

HUMAN RELATIONS



CHRISTOPHER NORRINGTON

Chimney Rock State Park,
Department of Natural and
Cultural Resources

As a maintenance construction technician at Chimney Rock State Park, Christopher Norrington is responsible for caring for the park's buildings, vehicles, and trails, managing invasive species, and helping to educate the public on the park's resources. While Norrington is accomplished in this role, it was his actions during and directly after Hurricane Helene that were award-worthy.

At a time of true devastation, Norrington became a lifeline for his community and a powerful example of what it means to be a public servant. Before the worst of the storm even struck, Norrington acted quickly and selflessly. On September 26, 2024, as rain poured and the Rocky Broad River rose to historic levels, he closed the park and secured public safety barriers before heading home. A dedicated steward of taxpayer dollars, Norrington returned to the park's maintenance warehouse that evening as the hurricane's winds intensified. He rescued a state-owned tractor and chainsaws – valuable tools, especially for rescue and cleanup operations – just hours before the warehouse and all its other contents were washed away.

Over the next four days, Norrington worked tirelessly to serve his neighbors. On September 27, he began clearing roads, checking on residents along the way. Drawing on his emergency medical technician training, Norrington aided in evacuations, performed welfare checks, and helped people escape dangerous, uninhabitable areas. He later supported swift water rescue operations and unloaded emergency supplies for local shelters, all without returning home for more than a few hours of sleep. At every turn, he acted not for recognition, but out of deep care for his community.

Christopher Norrington exemplifies the best of what it means to be a state employee. His actions not only protected lives, but also demonstrated the compassion, resilience, and determination that define North Carolina's public workforce. To the residents of Rutherford County, he is a hero. To the State of North Carolina, he is a shining example of the values that guide our work every day. The state proudly honors Norrington for his extraordinary contributions to advancing human relations through his selflessness.

