



Governor's Advisory Committee on Western North Carolina Recovery

March 6, 2026

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Today's Agenda

Call to Order, Introductory Remarks | *Sen. Kevin Corbin, Co-Chair*

Welcome | *Dr. J.W. Kelley, McDowell Tech Community College*

Water and Sewer Project Awards and Unmet Needs / *Andy Miller and Shadi Eskaf, NC Department of Environmental Quality*

Remarks / *Governor Josh Stein*

Blue Ridge Parkway: Status of Repairs and Timeline for Future Work / *Tracy Swartout and Leesa Brandon, Blue Ridge Parkway, National Park Service*

Update from the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation | *Dr. Carolyn Widner*

The Critical Role of Philanthropy in Recovery / *Tara Scholtz, Community Foundation of Western North Carolina; Sarah Grymes, Dogwood Health Trust; Luke Howe, AMY Wellness Foundation; Ret Boney, NC Community Foundation*

Consider Resilience Subcommittee Funding Recommendations

Recovery Updates / *Matt Calabria and Emily Gangi, GROW NC*

Next Steps / *Matt Calabria, GROW NC*

Adjourn





Welcome

Dr. J.W. Kelley, President,
McDowell Technical Community College





Helene Water and Sewer Funding Awards and Unmet Needs

Andy Miller, Deputy Secretary for Infrastructure and Environmental Assistance,
NC Department of Environmental Quality (NC DEQ)

Shadi Eskaf, Director, Division of Water Infrastructure, NC DEQ

Helene Funding for Water, Wastewater and Septic Systems

Emergency Bridge Loans

- State appropriations (\$75M)
- Started in October 2024
- Water and sewer repair/recovery
- Short-term, 0% interest loans, to be paid back upon receipt of other funds

26 bridge loan recipients

SRF Helene

- Federal appropriations (\$685M)
- Allotted by EPA in March 2025, awarded to DEQ in Aug/Sep. 2025
- Add flood resilience to water, sewer, and septic systems
- Long-term, 0% interest loans with a lot principal forgiveness (grant-like) portions

Applications accepted on rolling basis between July 2025 and March 2, 2026. Funding awards over four SWIA meetings (last in April 2026).

State Reserve Grants

- State funds
- State grants prioritized for Helene damage repair projects in specific western NC counties, per SL 2025-26, Section 3.6.

Awarded \$27M for construction projects on Feb. 18, 2026.

Timeline of New Helene Funding Programs

Oct. 2024 –
Mar. 2025

- Engaged with communities, federal and state funding agencies, EPA Region 4, NC WaterWARN, Emergency Management, and other stakeholders to assist and prepare for potential new funding
- Began obligating Emergency Bridge Loans and technical assistance grants

Dec. 2024

- US Congress passes American Relief Act of 2025 (Supplemental Appropriations for Hurricanes Helene and Milton and Wildfires of Hawai'i: SA-HMW)
- North Carolina receives allotments totaling \$685 million for “SRF Helene”

Mar. – Apr.
2025

- EPA published SA-HMW Implementation Memo on 3/13/2025
- Immediately began developing plans and new Priority Rating Systems (PRS)
- SWIA approves draft PRS for public comments

