

UNCW Tree Relocation Project To Begin Feb. 25

Wilmington- Paving the way for new buildings and infrastructure at UNCW means the relocation of some of the university's longleaf pines and majestic oaks, assuring the preservation and replanting of all tree species.

tree spade is then used to dig up the trees and transport them to their new locations.

"Moving trees is a lot like playing Chinese checkers," says Robert Warren, landscape services superintendent. "You start with the last hole you want to fill and hopscotch your way back."

After the trees are replanted, great care must be taken to keep them properly watered. Most of the trees being moved will go to areas served by the university's irrigation system, or where there are plans for irrigation to be installed. Trees that fall outside of the system are usually watered by means of "alligator" bags. These bags hold up to 20 gallons of water that penetrate at a rate determined by the slit placed in the bag. The green bags must be refilled manually, but are an efficient way to keep the roots of the replanted tree hydrated.

The majority of the trees being moved have a trunk span of 2 to 12 inches. Once a tree exceeds this size, it becomes too large, and is not feasible to move. In those cases, the university has pledged to replace a like number of significant trees in other areas on campus.

The UNCW ECO Club (Environmental Concerns Organization) has partnered with the Office of Facilities in the replanting project. Student ECO club members counted the number of significant trees in areas affected by planned campus construction and made recommendations for the number of trees to be replaced.

"The two tree counts I participated in were definitely positive experiences," said Johanna Imhoff, ECO club vice president. "Not enough students are aware of what the university is doing or even how to find out. Involving students in the process is a big step forward."

According to Warren, the trees will be relocated to high-student areas in order to soften the look of campus and make entrances more appealing. The trees will not be replanted in straight lines, instead they will be grouped in the same configuration they are now in order to create a natural look.

"Our goal is to minimize the effects of construction on significant trees, to whittle away the open areas by planting more stands of trees and to avoid plantings now

that will need to be cleared for later construction projects," he said.

And because the best times to transplant trees is from Nov. 15 to March 15, planting plans must stay well ahead of construction plans. "We are forerunning building plans by as much as six months to two years," says Warren.

The two major sections of campus that will benefit from the tree relocation are the entire Campus Commons and Greene Track and Field. The trees in front of the University Union, along with those in the Leadership Grove, will be relocated throughout the commons area. Also, several oaks and a few pine trees will soon be moved to Greene Field where they will provide shade during special events.

For more information, contact Robert Warren at 910/962-3107.