

Weather watchers eyeing system in Atlantic Ocean

October 14, 2024 | Fayetteville Observer, The (NC) Author: Mike Snider; USA TODAY | Section: News | 472 Words Page: A2 OpenURL Link

As west-central Florida assesses the aftermath of Hurricane Milton – and the Southeast continues its recovery from Helene – the National Hurricane Center keeps watch for the next potential storm, which would be called Nadine.

Forecasters had been watching a developing system off the east coast of Florida, but it had dissipated before becoming Tropical Storm Nadine.

Now being watched: a system in the east tropical Atlantic Ocean. It is a couple of hundred miles west of the Cabo Verde Islands, which lie off the west coast of Africa. It is moving westward and could develop into a tropical depression. Additional development is not expected until at least the middle of next week, with the system having 40% chance of formation over the next seven days, the NHC said.

Still, the tropics near the U.S. could be quiet for most of next week, AccuWeather forecasters say. But they forecast a medium risk of tropical development Thursday to Saturday in the western Caribbean, the region where Helene and Milton formed.

A gyre, an area of spinning air currents, is expected to form over Central America next week.

"From this large, slowly spinning area of low pressure, a more distinct area of showers and thunderstorms may form, and from that, a tropical depression or tropical storm may evolve," AccuWeather lead hurricane expert Alex DaSilva said in the forecast.

Where is Tropical Storm Leslie?

Designated as a tropical storm on Oct. 2, Leslie strengthened into Hurricane Leslie then weakened again Thursday into a tropical storm. On Saturday, the National Hurricane Center said Leslie – about 975 miles west-southwest of the Azores – had degenerated into a trough and posed no threat to the U.S.

The storm is producing maximum sustained winds near 50 mph, with higher gusts, and is expected to gradually weaken during the next couple of days, the NHC said.

When does hurricane season end?

There remains more than seven weeks in the 2024 Atlantic hurricane season, which typically runs from June 1 through Nov. 30. So far this season, there have been 13 named storms. The next storms to form will be named Nadine and Oscar.

After a relatively quiet five weeks or so, the 2024 season – especially with the arrival of Helene and Milton – became an above-average hurricane season, according to Colorado State University meteorologist Phil Klotzbach.

Having generated 127 on the Accumulated Cyclone Energy index, a metric that includes storm frequency, intensity and duration, the 2024 Atlantic hurricane season ranks as "officially meeting NOAA's definition of an above-normal season," Klotzbach said Wednesday on X.

Contributing: Natalie Neysa Alund, Max Hauptman, Laura Lordi, Samantha Neely, Doyle Rice and Jennifer Sangalang, USA TODAY NETWORK

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Helping with Helene - When and where to donate clothing for survivors in WNC

October 14, 2024 | Gaston Gazette, The (Gastonia, NC) Author: Chloe Collins; Gaston Gazette | Section: News | 178 Words Page: A1 OpenURL Link

CityCade Retro Arcade Bar in Gastonia is hosting a clothing drive to support Hurricane Helene survivors in Western North Carolina.

According to a press release, CityCade is looking to collect clothes that will keep people warm ahead of the cold weather that will settle in coming weeks.

In response to the devastation Helen caused in WNC, the arcade partnered with Bou Cleaners to host the drive.

Now through Oct. 19, residents can donate clean used clothing in good condition including:

Shirts, pants, and jackets

Gloves, scarves, and hats

Blankets and other warm items

Undergarments will not be accepted.

Items can be dropped off at CityCade, 122 S. Oakland St. in Gastonia, the release said.

To thank donors, they are also adding an incentive to donate.

"Each donation made will earn the donor an entry into a raffle for a free gaming night at CityCade, for the winner and a friend! Play any game, anytime during your free night. One entry is permitted per donation per day, so keep your tickets for the drawing," it said.

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Western NC residents say - Helene left 'highly toxic' mud

October 14, 2024 | Herald-Sun, The (Durham, NC)

Author: Catherine Muccigrosso; Staff Writer | Section: News | 644 Words

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As historic floodwaters recede in western North Carolina, the destruction left behind from former Hurricane Helene also involves dealing with massive amounts of mud that some residents and business owners fear is toxic.

Helene leveled the Biltmore Village where Origami Ink has been "completely destroyed," the gift shop said on its Facebook page last week. The flood waters reached the second floor, "literally smashing everything to bits and leaving everything coated in toxic mud," Origami Ink said.

But as of Wednesday, federal and state officials would not confirm that the mud from Helene is toxic.

As part of the state and federal storm response, North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality and other state agencies are working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to identify and address potential contamination in the affected region, the agencies said in a joint statement to The Charlotte Observer.

"Given the widespread impacts of the storm and flooding, generally speaking, the public is advised to treat areas that have flooded and any substances of unknown origin with caution," the agencies said.

Western North Carolina residents are urged to use caution during cleanup, especially if there is a noticeable chemical odor or spilled container of a hazardous material and to ask the local health department or fire department for help.

More guidance is available online at deq.nc.gov and the NCDHHS websites.

Federal and state agencies did not make an official available for interview.

Testing for potential contamination

DEQ has received reports of concerns about potentially toxic mud downstream in Madison County near Marshall from damaged IPEX's Silver-Line Plastics plant in Asheville. Marshall, with less than 800 residents, is on the French Broad River about 20 miles north of Asheville.

In response, inspectors have visited the site and found no injuries were confirmed related to potential exposure in this area, according to the federal and state agencies.

Silver-Line is not listed as a hazardous waste generator in DEQ permitting records.

"They have an air permit with the local air program in Buncombe County and did not have significant quantities of hazardous chemicals," DEQ and EPA said.

How to handle cleaning up the mud?

Flood water can bring microorganisms from sewage and other sources inside buildings, according to the EPA. During flood cleanup, exposure to microorganisms can cause allergic or irritant effects, or in some cases even infectious diseases.

The EPA urged residents are urged to wear an N-95 respirator, sealed goggles, gloves, pants, long-sleeved shirt,

and boots or work boots.

NC DHHS also advises residents to clean their hands with soap and water before preparing food or eating after contact with flood waters.

"Never assume that a water-damaged house is safe," NC Department of Health and Human Services said in a statement to the Observer on Tuesday.

"Going into a building that has been flooded, even after the water is gone, can present a wide variety of hazards that can cause injury, illness or even death," the agency said.

Origami Ink Shop owners Cathie and Jonathan Robbins have been digging through the mud daily looking for anything salvageable. "Cathie and I have been doing most of it ourselves since we could not risk the health of any of our customers who have offered to pitch in," Origami Ink said Saturday on Facebook.

The store, which sells stationery, fountain pens and gifts, set up a Go Fund Me page Saturday to help rebuild. Origami Ink officials did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

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Bizarre dead-body - rumors impede Helene disaster response, NC county spokeswoman says

October 14, 2024 | Herald-Sun, The (Durham, NC) Author: Joe Marusak and Adam Wagner; Staff Writer | Section: News | 656 Words Page: 5A OpenURL Link

False social media rumors are hurting the emergency response to the Helene disaster in Western North Carolina, the spokeswoman for hard-hit Buncombe County said Thursday.

