



NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & CONSUMER SERVICES

North Carolina Forest Service

Greg Hicks, Assistant Commissioner / State Forester
Kevin Harvell, Deputy State Forester
March 12th, 2026



*To protect, manage and promote forest resources for the citizens
of North Carolina*





Mission

The mission of the North Carolina Forest Service is to protect, manage and promote forest resources for the citizens of North Carolina.

Wildfire & All-Risk Responsibilities

The North Carolina Forest Service (NCFS) is responsible for:

Protecting state and privately-owned forestland from wildfires, forest pests and diseases (§ 106-895)

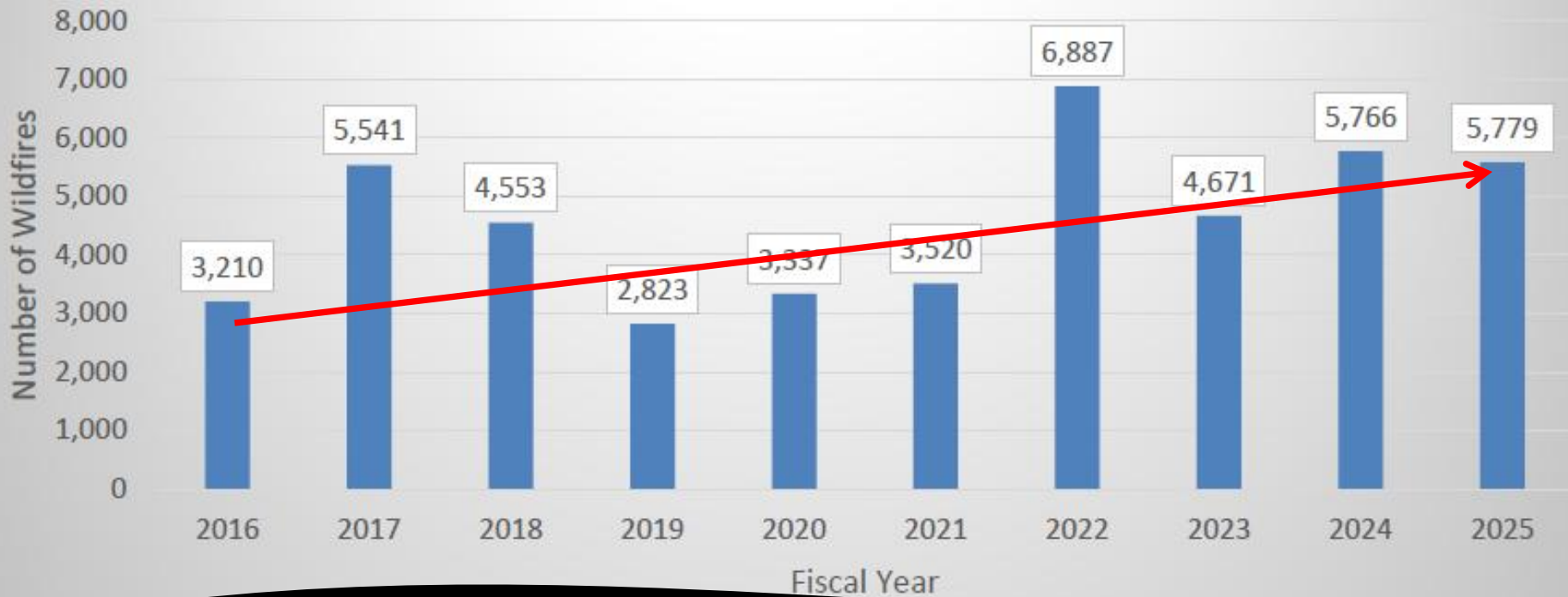
Regulate certain open burning (§ 106-940 to 106-950);

Providing emergency response resources and expertise for all-risk incidents, such as hurricanes, tornados, ice and snowstorms, and infectious diseases (§ 166A-19.77)



