

MICHAEL'S MESS



ANTON L. DELGADO | MANAGING EDITOR

Hurricane Michael's heavy rain and harsh winds knock a white oak tree onto Haggard Avenue on Thursday, Oct. 11. Clean-up crews cleared the avenue in less than an hour.

Trees down and power out, Elon recovers from Hurricane Michael

ANTON L. DELGADO | Managing Editor | @antonldelgado

WENDY WILLIAMS' FIRST RAYS of sunshine after Hurricane Michael were through the damaged branches of an oak tree.

As she worked, Williams wore soundproof earmuffs — she doesn't like the sound of branches hitting the ground — but thankfully her phone was on vibrate.

As the only arborist at Elon University during Michael, her phone hadn't stopped alerting her to the damage around campus. But on Friday morning, it buzzed for breakfast.

Along with 22 members of Physical Plant's Landscaping and Grounds crew, Williams ate her breakfast while listening to her supervisor's hopes for the weekend.

According to Physical Plant, the storm downed and damaged around 57 trees on campus, falling on roads, buildings, cars and utility lines. Power in areas around Elon was cut off for roughly 50 hours from Thursday to Saturday. While restoring power wasn't their job, much of the recovery effort fell at the boots of Physical Plant workers.

"Our goal is get campus cleaned up of debris by the end of the day,"

said Scott Stevens, director of Landscaping and Grounds, on Friday. "If we can get campus clean, there is no reason to come in tomorrow."

After a 13-hour shift the day before, and knowing what work needed to be done, Williams marveled at the thought of spending the weekend with her daughter. But her gut told her she wouldn't finish everything that needed to be done by the end of the day.

Better to aim for the sky and reach the treetops, Williams thought as she set off from Lakeside to take care of a downed tree — business as usual.

Height of the damage

Now in her 26th year at Elon, nothing comes as a surprise to Williams, especially not hurricanes. Most recently, Williams helped the campus recover from Hurricane Florence in mid-September.

"I don't even remember Florence other than it rained a little," Williams said. "Michael has been far worse for us."

See **MICHAEL** | pg. 4



ANTON L. DELGADO | MANAGING EDITOR

Arborist Wendy Williams uses an extended saw to cut down damaged branches of a tree behind Story Hall in the Colonnades Neighborhood on Thursday, Oct. 11.

DOWNED AND DAMAGED

~57

trees downed and damaged around Elon University's campus. Hurricane Michael's 2.5 inches of rain and up to 56 mph winds is to blame.

HOURS WITHOUT POWER

~50

hours without power at The Station at Mill Point and parts of South Campus. The power outage was from Thursday afternoon to Saturday evening.

TO OUR READERS

This special edition of The Pendulum is being delivered on Monday instead of Wednesday in order to give you timely coverage of Hurricane Michael. The Pendulum will resume its normal delivery schedule next week.



ANTON L. DELGADO | MANAGING EDITOR

A Duke Energy employee observes a crew from Linetec Services as a downed power line is lifted off Briarcliff Road on Saturday, Oct. 13. The power line is suspected to be the reason for Elon's power outages.



With their dog Zeb, Jo and Gene Gremley, two former Elon chemistry professors, walk along Haggard Avenue moments after it is reopened on Thursday, Oct. 11.



Debris from Hurricane Michael lie scattered on bricks as the sun sets over Lake Mary Nell moments after the rain stopped and the winds slowed on Thursday, Oct. 11.



ANTON L. DELGADO | MANAGING EDITOR



HANNA MEYERS | ASSISTANT COPY CHIEF



ANTON L. DELGADO | MANAGING EDITOR

A willow oak topples onto two cars in the Global Neighborhood parking lot on Thursday, Oct. 11. The car on the right took the brunt of the tree's force and received large dents, while the car on the left suffered several scratches.



