
LANDSCAPE
AND
CYCLOCROSS

INTRODUCTION

The sport's growth and popularity is conflicting with traditional park and open space perceptions and uses. We seek to proactively deliver information that can develop long term relationships between the sport and its landscape.

Preface

"We are very aware of the difficulties that cyclocross race directors are encountering when talking with their parks departments across the United States, and we look forward to creating a healthy discussion about cyclocross. Communication between race directors, parks-and-rec managers, arborists and landscapers are critical to the health of this quickly growing sport, and USA Cycling endeavors to be a resource for all of these groups. As cyclists and outdoor enthusiasts, the love of nature and respect for our parks is important to all of us." Micah Rice, USA Cycling

About the Author

Joshua Burgel is a Registered Landscape Architect in Massachusetts with over fifteen years working with Cities to design their landscapes and redevelop their parks. More recently Mr. Burgel has consulted with Providence Cyclo Cross to coordinate their course with historic Roger Williams Park constraints and plans. Mr. Burgel races cyclo cross at a masters level and has two cub juniors who like to test ride new courses. Please contact him at joshua.burgel.cx@gmail.com.

About the Photographs

Much of cyclo cross is about the image - in fact that is what much of this guide is about too - and it wouldn't be possible without the tireless work of fantastic photographers who's images are featured herein. Thank you to all who have contributed. Including but not limited to: John Kavouris, Katie Busic, Dot Wong, Kat Armour, Sean Curran, Jeffrey Friedl, Capevelo.com, Wil Matthews, Russ Campbell, Jennifer Harvey, Jeff Dieffenbach, MTSNE.com, Takingplaceinthetrees.com

Purpose

Provide guidance to race directors or other promoters to better navigate concerns regarding cyclo cross event's impacts on the landscape-especially public spaces. Provide understanding and factual resources to host agencies and decision makers. Event examples describe both issues and solutions.

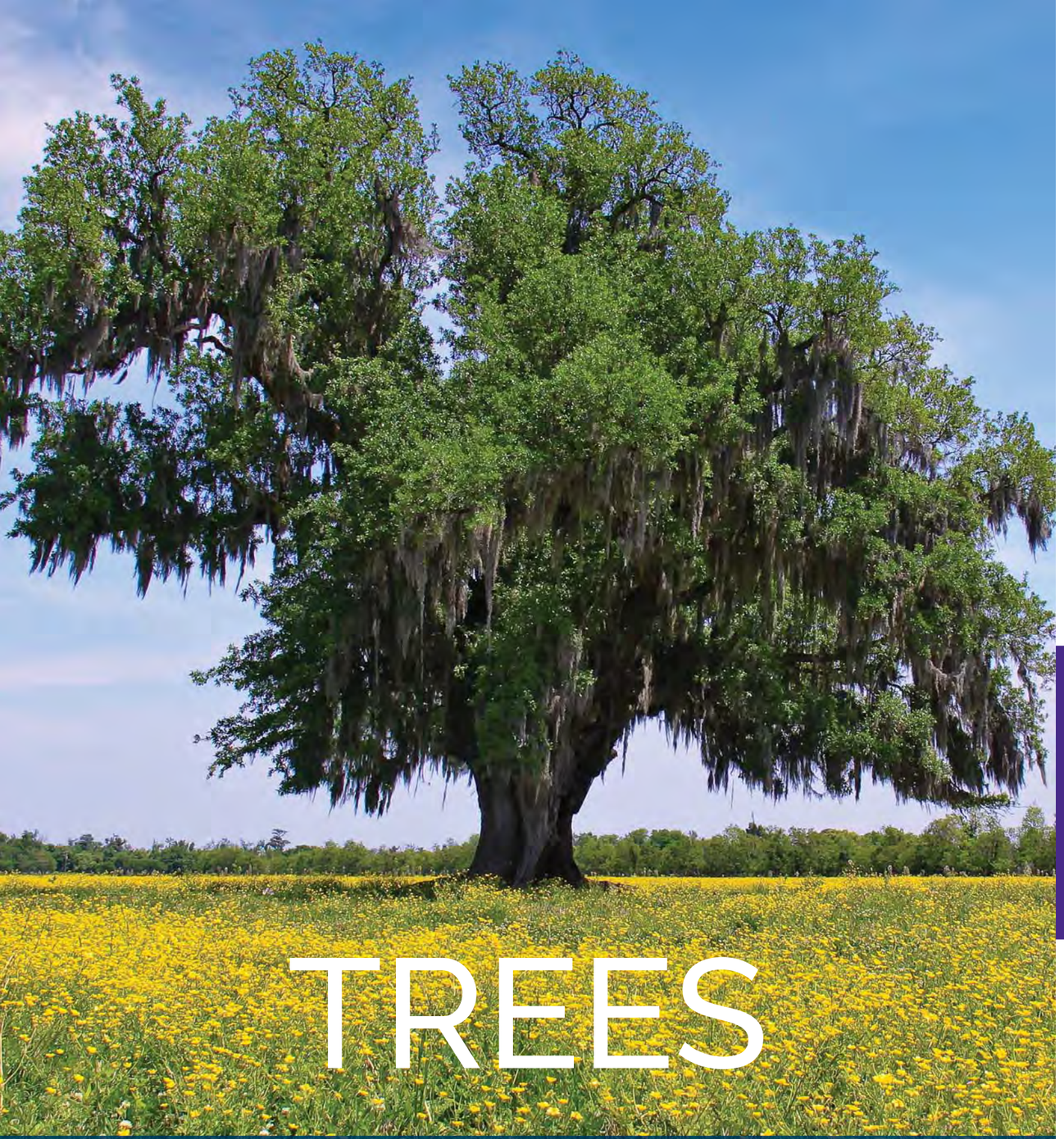
Reason

Landscapes are impacted by cyclo cross events. These impacts can cause events to fund expensive site restoration efforts, to not be permitted for future years, or as has happened recently, to be canceled or postponed during the event itself. This guide pre-supposes that event planners intend to be good stewards for the park and promoters of the sport.

Landscape Impacts

We study three primary topics:

* Trees
* Turf Grass
* Community



TREES

Epic cyclo cross battles are fought in and around trees. Without them, the sport is missing an important sentinel, a turning post, a finish line. Yet racing and riding on tree roots can damage these long-term occupants. This guide aims to balance protection and participation.