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WILDFIRE / ALL HAZARD EMERGENCY RESPONSE

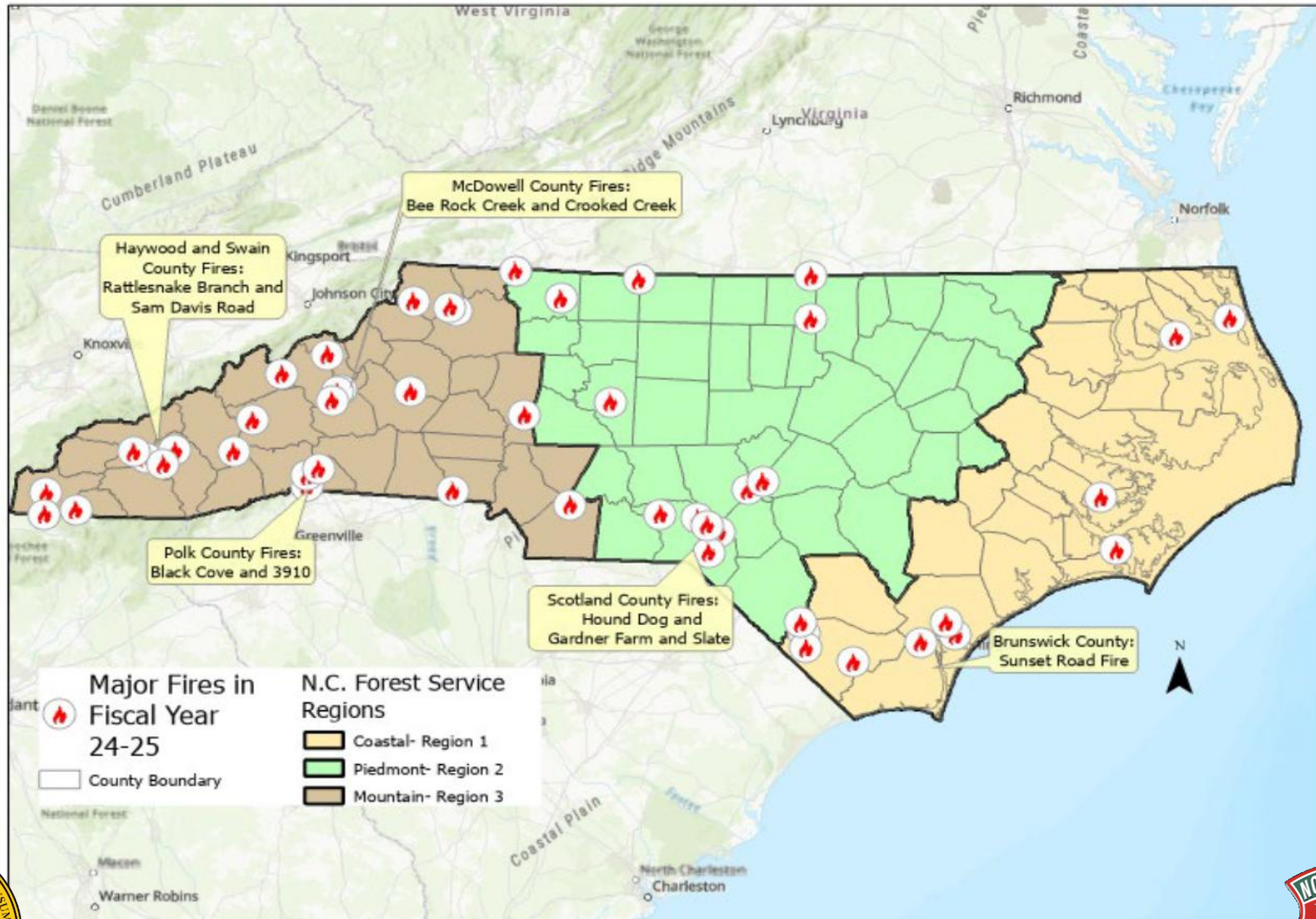
NCDA&CS is charged by G.S. 106-895 to prevent and control forest fires in the state

- NC averages 4,589 wildfires burning 29,499 acres per year (10-year average)
- NCFS is designated as an emergency response agency by G.S. 166A-19.77 to support all-risk incidents in the state (hurricanes, tornados, winter storms, etc.)





