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Trees

Continued from Page 1

seconds. They make a lot of noise and tend to fall slowly. But even though they are loud, King said, it was lucky it fell at night because there's always the possibility of panic if a lot of people are around.

About three years ago, the University started looking more carefully at potential problem trees and took out 10 they thought were a serious risk.

"The campus was barren when the University started [in 1876], and some of the trees on campus today are in excess of 100 years old," King said.

Trees are living organisms, he said. They live and die, and the University is now experiencing some of the drawbacks of having old trees.

Facilities Services always replaces the trees it cuts down after reexamining the area and deciding if another tree would survive in its place, King said.

"Sometimes we replace one tree with two," he said. "We always want new trees growing so the population has a good range of ages."

In the city of Eugene, Johnny Medlin, the maintenance support services manager, said it is typical to have problems with trees, but he said this year is the worst wind damage the city has seen in a number of years.

Trees mainly fell on streets, causing six street closures and damaging a large part of Hendricks Park, Medlin said.

He said the city has an emergency command center that has two-way radio capability that helps the city's employees mobilize and act quickly.

"We anticipated the storm and had people to man that," he said. "It's common to call crews in for overtime."

Medlin said it is still too early

for a cost estimate, but the most significant damage was at Hendricks Park, where at least 20 trees fell and a picnic shelter was ruined.

Concerning preventive measures, Medlin said the city usually doesn't respond until it gets a call about a problem, but it does periodically check for problem trees.

"We have staff almost full time to do condition assessment and hazard assessment," he said. "But there's not much opportunity to do a prediction more than a few hours ahead of time."

The trees hardest hit in last week's wind storm were evergreens, because they have a large canopy-like structure that creates a wind sail, he said. A big problem is that when weather fronts come in, wind is often a part of them, he said.

"With rain, wind and ice, it is not uncommon that they all go together," he said.

Even though the city trees were hit harder than those on campus, University Arborist John Anthony said, the University is a tough place for trees.

"Trees have a life span that is sometimes compromised by the conditions," he said. "On campus, there are injuries to trees that would not be done in the wild."

Anthony said trenching for sewers, laying concrete and digging for irrigation can often cause problems for trees. In these situations, trees go into decline sooner than normal, he said.

These environmental stresses, old age and an event like a wind storm all contribute to tree problems on campus, he said.

Felicity Ayles covers city development and the West University neighborhood for the Emerald. She can be reached via e-mail at fizzer@gladstone.uoregon.edu.

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