NOT a strip mine



Brookmeade Sod Farm
Hanover County, Virginia

Lou and Ginger Brooking of Brookmeade' Sod Farm in Hanover County, Virginia have been harvesting turfgrass on the same farm for over forty years.

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Not your typical photo of grass . . . But rather a photo ON GRASS



Through the exploration of chlorophyll as a light-sensitive material, artists Heather Ackroyd and Dan Harvey produce photographic images in grass.

Using a 400w projector, light is cast through a negative onto a turfgrass canvas, just as you would with photographic paper, and *exposed* for extended periods of time during the growing process. The result is dark green areas where large amounts of light were able to concentrate and lighter green to slightly yellow areas where less and less amounts of light were able to penetrate thus reducing the amount of chlorophyll each blade of grass produces.

Ackroyd and Harvey discovered that by projecting a bright black-and-white negative image onto a patch of turfgrass as it grows (in an otherwise

dark room), they can use the natural photosensitive properties of the grass to reproduce photographs.

From a distance it looks like any other monochrome photograph, but up close, it looks like perfectly ordinary grass. Ackroyd and Harvey stumbled onto this technique after producing an installation that involved covering an indoor wall with living grass. A ladder was leaning against the wall, and the artists noticed that even after it was removed, a faint outline of the ladder remained on the grass. They set about experimenting with ways of enhancing this effect, and soon they were using a slide projector as an artificial light source for growing their unique photographs. A typical exposure time is just over a week, with the image projected for 12 hours a day.

Other samples of Ackroyd and Harvey's grass photography



Where in the world is
TPI represented?
EVERYWHERE!

The first in a on-going series that will feature photos and copy from TPI member websites.

Kazmierz, Poland

<http://www.grasslandfarms.pl/>

Polish representative
of a worldwide
organization of turf
producers



Grassland Farms Sp. z o.o. was founded in 1997 and is located in Kiaczyn near Kazmierz Wlkp, about 30 km from Pozan. Our main business is the sale of turfgrass grown in accordance with Canadian technology that has been tested for over 50 years and with the use of Canadian and American seed blends on an ever increasing farm area. We are the Polish representative of the biggest world organization of turfgrass producers, the TPI (Turfgrass Producers International).



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Oh, by the way . . .

Cont'd from Page 1

My whole field is grass. We do not eat grass, but it is a valuable part of our ecosystem. I would like to make you aware of the following trivia about the benefits of turf grasses:

- Generally, water runoff is decreased and percolation is increased. Source: Dr. John Stier, University of Wisconsin (Madison)
- Turf grasses trap an estimated 12 million tons of dust and dirt released annually into the atmosphere. Source: Dr. Thomas L. Watschke, Pennsylvania State University
- 37 billion pounds of carbon could be stored in U.S. lawn areas. Source: Cristina Milesi, NASA Ames Research Center
- 55 square feet of turf grass provides enough oxygen for one person for an entire day. Source: Dr. Thomas L. Watschke, Pennsylvania State University
- The front lawns on a block of eight average homes have the cooling effect of 70 tons of air conditioning. Source: Maryland Turfgrass Survey - 1996 An Economic Value Study
- On a hot summer day, lawns will be 30 degrees cooler than asphalt and 14 degrees cooler than bare soil. Source: North Carolina State University - Department of Crop Science 200 introduction

Now, a comment of my own: I think if you are so concerned about Chesapeake Bay, you should look to your own backyard (no pun intended):

- To reduce runoff from streets, buildings and parking lots.
- To reduce water use in municipalities by using treated water and not dumping it in local tributaries, thus destroying that ecosystem.
- When it rains more than an inch, take your lawn irrigation system off the timer.

And finally, maybe you could reduce usage of your car and therefore reduce the carbon released to the atmosphere, to help global warming.

Oh, by the way -- it took 39,000 gallons of water to produce that car and 1,850 gallons to refine one barrel of crude oil. (Source: Visitors Center, Glenn Canyon Dam)

My point is we all have a role and it can be done better by everyone without a lot of finger-pointing.

Fred Moore Jr.
Collins Wharf Sod Farm
Eden, Maryland USA



www.CollinsWharfSod.com

TurfSide-UP



Mow or Moo?

Looking for an energy efficient and environmentally friendly alternative to grass mowing and aeration?

Taj-Mahal in Agra, India. Photo: Mirdula D.



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A TIP OF THE HAT

to **Graff's Turf Farms** in honor of their 30th Anniversary.

It was back in 1979 when **Randy and Betsy Graff** started Graff's Turf Farms just north-west of Fort Morgan, Colorado, some 70 miles northeast of Denver.

Since then their turfgrass sod farm has grown from 60 acres to over 400 acres and is now co-owned by their son **James Graff** and long time employee **Marty Thiel**.

Graff's Turf Farms, Inc. Celebrates 30 Years



Randy and Betsy Graff have plenty to smile about as they look back on thirty years.



Marty Thiel (left) and **James Graff** (right) are the proud co-owners of Graff's Turf Farms and continue to carry on a tradition of unprecedented management and production practices while stressing quality, service and customer satisfaction.

Attention All TPI Supplier/Manufacturer Members

2008/09 TPI Member-Get-a-Member Campaign Ends June 30, 2009

TPI knows that current Supplier/Manufacturer members are the best source to help recruit new turf farm producer members who could benefit from all TPI has to offer. Plus every time you recruit a new member you strengthen TPI, provide a means to generate greater awareness of the turfgrass sod industry, increase educational and networking opportunities, and help advance the turfgrass sod industry worldwide.