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PERSONNEL

643 full-time positions

66 seasonal employees

Position types include:

- Foresters, Forest Technicians, Law Enforcement, Vehicle/Equipment Technicians, Forest Fire Equipment Operators, Pilots, Electronic Technicians and Administrative

Positions are located at the County, District, Region, and Central Office levels

**Additional time-limited FTE's (3) & Temporary Positions (30)
Funded by the USFS Grants**

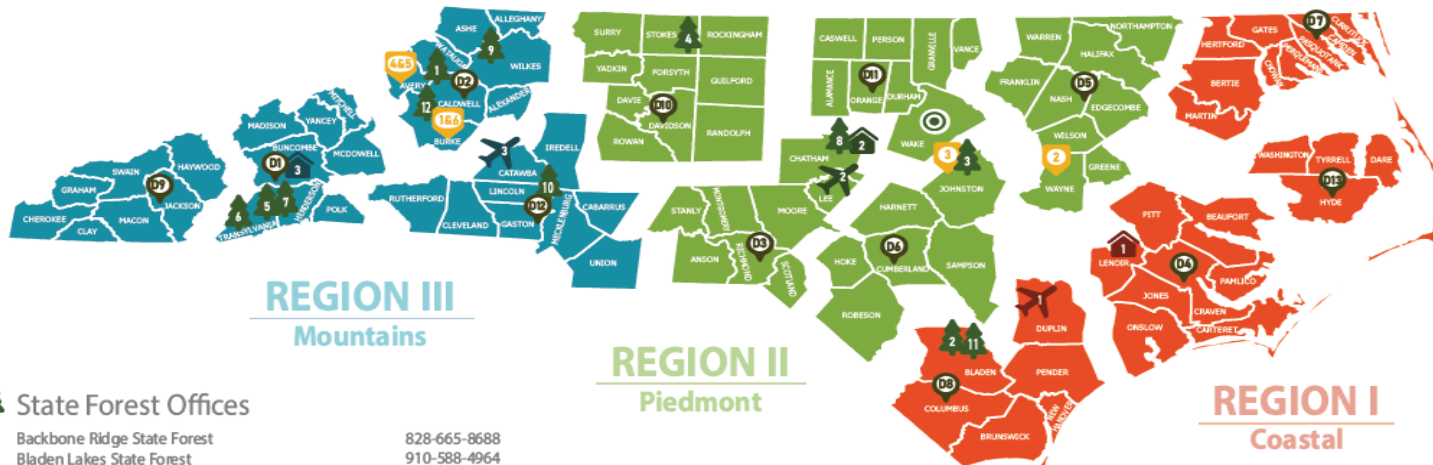


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NCFS Organization



State Forest Offices

1	Backbone Ridge State Forest	828-665-8688
2	Bladen Lakes State Forest	910-588-4964
3	Clemmons Educational State Forest	919-553-5651
4	Dan River Educational State Forest	919-542-1515
5	DuPont State Recreational Forest	828-877-6527
6	Headwaters State Forest	828-665-8688
7	Holmes Educational State Forest	828-692-0100
8	Jordan Lake Educational State Forest	919-542-1154
9	Little Fork State Forest	828-665-8688
10	Mountain Island Educational State Forest	704-822-9518
11	Turnbull Creek Educational State Forest	910-588-4161
12	Tuttle Educational State Forest	828-757-5608