"1,000 unidentified bodies" at the Asheville hospital, one rumor claimed this week. "Buzzards everywhere."

Two-thousand people trapped in a Candler church, another since-debunked rumor stated.

And a photo shared online showed people in a supposed N.C. mountain mudslide during Helene. The slide happened elsewhere in the world and not during Helene, Buncombe County spokeswoman Lillian Govus said Thursday.

"Those are not true," Govus said, replying to a question from The Charlotte Observer and The (Raleigh) News & Observer during her county's daily Helene disaster-response news conference on Zoom.

"And those hurt, because ... we have to redivert resources and make sure that our emergency personnel check that off the list. And it may be the fourth time that we've done that.

"... It takes away time and resources from us being able to do those critical lifesaving maneuvers in our community," Govus said.

"Verified information is critical at this time," she said. "But as we are trying to disseminate accurate, correct and truthful information in real time," investigating outlandish rumors "is a really big obstacle for us to overcome."

"So I would ask that if you are so compelled to share information on social media, that those sources be from the county, the city of Asheville, the agencies that are supporting us at the federal level, at the state level with North Carolina Emergency Services, and verified individuals."

Kody Kinsley, secretary of the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, called the social media rumors of hundreds of bodies piled up "disinformation."

"It's just not true," he said Thursday.

"We don't have a big backlog of work here," Kinsley said. "There's no large number of decedents that we're processing."

As of Wednesday afternoon, North Carolina was working on identifying four bodies, he said.

The state has now confirmed 115 deaths from Helene, and the sheriff of Buncombe County has counted 72 just in his county, The News & Observer reported.

"Our search and recovery has not ceased," Buncombe Sheriff Quentin Miller said. "We've been trying to do that 24/7. We cannot stop. We must continue to move forward."

Reporting human remains during Helene cleanup

If someone finds human remains while cleaning up debris, Kinsley said, they should call their local law enforcement's non-emergency phone number. Those local officials will work with the state team to gather the remains and start processing them.

To help identify bodies, DHHS has shifted medical examiners from the eastern part of the state to the west. When a body is found, Kinsley said, it is collected by one of six fatality recovery teams working in the storm-damaged region.

Next, the body is taken to a central processing site where examiners first try to identify the person. When they were found in their home or were carrying identification, that's easier. But sometimes, Kinsley said, identification requires DNA work or assistance from North Carolina's State Crime Lab.

After a body is identified, the examiners work to determine whether the cause of death is storm-related. In the case of a drowning or the victim of a landslide, that's obvious.

Other times, it's more difficult, Kinsley said, as in the case of someone who is found in a home and could have died from either blunt force trauma or a heart attack.

Those cases require more extensive work from forensic pathologists.

DHHS tries to let families of storm victims know what happened as soon as it can, Kinsley added.

"We very quickly inform the family and then after that we add them to our storm total. And then we continue to process the remains to return them to the family," Kinsley said.

News & Observer reporter Virginia Bridges contributed.

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Lawmakers expect to pass more Helene relief this month

October 14, 2024 | Herald-Sun, The (Durham, NC)

Author: Dawn Baumgartner Vaughan; Staff Writer | Section: News | 592 Words

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RALEIGH The first wave of Hurricane Helene relief funding for Western North Carolina is now law. Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper quickly signed a \$273 million disaster relief bill on Thursday, the day after the Republican-controlled General Assembly sent him the legislation. The bill passed the House and Senate unanimously.

Lawmakers are already planning for the next round of relief. Senate leader Phil Berger and House Speaker Tim Moore announced Wednesday that the legislature would be back again soon - Oct. 24 - to pass another bill.

What will that look like?

They are still figuring it out. Here's what we know about where things stand and how you can contact the General Assembly about needs for Helene-devastated areas.

Apply to the NC General Assembly for relief

People in Western North Carolina can share their needs directly with the General Assembly. The legislative website has a form you can fill out at ncleg.gov/form/helenerelief that asks for what kinds of needs are being requested, what county you live in and which lawmaker represents you.

Billions in the state's rainy day fund

The rainy day fund, or Savings Reserve Fund, had \$4.75 billion in it before the Disaster Recovery Act became law on Thursday.

Republican Sen. Kevin Corbin of Macon County thanked God for the rainy day fund on Wednesday as the Senate was debating the relief bill.

"We have over \$4 billion in the rainy day fund, because in Western North Carolina, we had a rainy day. That's what it's for," Corbin said.

The Office of the State Controller releases a weekly Cash Watch that shows the state's money, including the balance of the Savings Reserve.

Moore told reporters after the House passed the first bill that the second bill is likely to be funded from the Savings Reserve, too. He noted that the state also has about \$700 million in a disaster response fund.

He said that in determining how much to fund, they want to make sure the state can get a match from FEMA so the state pays 10% to the federal government's 90% in relief.

What they're waiting for

Leaders didn't want to wait until an already scheduled November session to pass more relief.

"Whatever information we have, we have, and we'll act on it," Moore said.

"It's a new territory here," he said.

Berger said that between now and the Oct. 24 session, "we're going to be collecting suggestions from folks. There are some things that are out there that will not be reimbursed by FEMA. I think we're going to start getting some information about those sorts of things, and what we will need to do in terms of the state funding and state response."

Berger said after 2018's Hurricane Florence, lawmakers came in and quickly appropriated money, then came back a month later with the "main appropriation." He said he didn't think the legislature would be ready for that in October.

Berger said lawmakers will need more advance notice, so it would be more likely for a larger bill to pass during the session that beings Nov. 19.

"I've encouraged the members (of the Senate), and I would encourage - we're reaching out to the executive branch as well - to get us your list, so that we have time to scrub the list, to make sure that it's something that we can build support for," Berger said.

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Largest Spruce Pine quartz mine restarts after Helene battered mountain town

October 14, 2024 | Herald-Sun, The (Durham, NC) Author: Brian Gordon; Staff Writer | Section: News | 532 Words Page: 5A OpenURL Link

Two weeks after shutting down its Spruce Pine facilities ahead of Hurricane Helene, Belgian mining company Sibelco announced Thursday it has restarted operations in the Western North Carolina town that contains the world's highest-purity quartz.

"Both production and shipments are progressively ramping up to full capacity," the company said in a statement, though it did not share how long this progress would take. Last week, Sibelco said its initial assessment of the sites had revealed only "minor damage," but power remained out even a week after the storm.

Heavy rainfalls from Helene flooded the North Toe River and battered Spruce Pine, a mountain town in Mitchell County with around 2,000 residents. In the storm's aftermath, many nationwide inquired about the status of the local guartz mines that are critical to the supply chains of semiconductors, solar panels, and other devices.

Few, if any, other places on earth match Spruce Pine quartz for quality. A lack of water in the region around 380 million years ago helped produce an ultra-pure crystalline mineral, and when it comes to manufacturing the semiconductor wafers that get cut into chips, purity is essential. Even a tiny impurity, such 50 parts per billion, can ruin final products.

"The more perfect the atomic structure in your silicon, the more easily and freely electrons can flow around," wrote author Ed Conway in his 2023 book "Material World," which dedicates a section to the Spruce Pine mines.