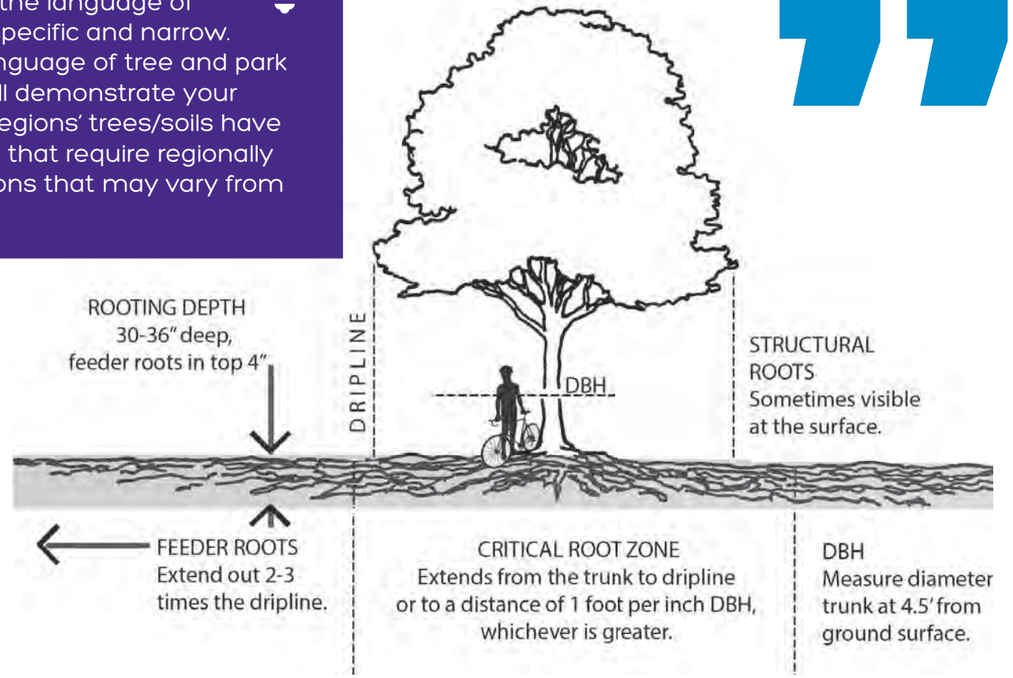
Talking "Tree"

Arborist: Licensed tree professional who can determine tree health, quality, longevity, damages, and repairs.

CRZ: Critical Rooting Zone (CRZ) surrounding trees. The CRZ is typically defined as the area beneath the canopy of the tree extending from trunk to leaf tips. CRZ is simply calculated by converting the trunk diameter in inches to feet and measuring that distance from the trunk. (10 inch diameter trunk means the CRZ is 10' from trunk). Feeder roots often extend further than the CRZ, so care should be taken outside the canopy edge as well.

Learn the Local Lingo

Like a bike race, the language of arboriculture is specific and narrow. Speaking the language of tree and park professionals will demonstrate your respect. Also, a regions' trees/soils have growth patterns that require regionally specific regulations that may vary from this guide.



Talking "Tree"

Soil compaction: High compressive zones, such as flyover bases, stairs, or planks/barriers, will compact soil in one event. Repeated events over time will cause compaction. Soil compaction around tree roots is often not immediatley visible and depends highly on soil fertility, texture, and moisture. Compaction can be measured from 0-6" below grade.

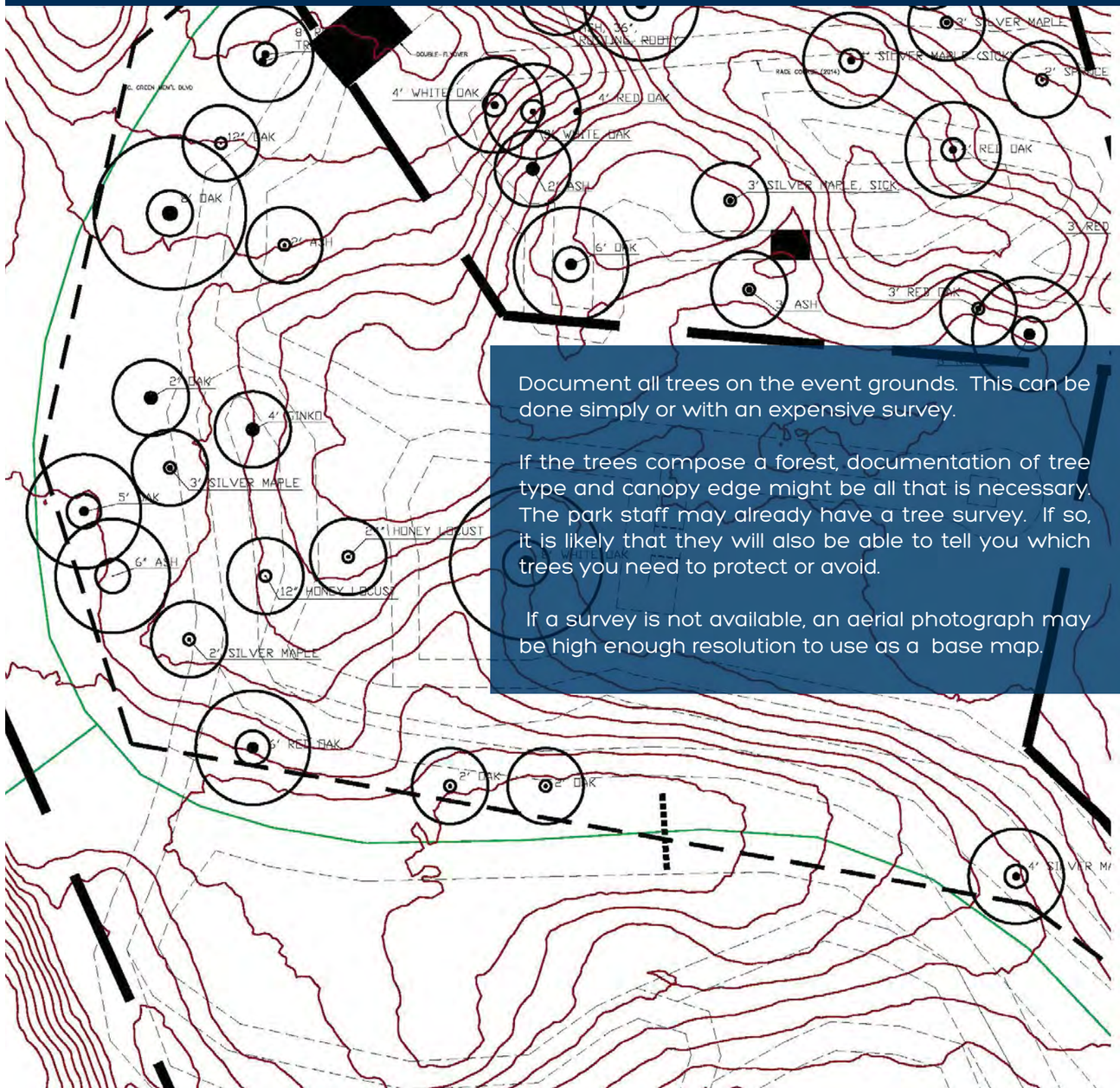
Structural Roots: Tough, larger diameter roots (1/2") that support tree from tipping over and are the conduit for moisture and nutrients from the feeder roots.

Tree limbs or trunk: The upper portions of a tree. Rarely do cx events impact the visible portions of trees, however, attaching anything to a tree's trunk or limbs can accidentally damage the tree - exposing it to disease and other issues. Cutting tree limbs will obviously disfigure the tree and should be avoided. If necessary, cutting should only be done with direct permission and supervision by park personnel.