Recruitment Rewards:

Whenever someone you recruit joins TPI, we will thank you with a \$20 Amazon* gift card!

Grand Prize Drawing:

For any supplier member company that recruits two or more members, they will automatically be entered into a Grand

Prize Drawing. The Grand Prize will be a complimentary full page (4-color) display ad to run in the September/October 2009 issue of *Turf News* magazine. The Grand Prize Drawing will be held at the 2009 Summer Convention & Field Days in East Lansing Michigan. You do not need to be present to win. Remember, the more members you recruit, the greater your chance of winning the grand prize!

Recruitment Recognition:

All recruiters will be recognized for their efforts in *Turf News* magazine, the Business Management newsletter, the TPI E-Newsletter and the TPI website at the conclusion of the membership campaign.

The 2008/09 TPI "Member-Get-a-Member" campaign ends June 30, 2009 so **act now!**



For more information contact Susan Hall, Membership & Marketing Manager at 847/649-5555 or e-mail shall@TurfGrassSod.org



Become a TPI Member

Click here for more info and an Application Form.

*Amazon is an online retailer of books, movies, music, games, computers, electronics, health & beauty, home & garden, toys, apparel, shoes and more. Visit their website at www.amazon.com.



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2009 TPI Summer CONVENTION & Field Days

East Lansing, Michigan

July 27-31

REGISTER NOW!

For more information and to register today:
www.TurfGrassSod.org
 and click on "Events"

2009 TPI Summer CONVENTION & Field Days
 East Lansing, Michigan July 27-31

Register now for special value package & early-bird pricing!

The path to **success**
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 The path to **recovery**

**Share
 Discuss
 Engage
 Learn**



2009 TPI Field Day
 Hancock Research Center
 Michigan State University

AGENDA

Monday, July 27

7:30 am - 10:00 am
 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Registration

Farm Tour

Be inspired and informed by Van Aken Sod & Tree Farm

5:00 pm - 7:00 pm
 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Registration

Welcome Reception & Golf Calcutta Auction

Network with industry's top agribusiness professionals

Tuesday, July 28

7:00 am - 12:00 pm
 7:30 am - 8:30 am
 8:30 am - 4:00 pm

Registration

Prayer Breakfast

The Lawn Institute Memorial Golf Tournament

A day of golf and networking providing crucial funding for the research that supports our industry's future

10:00 am - 4:00 pm
 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm
 6:00 pm - 10:00 pm

MSU Campus Tour

Registration

TPI Banquet

Wednesday, July 29

7:00 am - 6:00 pm
 8:00 am - 9:30 am

Registration

Women's Forum

Business topics for a woman's perspective -Amy J. Fouty, CSFM, Athletic Turf Manager

8:00 am - 9:30 am

Past Presidents' Breakfast

10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Annual Business Meeting

12:00 pm - 12:45 pm

Keynote Presentation

Compelling and informative keynote from an industry expert

12:45 pm - 2:45 pm

Roundtable Forum

A think tank atmosphere that yields information you need

4:30 pm - 8:00 pm

Hotel Exhibits with Dinner

Learn about advances and offerings that will elevate your business

Thursday, July 30

7:00 am - 1:00 pm
 8:00 am - 3:00 pm

Registration

Field Day - Hancock

Research Center

Hands-on, in-depth demonstrations from a wide variety of resources in one place - only at the TPI Summer Convention & Field Days

*Schedule is preliminary and subject to change. Visit www.TurfGrassSod.org for detailed schedule.



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Everyday Should Be Earth Day . . . and your **LAWN** knows it!



April 22nd was Earth Day. One solitary day set aside to increase everyone's awareness of our environment and serving as a means to heighten the public's consciousness about what is happening to the land, oceans, lakes, rivers and streams all around us.

Earth Day is set aside to promote the benefits derived from recycling,

using natural cleaning products, conserving our natural resources and education.

Volunteers across the country plant trees, work to prevent soil erosion, protect our water supplies and through numerous organizations commit their time and talents to conserve and protect our natural resources.

Perhaps you never gave it much thought, but your lawn contributes immeasurably to the collective efforts of Earth Day.

Each and everyday when turfgrass is growing it offers considerable benefits to our environment such as those listed below.

Cooling the Air

The front lawns on a block of eight average homes have the cooling effect of 70 tons of air conditioning.

Producing Oxygen

55 square feet of turfgrass provides enough oxygen for one person for an entire day.

Filtering the Air & Reducing Pollution

Turfgrasses trap an estimated 12 million tons of dust and dirt released annually into the atmosphere.

Recharging & Filtering Groundwater Supplies

One of the key mechanisms by which turfgrasses preserve water is their superior capability to provide water infiltration through the soil turfgrass ecosystem.

Reducing Storm Water Runoff

Turfgrasses preserve water by trapping and holding runoff with their higher root plant density.

Controlling Soil Erosion

Turfgrasses are relatively inexpensive, durable groundcovers that protect our valuable, nonrenewable soil resource from water and wind erosion.

Retaining and Sequestering Carbon

Lawn areas in the U.S. alone could store up to 37 billion pounds of carbon.

Restoring Soil Quality

An extremely important function of turfgrass is soil improvement through organic matter additions derived from the turnover of roots and other plant tissues.



When you add the community, human health and economic benefits that turfgrass has to offer it becomes very clear - - **when it comes to your lawn . . . everyday is Earth Day.**

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