

***NC AGRABILITY IN THE
EXTREME—ASSISTING
DURING HURRICANE
HELENE (A SAMPLING
OF ASSISTANCE)***

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NC Agrability is an AgrAbility Affiliate program
through NC A&T State University



NC AgrAbility is part of a larger agricultural safety and health platform at NC A&T

From PI Cook Marshall's previous work in the NGO sector and in alignment with the mission of NC A&T to assist the most vulnerable in our agricultural system, for the months of October – December 2024, NC AgrAbility switched up our focus encapsulated by these questions:

1. How can we support or relieve the burden of partners we have already on the ground there? What could we take on?
2. In the affected zone, who were the most vulnerable in the agricultural ecosystem in terms of safety and health and who might be falling through the crack and what can we do to assist?
3. How is the mental health and stress of our current NC AgrAbility clients and what additional support could we provide or coordinate?



N.C. A&T
STATE UNIVERSITY

COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION

Support or relieve the burden of partners we have already on the ground there

Usually the farmworker health project Vecinos based in far western NC spends the fall preparing farmworkers medically and outfitting them to assist in North Carolina's Christmas tree harvest.

While there are also settled populated of farmworkers there, about 200 new farmworkers come every year to that area specially (and many more across Western NC) for fall and winter tobacco, Christmas tree, and greenhouse harvests.

Vecinos needed 186 sets of these items:

Here is the list. More below the list. These farmworkers will be doing the Christmas tree harvest and greenhouse harvest for Christmas.

- Mens and Womens work jackets--variety of sizes M-XXL
- Glove liners / insulated gloves
- Leather gloves
- Work gloves
- Work boots

Help support
Trinity Tree Farm
a Christmas Tree Farm in Avery County, NC



Trinity Tree Farm in Newland, NC suffered tremendous damage from hurricane Helene. Years of growth has been affected and growth will be hindered for years to come. In effort to salvage what they can of their 2024 season they are offering their beautiful, but battered, trees at wholesale pricing. Tree tops will be cut from the salvaged trees damaged by the storm. However, by adding one of these trees to your home or space it will surely bring a little extra Christmas spirit this year while helping out our neighbors.



Three Ways to Show Support

- **Sponsor a Lot**
Order trees to sell on your own lot
Perfect for churches, civic groups and nonprofits
Transport of trees can be arranged
- **Pre-order Trees**
Form Link Attached
Approximate sizes:
4' \$40
6' \$60
8' \$80
Picked up from various Trial locations 11-30 & 12-1
- **Purchase a Virtual Tree**
Make a donation to:
Avery Farm/Trinity Tree Farm at the link below:
www.AveryChristmasTrees.com/shop

For questions about Sponsored Lots and Pre-Orders, please email admin@grassrootboots.com



Order Confirmation

Your guaranteed delivery date is:
Thursday, November 7

Your order will be sent to:
Crystal Cook Marshall
UNION GROVE, NC
United States

Your shipping speed:
FREE Shipping

Order #
114-2408902-5096268

[View or manage order](#)



48 Pairs Bulk Thermal Work Socks for...
Sold by HappySupplier
Condition: New
Qty : 3
\$58.20



Coume 42 Pairs Thick Warm Winter Soc...
Apparel
Sold by Surlontye
Condition: New
Qty : 1
\$42.99

Private appeals by Cook Marshall resulted in donations of the needed work gloves and socks

Online community specific FB groups and mutual aid groups formed or reignited (previously more active during peak Covid)

PI Cook Marshall worked those networks Special assistance from Holler to Holler—and made a connection for coats!

Gathered assistance

Raised funds to cover the usual yearly need of farmworkers for gear, taking a very small burden off the Vecinos crew while they assisted folks on the ground