Feeder Roots: Delicate, fine fibrous roots within the top layer (4-6") of soil. These roots are the major mechanism for nutrient and water uptake for use by the rest of the tree.

Delicate Root Zone trees: Several tree species have delicate CRZ's to which any impact can damage the tree. These species include: beech, birch, aspen, sassafrass and any ornamental tree such as dogwood, crabapple, etc.

TREE DOCUMENTATION



Document all trees on the event grounds. This can be done simply or with an expensive survey.

If the trees compose a forest, documentation of tree type and canopy edge might be all that is necessary. The park staff may already have a tree survey. If so, it is likely that they will also be able to tell you which trees you need to protect or avoid.

If a survey is not available, an aerial photograph may be high enough resolution to use as a base map.

Know Your Trees

Many urban parks were built over 100 years ago by now famous or celebrated designers. Trees planted then are now revered specimens that people care deeply for.

There are several special trees to note: Specimen, Champion, and Heritage trees.

Champion Trees, like champion cyclists, are known throughout the country and are cited as the best examples of their species.

A large White Oak dominates the Temple to Music Lawn. This prominence is a clear indication that the tree should be fully protected.

AVOIDANCE

DO NOT CUT, DO NOT ENTER

The best policy is to stay away from trees at all costs with the race course, spectator zones, and any other aspect of the event. For the special trees documented, protection is prudent even if your race course does not enter the CRZ.

If your event damages a special tree, be aware that no amount of repair will be able to fix the potential political fallout. Never cut a tree, its limbs, or its roots.

Follow the Law!

Check the City's tree ordinance and follow it even if the park does not ask you to. If you do need to impact a tree, obtain a permit from the Tree Warden or City Forester.

Note that tree ordinances are written for developers, not race events, so look for tree ordinances carefully. See the next page for an example.

City of Portland

Portland Parks & Recreation Urban Forestry

Title 11, Trees Fee Schedule FY16-17

NON-DEVELOPMENT PERMIT FEES		
Street Trees		
Tree Removal Application	$	35.00
Tree Pruning Application		no charge
Tree Planting Application		no charge
Fee in Lieu of Planting and Establishment (per inch)	$	300.00
Permit Appeal	$	100.00
Attaching Permanent Objects Application	$	264.00
Ornamental Lighting		
Application Fee	$	35.00
1-10 trees, Additional Fee		no charge
11-50 trees, Additional Fee	$	45.00
51-100 trees, Additional Fee	$	75.00
101-200 trees, Additional Fee	$	100.00
201-500 trees, Additional Fee	$	175.00
>500 trees, Additional Fee	$	250.00
City and Private Property Trees		
Tree Removal Application	$	35.00
Tree Pruning Application (c,p, v zones)		no charge
Fee in Lieu of Planting and Establishment (per inch)	$	300.00
Permit Appeal	$	100.00
PROGRAMMATIC PERMIT FEES		
Programmatic Permit Application	$	5,500.00
ENFORCEMENT FEES AND PENALTIES		
Tree Permit Violation Review	$	250.00
Administrative Review	$	110.00
Enforcement Penalty	$	250.00
Civil Penalty	$	1,000.00
Restoration Fee, Damaged Tree (per inch) city, street	$	150.00
Restoration Fees, Tree Removal (per inch) city, street	$	300.00
Nuisance Abatement Charges	Cost to remove the nuisance	
Nuisance Abatement Administrative Charge	40% of abatement cost (min. $257)	

PROTECTION & MITIGATION

If your course must come close to, or enter the CRZ, you must protect it or potentially be required to repair. Here are some options, listed from best / simplest to worst.

Protection Options

* Snow fencing with temporary wooden or event stakes can be used to guide the course and keep spectators out of a CRZ.

* Double Ribbon, with stakes at 10' on center on each side of the race course is often enough to protect, unless it is very windy. A course monitor can provide backup at especially important locations.

* Hard or armored ground, can be provided with plywood decking on 2x4 studs. This should be removed immediately after use. Caution, plywood is slippery and needs traction material. Repair is not likely required.

* Soft ground protection, has been used effectively to prevent erosive forces on some tree root areas (see also Turf). This can consist of artificial turf with sand, layers of erosion control matting, or mulch. Repair is probable. If mulch is used, station a volunteer to rake it into place between layers to prevent ruts.

* Course design, can help to minimize impact by either limiting turning/braking or decreasing the length of the course that is within the CRZ. No more than 1/2 of the CRZ should be considered to be "protected" by this method. Repair is highly likely and may be costly.

Idea

Partner with the local arbor organization to help monitor these trees during the event - they can educate the public, both furthering their mission and providing very good protection

REPAIR

If the event has damaged the CRZ it may be necessary to attempt to repair it. Your event may not be allowed to return to the venue if repairs are required.

Repair Options

These are steps that need to be taken with the supervision of a certified arborist (arborist fees add up quickly) and with the land owner's written permission. Also, the repair is usually a multi-stepped and monitored approach.

* Aeration and fertilization

* Watering and pesticide application (if a tree is stressed due to damage, it can be prone to attack by pests such as insects, fungi, or mold. Reducing stress levels by providing water during drought and protecting against invaders can help a tree Recover from cx impact)

* Vertical mulching

* Air spading

* Replanting (if your event damages a tree so badly that it dies or is permanently disfigured, replanting may be the only option. Replanting a champion tree is impossible, and the cost to plant a large stature tree is on the order of $10,000.

Paying a Fine

If the arborist determines your event has caused mortal damage, a fine may be assessed. Check the city's tree ordinance to determine.

* Austin, TX - $2,000 tree maximum
* Denver, CO - Assessed by City Forester
* Boston, MA - replacement cost x3 ($2,700 +/-)
* New York City, NY - $1,000-$15,000
* Portland, OR - $1,000/Day/Tree

TURF

Turf health and management is critical to the success of a cyclocross event and imperative when considering a long term investment. Over years of events, the soil can become compacted, the root zone can become weak, and the turf will eventually fail. Planning, preparation, coordination, in-event adjustments and protection, and a comprehensive repair plan can position you for successful outcomes year after year. Riding bicycles on turf can cause damage to the turf regardless of tire pressure or width.

Talking "Turf"

Roots: : Fibrous root system of turf grass functions to absorb water, take in nutrients, anchor the leaf, and spread new plants. Root hairs are the primary site for root functionality and grow through soil pores - damaging the soils around roots/ root hairs highly degrades the turf's ability to function.

Leaf: The green portion of turf grass that we see. The leaf provides energy to the turf system through photosynthesis.

Soil: Soils are critical to turf's ability to survive. Soils vary widely from region to region and location to location. The soil texture is the mix of sand, silt, and clay components. Typically a "sandy" to "sandy loam" texture root zone allows for maximum rooting. Organic matter within the soil is critical for providing turf with nutrients. Voids between soil particles are pores. Sandy soils are more likely to contain a better pore structure.