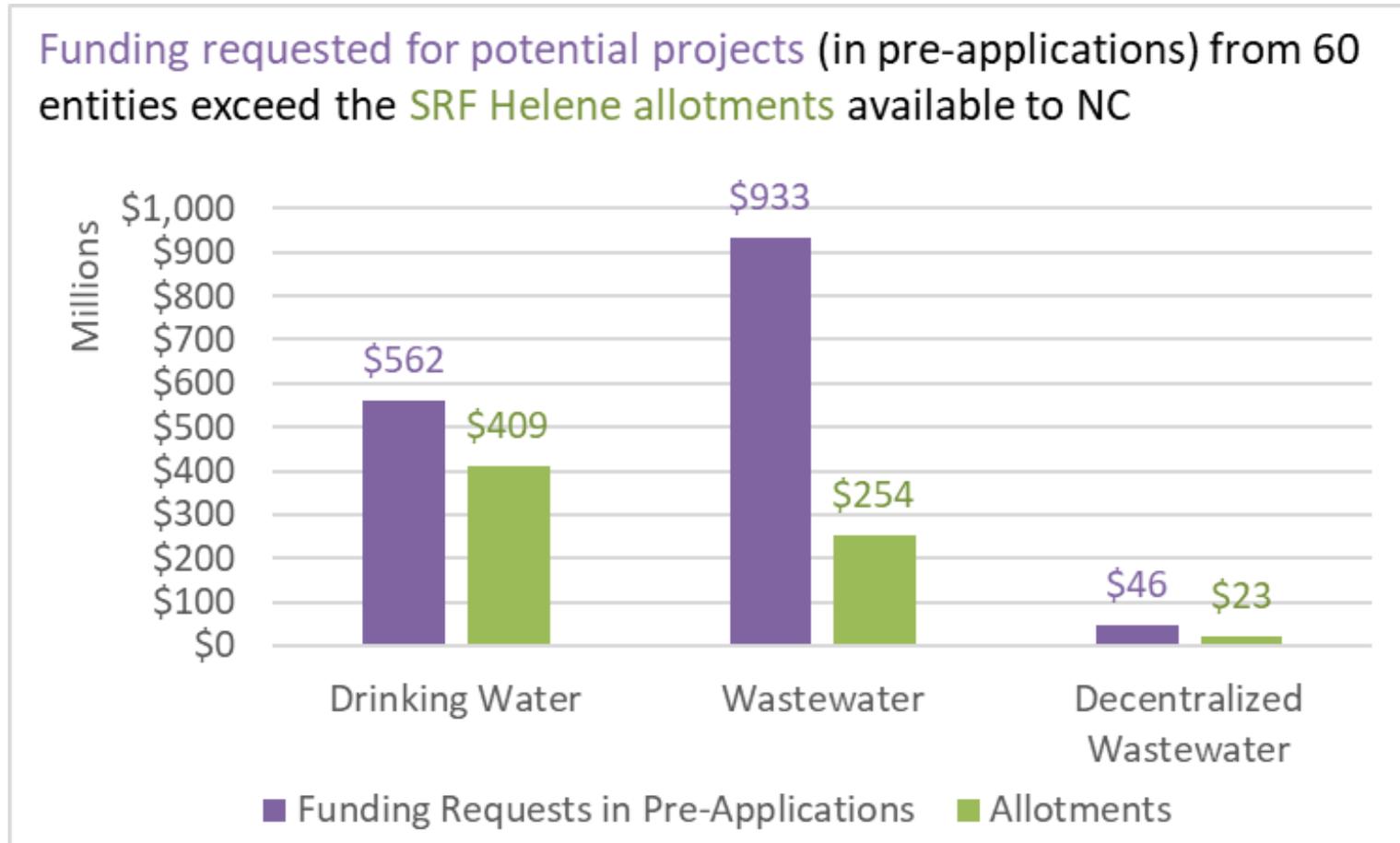
Apr. - May
2025

- Conducted public comment period for draft PRS and Intended Use Plans
- Conducted 4 regional workshops in WNC with EPA on May 22-25 (150 attended)
- Applied for all 3 EPA grants by June 1
- Implemented an informal “pre-application” to gauge demand



Preliminary Requests from Informal Pre-Applications

To understand the potential funding needs before applications were available, we asked potential applicants to identify preliminary project needs (May – July 2025).



Timeline of New Helene Funding Programs, Cont.