During most of the 20th century, local miners extracted mica and feldspar from the Mitchell County sites. Over the past three decades, new technological demands have made high-purity quartz one of North Carolina's most important exports.

Between 2019 and 2023, Sibelco said its Spruce Pine sites produced almost 60% more high-quality quartz. And last year, the company announced it would invest \$200 million into the site by 2025 to double production. It is now the largest employer in Mitchell County, according to the N.C. Department of Commerce.

The company sells its quartz under the brand name IOTA. Its mines are north of downtown in an area called the Spruce Pine Mining District. On Google Maps they look like wide, white sandy beaches.

Sibelco is one of two quartz mining operations in Spruce Pine, with a competitor named The Quartz Corp forming in 2011. While Sibelco is headquartered Antwerp, Belgium, The Quartz Corp is based in Spruce Pine.

In an Oct. 2 online post, The Quartz Corp said its initial plant inspection suggested "that damage is mostly concentrated around ancillary units."

"It is still too early to assess when TQC will resume operations as this will also depend on the rebuilding of local infrastructure," the company said.

The News & Observer reported roads and rail lines around the town suffered significant damage when the storm passed through on Sept. 27.

Despite its continued closure, The Quartz Corp said supply shortfalls are not likely.

"We operate a long supply chain and like many organizations we added more focus on our resilience planning post-Covid," the company said, noting it has backup stock of finished products.

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Helene gave them a chance to meet Kamala Harris. They didn't expect a follow-up call.

October 14, 2024 | Herald-Sun, The (Durham, NC) Author: Tammy Grubb; Staff Writer | Section: News | 655 Words Page: 2A OpenURL Link

Politics wasn't on the radar when Justin Thompson and his wife loaded their 8-month-old son into the family car to leave Asheville on Sept. 28 for a safer place to stay after Helene.

A random connection landed them a meeting with Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic nominee for president, when she visited Charlotte on Oct. 5, he said. But it was the call from the vice president on his cell phone Friday that really took him by surprise.

It was a quick call, said Thompson, 33. She was just checking in to make sure they were OK.

"We were out, and it took me off guard," Thompson said, recalling the conversation. "Hey, it's Kamala. How are you?"

He supported Harris for president before the storm, Thompson said, but his experience over the last week has "further reinforced" his decision that she's the right person for the job.

Finding a road to safety in Charlotte

Thompson and his wife, Rebecca, headed to the basement with their son Carter when Helene hit the north side of Asheville around 7 a.m. Sept. 27, he said. It was "pretty scary," he recalled.

The next day, they found over a dozen trees in the yard, including one that hit a neighbor's house and another wrapped in power lines at the neighborhood's entrance, he said. They were fortunate not to have flooding, but they ran out of supplies, he said.

Without a way to buy food and no water, they decided to leave for Charlotte, where he and his wife have family, Thompson said.

"That took a while. Our neighbors talked about it for a little bit (and contacted Duke Power), and then they went in and took the power line out and chopped (the tree) up," he said. "It was fortunate for us, because that was the only way we had to get out."

Because they didn't have cell service, they didn't realize how bad the damage was in other parts of the city until they crossed the French Broad river and saw the flooding, he said.

"It was devastating, very sad, to see the city that you love and contribute to - I feel like we've spent so much time there, grown up there - and to see it in that condition is very sad," he said.

After trying multiple ways to get out of town and finding roads blocked, they managed to get through on Interstate 26 to Gastonia and then Charlotte, he said.

They were "very fortunate" compared to "the folks who were not able to leave and have been struggling and going through a lot," Thompson said. "Focusing on the broader community outside of Asheville - all the small towns in Western North Carolina - everyone was impacted, so I really want to make sure that relief and attention is on the wider focus and not just Asheville."

Meeting the vice president

A few days later, a close friend who works in North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper's office and had also evacuated to Charlotte asked them if they wanted to share their story with the vice president during her Oct. 5 visit, he said.

"It was an incredible experience," Thompson said. "It was very intimate. It was just us and one other family."

Harris and Cooper shared updates on the response by FEMA and state resources to the storm in Asheville and the wider Western North Carolina community, Thompson said, and he got to emphasize to Harris how important federal support was going to be for the small businesses that make up the backbone of Western North Carolina's economy.

"That's going to make or break the recovery at this point, in my opinion at least," said Thompson, who works for community development financial institutions that support small business investment.

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Despite false claims, no technology exists to create massive hurricanes, experts say

October 14, 2024 | Herald-Sun, The (Durham, NC) Author: Mary Helen Moore; Staff Writer | Section: News | 743 Words

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You may have read the falsehoods spread on social media suggesting people, not nature, created Hurricane Helene.

Though people do have the means to encourage rainfall on a small scale, no technology exists that would allow anyone to create a hurricane, experts say.

That's because hurricanes require massive amounts of energy to form, explained Chip Konrad, a University of North Carolina professor whose research focuses on the science of extreme weather.

"They're very strong, and they occur over a very broad area, and there's just a tremendous amount of energy that's required to create them and also to maintain them," Konrad said.

Helene originated from a thunderstorm in the western Caribbean first observed on Sept. 23, according to NASA. Its first recorded coordinates are around 1,500 miles from North Carolina, and the National Hurricane Center tracked the storm continuously.

When Helene made landfall Sept. 26, tropical storm-force winds extended more than 300 miles from its center. That's approximately the distance from Raleigh to Cherokee.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's research division says no weather modification technology could produce or steer such a storm.

"Hurricanes Helene and Milton, like all hurricanes, formed on their own due to the right conditions of sea surface temperature and upper atmospheric winds," NOAA spokesperson Monica Allen said in an email.

It takes months of heat over spring and summer to warm the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico enough to create powerful hurricanes, said Konrad, who also directs NOAA's Southeast Regional Climate Center.

"That energy gradually builds up, and that's what it requires to get a hurricane," he said. "Think about how big the oceans are. And it takes a long time in the natural world."

Conspiracy theories spread after Hurricane Helene

U.S. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, a Republican from Georgia, has amplified conspiracy theories on social media that suggest the hurricanes that have hit the Southeast this year are tools of voter suppression ahead of the 2024 election.

"Yes they can control the weather. It's ridiculous for anyone to lie and say it can't be done," Greene wrote Oct. 3.

Democratic President Joe Biden dismissed the idea Oct. 9 as "beyond ridiculous."

Greene followed up Oct. 8 with a link to NOAA's records of attempts at weather modification. The agency has tracked 1,026 such attempts since 1972.

The most common reasons listed on the site are increasing rain and snowfall by cloud seeding, "usually for the purpose of increasing the local water supply," according to NOAA.

That's typically done out west, not in the less drought-prone Southeast, Konrad said, and could never produce rainfall on the scale brought by Helene.

"The thing about cloud seeding is it can only be effective at a local scale. So, you could make it rain, maybe, a little bit more in one place, but you can't make it rain over a broad area," Konrad said.

Helene brought more than 10 inches of rain to much of Western North Carolina, but large areas saw 18 inches from the tropical storm and the rain that fell the two days before. The N.C. State Climate Office's highest measurement for Sept. 25 to Sept. 27 was more than 31 inches at Busick, in Yancey County.