Subsoil: Below the root zone, typically about 6-8" below the surface, subsoils will exist. This material is low grade, low nutrient, and does not support growth. If subsoil mixes into soil, turf will not grow.

Compaction: Pore spaces between soil particles are reduced or eliminated. Traffic (foot, tire, etc.) and poor cultural practice causes compaction. Compaction is measured with a penetrometer. Compacted soils do not allow root growth nor water drainage - both lead to turf degradation.

Talking "Turf"

Minor Impact: Tearing the leaves, keeping roots intact [a very close mowing].

Medium Impact: Tearing or compacting the roots and removing the leaves [the brown snake].

Major Impact: Removing or compacting the root zone and compacting the soil [signified by a turf that is very hard, thin, and often full of weeds, think of the comb-over].

Replacement Required: Removing the soil and exposing the subsoil [brown or dark "topsoil" or "loam" is replaced by sandy/clayey/ silty/etc].

PRIORITIES

It is important to know which areas of turf are highest and lowest priority to the owner and where courses can be located for best effect. Questions that can be asked include:

* Are there any important events that require nice looking / healthy turf? (weddings, concerts, other sporting events like croquet) or events that will impact repairs?
* When do these events take place?
* Can the race course be seen from important areas?
* Is there someone on staff who can help with turf maintenance and

TURF DOCUMENTATION

1. Photograph the entire event space, both overall perspective and close up views of the ground

2. Sample existing soils within areas that are likely to be impacted by obtaining compaction measurements* and/or standard samples.

3. Send test samples to horticultural experts such as your local Agricultural Extension Service for soil fertility and texture classification. Request recommendations for soil amendments for high use lawn and, if your course is in treed areas, for trees.

4. Determine quality of existing turf as follows:
   * Healthy: lush, thick, and well maintained
   * Unhealthy: thin, weedy, patchy

AVOIDANCE

Understand the other uses of the site and plan the course in a way that is not visible or does not conflict with the other uses.

Where possible route the course on slopes away from other uses or on locations that do not impact the overall image of the park

Locate higher impact uses in locations that are easily repaired and protected from other uses.

PROTECTION & MITIGATION

It is critical to both know the impact your event will have on the facility and to be up-front with the owner. For instance, if there is another "image conscious" event scheduled within a few weeks after your event, notify the owner that there is a potential conflict and have a plan ready for them to approve.

Preparation Methods

Early preparation (as in months or even years in the care of VCI or national level events) will help you avoid potential conflicts. Here are a few pre-event mitigation and protection methods that will help avoid costly repurcussions:

Pre-Mitigation

Early Mitigation (9 months – 30 days before race)

* Plan - on paper plan showing all aspects of the event.
* Plan B - rain or weather event planning
* Turf Preparation - verify turf has been watered + fertilized in the months leading up to the event
* Contracts
  * Owner
  * Landscaper

Pre-Race Mitigation (30 days – 5 days)

* Water
* Mow and blow
* Purchase protection materials
* Prepare for the weather

Race Protection

Course Setup

Plan the course to minimize visual impacts, plan ahead for weather events and prepare to make minor adjustments mid-event to minimize turf damage and cost of follow-up repairs by:

* Cover high visibility / hard to repair / "#1" park view turf
* Locate hard braking, off-cambers, and other high friction features out of primary park views
* Consolidate spectator crossings in paved locations or provide hardened or temporarily mulched surfaces at pinch points.

* Prepare for weather conditions. If hot/dry bring in water for the turf, if wet/rainy hardwood mulch and a drying agent can improve conditions quickly. Mixing soils when wet (as bikes do) destroys soil structure.

Venue Preparation

Planning vendor, team, beer tent, parking, and other spectator/racer amenities in consideration of the turf can greatly minimize turf impacts. For instance, if wet weather is forecast, move all vendors into place prior to the weather event or purchase a truck full of plywood to install temporary roadways over the turf. In addition, a truck full of hardwood chips, will stabilize spectator areas from foot traffic turning turf to bog.

Mid Race Adjustments

Spectator and Parking Areas

* Course - prepare volunteers to spread mulch, tack down slope netting, and to potentially re-route the course as it deteriorates.
* Spectator - assign one volunteer to be vigilant to turf conditions around all spectator zones - making sure that soft turf areas are protected and the crossings and other gathering zones can either be relocated or protected with a supply of wood chips.
* Vendor - Require that vendor vehicles remain off-site or in-place for the duration of the event and that if they observe turf damage to report it to the event director.
* Parking - Monitor parking for wet zones and route traffic around/away from areas where turf will become severely damaged by cars. Have a backup location for parking.

Post Race
(Night of or next morning of the race)

* Course cleanup
* Garbage removal
* Assessment with Contractor(s)

REPAIR

Ok, so you had an awesome race, everyone showed up, it rained, hard, and then snowed, and you have images of mud faced Sven Nys hoisting a beer stein on the front page of VeloNews.

But on Monday you have a disgruntled owner, threatening to take your damage deposit, demanding repairs, and cancelling the contract you just signed with UCI for the next five years. What now?

Like any disaster, you need a damage assessment to plan the repair. Typically it is most efficient to walk the event site with the owner, your landscaper and if redesign or political capital is required, a landscape architect.

Turf Impact

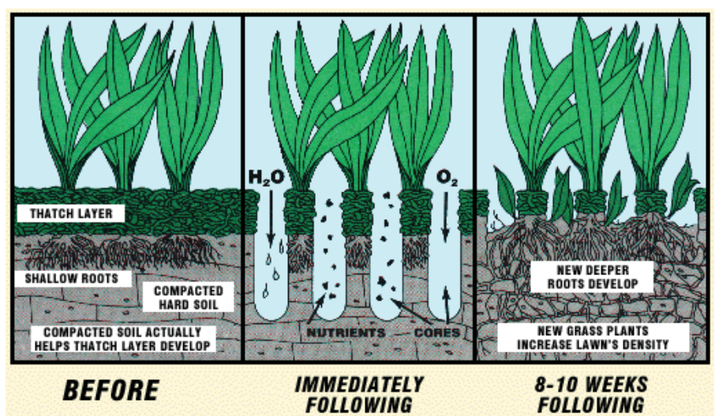
Ranking the turf impact can be evaluated with a common sense set of criteria:

* Minor Impact: Tearing the leaves, keeping roots intact.
  [a very close mowing, brown snake]

* Medium Impact: Tearing or compacting the roots and removing the leaves.
  [the brown snake with soil exposed]

* Major Impact: Removing or compacting the root zone and compacting the soil.
  [signified by a turf that is very hard, thin, and often full of weeds]

* Replacement Required: Removing the soil and exposing the subsoil.
  [brown or dark "topsoil" or "loam" is replaced by sandy/clayey/silty/etc]



