

## StarNews (Wilmington, NC): Page 29

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### Oyster Roast attendees take in view at Flake Haven

October 2, 2024 | Anson Record, The (Wadesboro, NC) Author: Lauren Monica Staff Writer| Section: news-main top-stories | 383 Words OpenURL Link

WADESBORO — The Anson County Chamber of Commerce held its annual Oyster Roast on the half shell at Flake Haven, a local event venue that features a sprawling paradise of picturesque views.

Though the beloved community event dates back to 2017, this year was Chamber of Commerce President Sandy Cox's first year sponsoring the oyster roast.

"We are really excited to be here at Flake Haven again this year, it is a beautiful venue. I have a supportive board of directors and I am so thankful for those who helped us get set up for today," said Cox, who admitted the task was a little daunting and she could not have done it without her team behind her.

Cox was also excited to have great weather for the event after Hurricane Helene tore through the Southeast.

"We are really blessed the weather turned out so great today. I know a lot of people waited to purchase tickets until today," Cox said.

The event ended up having a huge turnout with hundreds of tickets sold. State Rep. Mark Brody, Sheriff Howell, and many other well- known people in the county came out to enjoy fellowship with the community. Rep. Brody, who has been a fixture at the Oyster Roast practically since its inception, shared he always has a good time when he visits Anson County.

"I really enjoy coming, it is great food and great people and it is a great cause to support the Anson County Chamber of Commerce. Flake Haven is a really beautiful place to hold it," Brody said.

In addition to amazing seafood served up by Washington Crab, the Al and Friends Band out of Charlotte kept attendees grooving. A husband and wife management and ownership team, the band has been together for about six years. Val Gist handles booking while her husband Al Gist assists her with managing the band. He is also the band's lead vocalist and has been known to create musical magic with the drums on occasion.

"Wadesboro has been really good to us," Val said.

The band has performed for many notable Anson County events, including the Fourth of July celebration over the summer.

Serving up more than oysters on the half shell, Washington Crab, from Washington, NC, had shrimp, hushpuppies, BBQ sliders, and a variety of other southern delicacies for attendees to enjoy.

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Lauren Monica Staff Writer, 'Oyster Roast attendees take in view at Flake Haven', *Anson Record, The* (online), 2 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BF5EE04B60AC88">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BF5EE04B60AC88</a>



### EDITORIAL: Patience should temper rush to give storm aid

October 2, 2024 | Carteret County News-Times, The (Morehead City, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: Opinions | 1091 Words
OpenURL Link

In the aftermath of tragedy and destruction, as we have seen in recent storms hitting the coast and N.C. mountains, there is a sudden desire by those who are able, to rush in to the impacted communities to provide assistance. But often times these quick reactions, all with the best intentions, become part of the problem as professional emergency personnel work through the immediate needs of the affected community.

For those in Carteret County who have lived through storms that have devastated whole sections of the county, such as occurred with hurricanes Isabel and Ophelia, and most recently Florence, we understand and appreciate the value of aid. Not only does it provide physical solace as storm victims attempt to take as much corrective action possible to mitigate the damage, it provides valuable emotional support as well- it gives the recipients comfort knowing that they are not alone in their moments of distress and despair.

But in many cases, particularly in Hurricane Florence, the first order of business was taking action to repair the needed infrastructure, particularly power to the Down East communities. For days, power crews were replacing power poles along U.S. Highway 70 from North River bridge all the way to Cedar Island. And while there was definitely a need for assistance to the hundreds of homeowners whose furniture and clothing was sitting in the front yards to be carted off, the first order of business was to clear the roadways and get electricity to the area.

So too is the situation in the North Carolina mountains where the residents and businesses flooded by Hurricane Helene are trying to just survive, let alone recoup their homes and businesses. While emergency crews are working to assure the safety and wellbeing of the victims, repairing the regions infrastructure is a first order of business. Without needed repairs to I-40, the primary roadway into the impacted regions, along with electricity and communications, any effort to provide sustainable aid to the area is impossible.