The U.S. government did experiments decades ago that aimed to weaken hurricanes, not strengthen or create them, according to NOAA records.

In 1947, military scientists working with General Electric on Project Cirrus dumped crushed dry ice into a hurricane after it had passed over Florida into the Atlantic, according to NOAA. Instead of weakening, the storm strengthened and veered into southern Georgia. Experts were unsure if the swerve was caused by the scientists, but the public was outraged and the efforts were abandoned.

From 1962 to 1983, the government used silver iodide to weaken storms further from land under Project Stormfury. The results were inconclusive, according to an account published in the American Meteorological Society in 1985.

"Since then NOAA has done no weather modification," Allen said. "The primary concern about altering weather is that you could make things worse, such as the case of using nuclear bombs on hurricanes - a common recommendation NOAA receives from the public."

NC Reality Check is an N&O series holding those in power accountable and shining a light on public issues that affect the Triangle or North Carolina. Have a suggestion for a future story? Email realitycheck@newsobserver.com Copyright, 2024, The Durham Herald Company

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'Still reeling.' Challenges are just beginning for some Western NC schools after Helene

October 14, 2024 | Herald-Sun, The (Durham, NC) Author: Rebecca Noel; Staff Writer | Section: News | 1292 Words Page: 4A OpenURL Link

Michael Luplow stood in front of FernLeaf Community Charter School two weeks ago, feeling optimistic. He thought the school had been spared the worst of Hurricane Helene.

But in less than 24 hours, the school - and his life's work - would be swept clean off its foundation.

"It was absolutely heartbreaking," he said of the school he launched in 2016 in Fletcher. "The Creek campus has been a big part of our identity from the beginning."

The campus in Henderson County sits surrounded by Cane Creek, where students in kindergarten through fourth grade would go for outdoor learning during the week. It's flooded before - but nothing like this. Outdoor learning spaces and athletic fields were washed away, and each of the campus's three buildings became unusable as 5 feet of water crept up the walls.

"The shared experience of watching the loss of this space is creating real, intense feelings for all of us," Luplow said.

FernLeaf is slated to begin classes again Oct. 16, but other nearby school districts will need more time. They're racing to get access to running water and get kids back in the classroom. And parents can't help but wonder whether this break from school might be as devastating for student learning as COVID.

Immediately after the storm, Luplow began trying to contact staff - a tall task when few people in the region had cell phone or internet service. They reached out via email, text, phone calls and, eventually, contacting neighbors and friends until they confirmed all staff and students were safe and accounted for.

"The two happiest days were when they told us that every staff member had been accounted for and then the day when they told us every student had been accounted for," said Lisa Spalding, a third grade teacher at FernLeaf.

Spalding says most staff members, including herself, still lack running water.

But not all is lost. The school has a second campus for middle and high school that 430 elementary school students will now share.

"We've been able to put together a really solid plan to allow for the least amount of disruption," Luplow said. "We are incredibly fortunate that we have been building our facilities to accommodate growth, so we have some flexibility."

Luplow still feels a personal connection to the Creek campus, but after Helene, he's hesitant to rebuild there.

"I would love to see us rebuild the Creek campus because it is such an integral part of who we are, but we're conscious that storms of this magnitude are on the rise," he said. "We know that what makes us who we are are the people."

What's the damage

Buncombe County Schools, the largest public district in the region and 13th largest in the state, aims to reopen its

campuses "as quickly as possible," but only 40 out of 45 schools had power as of Wednesday afternoon. Only 13 had running water.

"We've looked at every viable option we could imagine for the safest and quickest solution to get students back in school," Buncombe County Schools Superintendent Rob Jackson said at a community briefing Wednesday. "We've looked into sharing buildings that do have power and water, looked into partial day schedules and bussing students across the county."

The district, along with Asheville City Schools, is even considering assembling "flush brigades" of community volunteers to carry non-potable water to schools throughout the day to supply and flush their toilets. Both districts said they're ordering portable toilet trailers, though delivery dates have not been announced.

None of Buncombe County's campuses sustained catastrophic structural damage. Some classrooms need carpet replaced and one school saw flooding in its boiler room. Maintenance and facilities crews started repairs and removing downed tree limbs and debris blocking entrances, Chief Communications Officer Ken Ulmer told The Charlotte Observer.

Once some internet and cell service started returning, teachers, administrators and other staff teamed up to try to contact families and educators. As of Wednesday, the district had made contact with 100% of its staff and 98% of families.

"Communication continues to be challenging, but we're connecting with students everyday," Ulmer said. "I was able to connect to a student while I was at a water distribution site. We had several schools where teachers found spots where they had cell service and started calling."

Asheville City Schools initially announced it would close indefinitely, but Superintendent Maggie Furman said Wednesday the district wants to bring students back Oct. 28. It's drilling wells at each of its schools.

"While the city continues to make progress with the municipal water system, we can't wait until it is fully repaired to open our schools," Furman said Wednesday. "Yesterday, we began drilling a well at Hall Fletcher Elementary School and were able to hit groundwater."

She cautioned that it will still take two to three weeks before the district can start using that water in its buildings.

"I felt immense relief that there is some kind of timeline being announced because, at first, there was messaging that suggested we could be out for weeks and weeks," said Liz Tallent, a parent to two second-graders and one sixth-grader in Asheville City Schools. "There was basically a 100% communication blackout. It was really like we were transported to another era."

Tallent says she worries for teachers, most of whom still don't have water in their homes.

"I would almost call teachers first responders in this situation because they're having to make these huge sacrifices and get back to work for the sake of the rest of us," she said. "It really highlights the importance of schools. When there's no school, the whole community is at a standstill."

'Déjà Vu'

North Carolina has strict laws in place for when the school year can start and end as well as how many remote learning days are permitted. State Superintendent of Public Instruction Catherine Truitt announced she's requesting more flexibility for school districts after Helene from the General Assembly, including the ability to continue the school year past mid-June.

Tallent's sixth-grader was in first grade when the pandemic hit in 2020. She said Helene's damage feels similar - life grinding to a halt yet again in the face of a disaster.

"It really feels like déjà vu," she said. "I'm putting some of those lessons that I learned during the pandemic into practice now, which is not something I really thought I'd have to do again. I think I'm kind of in shock."

She's concerned about learning loss like kids saw during the pandemic, which schools are still recovering from. She's finding opportunities for her kids to do lessons with teachers. But she's worried for people who don't have those opportunities.

"This kind of thing, just like the pandemic, exacerbates the difference between those who have the resources and the bandwidth and those who don't," Tallent said. "It just widens the inequities that Asheville already struggles with."

Luplow said parents at his school are echoing some of Tallent's concerns.

"Parents are still reeling from some of the experiences from COVID," Luplow said. "They're concerned about learning loss."

Pulling together

Luplow and Tallent said their communities have sprung into action, volunteering to clear away road blockages, clean rivers and get resources to people who need them most.

"With that heartbreak, also there's immediately been a sense of hope and optimism and opportunities to rebuild," said Luplow. "It's been astounding to watch."

Luplow said schools across the country have sent loads of school supplies to FernLeaf. Tallent said parents in her community have set up a GoFundMe for teachers in her area who may need help covering the cost of home repairs.