Turf Impacts

Design Feature	Minor Impact	Medium Impact	Major Impact	Replacement Required
Off cambers, downhills, chicanes/ turns	Light Rake and water	Heavy rake, overseed or slice seed.	Aerate compression zones, rake, hydroseed, monitor and protect. Downhills require erosion control matting	If wet, braking zone of downhills and hard off cambers may require full replacement. Erosion control matting required.
Climbs / Runups	N/A	If wet: rake, seed, otherwise N/A	Power rake, topsoil addition, erosion control matting, protect.	Soil reinforcement (fibers), hydroseed with tackifier, erosion contol matting. Protect.
Barriers Turf, generally flat, if slope or wet, additional impact.	N/A	N/A	Aerate, power rake, seed, protect	If rainy, replace topsoil and hydroseed/sod, protect
Fly Overs Turf with armoring at the base	N/A	Runout/approach Power rake, hydroseed, protect	Replace topsoil decompact subsoil, and hydroseed/sod small area protection	Replace topsoil decompact subsoil, and hydroseed/sod small area protection
Pit Turf	If wet, light rake	Light rake. If wet, aerate, light topsoil, seed	N/A	N/A
Wash Down Preferred location on gravel or pavement. If turf, consider building walkways	N/A Only asphalt or gravel areas will not be impacted very much - consider protecting drains w/ silt sacks	If runoff not controlled, repair with topsoil, seed, erosion control matting	After moisture levels return to normal, power rake, add topsoil, hydroseed and protect.	If no root zone remains, rototill topsoil or add 1-2 inches compost and rototill, hydroseed, protect.
Spectators: Generally foot traffic no worse than any other event. If long duration or wet, these apply	Light Rake and overseed primary wear zones	Aerate, rake, overseed. Highly concentrated areas should be double aerated and power raked	After moisture levels return to normal, power rake, add topsoil, hydroseed and protect.	If no root zone remains, rototill topsoil or add 1-2 inches compost and rototill, hydroseed, protect.
Tents + Media Team and Vendor	Ruts may need filling / aerating and seeding	Same as spectators	Same as spectators	Same as spectators
Parking: on turf will damage it.	Minor turf bending, if parking is allowed on turf, the owner likely accepts the risk	If wet prior to the event, minor rutting needs to be repaired with raking, topsoil and seed.	If very wet, consider relocating parking during event. Large areas may need major repair with heavy equipment.	Hope your sister-in-law owns a landscaping business!

Repair Examples

The following images illustrate various turf repairs for common cyclo cross event impacts.

1.

New loam added, seeded, and protected with jute. Turf is re-establishing.

Course area power-raked and re-seeded. Mostly established turf. Minor visible erosion.

Turf repair washed out subsequent to installation - controlling surface runoff is a part of protecting your investment.

2.

3.

1. Slope protection with geo-jute, after loam and seed. This area had no topsoil prior to repair.

2. Slope protection with geo-jute, after raking and seed. This area had no turf prior to repair. Consider jute products that biodegrade quickly or are a dark color that will blend into the slope in order to be less visible while the turf is growing in.

3. Aerated post race, but not protected from foot traffic. Seeds have germinated in aeration holes. Bare patches will allow weed proliferation.

COMMUNITY

The decision makers on a permit are influenced by their staff, neighborhood input, park user comments, and political pressure. The social and political repercussions of an event can have lasting effects on the community that can jeopardize future events for years throughout the country. Sometimes it only takes one complaint to the right person at the right time, or the right tweet or email post to incite a backlash. Because the event will leave a visual mark on the ground, easily photographed and published, the image tells the negative story convincingly. Skillfully negotiating political issues of the landscape is critical to your event and the sport in general.

Talking "Community"

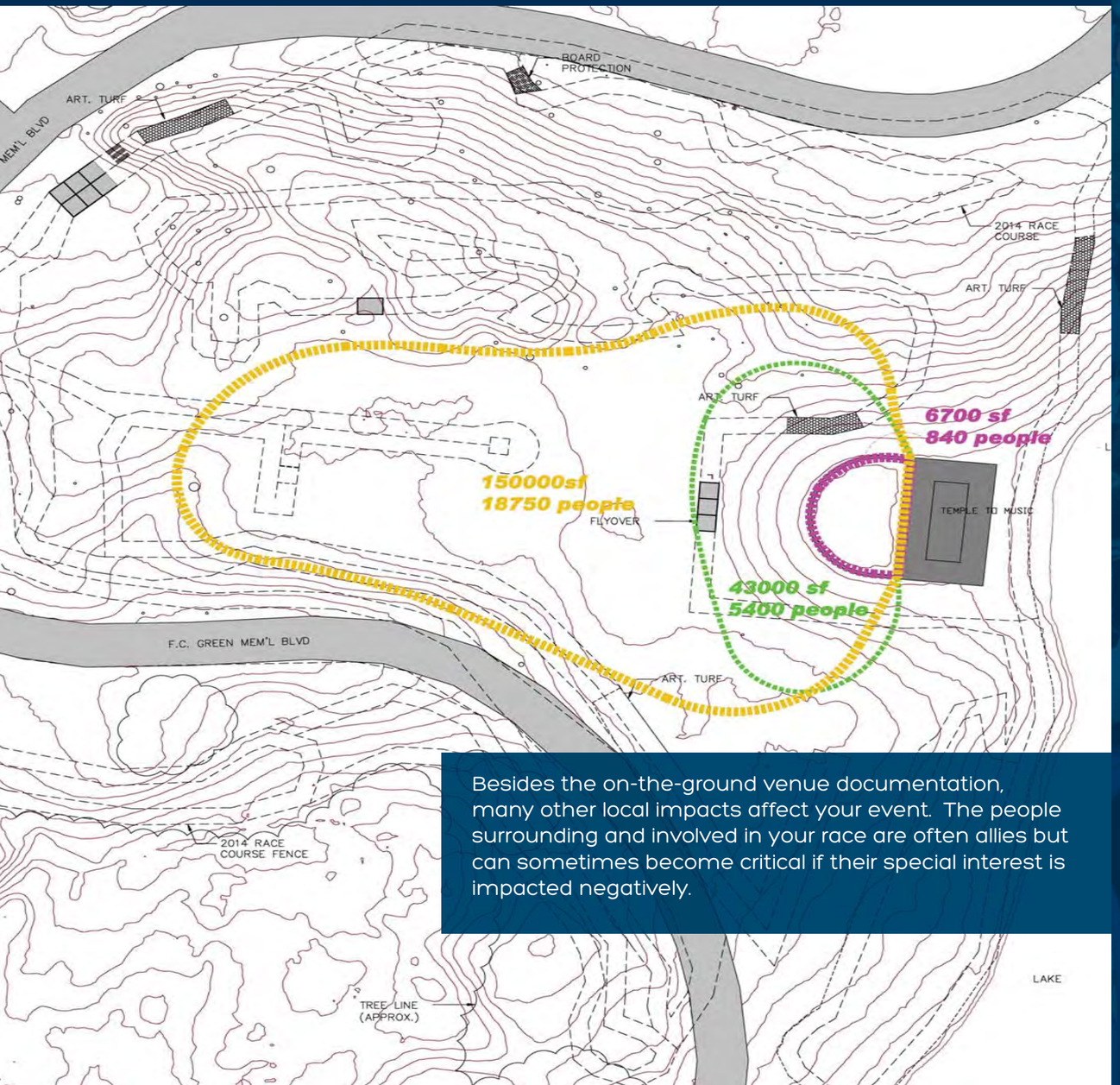
Process: Talking, publicizing, seeking other opinions. A robust process can lead to enduring events.