Other Offices

1	B.R.J.D.G.E.	828-544-6600
2	Goldsovo Forestry Center/Claridge Nursery	919-731-7988
3	Griffiths Forestry Center	919-553-6178
4	Linville River Nursery	828-733-5236
5	Mountain Training Facility	828-733-4242
6	Morganton Forestry Center	828-438-3793

REGION II Piedmont

District Offices

D1	Asheville	828-667-5211
D2	Lenoir	828-757-5611
D3	Rockingham	910-997-9220
D4	New Bern	252-649-6770
D5	Rocky Mount	252-442-1626
D6	Fayetteville	910-437-2620
D7	Elizabeth City	252-331-4781
D8	Whiteville	910-788-5050
D9	Sylva	828-586-4007
D10	Lexington	336-956-2111
D11	Hillsborough	919-732-8105
D12	Mount Holly	704-827-7576
D13	Fairfield	252-926-3041

Map Revision Date: July 25, 2023

REGION I Coastal

State

Headquarters	919-857-4801
1616 Mail Service Center	Archdale Building
Raleigh, NC 27699-1600	512 North Salisbury Street
	Raleigh, NC 27604-1170

Regional Offices

1	Kinston	252-775-6200
2	Jordan Lake	919-542-1515
3	Asheville	828-665-8688

Aviation Bases

1	East (Kenansville)	910-275-6520
2	Central (Sanford)	919-775-7534
3	West (Hickory)	828-322-8234

The North Carolina Forest Service is a division of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Steve Troxler, Commissioner

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Response to Wildfires

NCFS Personnel are assigned in all 100 Counties

Typical County Staffing

County Ranger (Forestry Technician II)

Assistant County Ranger (Forestry Technician I)

Forest Fire Equipment Operator

Dispatched with Local Fire Departments to “Grass, Woods & Brush” Fires

Paged by County 911 System

Initial response with Fire Engine(s) & Bulldozer /Tractor Plow Unit

Request additional manpower, aviation support, and equipment through NCFS District “Operations” Center

