



Hurricane Helene Update

As of 5 p.m. June 20, 2025

Latest News

- Crews and contractors have completed repair or replacement of 456 (or 54%) of the 846 bridges, 55 (59%) of the 92 large culverts, and 1,213 of the 1,217 smaller culverts damaged by the storm.
- We have completed the permanent replacement of 17 bridges and anticipate 137 more bridges need to be replaced.
- To date, the Department has spent \$852.2M on Helene recovery and has been reimbursed with \$157.2M in federal funding (\$92.2M FEMA, \$65M FHWA).
- Debris removal is now 70% complete or greater in all affected counties except Henderson (55%). Other counties with the most remaining debris removal needed are Haywood, Jackson, Macon, Polk and Transylvania (70% complete), Buncombe, Madison and Yancey (72%), and Mitchell (75%).
- Heavy rains Wednesday caused rockslides and flooding on Interstate 40 in Tennessee near the state line. This resulted in NCDOT closing I-40 West at Exit 20 (Jonathan Creek Road) until TDOT clears and reopens the interstate, which is expected to take several weeks. Mountain region IMAP drivers relied on skills and lessons learned during Helene to turn traffic around at openings designed for this specific purpose throughout the temporary two-lane section in the Pigeon River Gorge.
- NCDOT issued social posts and a special alert was activated on DriveNC.gov featuring the same [detour information](#) utilized when I-40 was closed due to Helene and previous slides in the gorge. We also incorporated messaging in the alert and [social posts](#) at the request of Great Smoky Mountains National Park staff, urging truck drivers to NOT attempt to use U.S. 441 to cross from state to state.
- We continue to coordinate with the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources on a ceremony to celebrate the reopening of Chimney Rock State Park on June 27 – exactly nine months after Helene devastated the area. In addition to constructing a temporary road restoring access through Chimney Rock, NCDOT recently completed a temporary bridge that will enable residents and visitors to access the park.
- Communications sent a [press release](#) Friday inviting the public to a June 26 meeting at Bat Cave Fire Department regarding reconstruction of Middle Fork/Toms Falls Road in Henderson County. NCDOT anticipates opening the contract to bidding in late July with construction starting four to six weeks later. This informational session will cover:
 - Timeframes for the start and completion of construction
 - Coordination with utility agencies
 - Roadway closures during construction