Still, they say, it will take years to fully recover.

"I think it's important for our community and the broader community to understand the true impact of this storm," Luplow said. "We need all the help we can get."

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p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C3716C6D7953B0>



NC facility for migrant children freed up for FEMA's use in Helene relief

October 14, 2024 | Herald-Sun, The (Durham, NC) Author: Danielle Battaglia; Staff Writer | Section: News | 482 Words Page: 3A

OpenURL Link

A facility in Greensboro intended to be used to house unaccompanied migrant children will instead be made available to help with hurricane relief.

Sen. Thom Tillis and Rep. Richard Hudson led the nine Republican members of the North Carolina congressional delegation in asking the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to sign over a care facility in Greensboro to the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

On Wednesday, FEMA announced that transfer is taking place.

"This already controversial migrant facility has gone unused for years, which is why Rep. Hudson and I have been pushing the Biden administration to use it instead for Helene recovery efforts," Tillis said in a written statement to McClatchy on Wednesday. "I'm glad they've listened and this facility can now be put to better use by helping North Carolinians in their moment of need."

The facility in northwest Greensboro sits on 100 acres of what used to be the American Hebrew Academy. The school closed in 2019 after 18 years as an international boarding school.

Officials with the Department of Health and Human Services leased the facility to use for unaccompanied migrants who crossed the southern border.

Lawmakers like Tillis and Hudson questioned HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra on how he planned to keep both the community and the children housed there safe. These types of facilities have a long history of abuse allegations. Without definitive answers from Becerra or other HHS employees, Tillis and Hudson have loudly spoken out against the facility's use.

Despite that, the facility became operational to house minors in March.

But that never happened.

On June 23, HHS announced it was ramping down its operation of facility upkeep, though it would have to be ready within eight weeks of being notified that children would need to be housed there. It remains under that classification.

Tillis and Hudson reminded HHS of this when they asked the agency to transfer the facility to FEMA for use.

In a letter to Becerra and FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell, the lawmakers noted that the Greensboro facility has hundreds of beds and facilities for medical care, meals and education. It was created to hold up to 1,100 beds if needed.

"We believe that this ICF (Influx Care Facility) could be repurposed to support the state's rescue and recovery efforts." the letter stated.

They suggested using the facility for the thousands of people displaced by the storm, or as a staging area for aid workers.

The letter was signed by Sen. Ted Budd and Reps. Chuck Edwards, Virginia Foxx, Patrick McHenry, Greg Murphy, David Rouzer and Dan Bishop.

In a written statement, a FEMA spokesperson said transferring the Greensboro facility to FEMA is part of a "comprehensive, whole-of-government approach" to help those affected by the storm.

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Harris packs supplies for Western NC in Raleigh before heading to rally in Greenville

October 14, 2024 | Herald-Sun, The (Durham, NC)

Author: Tammy Grubb and Avi Bajpai; Staff Writer | Section: News | 641 Words

Page: 2A OpenURL Link

RALEIGH Vice President Kamala Harris landed in Raleigh on Saturday to meet supporters and pack hurricane relief supplies as her presidential campaign resumed following Helene's devastating impact on Western North Carolina.

She was expected to spend Saturday night in Raleigh before heading east Sunday for a campaign rally. Harris is expected to speak at 4:40 p.m. Sunday in Greenville before returning to Washington later in the evening.

Harris arrived at Raleigh-Durham International Airport at around 5:45 p.m. Saturday and traveled by motorcade to The Pit Authentic Barbecue in downtown Raleigh. There, she meet with members of the Black community, politicians and faith leaders before helping box up several care packages of diapers, hand sanitizers and other supplies for Western North Carolina.

Last weekend she was in Charlotte on a similar visit.

Greg Hatem, owner of The Pit and founder of Empire Properties, said he worked with Harris' campaign to organize the relief effort. The campaign pulled together the group of supporters they wanted to meet with and have a conversation, he said.

"We took (a truck) earlier, mostly water and gas and basic supplies," Hatem said. "We're going to be taking a second truck, and we're working with the governor's office about what they need and where, so we put those two together - the campaign, Vice President Harris - we put those together to pack this, along with Empire Properties."

The collection drive will continue for a few weeks before the supplies are delivered to the N.C. mountains, he said. After that, they will start planning for how to provide mobile kitchens and construction labor, he said. They're also reaching out to chefs and other restaurant workers in Western North Carolina about how to set up temporary jobs, he said.

"It's such a community of people in the restaurant industry. Everybody knows everybody," he said.

North Carolina a battleground state

North Carolina is one of seven major battleground states that Harris and former President Donald Trump have been crisscrossing in recent weeks. The Harris rally Sunday comes ahead of the start of early voting here, which begins Thursday and runs through Nov. 2.

As part of her outreach in Eastern North Carolina, Harris is also tapping former President Bill Clinton to stump for her. Clinton will embark on a bus tour of the region targeting "hard-to-reach" rural voters between Oct. 17 and 20.

He's expected to appear at small-scale events like "local fairs and porch rallies," and will focus on the economy, CNN reported earlier this week.

Election Day is just 24 days away.

Trump, the Republican nominee for president, held a town hall in Fayetteville on Oct. 4, where he blasted the Biden administration's response to the storm.

As of Friday, the RealClearPolitics polling average showed that Trump has a very slim lead over Harris in North Carolina. The state has only supported Democratic presidential candidates twice in the last 50 years - former President Jimmy Carter in 1976 and for former President Barack Obama in 2008.

Harris and Trump, and their vice presidential picks - Democratic Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz and Republican Ohio Sen. JD Vance - have included the Tar Heel state in multiple campaign stops this year.

Those visits have been ramping up in the last few weeks, with Vance holding a town hall Thursday with voters in Greensboro. He is also expected to attend the Bank of America ROVAL 400 race at the Charlotte Motor Speedway on Sunday, according to WCNC Charlotte. This will be Vance's third visit to Charlotte in less than a month.

On Saturday, the Trump campaign announced that Vance will hold a rally in Wilmington on Wednesday.

Walz has not returned to North Carolina since Helene.

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Helene, Milton show us how real climate change is. Let's fight it.

October 14, 2024 | Herald-Sun, The (Durham, NC) Author: Issac Bailey | Section: Editorial/Opinion | 702 Words

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I was mowing my lawn in Myrtle Beach as Hurricane Milton's outer bands and the tornadoes it brought with it began to lash Florida on Wednesday. Though the lawnmowing was trivial compared to the lashing, a slight inconvenience alongside a pending catastrophe, I couldn't help linking the two because of climate change.

In all my years as a homeowner, I don't remember mowing my lawn this consistently this late in the season. I took out the lawnmower, edger and clippers a couple of weeks ago as well. The hedges had regrown to heights they usually reach at the end of spring.

All it cost me was a few dollars of gas money and a sweaty T-shirt. No biggie. But a change in the climate, even a modest one, could dearly cost Myrtle Beach. Despite the draw of Broadway at the Beach, the SkyWheel and Ripley's Believe it or Not!, weather remains the top reason some 20 million people flock to the area every year. Sitting on the beach taking in the beauty of the Atlantic becomes less palatable without mild, stable weather.