Community: Everyone involved in the race, but at the event and those effected by the event.

Superintendent: The person who runs the park, and all the other parks. Usually motivated by politicians, precedent, and budgets.

Electeds: The politicians who are elected to represent the constituents, ie community members. Major backlash if you forget to speak with them.

COMMUNITY DOCUMENTATION



Besides the on-the-ground venue documentation, many other local impacts affect your event. The people surrounding and involved in your race are often allies but can sometimes become critical if their special interest is impacted negatively.

Documenting Groups

It is important to document the various groups that need to be coordinated and brought into the event if possible. These groups can include:

* Politicians, appointed cabinet members (Park Superintendent, City Public Relations, etc) and staff (groundskeepers, police, emergency services)

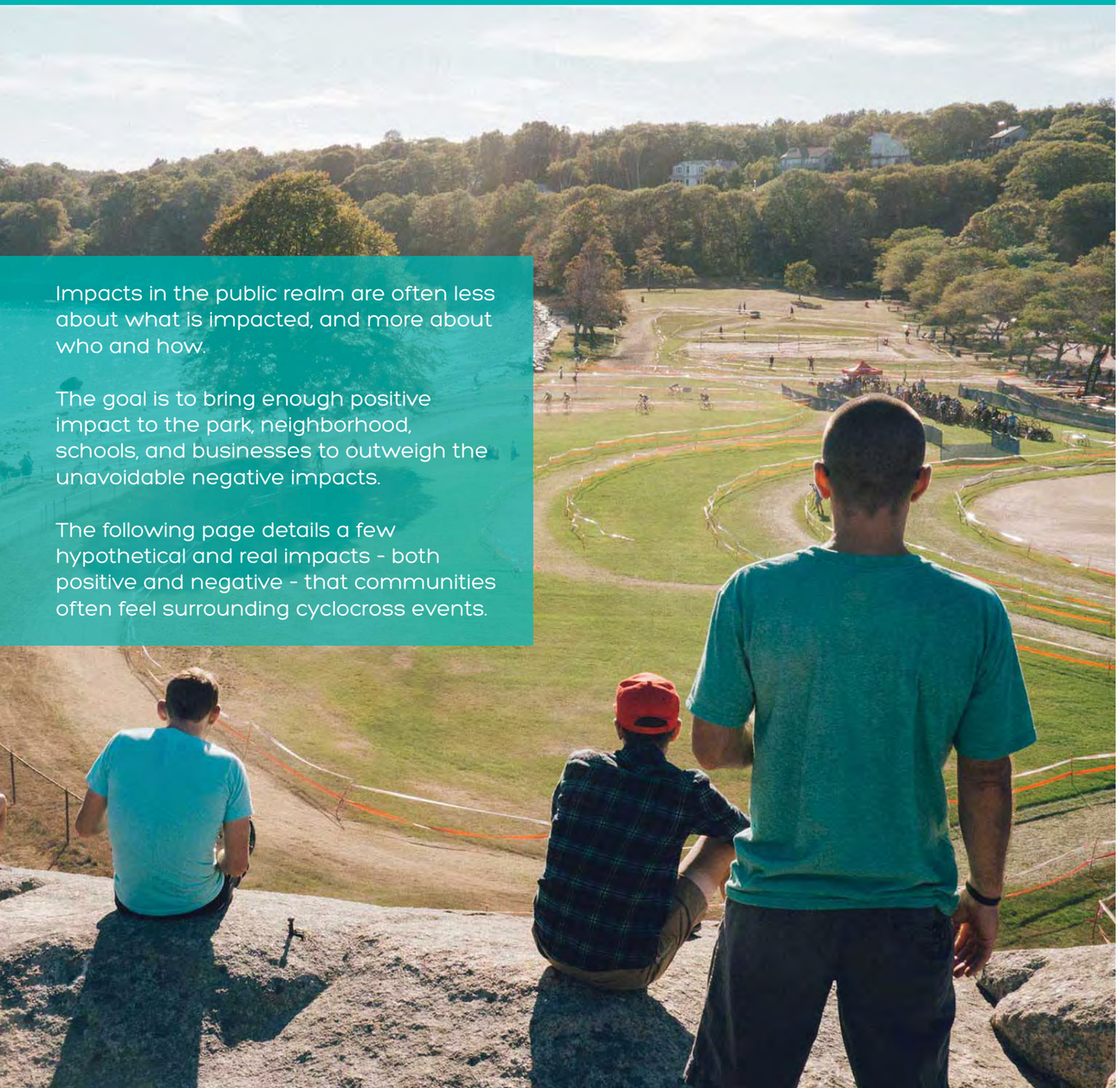
* Adjacent neighbors who will be impacted by parking, racers and traffic

* Park visitors such as dog walkers, children, hikers, etc.

* Other simultaneous park event attendees (Roger Williams Park Zoo hosts a pumpkin lighting event, which draws 10,000 visitors, the same evening as Divine Providence)

* Special Interests such as
  - Birders
  - Heritage Tree Preservationists
  - Historic Resource Preservationists

IMPACTS



Impacts in the public realm are often less about what is impacted, and more about who and how.