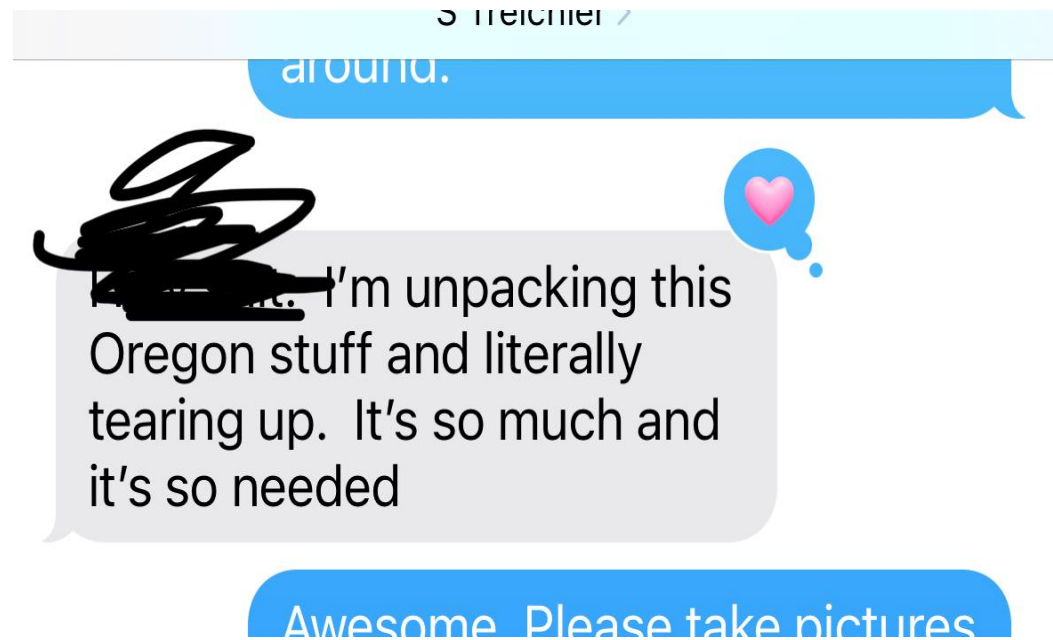


Connection through mutual aid group
Holler to Holler posted about a coat
give away through Pearisburg Baptist
in VA– they assembled 186 good
coats + bought 25 sets of workboots



PPE was in short supply and many unskilled people were doing very dangerous chainsaw work. The nonprofit Asheville Tool library already was giving free chainsaw safety workshops but they needed PPE specific to that work and more to lend or give away.

I think the Oregon parts are getting delivered today! I just got a call from FedEx freight and I'm headed over to the Tool Library to meet. I think there is still a need but also don't want you chasing a ghost. The pop-up, we did the other day and Spruce Pine. They brought us 63 chainsaws to fix. We thought it was winding down, but there's so rule communities that still have a lot of trees that need to be processed so we're still trying to pop up there. Let me see what Oregon sent today And then we can see if it's good to keep up with chainsaw companies or maybe pivot to tools needed for rebuild. If you're down with that.



PI Cook Marshall reached out (cold called, emailed, tracked down on LinkedIn chainsaw companies. Was given the runaround by Husqvarna and Stihl, but Oregon Tool reached back when we reached out. The goal was to take the burden off Asheville Tool Library for this search for PPE.

We are a small and stretched staff in Agromedicine at NC A&T, however, using training from her former work in a USAID program, Cook Marshall went seeking vulnerable populations to assist rather than wait on them to find help or to reach out. There are always people that fall through the cracks of big agency assistance.

Cook Marshall scanned social media to find some folks to assist, and, reached out to people being pointed to as local trustworthy intermediaries.