The good news is that the fight to persuade people we are undergoing change is over. NASA says there is "no question that increased greenhouse gas levels warm Earth in response," even if scientists may not be able to say definitively that my lawn is changing or Milton's historic strength was directly caused by climate change because climate is more than just individual weather events. Now, nearly 80% of South Carolinians believe climate change is real, according to Winthrop University polling. That's higher than the national average of about 72%.

The bad news is that fewer of us are in agreement about its causes, what should be done, or if climate change is an urgent matter at all. While 55% of North Carolina residents believe recent extreme weather events are related to climate change, only 47% believe it's an emergency, according to High Point University polling. That's even while knowing rural areas are most vulnerable, which Hurricane Helene has unfortunately just illustrated in devastating ways.

In Florida, the gap is starker. While 90% of Floridians believe climate change is real, less than half would be willing to pay \$10 a month to strengthen that state's infrastructure to weather hazards.

In Congress, when Democrats talk about climate change or "green" projects, many Republicans criticize them. Only 13 House GOP members voted for the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which represents the country's biggest investment in the climate change fight. More needs to be done, but President Joe Biden signed it into law just a couple of years after President Donald Trump spent his time in office rolling back such efforts.

It's akin to knowing an out-of-control freight train is screaming down the track. Instead of working to either try and stop it or get people out of the way, we're stuck arguing if it's really an emergency worth the sacrifice of short-term political wins or a few extra dollars to equip those who can mitigate the damage with the tools they need.

The truth is we've been forking over extra dollars anyway. Some of it has been in the form of having to mow the lawn and cut the hedges a few extra times, the kind of thing that feels small but will add up over time. We've even accepted the occasional house on the North Carolina coast falling into the Atlantic because of rising seas as a curiosity rather than calamity.

In other ways, it is easier to see that the freight train that is climate change has already arrived. In recent years, a variety of storms and other natural disasters around the nation have caused damage that is approaching nearly \$100 billion annually - the highest it's ever been.

While there is no way to say with absolute certainty the damage from Helene and Milton is a direct cause of climate change, we'd be fools to believe it isn't, and bigger fools to let partisanship stop us from committing to doing something serious and sustained about it.

Issac Bailey is a McClatchy Opinion writer in North and South Carolina.

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With schools still closed, NC fifth grader's spirits lifted by teacher's special call

October 14, 2024 | Herald-Sun, The (Durham, NC) Author: Josh Shaffer; Staff Writer | Section: News | 484 Words Page: 3A OpenURL Link

BANNER ELK An eager fifth-grader, Molly Bloemendaal had already missed two weeks of school, huddling in her Banner Elk house without power, water or a good-work sticker.

From her front porch, she could see where the Elk River roared through town at 10 times its height, carrying off the town's water and sewer lines, ripping out bridges and roads.

School seemed out for good.

Then on Monday, Molly's mom handed her a cell phone, where her teacher Libby Gragg smiled from the screen.

"I miss you so much," she said.

Molly's face lit up inside her pink hoodie.

"Is your house OK?" she asked.

The wreckage from Hurricane Helene has canceled class across western North Carolina as the schools themselves were heavily damaged by rising water and sliding debris, and many of the remote mountain towns are still enduring power and water supply outages that could take months to repair - at least.

In Banner Elk, high above Boone in Avery County, the elementary school escaped heavy damage, but the town's 1,000 residents are surviving on bottled water, portable showers and toilets flushed with buckets carried from the Elk River.

At Banner Elk Presbyterian Preschool, a wall of water pushed through the walls and flooded the building. A Noah's Ark carpet hung ironically to dry over a ruined table.

"All my cubbies are gone," said teacher Jarrett Koski, better known as Mr. K. "One of my parents called and said, "Can you FaceTime with him, so he doesn't think Jesus came and got you?' "

'I love you. You take care.'

Molly's mother Nola Bloemendaal spends her day ferrying supplies around town, and when she stopped at the Best Western, a hub for meals and showers, one Avery County child told her, "I'm afraid all my friends are dead."

At Banner Elk Elementary, Gragg checked on every fifth-grader - talking to dozens like Molly.

"We have power but no water," the 10-year-old said.

"OK," Gragg said, "well, you tell your mom to get you over to our house."

At this point, Molly's mother jumped on the call to say her daughter was still wearing the crescent moon necklace the principal gave her before the storm.

"The electricity turned out for a second and then I could see it glowed in the dark," she told her teacher.

"How neat!" Gragg raved. "Well, I hear you are just making us all so proud. You've got that river spirit. The dreamer. Way to go, girl."
"Where are you?"
"I am actually at Banner Elk Elementary. I was just checking in to see how you were because I miss you and love you and I want to see you soon."
"OK "

"OK."

"OK, girlfriend. I love you. You take care."

"OK."

"Bye, Molly."

"Bye."

She clicked off the phone, revived for the moment by a 2-minute outreach.

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Lt. Gov. Robinson's scandal: No action taken, no answers given

October 14, 2024 | Herald-Sun, The (Durham, NC)

Author: Paige Masten; Staff Writer | Section: Editorial/Opinion | 661 Words

Page: 11B OpenURL Link

It's been approximately three weeks since news of Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson's disturbing online behavior surfaced in a CNN report. That's three weeks since Robinson vigorously denied the allegations, and since Republicans used Robinson's denial to avoid criticizing him.

According to CNN, Robinson posted lewd and racist comments on a pornography website more than a decade ago comments in which he called himself a "Black Nazi" and expressed support for reinstating slavery.

Republicans hedged by saying Robinson owed the people of North Carolina "answers" and called on him to provide concrete evidence that CNN's report was untrue. U.S. Sen. Thom Tillis, for example, called on Robinson to disprove the allegations and take legal action against CNN to clear his name. Hal Weatherman, the Republican nominee for lieutenant governor whose face is plastered alongside Robinson's on campaign signs across the state, also called on Robinson to prove his innocence.

Robinson says he has hired a legal team - led by a lawyer who represented Donald Trump in his attempts to overturn the 2020 election as well as in more recent legal battles - and vowed to go after CNN for spreading "salacious tabloid lies." Both Robinson and his attorney promised to move "quickly" in order to resolve the matter before the upcoming election. But that was nearly two weeks ago. Robinson has yet to provide any evidence or take any official legal action.

Robinson's campaign has not provided any further information about the matter, despite inquiries from various media outlets. WUNC reported that Robinson's campaign did not respond when asked for updates and a timeline on when the law firm might release its findings. A spokesperson for Robinson's campaign did not respond to my request for comment, either.

But Robinson and his campaign aren't the only ones who have remained silent on the matter. When the reports surfaced, Tillis even went so far as to issue an ultimatum: disprove the allegations by Friday, or the party needs to "move on." But it's been two weeks since that deadline expired, and Tillis has shown no sign of taking action on it. Tillis' office did not respond to a request for comment.

Weatherman, who said at the time that Robinson's "entire campaign strategy should be focused on proving the allegations false," did not respond to a request for comment, either. House Speaker Tim Moore has said he stands by his endorsement of Robinson, but Senate leader Phil Berger hedged when speaking to reporters last week.