Jul. 2025

- Finalized IUPs and PRS with SWIA after public comments/input
- Started formal applications for SRF Helene funding on a rolling basis
- Conducted application trainings, incl. 3 in WNC, 1 hybrid/recorded, and 2 others (190 attendees)
- Started accepting SRF Helene applications on a rolling basis

Aug. – Sep.
2025

- DWI received the three SRF Helene grant awards from EPA
- Conducted a statewide webinar
- 1st round of SRF Helene applications received (Aug. 1) and awarded (Sep. 17)

Oct. 2025 –
Mar. 2026

- 2nd round of SRF Helene applications received (Nov. 3) and awarded (Dec. 10)
- 3rd round of SRF Helene applications received (Jan. 9) and awarded (Feb. 18)
- SWIA awarded \$27M in state grants for Helene recovery per SL 2025-26, Section 3.6 (Feb 18)
- 4th (final) round of SRF Helene applications received (Mar. 2)

Apr. 2026

- Final awards of SRF Helene funding scheduled for April 15-16 SWIA meeting



Water Infrastructure Helene Funding for WNC

\$75M Emergency Bridge Loans

- Expended: \$14,156,018.66 (as of 2/24/26)
- Towns apprehensive to take 10-year loan without FEMA reimbursement
- Need NCGA to change to grants or 20-year loans

\$27,095,900 in State Reserve Program Grants for Helene Recovery

These grants were prioritized for WNC by Disaster Bill III S.L. 2025-26, Section 3.6.

\$7,000,000 in Technical Assistance Grants

To support the design and planning for small systems' recovery and/or add resilience through regionalization.



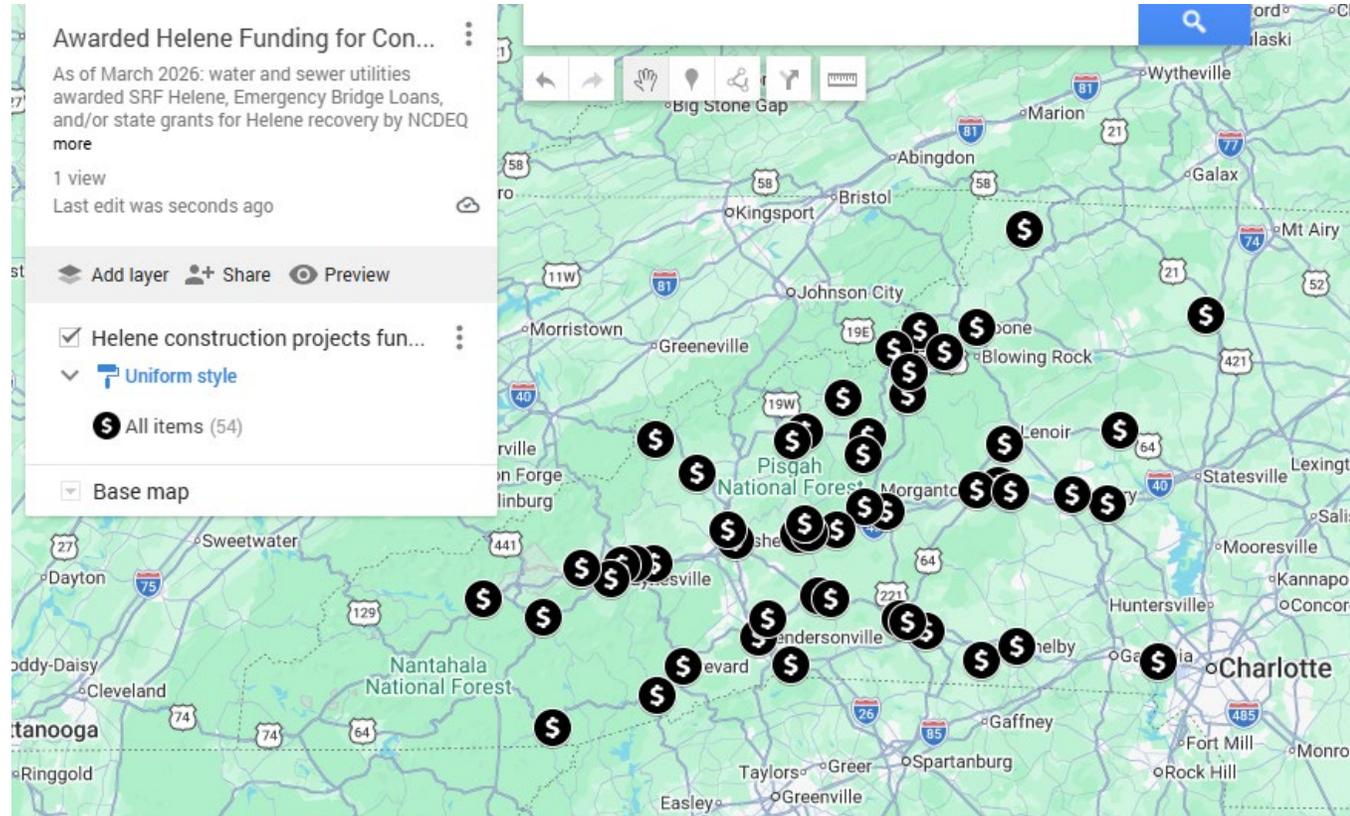
Town of Burnsville – temporary raw water intake

