

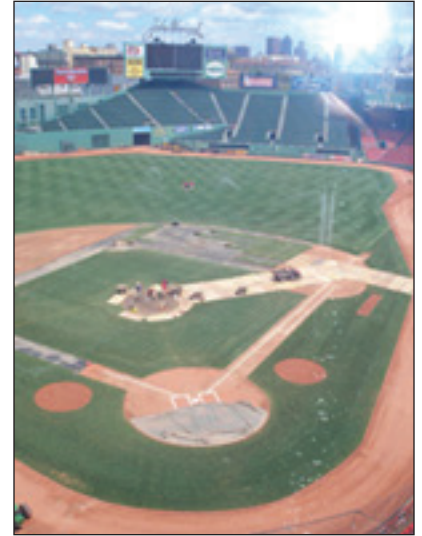
PGMS Celebrates A Successful Site Visit in Boston!

When it comes to a PGMS regional visitation program, trying to convey the multitude of learning experiences and networking value really does boil down to “you had to be there.” Still, here’s a birds eye view of the highlights of the highly successful July 22-23 trip to Boston.

Coordinated by John Doiron of Concord Hospital in New Hampshire, the Boston trip got underway in what you might call “championship” style as the 60-plus attendees boarded buses and headed to an exclusive insider’s tour of Fenway Park, home of the Boston Red Sox. And what a unique opportunity it was for the grounds managers as they were able to observe the field being converted from a field that hosted a world soccer event the night before back to its grandeur as a baseball legend.

While sitting in the press box, the group learned more about the park which was originally built in 1912 and watched as the reconstruction of the field was unfolding. Sod was being removed from the base paths (the sod was atop tarp to help protect the paths), the pitching mound was being re-built and divots in the outfield were being meticulously repaired. The grounds crew had three days to return the field to major league standards. As the group moved to sit in the new seats atop the “Green Monster”

they learned that the warning track is made of fine-ground red brick and that the field is mowed to 1 1/8”. They also received a fact-filled briefing on the history of both the ballclub and the stadium and why one seat located among the green seats in the bleacher of center field is painted red – 502 feet from home plate, it marks the longest home run ever hit in Fenway which was by Ted Williams on June 9, 1946.



It was a fantastic trip “around the bases” but the bus was waiting to take the visitation gang to Mount Auburn Cemetery, the first large-scale, landscape-design, open-to-the-public in the U.S. Since it’s founding in 1831 by the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, Mount Auburn has been maintained with the highest regard for horticultural excellence. Plant materials from around the world were introduced to the park even before the onset of the American public parks movement and the creation of botanical gardens.

The horticulture staff at the cemetery is comprised of 11 full-time, year-round workers and 32 seasonal workers to take care of the 175-acre property. Additionally, 11 full-time, part-time and seasonal employees work in Mount Auburn’s 9,600 sq. ft. greenhouse and help curate the horticultural collections.

The cemetery boasts nine distinct areas or attractions including the Asa Gray Garden that features four large Acer palmatum Japanese Maple trees and serves as a showcase for some of the 60,000 flowering annuals and Auburn Lake which is a picturesque water body first created by excavating a “bog Meadow” in the 1840s and that today is one of the more naturalistic landscape styles found in the park that is home to over 400 speckled salamanders. The Bigelow Chapel Lawn, a 1840s Gothic revival chapel area that features a Victorian-inspired garden, is also one of the distinct attractions.

Other featured areas include the Birch Garden, Consecration Dell, and Halcyon Lake. In addition to the lake itself, which was shaped to its circular outline in the 1850s, the dominant landscape elements for this area include the Mary Baker Eddy memorial, two swaths of manicured lawn reaching to the water’s edge and a diverse collection of some magnificent specimen trees. Willow Pond and the Washington Tower, from which visitors can see one of the most striking panoramic vistas of the Boston skyline, are also notable feature areas.



Another area of note is Mount Auburn's state-of-the-art recycling center which helps demonstrate Mount Auburn's commitment to sustainability. Some of their sustainable practices include they make their own soil from top dressing, fungal compost is used for fertilizing the grass and the soil is also created for use in potting plants at the greenhouse.



Lastly, composed leaves are ground up with woodchips are used to create mulch.

Before leaving Mount Auburn, a couple of quick collection summaries were given and include: Total Plants/Mass Plantings = 16,195; Total know taxa = 1,557; Botanical families represented = 105; Genera represented = 336; Total recorded trees = 4,980; 47 state champion trees. All of this adds up to create a very impressive and beautiful landscape!

From Mount Auburn, it was back on the bus for a return to PGMS headquarters at the hotel and a chance for everyone to relax in a comfortable networking reception on the lawn.

Early Friday morning, it was back on the bus for a trip to the Arnold Arboretum where attendees enjoyed a delightful breakfast followed by three-hours of extremely interesting and informative education sessions. The education sessions included "Invasive Plants in the Environment" presented by Steve Schneider of Arnold, "Sustainable Stones" presented by Gavin Johnson, "Green Roof Designs" by Mike Sardina from Brown Sardina Landscape and "Dealing with Difficult People" presented by Kevin O'Connor, MSW, MAOM.

During the invasive plants presentation, attendees were introduced to several handy tools that help in plant removal including one that includes using a .22 cartridge to inject "round up."

In the Sustainable Stone program, Mr. Johnson demonstrated exciting ways to find and use reclaimed and antique hardscape materials including cobblestones, paving bricks, curbing, building blocks, and more. These reclaimed materials help to provide a patina that cannot be duplicated.

As for the "Dealing with Difficult People" program, attendees spent time dissecting the difference in "conflict" and "hostility" to better understand how conflict tends to be "issues related" while hostility leans toward "relationship related." Understanding that the core need of people is to be understood will help grounds managers better resolve issues. Remember: anger is one letter short of danger.



Following the classes it was back outside for a chicken bbq lunch and then a three hour trek through the oldest public arboretum in North America and one of the world's leading centers for the study of plants. Arnold Arboretum was founded in 1872 and was planned and designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and the arboretum's first director, Charles Sprague Sargent. In 1882 a creative agreement was forged between the City of Boston and Harvard College. Under the terms of a 1,000-year lease, the Arboretum became part of the Boston park system. The City provides security and infrastructure care, while Harvard manages the landscape, research and education.



The Arboretum is one of the largest and best documented woody plant collections in the world. Amid Olmsted's naturalistic design of meandering roadways and scenic vistas lies Sargent's scientifically arranged collection of over 15,000 living plants representing over 4,500 different kinds of trees, shrubs and vines. Plants are grouped by family for easy comparison and arranged in a botanical sequence along the main roadway. Each plant is labeled with its scientific and common name, country of origin, and an accession number that links the plant to an extensive database.

Special destinations in the Arboretum include the Larz Anderson Bonsai Collection, the Leventritt Shrub & Vine Garden, the Bradley Rosaceous Collection, the Lilac Collection, Hemlock Hill and the Explorers Garden where a warm microclimate makes the area a great place to test the cold tolerance of newly discovered plants.

In all, it was another great PGMS regional visitation program. For those who missed it, we hope you'll plan to be a part of the 2011 visitations which are coming together now. The spring session will be coordinated by the Ozark Branch of PGMS and will head to Springfield, MO, April 7-8. Hope to see you there!