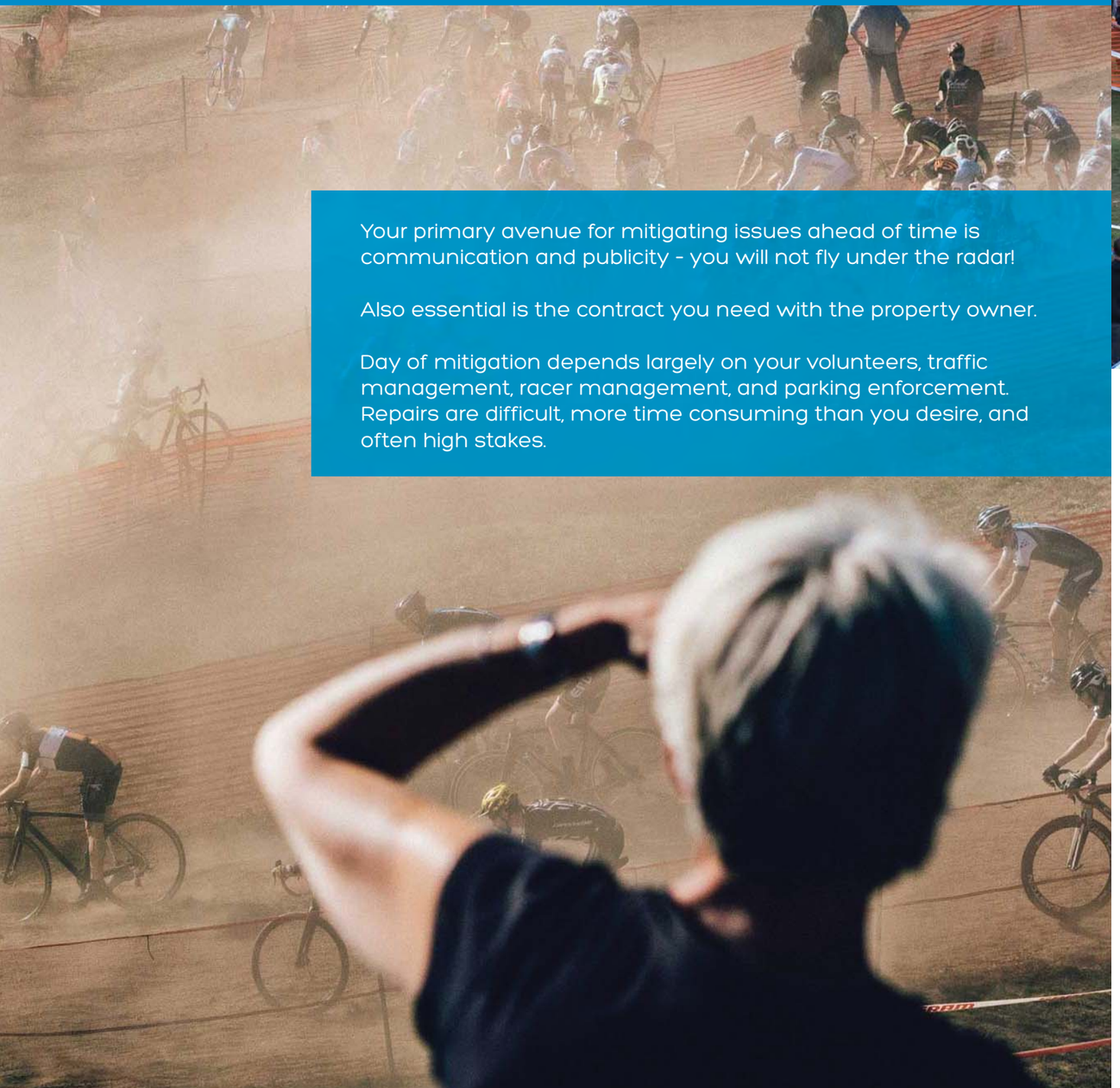
The goal is to bring enough positive impact to the park, neighborhood, schools, and businesses to outweigh the unavoidable negative impacts.

The following page details a few hypothetical and real impacts - both positive and negative - that communities often feel surrounding cyclocross events.

Impacts and Outcomes

Impact	Positive Outcome	Negative Outcome
Park	In better condition than started, healthier turf, stronger trees, surplus to the park's budget.	Parks staff needs to work overtime and use additional resources to repair the damages.
Park User	Enjoys the spectacle, participates with vendors, is welcomed to try the sport.	Is inconvenienced, excluded from the site, unable to walk a dog or visit a playground, unable to conduct their event as anticipated.
Traffic & Parking	Increases, but flows smoothly/ safely. Drivers know where to park/ navigate to destinations. Volunteers are friendly and animated, leaving a positive impression to passersby.	Traffic jams due to volume and additional vehicle trips caused by unclear directions or insufficient parking. Overflow plans fail. Neighborhoods faced with racer/spectator parking.
Neighborhood	Neighborhood members participate in an inclusive/problem solving forum. From this, volunteers and converts to the sport may be made. Some outspoken neighborhood leaders positively respond.	Race day, the neighbor wakes up with here bikers everywhere, trashing the park and leaving a negative impression. The neighbor phones the press, police and councilman. Permit revoked.
Tourism	Racers are eager/excited to come from distance, stay overnight, enjoy meals out, and bring families/friends. The City is the destination and race is an excuse. Big dollars are dropped throughout the city.	Your event is full, the course is spectacular, but isolated and unconnected to the City. Everyone drives, parks, races, then leaves. No families. Race fees stay with the promoter.
Social Media	Instagram Twitter and Facebook are flooded with racers in the City. The City/Park is promoted along with the event.	Images are sparse and race focused. The City does not feature in the name of the event or in any newspaper articles.
Education & Health	Local schools are able to participate in hosting and riding. The pros are encouraged to visit schools or youth programs, and positively impact the youth to organize around cycling.	Outreach to schools is minimal. Cyclocross is seen as a fringe sport that only crazy people participate in.
Economics	Businesses rally to the event and clamor to sponsor. Attendees support the sponsors and local shops. City's tax revenue spikes and the business council promotes the event. Economic benefits are documented.	A few bike sponsors chip in some course tape. The park is ridden hard and not repaired. City resources are used for repair, emergency services and for police details when traffic over flows.
Historic Preservationists	The RD recognizes the location is historically connected, invites contrarian people into the event planning. The event celebrates a unique aspect of the park. The preservationist contributes to growing the park's history.	During the event, the park superintendent receives a disgruntled call from a long-time "friend of the park" who feels that irreparable damage is being done to historical features. Superintendent agrees and pulls the permit.
Nature	Local natural resources groups/agencies help direct the RD's course design around resources. Suggestions improve course design. Cycling's connection to a naturally "green" footprint is enhanced.	Mud and silt runs off the course into a natural resource such as a stream or drinking water source. Newspapers headline "Cyclocross Destroys the Planet" complete with photos. Event cancelled.

MITIGATION



Your primary avenue for mitigating issues ahead of time is communication and publicity - you will not fly under the radar!

Also essential is the contract you need with the property owner.

Day of mitigation depends largely on your volunteers, traffic management, racer management, and parking enforcement. Repairs are difficult, more time consuming than you desire, and often high stakes.

Communication

Speaking with each group requires you to understand their perspective and to do so in a way that provides benefits to them.

* The park superintendent is charged with protecting their resource, minimizing damage costs, and improving a visitor's experience.

* The office of visitors/tourism is charged with bringing in as many visitors as possible and translating that to dollars for the local businesses.

* School and Health Commissioners are interested in promoting healthy and educational activities.

* The police chief needs to minimize traffic and crime - keeping people safe - and if your event can attract good uses to a crime ridden area, that is a benefit.

* A mayor or city council is concerned about balancing all of this.

* If you can make the case that the event will benefit each group, you will likely gain their approval and support.

Publicity

Critical to both your event and the goals of many who make/allow it to happen is the public presence that is developed around your race.

While not necessarily the purview of this guide, an event that pulls a park permit will be noticed - so you may as well make sure to prepare the press, your staff, your volunteers, and the racers to be ambassadors for your event and for the sport in general.

Press releases are evidence to your sponsors, to teams and their sponsors, to the public greenlighting officials, and to next year's contestants that this is the real deal.