SRF Helene Funding for WNC through Feb. 2026

Grant Source	Total Available Funds	Total SRF Helene Funding Awarded	Total Remaining Funds
DWSRF Helene (Drinking Water)	\$384,856,680	\$289,507,145	\$95,349,535 (25%)
CWSRF Helene (Wastewater)	\$238,460,140	\$158,324,249	\$80,135,891 (34%)
CWSRF Helene (Septic or Septic-to-Sewer)	\$21,159,400	\$20,097,217	\$1,062,183 (5%)
All SRF Helene Programs	\$644,476,220	\$467,928,611	\$176,547,609 (27%)

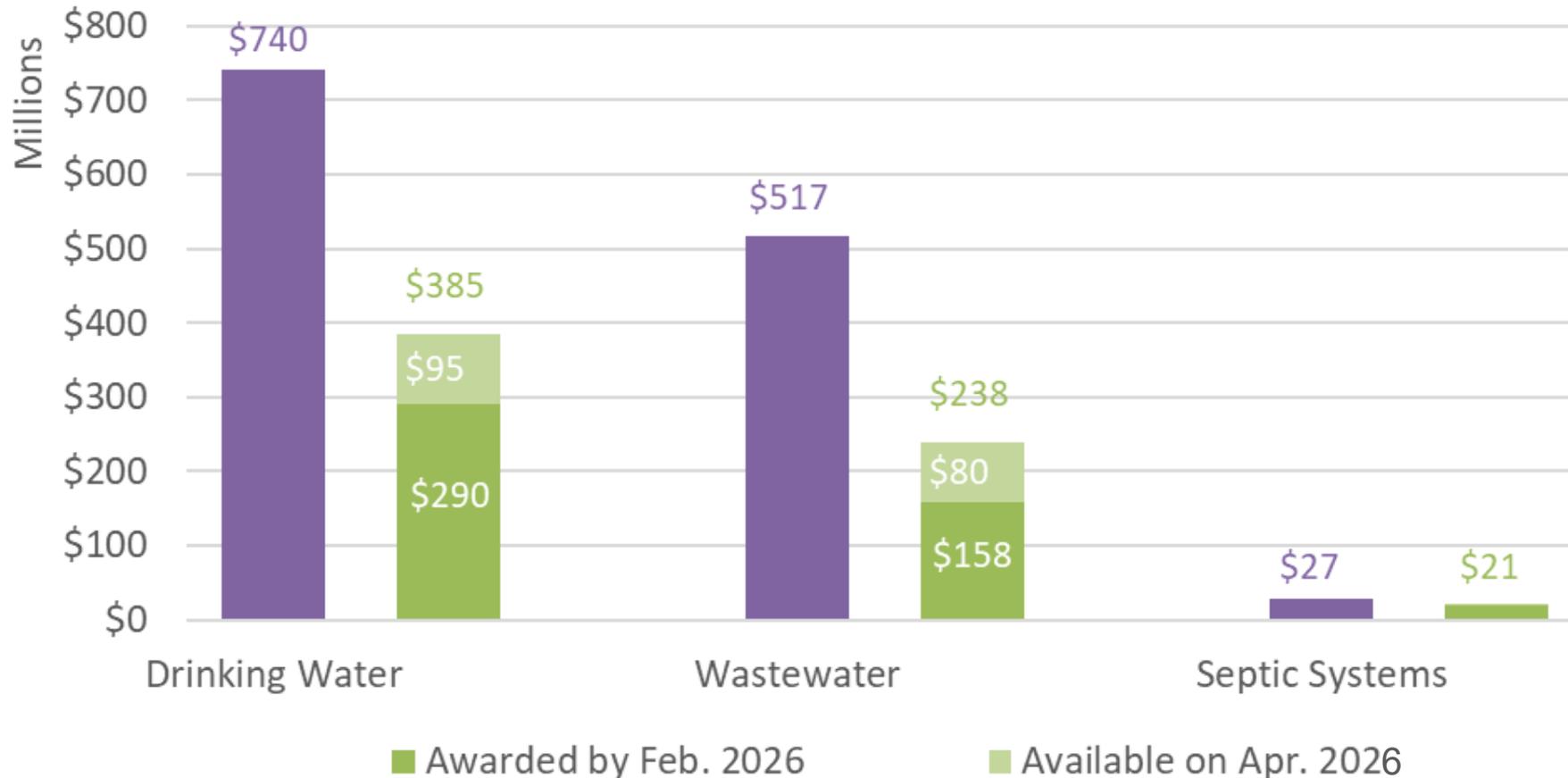
Awarded Helene Funding for Construction Projects as of March 2026

