

A Remarkable Recovery Two Years After The Flood""

The logo for Turf, featuring the word "Turf" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A green grass blade graphic is integrated into the letter 'T'.The logo for Tree Services, featuring the words "Tree Services" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A small green leaf graphic is above the 'e' in "Services". Below the main text is the tagline "Taking Tree Care to New Heights" in a smaller, italicized font.The logo for Turf DesignBuild, featuring the word "Turf" in a small, orange, sans-serif font above the word "DesignBuild" in a larger, orange, sans-serif font.The logo for PLOW, featuring the word "PLOW" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

Source: www.TurfMagazine.com

By Ron Hall



NASHVILLE, Tenn. — I am writing this in the heart of Music City one day shy of the two-year anniversary of the flood that caused more than \$250 million dollars in damage to the sprawling Gaylord Opryland Hotel, in addition to forcing 1,000 guests from their rooms.

I am attending the annual conference hosted by the Turf & Ornamental Communicators Association. Last night many of us were guests at the hotel that (amazingly) reopened in November 2010, just seven months after the destruction.

Mower manufacturer Grasshopper hosted the event, and the guest speaker was Hollis Malone, manager of horticulture at the resort. Malone's involvement with the property reaches back to 1971 with the initial construction of the Opryland theme park on the property. The theme park is long gone, but the hotel has since grown to approximately 2,900 rooms.

Memories of the rampaging Cumberland River filling the lower level of the massive 2,900-room hotel and its world-class, glass-domed garden atriums (about 8 acres in total) remain fresh in Malone's mind.

Even the 1975 flood that swept through the adjacent and now-gone Opryland theme park pales in comparison to the damage done in the May 2010 catastrophe, says Malone. Malone and his crew spent the months following the flood putting in seven-day-a-week, 10-hour days restoring the hotel's incredible interiorscapes and its grounds. Malone says there's a reason why he refers to his crew members as "stars."

"We learned a lot about each after the flood," said Malone with a wry smile

as he recounted how everybody pitched in to remove the incredible amount of mud and other debris, including fish (dead and alive) from the hotel and the employee tunnels under the hotel. He, his crew, and indeed every hotel employee involved the restoration worked in tropical conditions because the flooding had knocked out electricity at the hotel.

But, eventually the employees and hosts of local contractors repaired and cleaned the sprawling resort, and Malone's horticulture staff (60 percent hold college degrees) had returned its famed tropical gardens and surrounding grounds to their former glory.

To prevent a similar future catastrophe, the resort is now building a \$10 million flood wall around the property. In some places it is 14 feet high.

Yesterday (May 1), Gaylord Entertainment, the hotel's parent company, sued the U.S. Army of Corps and contends that the damages could have been avoided if the Corps had opened a spillway, and it accused the Weather Service of not accurately predicting the severity of the storm.

For a more complete report on the efforts by Hollis Malone and his team following the flood, please click [here](#) for writer Carol Brzozowski's article "[After the Flood](#)," which appeared in the September 2011 issue of *Turf*.

Many thanks for Grasshopper for the special evening and especially for inviting Hollis Malone to speak to our TOCA group. Hollis has been directing the resorts horticulture and pest control programs from almost day one. To this day he displays a love for his job and a loyalty to his employers that's inspiring. And he adds, his grounds crew loves the Grasshopper units it uses in every season because of their many landscape attachments.

(Image: Hollis Malone, left, and Grasshopper's Ray Garvey)

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