ANTON L. DELGADO | MANAGING EDITOR



ANTON L. DELGADO | MANAGING EDITOR

Above: Sophomore Noah Orr leads visitors on a tour of campus the day after Elon experienced the worst of Hurricane Michael. The Office of Admissions saw over 100 families on Friday, Oct. 12, the day after the storm.

Left: Gardener Terry Rogers uses a saw to slice a fallen Chinese elm tree behind Brannock Residence Hall in the Historic Neighborhood on Friday, Oct. 12. As Rogers cut through the same tree he helped plant a decade before, all he could think about was a glass of wine and a bubble bath.



ANTON L. DELGADO | MANAGING EDITOR

Harsh winds and ground saturated by water cause trees to become more likely to topple over. This tree fell onto Sloan Residence Hall in the Historic Neighborhood on Thursday, Oct. 11. No residents were harmed.

Racing to recover following the hurricane

MICHAEL | from cover

According to the National Weather Service, Michael poured 2.5 inches of rain onto Alamance County and had wind gusts up to 56 mph. The rain dampened soil at the bases of trees, making them more prone to being knocked over by the wind.

Williams is in charge of assessing, cutting and clearing these trees. For her, it is the most heart-wrenching part of the job.

“Cutting down branches and slicing up trees is painful for me because I just love trees and nature,” Williams said. “But I’ve done it long enough that to me, a dead tree is just a new opportunity to plant something else.”

To help Williams and her co-workers remove larger trees and repair landscapes, Elon contracted Tarheel Tree Service and High Rock Land & Hardscapes. The costs of these contractors have not been determined.

Trees fell onto Sloan Residence Hall, two cars in the Global Neighborhood parking lot and a utility line on Lebanon Avenue. But according to Bob Shea, associate vice president for business, finance and technology, Elon’s landscaping is what got hit the hardest.

While scouring the campus for downed trees, Williams and her co-worker Terry Rogers, a gardener, came across a Chinese elm behind Brannock Residence Hall. With a chainsaw and gloves, the duo began chopping up and piling the branches of the same tree they had both helped plant more than a decade before.

“Nature goes full circle,” Rogers said. “It’s just life.”

The overtime work Williams and other co-workers put in during Michael, alongside the contractor fees, will be the university’s main expense.

Shea estimates overtime fees to be \$30,000 — far less than the overtime costs from Florence, which was around \$50,000.

In the dark

Since Oct. 7, Michael had been forming in the Gulf of Mexico and made landfall on the Florida Panhandle as a Category 4 hurricane on Oct. 10. In response to the storm, five states declared a state of emergency: Florida, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina. Across those states, the storm has led to more than 1.3 million homes and businesses losing power and has killed 19 people as of Sunday.

On a local level, both Alamance County and the town of Elon also declared a state of emergency. At the storm’s peak on Thursday, Duke Energy reported 24,959 power outages in Alamance County, including the Station at Mill Point and South Campus.

Throughout Thursday and Friday, the Burlington Fire Department responded to roughly 45 emergency calls,

while the Elon Fire Department responded to more than 50. All calls were in relation to Michael and most commonly regarded downed trees and power lines. Neither fire department noted any injuries.

Similarly, Elon’s Student Health Services, which maintained Fall Break hours, received zero patients with Michael-related injuries.

The cause of Elon’s power outage has not been confirmed. But a downed power line on Briarcliff Road restored on Saturday afternoon is suspected to have contributed to Elon’s outage. According to a Duke Energy employee supervising the restoration, the power line “could be the one affecting Elon.”

During the two days without power, Moseley Center, which runs off a generator, was used as a student shelter. Jana Lynn Patterson, associate vice president for Student Life, was one of two staff members present throughout Friday night.

“Any time we have a widespread power outage, Moseley is our main center,” Patterson said. “As long as we got a residential area where folks can’t access power, we will keep the shelter open.”

Before power was restored, administrators had planned to use Alumni Gym to host the roughly 320 Mill Point residents. The return of power on Saturday rendered these plans



A DEAD TREE IS JUST A NEW OPPORTUNITY TO PLANT SOMETHING ELSE.

