

America's National Mall - Update

TPI and NTF meet in Washington D.C. and join other concerned parties to address the deplorable condition of "America's Front Yard".



"The National Mall, the 700-acre stretch of hallowed ground located between the Capitol and the Lincoln Memorial and from Constitution Avenue to the Jefferson Memorial, has come to be known worldwide as a symbol of democracy and America's heritage. It encompasses the strength and proud history of our nation, symbolizes the democracy that our forefathers worked so hard to secure, and memorializes the sacrifices of so many who have given their lives to preserve. It is "America's Front Yard."

John E. "Chip" Akridge
Chairman - Trust for the National Mall
May 2008

TPI and NTF take the initiative to extend communication with key players for the good of the industry and the American people.



Gary Wilber and Kirk Hunter in front of the Lincoln Memorial.

It has been called "The Peoples Place" and "America's Front Yard. It's as much a part of America's history as the monuments, government buildings and historic museums that nestle within and just beyond its boundaries. If you take into account the National Mall and the surrounding Memorial Parks, there are more than 1,000 acres of parkland containing many of the United States' more significant natural and cultural resources.

The National Mall has more than 26 miles of pedestrian sidewalks and 8 miles of bike trails. 10 tons of grass seed and nearly 3,000 yards of sod and turf are installed and planted on over 300 acres on the National Mall.

In response to a growing concern over the condition of the National Mall, Kirk Hunter, TPI's executive director was joined by TPI Board Trustee Gary Wilber of Oakwood Sod Farm in Delmar, Maryland and Kevin Morris, president of the National Turfgrass Federation (NTF) to meet with Judy Scott Feldman, PhD, Chair and President of the National Coalition to Save Our Mall and W. Kent Cooper, FAIA, Vice Chair and coordinator, National Mall Third Century Initiative.*

** The Third Century Mall Initiative, a project of the National Coalition to Save Our Mall, is a volunteer organization dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the National Mall for future generations.*

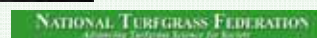
During their meeting it was learned that although the National Park Service is often considered to be "in charge" of the Mall and provide the vision of the future; it is actually a bit more complex. A broader picture suggests that at least 14 committees in Congress are involved; six to eight managing agencies and authorities; nine planning and reviewing agencies and other independent organizations such as the National Coalition to Save Our Mall. The Trust for the National Mall (the official partner of The National Park Service), the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC), Architect of the Capitol, the District of Columbia Office of Planning, etc.

It was agreed that perhaps TPI and NTF could play a minor yet significant role in the overall goals of The Third Century Mall Initiative. Any such effort would be a collaborative effort by TPI and NTF.

A tentative Project Proposal (subject to revision) has been submitted to the National Mall Third Century Initiative for their consideration. An excerpt of that proposal appears on the following page.



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The Washington Post

Excerpt from May 25, 2008 Editorial

"A lot of grand words were used last week to describe the Mall: "iconic landscape," "the people's place," "great swath of green," "hallowed ground," "America's civic stage" and -- in the vernacular of its famed designer -- "the vast esplanade." Unfortunately, though, the most accurate description heard was "disgrace." Conditions are so bad that a lot more than words are needed if this special place is to be saved. . . . Responsibility for the Mall is fragmented among different agencies, and oversight is split among at least eight congressional committees. The last comprehensive look at the Mall was in 1902 by the McMillan Commission."

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One of the many clogged storm drains throughout the National Mall.



Photos by Kirk Hunter, Turfgrass Producers International, taken during his March 2009 visit.



NATIONAL TURFGRASS FEDERATION
Advancing Turfgrass Science for Society

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Excerpt of Tentative Project Proposal Presented by TPI and NTF to The Third Century Mall Initiative

THE PROJECT

The turfgrass industry proposes to install a demonstration project on a section of the National Mall. The project, preferably one to two acres in size, will improve the turfgrass cover on top, as well the infrastructure below ground, including the soil, drainage, irrigation, etc. The latest in turfgrass establishment techniques will be utilized, including efficient irrigation technology, a soil mix to withstand compaction and promote turf health, and improved turfgrasses to withstand drought, heat, foot traffic, overuse, etc. Sustainable practices will be used throughout the establishment process. After all operations are completed appropriate maintenance practices will be developed and implemented to ensure successful establishment..

PROJECT OUTCOMES

This project will showcase how the National Mall grounds can be enhanced using the latest in turfgrass cultivars, establishment and maintenance techniques and practices. This information can be used to train, teach and educate consumers on lawn and landscape procedures that produce quality lawns while reducing water use and other inputs. This project may also be an opportunity for community service groups to participate in the construction of a quality turfgrass area.

PROJECT SPONSORS

The National Turfgrass Federation (a non-profit coalition of turfgrass organizations) and Turfgrass Producers International (a trade organization of turfgrass sod producers) are the co-coordinators of this project. NTF organizations will provide products and/or expertise for the project. No funds, products, equipment, services or labor will be requested from the federal government. The sponsors will organize all activities, in conjunction with the National Park Service and other cooperating organizations to complete the project.

SIDE NOTE: A full proposal was submitted to Judy Scott Feldman, PhD, Chair and President of the National Coalition to Save Our Mall on April 2, 2009.



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