

# REMEDIATION & RESTORATION

By W. Andrews Jenkins, P.G., Duffield Associates, Inc.

## Public park and commercial venture join forces

The new Hockessin Athletic Center (HAC) is located in the perfect location — on 11 acres nestled within the boundaries of the recently completed 38-acre Tweed's Park. The combined health club and public park is successful from social, economic, and environmental viewpoints — key elements of sustainable green design. The value of these properties to the community can be attributed to the public/private collaboration in the land planning process.

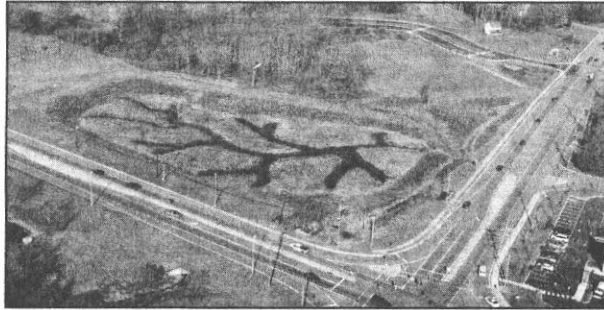
Imagine building a public park around a landlocked parcel with rundown buildings and open spaces covered with scrap metal, junk automobiles, failed septic systems, environmentally impacted soils, and storage tanks filled with waste oil.

Conversely, imagine developing a new state-of-the-art health club surrounded by traditional stormwater basins constructed to reduce highway flooding.

The timing was fortunate. HAC was searching for land to construct a new club and, at the same time, Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) was commencing the design of Tweeds Park. By developing an athletic club on this 11 acre parcel, both entities had a win win opportunity. With assistance from Duffield Associates, DelDOT and HAC created interdependent yet mutually beneficial land planning designs.

The Delaware Brownfields Program certified the HAC site as a "Brownfield" qualifying the developers for State funding and tax incentives to investigate and cleanup the site. Cleaning up the HAC parcel reduced the potential environmental impact to groundwater and streams. Stormwater runoff from the HAC property and the park is captured in newly created wetlands and bioretention basins that remove sediment and reduce concentrations of unwanted nutrients and oils from nearby highways and residential communities. A two-story parking deck was constructed on the HAC property for joint use by health club and park patrons. This parking deck reduces the impervious "foot print" and provides more green space within the park.

As we move through the spring months, families line



*Tweed's Park*

the sloped grounds surrounding one of the three soccer fields in the park. The grassy field is inside a secondary stormwater

system that would flood only if the much larger adjoining wetland basin were to fill. The newly constructed wetlands

have filled in with native trees and grasses. Subtle waterways meander through the grasses and other vegetation creating a wetland habit. The sports events and wildlife are easily observed from the newly constructed jogging trails and pedestrian bridges.

The "greening" of this corner of Delaware was beneficial to many interested parties including the White Clay Watershed Association, Hockessin Historical Society, and the community as a whole. Environmental hurdles to the HAC developers were made less daunting by financial incentives from Dela-

ware's Brownfield Program and the Delaware Economic Development Office. Tweed's Park was constructed as a design build effort by Duffield Associates, thereby accelerating the planning and implementation of this complex regulatory driven project. Next time you are passing through, stop and stretch your legs. Maybe there will be a soccer game to watch down in one of the specially designed stormwater management areas.

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