WENDY WILLIAMS
ARBORIST

unnecessary.

“It was definitely very nice to know I didn’t have to make any other plans and I didn’t have to stay in Alumni Gym,” said senior Reed Stiller, a Mill Point resident.

With power back on and students returning from Fall Break, life at Elon is expected to go back to normal.

After the storm

The familiar sight of campus tours were seen on Friday morning, the day after the worst of the storm. According to Greg Zaiser, vice president for enrollment, around 200 families visited Elon’s battered campus over Fall Break.

“Our university guides are amazing,” Zaiser wrote in an email. “In spite of the horrific and dangerous weather, they made the best of the situation for our visitors.”

Now looking ahead, after experiencing both Michael and Florence almost exactly



a month a part, Elon officials will be reflecting on how to improve the university’s emergency preparedness.

“We do a great job here at planning, but afterwards, we always sit down and critique ourselves,” Shea said. “I can guarantee at our next senior staff meetings, some of the topics on the agenda will be what we did well, what we didn’t do well and what we can do better.”

One main takeaway from Florence was maintaining a consistent line of communication with the community.

“After Florence we critiqued ourselves about communication,” Shea said. “We decided to air on having a consistent email flow.”

Between Thursday and Saturday evening, Jon Doolley, vice president for Student Life, emailed the student body eight times regarding Michael. His emails were followed up by article updates on E-Net, a communication strategy senior management plans to continue.

Circling around Elon

As Elon plans for the future, Williams is content with the present.

Williams’ life has revolved around Elon ever since her first job at the Daniele Nursery, where she started as a horticulturist growing shrubs.

Her boss there was Mark S. Daniele, son of late Elon President Emeritus James E. Daniele. Williams faced her first storm, Hurricane Hugo, with Mark in 1989. Four years later, she transferred to Physical Plant and has worked there ever since.

“Working hurricanes is always kind of exciting and kind of stressful. It was then, and it still is now,” Williams said. “Just now, we have to do it before all of the students get back.”

Cleaning up after Michael before students return from Fall Break is one of Physical Plant’s top priorities, especially with Connie Book’s presidential inauguration on Oct. 18. Book will be Williams’ third Elon president. She began with Fred Young, contin-



ued with Leo Lambert and now welcomes Book.

Twelve years after starting at Elon, Williams received her arborist certification. As Williams’ career continued to grow, so did other aspects of her life. In 2001, Williams named her only child Summer — despite her favorite season being spring.

Now, a senior in high school, Summer plans to apply early decision to Elon, the school her mother has cared for since before she was born.

“I applied here because it’s home and because I’ll get to see her every day,” Summer said, nudging her mom.

Though the damage Michael has caused on campus has been limiting the time Williams has been able to help her daughter with the college process, it hasn’t cut bonding out completely. While Physical Plant made it clear there was no obligation to work on Saturday, Williams and less than half a dozen co-workers volunteered to come back to campus and continue the recovery effort.

But, Elon employees weren’t the only ones helping out. Summer spent her Saturday volunteering with her mom.

“One of my earliest memories is coming to campus to work and spread grass seeds around,” Summer said. “So, I figured, why not work today?”



PHOTOS BY ANTON L. DELGADO | MANAGING EDITOR

Top: Workers in safety gear watch a downed tree by Carol Grotnes Belk Library being removed from Haggard Avenue. The white oak tree blocked the avenue for roughly an hour on Thursday, Oct. 11.

Middle: Facing her next challenge, arborist Wendy Williams looks at the branches of a damaged tree by Sloan Residence Hall. Williams was raised three stories high to deal with the branches on Friday, Oct. 12.

Bottom: Sporting an entirely waterproof outfit, arborist Wendy Williams leans against her Cushman cart after spending the day clearing the damages Hurricane Michael caused on campus on Thursday, Oct. 11.