

# NATURES TALES

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## SPECIAL EDITION HURRICANE DOLLY

***July 23, 2008***  
***Natures is De-Nuded by Dolly***

As Hurricane Dolly made its way across the Gulf of Mexico, we kept a close eye on it and were relieved when it was predicted that it would go north of Natures Resort. However, Frank and the Natures residents took all the necessary precautions – just in case! The tables, chairs, loungers and umbrellas were carried into the clubhouse, all the large wooden picnic tables in the pull throughs were turned over, and they made sure that there were no items around the park that could be turned into flying missiles in the event of strong winds. Then the waiting began.

It was not long before the rain started, and the wind began to roar. Unfortunately around this time it was reported that Hurricane Dolly had decided to change its predicted path, and not only did it go over Natures, it chose to stall there. The resort, the residents and some of the people who were evacuated from South Padre Island and

had taken shelter at Natures were pounded by strong winds and heavy rains. As the hours went by the ground became completely saturated. The wind continued and many branches succumbed to the fierce gusts, and crashed to the ground. Then the trees lost their soggy footing and one by one they fell over onto the ground. The fence began to whip back and forth and in time started to disintegrate. As one of the residents said “It was a hairy time!” Adding to the miseries, the power went out leaving everyone in darkness.

***July 24, 2008***

When, eventually, Hurricane Dolly moved on, Natures looked as though a team of lumberjacks had been playing in the front section. Twenty two trees are down, and those that remain standing have broken limbs and are basically a sorry sight. Large sections of the fence are simply gone, and other sections of the fence are leaning at a 45 degree angle. Inside the park more trees

were blown over and many branches were broken off. In addition to this, Bill T's shed was blown away.

There is good news however:

- No one at Natures was injured.
- Although the surrounding areas were badly flooded, Natures fared quite well. There was some flooding in the north east corner, but that drained away very quickly.
- The clubhouse is undamaged, and the pools and pool fence are all untouched.
- There was some skirt and a few singles blown off a few of the mobiles, but no serious damage.
- All of the RVs were untouched.
- Within 24 hours the power was back on.

Bill D and Bill S spent the day after the hurricane loading up supplies from Wyoming and Colorado, and they headed down to Natures to deal with the cleanup and fence building. They arrived at Natures within 48 hours of Dolly's arrival driving non-stop from Cheyenne.

Although they had been given comprehensive reports on the damage they were both shocked by what they saw. Bill D said that the front area looked like a clear-cut forest. Not a pretty sight at all. There was

more fence gone than was left standing, and most of what was still standing would have to be completely rebuilt. There was a lot of work to be done.

**July 26, 2008**

***Some things change, and some stay the same!***

There is no getting away from it – The face of Natures Resort has changed. The majority of the trees are gone, and the grounds definitely will have a very nude look. In time we will replant trees, and in time they will grow, but right now everything is a huge mess and the work that needs to be done to rebuild the fence, cut down damaged limbs of the few remaining trees, and dispose of all the blown down trees and limbs is overwhelming.

However, the part of Natures that will never change is the extraordinary volunteering spirit that exists here. The owners of Natures are once again overwhelmed by the response that we have received. Prior to and during the hurricane there were phone calls and emails from our annual members voicing their concern about Natures Resort and the people staying there, many saying that Natures was in their prayers. After Dolly's departure again there were more emails and phone calls offering support and help. A number offered to head south to help us. Many of our residents and annual members immediately jumped in to help with the work.

There are people who are running chainsaws, cutting up the fallen trees. Others are cutting down the broken

branches. Others are stacking the cut up pieces for removal.

We have hired four people to repair the fence, and some of our lady residents are preparing meals for them as well as the Natures people who are helping. Others have taken it upon themselves to walk around with coffee and water in a wagon, making sure that everyone stays hydrated.

Before the storm was fully over people were out checking our annual members' houses and lots, checking for damage and putting any blown off skirting under the house so that it would not blow away. Later those same people went back to those houses and re-attached the skirting. Bill S. spent a couple of hours modifying the bucket on the tractor, giving it long 'fingers' so that it could scoop up large piles of brush and logs to speed up the cleanup.

### ***July 29, 2008 The Cleanup Continues***

People might be tired, but the volunteering spirit continues and the cleanup is going well. The ladies are still preparing meals for everyone who is working. Our 'water crew' continues to take water and coffee out to where people are working to ensure that they stay hydrated. This is a real concern because it is HOT! The cutting up and removal of trees seems to be a never ending job, but our faithful volunteers continue on.

The hired help have made fantastic progress on the fence. Although there is a shortage of some materials they have clout where we do not, and have managed to pull strings to get what is needed to get the job done.

Someone driving past Natures saw the huge piles of logs, and asked what we were going to do with the wood. "If you want it, it's yours!" was the response. He came back later with a trailer, and hauled off a big load of the logs. Perhaps he will want some more? We have plenty to give him, and are grateful to see them hauled away.

Although the rain water at Natures had completely drained away within a couple of hours of Dolly moving on, there is still much flooding in the Rio Grande Valley, and our hearts go out to those who are unable to get back into their houses.

No hurricane is ever welcome but one needs to always look on the good side of every situation. We are so grateful that no one here was hurt, and that none of our residents or annual members suffered any major damage to their property. However, the shining light of Hurricane Dolly was to see the fantastic response of our residents and members. They were not asked to help – they VOLUNTEERED. And not just for a day, but for many days of hard work. They volunteered because they are good and fantastic people. We, the owners, owe them our gratitude and our thanks. In the midst of all this YOU make our hearts almost burst with pride. I do believe that we are the ONLY park with such wonderful and caring people. Thank you so very much.