According to news reports, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reported Monday that hundreds of roads in the state's mountain regions soaked by the hurricane's "biblical rainfall" were closed due to mudslides and destroyed bridges. More than 1,000 people are being housed in emergency shelters with hundreds more being given shelter in their neighbors' homes.

As would be expected, the communities have come together, providing what little aid is possible, mostly in the form of food and water. A Washington Post article described a scene in the mountain town of Swannanoa where a resident emptied his freezer of venison to grill for his neighbors - this despite the fact that he had lost all of his belongings in hurricane floodwaters.

A local observer noted following Hurricane Florence that as residents bonded together to provide needed support, tough circumstances bring out the best in people. That is the case in the North Carolina mountains as well as in the devastated regions along Florida's Gulf Coast where Hurricane Helene has wiped communities off the map.

So too are the good intentions of the tens of thousands of Samaritans who want to provide aid any way possible. But these good intentions could have bad consequences, and that is why it would be best to pause and wait for the call for aid rather than simply rushing in.

Atlantic Beach Fire Chief Mike Simpson noted recently how just such an effort of good intentions could become a problem for emergency services and first responders. He tells the story that shortly after Bogue Banks roads were opened for public access following Hurricane Florence, he watched as a trailer full of chainsaws was being hauled down Highway 58.

Looking at the chainsaws and worried that they would be used by people with little experience, he told one of his EMS personnel that they should be prepared for an emergency call due to an injury caused by a chain saw. Several hours later his prediction came true as his rescue team made their first call of the day.

Good intentions do not supplant bad planning or misdirected efforts. In fact, the good intentions can compound problems, making the provision of aid by those qualified to provide the aid more difficult or even impossible. The last thing highway crews and power crews need is a line of traffic of good Samaritans getting in the way. Not only do they become an impediment to making the roadways safe for travel, these same good intentioned aid providers become another potential victim should other problems occur.

Recovery from major natural disasters such as floods and hurricanes requires professional management that takes into consideration all the aspects of logistics, to include sustainable services as well as cleared roadways and power systems. These recovery teams are experienced and organized to such a degree that they anticipate the services that will be required days in advance.

Within hours after Hurricane Isabel passed out of the county after flooding the South River community and Down East section of the county, Salvation Army food trucks were in position to provide food to victims. The trucks, originating in Hendersonville, N.C., the current site of Hurricane Helene devastation, had been prepositioned the day before in Raleigh to be ready to roll once the storm had passed. That same logistical process is in place now in all the areas impacted by the Helene.

The urge to help is strong but that desire should be tempered by patience. There will be more than ample opportunities for providing aid. Considering the immensity of the damage in just North Carolina alone, let alone in Florida, Georgia and Tennessee, the need for assistance will be long, very long. News-Times reporter Cheryl Buke noted in a recent article that 45 local families are still waiting for repairs to be completed to their home six years after Hurricane Florence forced their evacuation. That same scenario will probably play out in in the N.C. mountains where the challenges are compounded by the remote nature of many of the impacted areas as well as the need to repair large section of major highways.

While there are immediate needs for victims of Hurricane Helene as well as the residents in the southern coastal regions of the state that were inundated by Potential Tropical Cyclone 8, there will also be need for long term aid. Once FEMA and the various private rescue services depart, the residents will still be trying to reclaim their lives and that is when the need for public support and assistance will be greatest. Be patient, our support and good intentions will be needed for a long, long time.

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Writer, 'EDITORIAL: Patience should temper rush to give storm aid', *Carteret County News-Times, The*(online), 2 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BF4E03303A2D18">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BF4E03303A2D18</a>



### UNC Researcher tracks how species adapt to climate change

October 2, 2024 | Carteret County News-Times, The (Morehead City, NC) Author: Kip Tabb Coastal Review Online | Section: News Times | 1077 Words OpenURL Link

CHAPEL HILL — There is a grippingly real sense of dread that some people feel about the state of the environment.