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NCFS ENGINES

- 240+ Type 6 Engines
- 8 Type 4 and 5 Engines



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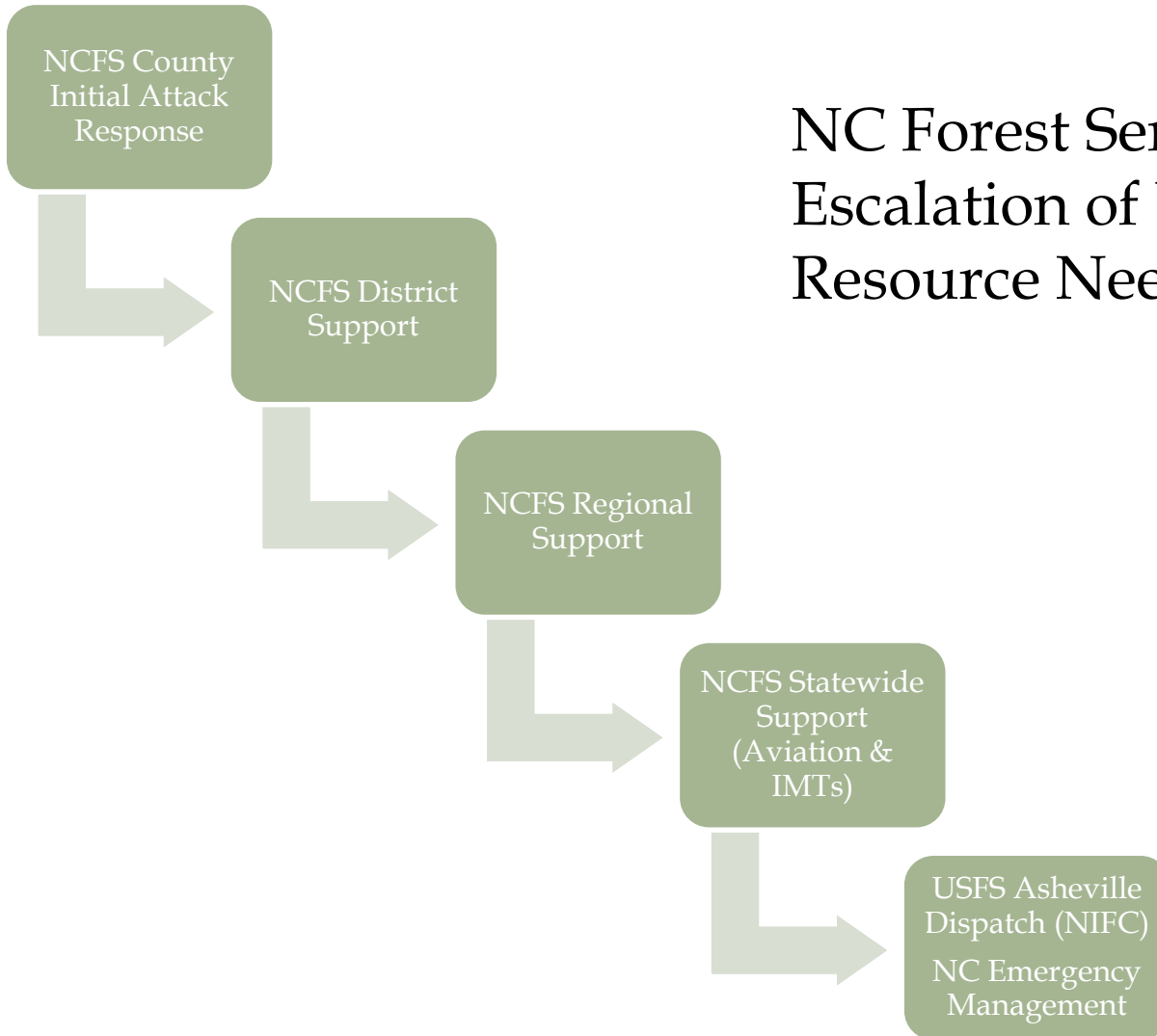
NCFS Tractor Plow Unit

Consist of Transport, Trailer, Dozer and Plow



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NC Forest Service Escalation of Wildfire Resource Needs

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Young
Offenders Forest
Conservation
Program
(B.R.I.D.G.E.)

B.R.I.D.G.E. (BUILDING, REHABILITATING,
INSTRUCTING, DEVELOPING, GROWING,
EMPLOYING)

- Cooperative effort between the N.C. Forest Service and the N.C. Department of Adult Corrections
- The primary goal of the program is to provide trained wildland firefighting crews ready at a moment's notice and develop a strong work ethic and skills so inmates will be able to secure a job when they are released.



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LAW ENFORCEMENT

Utilized as a prevention tool to reduce occurrence of wildfires in the future

- As of December 1, 2021, NCFS has responsibility for Timber Theft/Trespass cases
- Utilized to ensure safe visitor experiences at DuPont State Recreational Forest
- NCFS has 16 sworn Law Enforcement Officers
- Their focus is on enforcing “Forest Laws” as defined in G.S. 106-897



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SINGLE ENGINE AIR TANKER PROGRAM



- Air Tractor AT-802F
- \$2 million each
- Two in Service purchased in 2016 and 2017
- 800-gallon load capacity
- Mobile platform
- On board mixing capability
- Lead Plane, T-34C
- Load Plane, Kodiak
- Based in Duplin Co.



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HELICOPTERS



- Airbus Eurocopter Astar 350B3s
- 1 in Sanford (2008 model)
- 1 in Kinston (2001 model – Out of Service)
- 210-gallon bucket capacity
- Longline capable
- Can be used for aerial ignition

- Huey's
- Bell UH1H's
- 4 in Service (2 state owned)
- Located in Hickory & Kinston
- 250-gallon bucket capacity



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PATROL AIRCRAFT



- 3 Cessna 185's
- Seats 4
- 5 Hours Flight Time
- 8 Cessna 182's
- Seats 4
- 5.5 Hours Flight Time



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PERSONNEL Vacancies

NCFS has been running a Vacancy rate of 15-20%

Currently there are 70 vacancies across the agency.

