

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

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Greetings FM Team,

I want to thank you all, and especially Outdoor Services and Building Services, for the extraordinary efforts of snow removal that occurred after the mid-March snowfall.

You may be interested to know that 97 out of the 100 elms on the Oval survived, but three were lost in the most recent storm event. The Outdoor Services Group in collaboration with the contractor SavATree have been extremely busy with limb cleanup—removing hanger limbs caught in trees, hauling branches to adjacent areas to be chipped, and so on. This has been an “all hands” effort by the group, including student and non-student hourly employees. The end goal is making the Oval and the larger campus safer for our community and preserving the trees for the future.

Outdoor Services Manager Rodney Gillespie praised the group, “FM Grounds staff have shown the true qualities of a team. Many set aside their regular job duties to help our tree crew, assisting with clean-up efforts and putting campus back together after the storm. From supervisors to hourly employees, all have lent a hand in this monumental effort!”

University Planner Fred Haberecht shared with me that while 97% of the Oval elms survived the storm, which deserves an A grade, more context helps us understand the story of these elms. The first Elms were planted in the Oval 140 years ago this spring, and were part of a larger planting of 3,000 trees total. Over the entirety of those years, we have lost some with most major snowstorms. We observe from lived experience and historical records that most elm trees that make it past the first 15 years of life—and the frequent spring and fall snow events of the Front Range—continue on to present day. However, the first 15 years is very difficult. American Elms, which are the majority of the Oval trees, are very fast growing with a wild and unruly form in youth. The small ones that make it through the first 15 years often catch up in size with their elders, so over time it is hard to tell which ones were planted first. The mature trees lining Oval Drive, for example, are 45 years younger than the mature trees lining the central walk.

For 140 years CSU has replanted when catastrophe struck, and that dogged perseverance has resulted in the Oval being the most iconic space on campus for generations. I trust that Facilities Management will continue to be good stewards of our trees, fulfilling the promise of the CSU Campus Arboretum for generations to come. Thanks again to all the FM employees who helped and continue to support the campus cleanup efforts after this last major storm.



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