Contract

Meetings and phone calls are nice first steps, but get a contract, signed by the owner. Yes, really, a handshake in the public realm is not useful, either write or sign a contract that stipulates the following minimums:

* Cyclocross events will cause damages to the landscape.

* Protection and planning measures will be XYZ

* Traffic and parking measures will be PDQ and have been vetted with the police department

* Emergency access/egress will be ABC, and an ambulance will/will not be on site during the event.

* Backup plans will be implemented when snow (more than X"), rain (X" over the prior week), or other atmospheric conditions occur.

* Backup plans will be X for the course, Y for the Parking, Z for the spectators/event attendees.

* Damages will be repaired and the venue will/will not be returned to pre-event or better conditions.

* Repair costs will not exceed $X,XXX.00.

* Repair methods will be as determined immediately after the event is completed with a site walk conducted by venue staff, venue superintendent, race director, and the landscaper responsible for repair.

RD Perspective

Fries

Of Parks and Politics By RICHARD FRIES

After the high fives and handshakes, the tents and fencing comes down, and the trucks pull away from the venue, the lonely pain of a cyclo-cross promoter hits. And if there had been “epic” weather conditions the pain is that much more jagged.
Having witnessed countless one-and-done cyclo-cross events in venues that could have been fantastic long -term race venues (The Presidio in San Francisco, Domaine Chandon in Yountville, Calif.; Patterson Park in Baltimore; and - of course - Zilker Park in Austin)

I know too well how badly things can go.

In Providence, Rhode Island, we discovered Roger Williams Park, which many believe to be one of the finest ‘cross venues in America. While we have support from the Convention and Visitors Bureau , City Hall, and local businesses, we have a groundskeeper determined to see us leave. Through ten years of politics we’ve learned a few things on how to deal with such a park. While there is much to discuss on the landscaping protocol, there is as much to know about the political protocol.

Below are 10 guidelines that I suggest NOT because of any wisdom but because of my stupidity. I have broken every one of these rules and have paid dearly for doing so.
1) Be Brutally Honest. Let them know the worst-case scenario up front. Guarantee your work with a sizable certified check and ensure them you will do everything in your power to leave the park better than when you found it.

2) Respond Quickly. Your team needs to be at the venue within 12 hours of the event close regardless of how good the Foam Party went the night before. Preferably schedule to walk the venue with the parks team to establish triage and a punch list. Ensure they have your mobile phone and you have it turned on. Bad news is better than NO news. So long as you are working and present they’ll calm down.

3) Document Your Work. Take photos and video in identifiable locations before, during and after the event. These should be done bi-weekly for up to three months depending on the germination process. Use objective data. Compaction data, GPS course data, and maps also make a big difference, especially when groundskeepers or other friends of the park begin to use anecdotal evidence against you.

4) Communicate Year Round. Stay in touch and visit often. We create the greatest impact - positive and negative - on the park. Hence we need to demonstrate the greatest care for the park. Know the other events in the park. Support any “Friends” groups of the park. Assist in the annual clean up wearing your event t-shirt.

5) Stay in Your Lanes. Determine a protocol of who talks to whom about what and stay with that. In short, don’t let your friend the plumber tell the park superintendent a thing-or-two about landscaping. We recommend the promoter deal with the park superintendent and the landscape professional deal with the groundskeeping team. And try to avoid “pulling rank” and forcing their hand by virtue of a mayor or city councilor ordering them to do so. Groundskeepers stay long after mayors lose elections.

6) Show Respect. Don’t tell them their baby is ugly. That you cleaned up broken glass, condoms and syringes is of no value to the conversation. That their park is populated by homeless people, partying teens, and sexual deviants is also of zero benefit. Simply do your job and stay out of the judgment business.

7) Share Your Vision. Make the entire city - especially those neighbors close to the park - part of your success. Start by outlining exactly what success looks like in assorted metrics and discover which of those metrics aligns with their goals.

8) Select Words Carefully. Instead of the word damages we use the word impact. Instead of the word repairs we use the word enhancements. If you stick to your vocabulary long enough you eventually alter the dialogue over time.

9) Collaborate With Promoters. Share resources, expertise, testimonials, landscapers, case studies, etc. with other promoters both regionally and nationally. Each local association could develop this “tool kit” for ‘cross promoters within each region.

10) Build Local Consensus. Start with your friends of the park organizations and build outward a network of support. Schools, YMCA’s, Chambers of Commerce, Scouts, and other civic organizations play a big role in this, especially if you and your team do not live in the host city or town. Add to that your vendors, from the host hotel to the toilet guy, and make sure they also communicate to park officials their support for your event.

Richard Fries has ridden, raced, promoted, written about and commentated on cyclo-cross dating back to 1982. Having co-promoted more than six national championships, Fries is the event director of the former KMC Cyclo-cross Festival Presented by Maxxis in Providence

RD Perspective

A Tale of Three Events - as told by Adam Myerson

2003 Burncoat Park, Worcester, MA,

- Prepared owner-even showed them videos of event damaged parks.
- rained for the entire week prior “it’s just like the ground disintegrated and we destroyed the place”
- event organizer repaired the park, came back the next year, event not continued for other reasons.
- perception that ‘cross events can destroy a park remains.

2011 North Beach Park, Burlington, VT,

Part of a larger concert/community event. The larger event organizer was primary contact with Park Owner.
Rained for a week prior. Soil did not appear to drain. News arrives during Monday morning walk thru.
Larger event organizer blames CX organizer of not informing well enough.
Event does not come back.

NEWS: A day later cyclists continue to run the course. The mud-trenches left behind will remain for some time. “When we were testing the course earlier in the week it was very dry because it was so beautiful last weekend,” Ward said. “We didn’t realize how wet it was under that top level.”

“I think by next spring most of it, I’m sure, will be in good shape,” said North Park Rec Superintendent Maggie Leugers.
She says they’ve never held an event like this and didn’t expect to see damage this extensive. “We made it very clear that damage needed to be taken care of,” she said.

Meyerson

ONGOING Look Park, Northampton, MA

Venue is public private partnership where City is required to provide programming.
Park has its own staff.
No contract, other than handshake that “we’ll do the same as last year”
Owner receives direct revenues of Parking fees = about $2/ racer or about $3,000
Owner repairs the park and helps locate the course, had to relocate after first year
Event is older than the tenure of many of the Park staff.

Adam Myerson is an ex-professional cyclist and coach who specializes in criteriums and cyclocross. A former collegiate national cyclocross champion, he began racing as a junior in 1987, and was a professional for 13 years. He raced his final season for the Astellas Professional Cycling Team in 2015.

He is the founder and president of Cycle-Smart, Inc., President of the New England Cyclocross Series, organizer of the Cycle-Smart Northampton International Cyclocross (the oldest UCI event in North America), a former member of the UCI Cyclo-Cross Commission, and a former member of the management committee of the International Association of Cyclo-Cross Organizers (AIOC-Cross).