Three communities in the highest mountain region had very specific needs

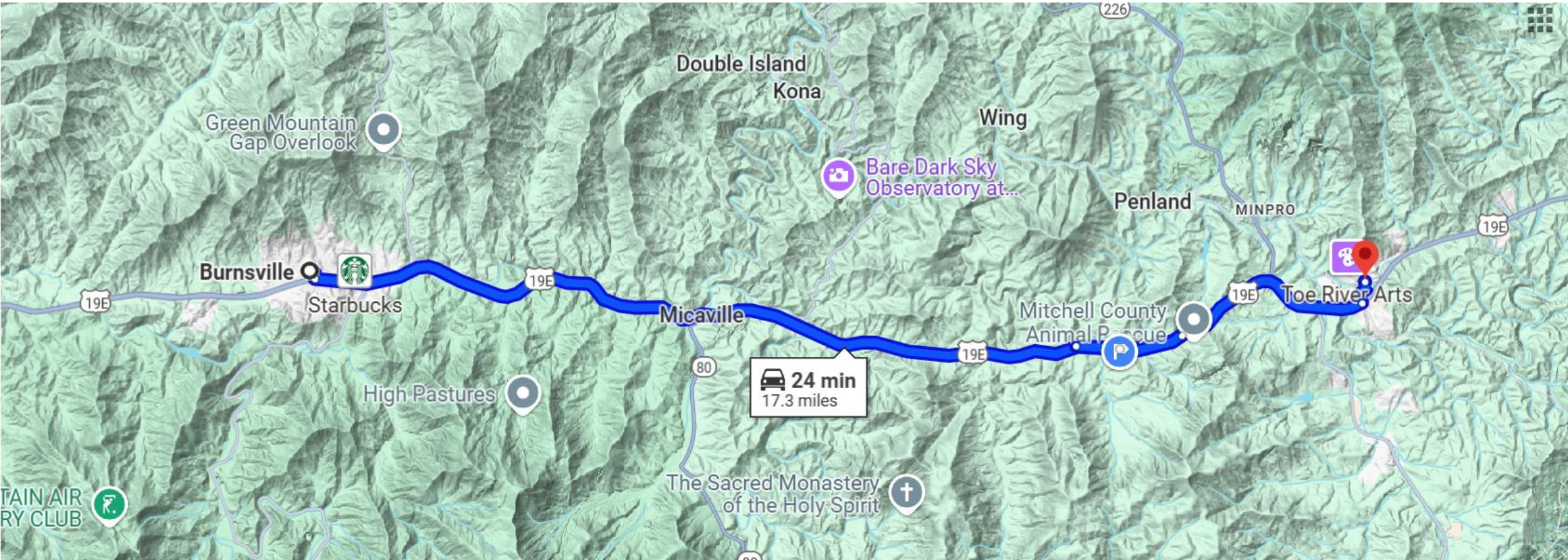
Burnsville— right under Mt. Mitchell

Estatoe (farmworkers in a trailer park)

Spruce Pine (farmworkers and locals spooked by the militarized atmosphere)

**VERY DIFFICULT TO GET TO PEOPLE AND TO ASSIST
INITIALLY DUE TO TERRAIN.**

Right under Mt. Mitchell (6,684 ft). Farming: tobacco, Christmas trees, livestock, greenhouses, fruit. The weather event reclassified as a geologic event as the water caused 1200+ landslides regionally. The mountains fell down in some places...FEMA was threatened in Burnsville and Spruce Pine by locals, so unofficial channels and National Guard stepped in.



Burnsville (farming right under Mt. Mitchell in very severe topography: livestock

PI had strong previous contacts there

Statesville, NC – PI's local town served as a staging area for aid for the region

PI organized direct relief and offered some reprieve for folks working ongoing in the affected zone

A local Statesville church donated a new wood splitter through PI contact



Trailer Park of Settled Farmworkers in Estatoe, NC
PI reached out to a person online designated as a person of trust
Raised private funds
Brought culturally appropriate food
More propane for stoves
Blankets
Clothing
The trailer park looked like the trailers were sailboats stacked behind each other in the “hollow” and they had no running water, septic, electricity, or heat.
Some people were living in tents. Most people were living in the wrecked trailers.
Not appropriate to take photos of people suffering.

Settled Farmworkers in this area had been threatened by out-of-state volunteer aid workers unfamiliar with the actual ethnic make-up of WNC

Farmworkers has aid and water ripped from their hands—told “this is not for you.”

Info of this treatment spread through the community so they stopped or did not go for showers or laundry or other services.

Estatote and nearby Spruce Pine—ongoing work there

over weeks to uncover real issues

Community-organized mutual aid came to the rescue when official channels did or could not

Church of Christ in Morganton

Western NC organized community assistance days

Western NC Mutual Aid brought IBCs for water

Holler to Holler out of Virginia sent \$\$ and heaters

Private donations provided

culturally appropriate food.



Co-hosted specific community aid days in Spruce Pine with medical, culturally appropriate food, and other aid.



- Discovered during a community day that some folks had not gotten the message not to bathe in or wash their clothes in the water. Their skin was peeling and their clothes were falling apart in the creek water,
- They were afraid to come to shower stations or laundry stations out of fear of being targeted
- Orchestrated donations of individualized solutions for water filtration in buckets—100 bucket water filters donated by filter company. They could collect rainwater and filter it for washing.
- Church of God in Morganton assembled and delivered those. Holler to Holler donated buckets.
- Mutal Aid of WNC brought IBCs to that trailer park and organized refills.



Church of God staging area for assistance to be brought to Spruce Pine



PI's pick up full of buckets and filters & other aid

Mental health and stress of our current NC AgrAbility clients and what additional support could we provide or coordinate

- Sent out an alert for where to turn for assistance
- Updated NC AgrAbility Facebook page with where to go for aid--- still update it now with weather warnings
- Field agents called 50+ current clients or in pipeline clients to check in. <<< Something we have decided to incorporate at regular intervals– just a friendly call for checking in.

Centering support for partner organizations and assisting the most vulnerable ag populations

1. Support or relieve the burden of partners we have already on the ground there.
2. In the affected zone, find and assist the most vulnerable in the agricultural ecosystem in terms of safety and health and who might be falling through the crack.
3. Check in on mental health and stress of our current NC AgrAbility clients and what coordinate additional support.

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