Of course, other serious events have replaced Robinson's scandal in the news cycle. And, twisted as it may be, Robinson has seemingly tried to reap the benefits of those events. He has taken full advantage of the devastation in Western North Carolina caused by Hurricane Helene through photo ops and social media posts, even going as far as to improperly criticize the state's response and run Facebook ads with pictures of himself comforting flood victims.

Asked at a recent campaign event if he's filed a lawsuit against CNN, Robinson appeared to resort to more stalling tactics.

"Not yet, but that is coming and that's one of the things we plan on doing. We have a law firm handling that while we continue to campaign and help the people of western North Carolina," Robinson said, according to CBS 17.

Robinson may be trying to run away from his scandal, but that doesn't mean his fellow Republicans should let him.

Because as much as Robinson is stalling, they're stalling, too. It's far easier to deflect and delay than it is to take the more difficult step of criticizing one of their party's top candidates, let alone call for him to step down. If they dodge the matter altogether, they don't have to say what they actually think. It's the easier choice - and the cowardly one.

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Here are the new rides coming to the 2024 NC State Fair (+ what to know about tickets)

October 14, 2024 | Herald-Sun, The (Durham, NC) Author: Evan Moore; Staff Writer | Section: News | 529 Words Page: 6A OpenURL Link

The North Carolina State Fair is approaching, and fairgoers can expect to see some new rides and attractions this year.

The fair, scheduled for Oct. 17-27 in Raleigh, will feature nearly 100 rides. New attractions include a traveling musician and a spot to enjoy adult beverages made right here in the Tar Heel State.

Here's what to know about new fair rides and attractions in 2024.

What new rides will be at the NC State Fair this year?

There will be two new rides at the state fair:

State Fair Slide: A 210-foot slide

Candyland Adventure: A 130-foot long funhouse

What else is new at the NC State Fair this year?

The Strolling Piano one of the new attractions that will be at the state fair this year. The motorized piano will travel around the fairgrounds as a piano player takes request to play and sing popular songs. The Strolling Piano can be found near Gate 2 behind Dorton Arena near the SkyGazer Ferris Wheel.

Another new attraction comes courtesy of the N.C. Distillers Association, where fairgoers 21 and older can purchase North Carolina-made spirits and cocktails at the new Stillhouse Building located down from the Gate 7 entrance near Heritage Circle. Drinks will be \$15 and capped at two per person.

How can I buy ride tickets cards?

You can purchase ride ticket cards at the NC State Fair website (ncagr.gov/divisions/ncstatefair).

Ride tickets can be purchased at a discounted rate (\$10 for 18 ride tickets) until Oct. 17. Tickets will be \$1 each beginning Oct. 18. One-day unlimited ride wristbands can also be purchased for \$30.

You can also support Hurricane Helene disaster relief efforts while purchasing your tickets. All money collected will go to the MANNA FoodBank of Asheville, which lost its distribution warehouse in the hurricane. When purchasing fair tickets online, a "State Fair Cares" boxed link will pop up on the shopping cart page before you check out.

NC State Fair Ferris wheel and sky lift tickets

There are two rides that are not included with ride ticket cards or wristbands: the State Fair Flyer and the State Fair SkyGazer.

* The State Fair Flyer is a permanent ride at the fairgrounds that offers a 14-minute round trip ride over the midway. One-way trip tickets are \$6 and round-trip tickets are \$9.

* The State Fair Skygazer is a 155-foot Ferris wheel that offers sight lines of up to 15 miles at the top. Tickets are \$6.

How can I check the height requirements for each ride?

You can check the height requirements for each ride online at powersgreatamericanmidways.com.

Note: Wristbands are not recommended for children under 36 inches tall, as there are a limited amount of rides they can safely ride. Parents with children under 48 inches tall should check the height requirements before purchasing to determine if wristbands offer the best value for their children.

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UNC relocated scrimmage takes somber turn after Davis injury

October 14, 2024 | Herald-Sun, The (Durham, NC)

Author: Shelby Swanson; Correspondent | Section: Sports | 918 Words

Page: 1B OpenURL Link

Chapel Hill What should've been a celebration of the upcoming men's basketball season took a brief turn when returning All-American RJ Davis hit the floor after a heavily-contested shot at North Carolina's Blue-White Scrimmage on Saturday afternoon.

The reigning ACC Player of the Year was attacking the rim early in the second half when, following some contact, his body came crashing down to the hardwood.

After the game, UNC Athletics Communications clarified Davis suffered a lower-back contusion - essentially a bruise. Davis was not made available for comment following the scrimmage.

"Basketball play," freshman guard Ian Jackson said. "He got bumped, he fell down, lower-back I believe. He'll be fine. Number four is tough. He'll be good."

Overall, the Blue-White Scrimmage took on a somber, but uplifting, tone.

The Tar Heels wore warm-up shirts to honor Tylee Craft, a North Carolina wide receiver who died Saturday morning following a lengthy battle with cancer.

Originally set for Oct. 13 at Harrah's Cherokee Hotel & Casino Resort, the event was relocated to the Smith Center due to logistical issues following Hurricane Helene. The scrimmage became a fundraiser for hurricane relief efforts, raising more than \$121,230 in donations between ticket sales and the basketball programs' own contributions.

"It was super fun," Belmont University transfer Cade Tyson said. "Glad we got to go out there and compete against each other and get a first taste of what it's like in the Smith Center... the energy was definitely a little different but I enjoyed it and I think all my teammates enjoyed it."

Here are three takeaways from UNC's scrimmage:

Freshman duo continues to impress

Jackson and fellow freshman Drake Powell showed off their growing chemistry on Saturday.

In the final two minutes of the scrimmage, Powell used his length to corral an offensive rebound and quickly found Jackson in motion outside the perimeter.

Before Jackson's defender could close out, the former 5-star recruit had released his jumper.

Swish.

There were certainly more highlight-worthy plays. Jackson's strip of Elliot Cadeau and transition dunk - a flashy, two hand slam - late in the first half comes to mind.

But these routine connections between the freshmen are a more fruitful sign of cohesive play to come as the two hoopers, wildly different in personality, work to learn each others' nuances.

"It was a little bit awkward at first because, I don't know if you guys can tell, but I'm a pretty quiet type of person," Powell said with a laugh. "We gel pretty well together. We'll play 2K sometimes, the NCAA games, and that really translates to the court. We're still learning each other's spots - like where we can be the most successful. I think we can be a pretty good duo this upcoming season."

Cadeau said the team is on a "different level of athleticism this year because of the freshmen."

"I feel like they bring a lot of grit, toughness - and basically everything we need as a team this year," Cadeau said.
"They're bringing it all."

Keep an eye on Seth Trimble

Jackson wasn't the only player showing off his hops on Saturday. Perhaps the most eye-popping play came from Trimble, who caught a body midway through the second half.

The dunk, a one-hand stuff over the outstretched arms of graduate forward Ty Claude, brought a number of fans to their feet. Cadeau, meanwhile, became so excited at the sight he slipped and fell. The point guard then got up ran back on defense - but not before throwing his hands on his head in an incredulous celebration. Trimble tossed his head back, yelled and flexed before locking back in on defense.

Trimble led all scorers with 19 points at a 53% clip. He added five rebounds and three assists and was the only Tar Heel to play the entire scrimmage.