While we experience vacancies at all levels it is most significant at the county/district level (entry level positions)

As a result of continued turnover, the agency's workforce has less experience, with 47% of our employees having 5 years or less of service.



\$27-30K

investment made in new hires for wildland fire and forest management training.



of new hires leave before completing our two-year ranger training program.

Starting Salaries for entry level positions

Forester	\$46,597
Forest Technician	\$39,115
Forest Fire Equipment Operator	\$42,179

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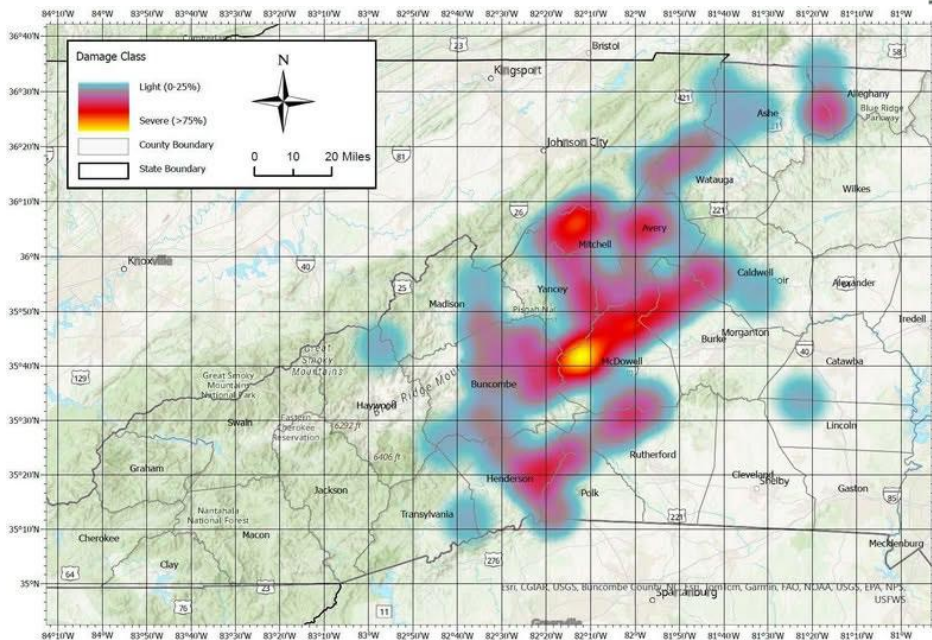
Hurricane Helene Impacts & Response

In early October 2024, the NCFS conducted an aerial survey of timber damage. This survey produced a conservative estimate of 822,000 acres of damaged timber. Satellite imagery showing changes in forest cover suggests the extent of damage is much greater than our initial estimates.