That's what Dr. Paul Taillie, assistant professor of geography and the environment at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, told an audience last week during the most recent "Science on the Sound" monthly lecture series hosted by Coastal Studies Institute at the East Carolina University Outer Banks Campus.

"This is a documented term called 'climate anxiety,' where this state of the Earth these days is causing people to be anxious," he said. "It's hard to avoid these dramatic, very worrisome headlines about super hurricanes and death and destruction, historic flooding. This feeling of anxiety is valid (and) I think it's very justified."

He delivered his talk, "Coastal Ecosystems and Rising Seas: Impending Collapse or Conservation Opportunity?" Thursday evening, one day before Hurricane Helene brought unheard of rainfall and destruction to western North Carolina.

Taillie acknowledged that while there is reason for concern about the environment, he does not share the full-on anxiety others may experience.

"I tend to be very optimistic about things," he said.

There are reasons for his optimism, he explained, adding he hoped attendees left the evening's discussion with "more of a sense of optimism about climate change and biodiversity than when you came in the room."

Taillie pointed out that all systems evolve and change over time and that the plants and animals living in those systems adjust to the changes and have been "for a really long time, hundreds of thousands of years,"

Taillie said that when he began his graduate studies, he wanted to look at how species, in general, reacted to environmental changes. One of the difficulties he found in wanting to study the possible benefits of those changes was the reluctance to focus on possible benefits.

"It's easier to publish a paper about a species going extinct because of climate change than it is to publish a paper about a species benefiting from climate change," he said. "But that's been kind of a driving force behind my research."

Taillie's first graduate work was to investigate the effects of wildfire on plants and animals, and what he found was that wildfire is, in fact, an important part of the ecosystem.

"I started to notice that there's all these plants and animals that are uniquely adapted to the conditions created by fire, and that these disturbances that we think of as being really bad can often be really good for biodiversity," he said.

When he started his doctoral work, he had the chance to study the 2016 Pains Bay Fire in Dare County that burned 15,000 acres in Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge.

"I was super interested to see what happened to this area. As soon as I was allowed to, I went in there," Taillie continued, showing the audience a picture of burned trees and shrubbery. Just a week later, grass had begun growing among the charred trees. "These grasses (are) palladium or sawgrass. This is exploding," he said. "It's

growing superfast and responding to fire very rapidly."

A year later, he found what was once a forest was completely covered in grasses and fast-growing vegetation.

"This is almost unrecognizable as forest," Taillie continued. "That fire is catalyzing this transition from forest to marsh."

Taillie made the point that the grasses that have grown where there was once dense forest are essential for the survival of a number of species. One year after the fire at Pains Bay there is a clear transition to marsh.

"These marshes support a lot of really unique animals that hide in these dense grasses," he explained. "Many birds and small mammals are running around in there. They're super vulnerable to predation, and so they need this dense grass in order to hide from predators."

Fire is a relatively spectacular environmental change. The changes that occur in a marsh are more subtle but every bit as dynamic.

"Marshes," he said, "have these built-in mechanisms of resilience to changes in sea level."

As sea levels rise, the marsh will often migrate landward, replacing terrestrial systems, especially forest. That movement is apparent in ghost forests, where stands of dead trees immediately adjacent to a live forest.

State and federal agencies, including the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, are concerned about these ghost forests.

"These were proliferating all over Dare and Hyde counties." Tallie said.

He added that he realized while he studied what was happening that "the ghost forest represented a transition from one stage of this transition from forest to marsh. This is not something to stop."

Bird surveys that were taken of the living forest and ghost forest showed that the ghost forests are an important part of species survival and adaptation.

"We started to notice that there were lots of interesting birds hanging out in the ghost forests, much different than in the live forest. One of those is a prothonotary warbler," he said.

A highly migratory species, the prothonotary warbler, is described by the Cornell University All About Birds website as "a species of high conservation concern."