The junior guard didn't speak to the media following the game, but his teammates - like Cadeau - did the talking for him.

"It don't surprise me at all," Cadeau said. "I feel like he does that every day in practice so it's kind of just letting the world see it and it's just fun watching it."

Cadeau said the biggest difference between Trimble this season versus last is his confidence.

"He's always been this skilled, he's always been very talented," Cadeau said. "I felt like his confidence is on another level and I feel like this year he's playing a much bigger role and he knows that. He's filling those shoes pretty well."

Cade Tyson isn't just a shooter

Tyson didn't make a single 3-pointer on Saturday, despite three attempts. While the performance didn't exactly reinforce his identity as a sharpshooter, it gave Tyson the opportunity to show off other aspects of his game.

The Belmont transfer came alive in the second half, recording 10 points by battling down low and getting out in transition.

Tyson also displayed his defensive versatility. He routinely matched up with, and held his own, against both guards and forwards on Saturday.

"I feel like my competitive nature and growing up with my brother [Denver Nuggests forward Hunter Tyson]," Tyson said. "I feel like that feeds into it a lot."

His teammates had high praise for the transfer and how he'll slot into Hubert Davis' system this season.

"He's been playing really well at the four position," Cadeau said. "He's been guarding, literally the one through four, every day in practice and he's been doing a really good job holding his own."

• Citation (aglc Style)

Shelby Swanson, Correspondent, 'UNC relocated scrimmage takes somber turn after Davis injury', *Herald-Sun, The* (online), 14 Oct 2024 1B https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C3716B8C6A4C88>



Catawba Falls trail closed again due to Hurricane Helene; one overlook washed away in storm

October 14, 2024 | Hickory Daily Record (NC) Author: MIKE CONLEY nconley@mcdowellnews.com| Section: Travel | 372 Words OpenURL Link

Catawba Falls trails near Old Fort reopened in late May after a two-year closure for improvements. Now, the trails are closed again after Hurricane Helene swept through as a tropical storm and devastated the area.

Despite the damage, the newly built stairs that take visitors to the waterfalls remain largely intact.

The U.S. Forest Service's Grandfather Ranger District manages the Pisgah and Nantahala national forests. In response to the widespread damage caused by Helene, all recreation sites on the Pisgah and Nantahala now remain closed until hazardous conditions improve and assessments can be completed, according to the website for the U.S. Forest Service.

That includes Catawba Falls near Old Fort. The trail leading to the falls had previously been closed for two years as it underwent major improvements to add retaining walls, boardwalks, staircases and overlooks to improve the trail and visitor safety. About 580 stairs, three overlooks and an observation tower were added. It reopened May 31 of this year.

Lisa Jennings, the recreation manager with the Grandfather District, said the stairs that were built to Catawba Falls only suffered minor damage from Helene and are 90% intact.

The upper overlook was washed away by Helene but the staircase and the tower were untouched, Jennings said. The U.S. Forest Service will need to further inspect the stairs and the trails as the process of reopening moves forward, she said.

"There will need to be additional assessments and repairs and/or bypasses around damaged sections prior to opening," Jennings said. There is no timeline as to when the Pisgah National Forest and Catawba Falls could open again, she said.

"Visitors must heed those closures," Jennings said.

Jennings said Catawba Falls and the surrounding national forest will not reopen until the Old Fort community is ready to welcome back visitors.

Old Fort suffered heavy flooding and damage during the storm.

"We will be working with local officials and emergency managers to reopen Catawba Falls as soon as feasible so that the community can have the recreation support that drives much of its economy" Jennings said. "However, we know that will take time. Damage to infrastructure in this area was major. The fact that the majority of the new staircase and overlooks were not damaged is some good news in an otherwise tough time."

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• Citation (aglc Style)

MIKE CONLEY nconley@mcdowellnews.com, 'Catawba Falls trail closed again due to Hurricane Helene; one overlook washed away in storm', *Hickory Daily Record* (online), 14 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C345B7134CF6B8>



Blood supply dwindles in wake of Hurricane Helene

October 14, 2024 | High Point Enterprise (NC) Author: JIMMY TOMLIN PAXTON MEDIA GROUP | Section: Local | 289 Words OpenURL Link

As donations of water, food, baby formula, generators and so many more items continue to arrive in hurricaneravaged western North Carolina, here's a donation item you may not have considered — blood.

The American Red Cross is working to restock much-needed blood products that went uncollected in the wake of Hurricane Helene, which forced the cancellation of more than a hundred blood drives across the region.

"We are in critical need of donors," said Kaitlyn Connolly, regional communications manager for the American Red Cross. "When we don't have electricity or we don't have running water, we can't collect blood, so we had to cancel a lot of those blood drives."

According to Connolly, the organization has missed out on collecting approximately 2,500 blood products because of the hurricane.

"So the need is critical right now," she said. "We're trying to restock the blood on the shelves, because that blood on the shelves is what saves people's lives."

Donors outside of the affected areas, in particular, are encouraged to make an appointment to donate blood now and help keep the blood supply stable in the weeks to come, Connolly said.

As the news has spread about the shortage of blood, citizens have been stepping up to help meet the need, Connolly said.

"We've seen a lot of people coming out and donating, and we're very thankful for them, but we can always use more blood donations, especially now," she said. "We'll take any blood product — whole blood, platelets or plasma."

As an added incentive, anyone who donates blood between now and Oct. 31 will receive a \$10 Amazon gift card by email and will be automatically entered for a chance to win one of three \$5,000 gift cards.

For a full list of blood drives, visit redcross.org.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

JIMMY TOMLIN PAXTON MEDIA GROUP, 'Blood supply dwindles in wake of Hurricane Helene', *High Point Enterprise* (online), 14 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C44C626D239678



Blood supply dwindles in wake of Hurricane Helene

October 14, 2024 | High Point Enterprise (NC) Author: JIMMY TOMLIN ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER| Section: News| 400 Words OpenURL Link

Want to help? To find a blood drive near you, visit redcross.org, hover your cursor over "Give Blood" and then click "Find A Blood Drive." Type in your ZIP Code for a list of upcoming blood drives in your area. Anyone who donates blood, platelets or plasma between now and Oct. 31 will receive a \$10 Amazon gift card by email, and will be automatically entered for a chance to win one of three \$5,000 gift cards. For full details, visit redcrossblood.org/treat. {related content uuid}ff3db794-7042-42c0-9540-d4d94f063c0d{/related content uuid}

TRIAD — As donations of water, food, baby formula, generators and so many more items continue to arrive in hurricane-ravaged western North Carolina, here's a donation item you may not have considered — blood.

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As an added incentive, anyone who donates blood between now and Oct. 31 will receive a \$10 Amazon gift card by email and will be automatically entered for a chance to win one of three \$5,000 gift cards.

Six blood drives are scheduled in High Point alone before the end of the month, and many more are scheduled throughout Guilford County and in neighboring Davidson and Randolph counties. For a full list, visit redcross.org.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

JIMMY TOMLIN ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER, 'Blood supply dwindles in wake of Hurricane Helene', *High Point Enterprise* (online), 14 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C398E6E15E3C80