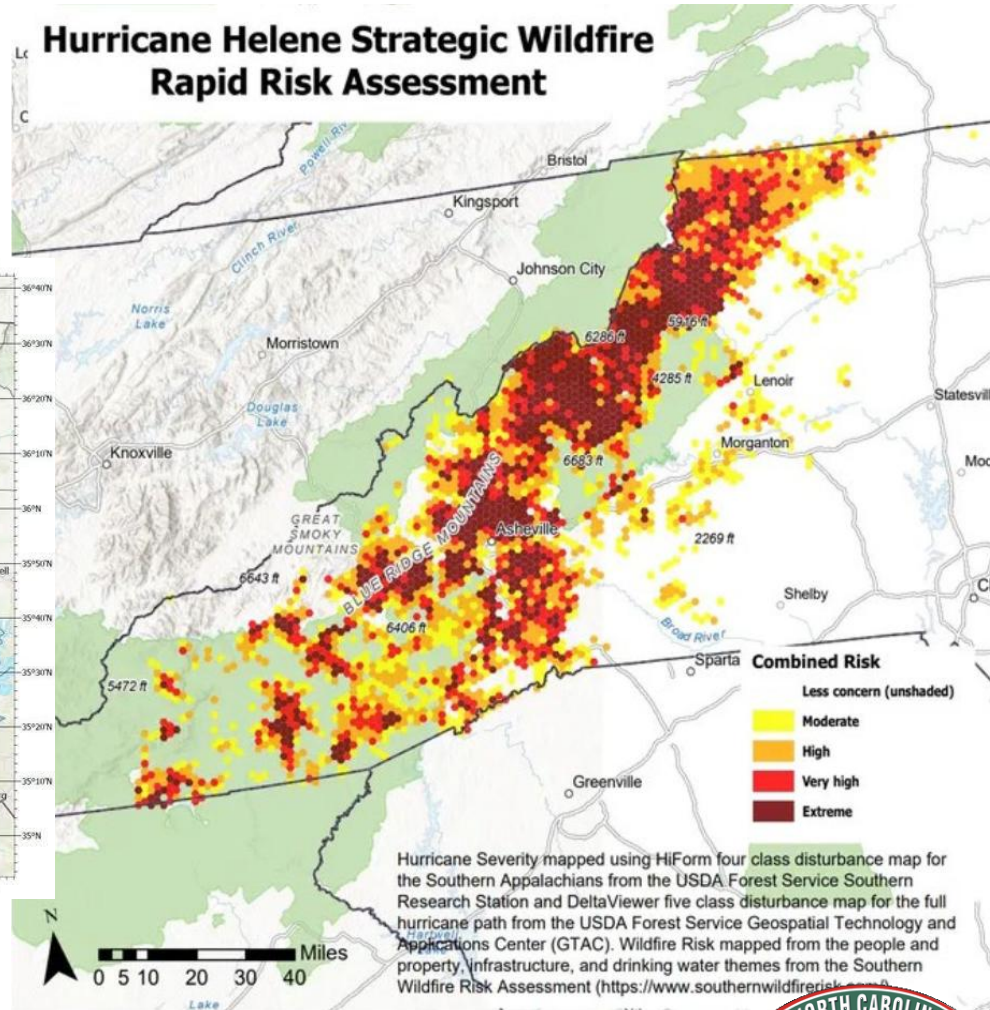


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Hurricane Helene Strategic Wildfire Rapid Risk Assessment



U.S. Forest Service map depicts areas at moderate to extreme risk of wildfires based on their assessment swaths through areas hit hardest by Tropical Storm Helene. Provided By U.S. Forest Service