The birds prefer nesting sites in standing dead trees over shallow water, a condition that Taillie described as "the exact sort of conditions that you find in those forests."

He said his work has taken him from the marsh and barrier islands of coastal North Carolina to the Florida Keys, where he has been studying the ability of a subspecies of marsh rice rats to adapt and survive in their environment. "Everyone always wants to know, well, if all the Keys were underwater, where did they go? I don't know," he said and pointed out that, "They have dealt with hurricanes for a very long time."

There are, he pointed out, a number of similarities between North Carolina's barrier islands and the Florida Keys. Both are subject, as an example, to periodic flooding, and it was the flooding that brought the silver rice rat to Taillie's attention in 2017.

At the time, he was working with the Fish and Wildlife Service following Hurricane Irma. The agency was concerned that because of storm surge, "this entire endangered species could be no longer in existence." It quickly became apparent that the silver rice rat population was holding its own, even though the storm surge of 2 to 3 feet should

have inundated the Keys where the rats lived. How they survived is a mystery, Taillie said.

This article is published under a reciprocal agreement between the News-Times and Coastal Review Online, the news service of the N.C. Coastal Federation.

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Kip Tabb Coastal Review Online, 'UNC Researcher tracks how species adapt to climate change', *Carteret County News-Times, The* (online), 2 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFA1F6360062F8">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFA1F6360062F8</a>>



### Lansing residents help one another after Helene's wrath

October 2, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The (NC) Author: Josh Shaffer; Staff Writer | Section: News | 474 Words

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In just a few hours, Big Horse Creek sent a 10-foot wall of water into the tiny mountain town of Lansing, destroying its row of quaint brick art shops, antique stores and cleverly named pizza parlor - Pie on the Mountain.

Hurricane Helene roared through Lansing's section of the popular Virginia Creeper Trail and left it strewn with mud, tree trunks and a Winnebago-sized camper turned upside-down in the water.

All along Lansing's main street, the shopkeepers pulled out soaking walls and floorboards already reeking with mildew, and they offered their canned goods and water bottles for all needy comers.

"This area has been devastated," said Jeff Pierce, a volunteer at the fire department, "Something we've not seen since the 1940s. You're familiar with Carter-Finley Stadium. Two of those, 40 feet high. That's how much water."

As rescue crews cut trees off roads and cleared branches and strips of sheet metal off bridges, the larger world began to see the extent of ruin in North Carolina's northwest corner.

'Caskets floating in the river'

While repairing a broken gas line in Boone, Steve Calhoun recalled the worst he'd seen in Ashe County since Friday.

"Caskets floating in the river," he said. "People in the water and nobody can get to them. Houses in the road. Cars in trees."

The water has receded, but locals do not expect all the area's power to be restored for months. The roads to many remote areas, including west of Lansing, are too washed out for crews to reach.

They worry about those still missing, unaccounted for in the chaos.

In Lansing, the Squirrel and Nut got walloped only four months after it opened. It sold local and vintage art, including pieces made by Lora Young, who spent Saturday, Sunday and Monday grilling donated food.

"A lot of us don't have power," she said, "so they're bringing us stuff out of their freezers. Need some food? We've got chicken grilling now."

Volunteers feeding hundreds

At the fire department, volunteers fed 300 people barbecue though the population of the town 33 miles northeast of Boone is only 128.

Pierce led a prayer over the pig cooker, giving thanks and asking for guidance.

"One thing you have to understand about mountain people," he said. "We're resilient. We keep fighting."

As he spoke, the shopkeepers moved up and down Lansing's main street, shoveling mud.

Young smiled at them over her grill.

"You have to," she said. "Once you get a chance to slow down, it'll all sink in."

Josh Shaffer: 919-829-4818, @joshshaffer08

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### • Citation (aglc Style)

Josh Shaffer, Staff Writer, 'Lansing residents help one another after Helene's wrath', *Charlotte Observer, The* (online), 2 Oct 2024 1A <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BF7CF931CACF98">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BF7CF931CACF98</a>