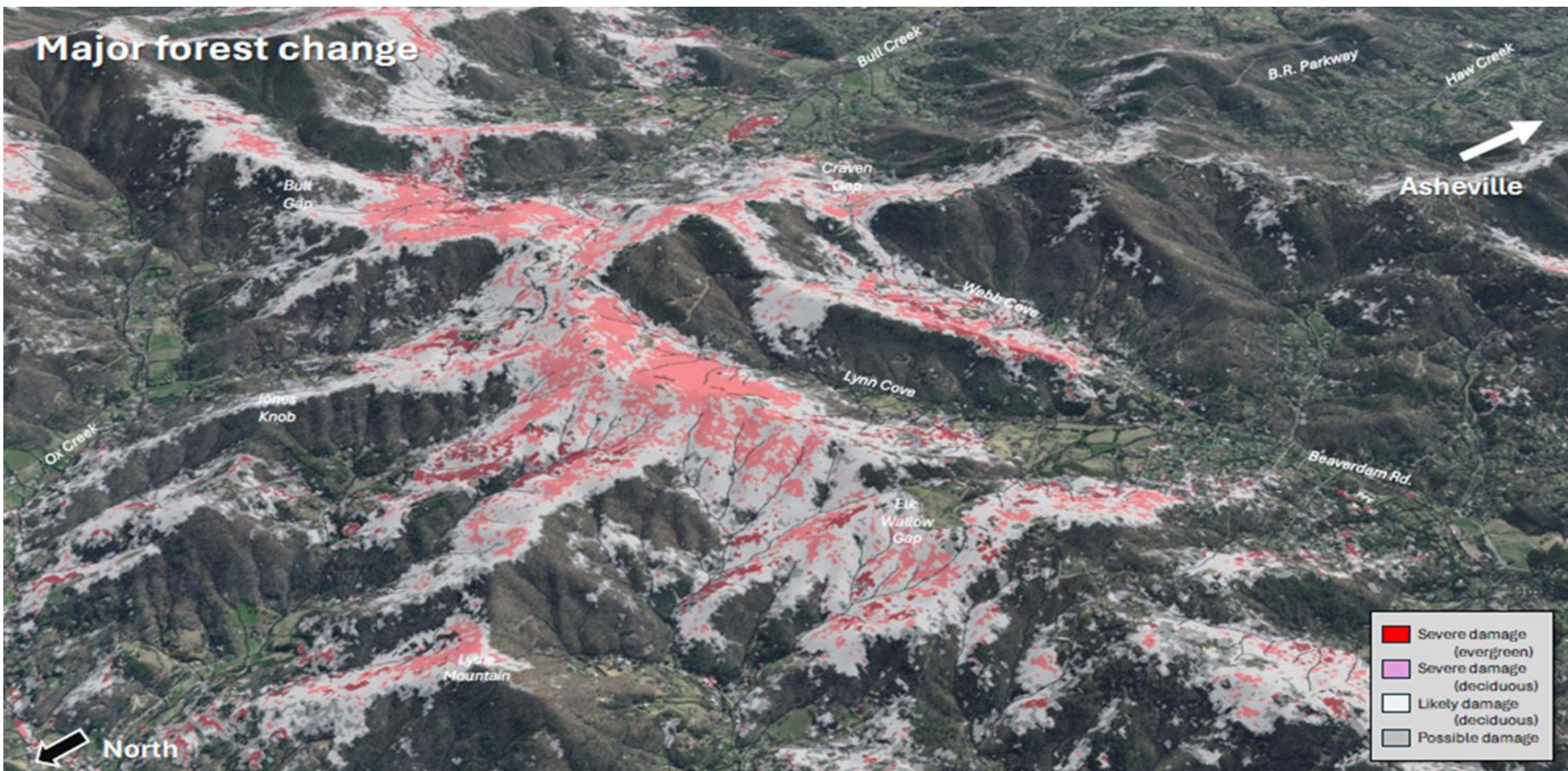
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Major forest change



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Hurricane Helene Impacts & Response





Hurricane Helene Impacts

- Decreased Access for Emergency Responders



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Hurricane Helene Impacts

Increased Severity
of Wildfires





Hurricane Helene Impacts

- Increased Threat to Homes and Infrastructure in the Wildland Urban Interface

Helene affected wildfire hazards near structures in different ways



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Hurricane Helene Wildfire Mitigation Response

Wildfire mitigation in Western North Carolina is the coordinated, pre-incident effort to reduce wildfire intensity, improve access, and protect communities in a post-hurricane, high-fuel environment.

What Mitigation Looks Like Now

- Hazard reduction prescribed burning to reduce accumulated debris
- Mechanical fuels removal where access allows
- Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) treatments to protect structures
- Fuel break creation and opening and access corridors
- CWPP updates reflecting post-Helene fuel loading
- Risk modeling and GIS validation to defensibly allocate resources



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Hurricane Helene Impacts on Wildfire Response

- Pre Fire Season Planning
- Contracting and Pre-Positioning of Resources
- Multi-Agency Response (Local – State – Federal)
- Safety Concerns (Public – Firefighters)
- Larger Fires that are Harder to Contain and Control
- Smoke Impacts



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QUESTIONS?

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