- **\$569,731,571** awarded to **60 applicants** in WNC in SRF Helene, emergency bridge loans, and state grants for construction
- SRF Helene applications prior to March 2:
 - Received 103 applications; awarded 94
 - Awarded: \$467M
 - Unmet needs from applications: \$633M
- SRF Helene applications received on March 2:
 - Received 40 new applications (incl. from 10 new applicants), requesting \$184M
 - Total funding requests to be considered by SWIA in April: \$817M
 - Total SRF Helene funding available to award in April: \$177M
 - Unmet needs from applications after SWIA's April meeting **will likely exceed \$640M**



SRF Helene Applications Funding Requests and Availability

Funding requested in SRF Helene applications exceed the SRF Helene funding available to NC (data as of March 3, 2026)



\$1.3 Billion in Funding Applications



Additional Needs

1. To fully fund remaining applications, need \$640 million in additional funding (Drinking Water: \$355 million, Wastewater: \$279 million, Septic Systems: \$6 million)
2. Ability to forgive the \$75 million in emergency bridge loans that are not reimbursed by another grant source/FEMA
3. To enhance utilities' resilience needs:
 - Raise the statutory cap for Asset Inventory and Assessments from \$150,000 to \$225,000 per applicant
 - Raise the statutory cap for Merger/Regionalization Feasibility grants from \$50,000 per applicant every 3 years to \$75,000 per applicant every 1 year





Remarks

Governor Josh Stein



Blue Ridge Parkway: Status of Repairs and Timeline for Future Work

Tracy Swartout, Superintendent,
Blue Ridge Parkway, National Park Service

Leesa Brandon, External Affairs Specialist,
Blue Ridge Parkway, National Park Service

AGENDA



1. Speaker Introductions
2. State of the Park
3. Year 1 Recovery Accomplishments
4. What to expect in 2026
 - a. Transportation Projects
 - b. Non-transportation Projects
5. Looking Ahead



INITIAL IMPACTS on the BLUE RIDGE



100%
of the 469-mile
route closed

300+
first responders
rotated through NPS
Incident Team



58
catastrophic
landslides



Six-week initial
response by NPS
Type 3 Team

115+
barriers
deployed



55,025
acres with rapid
assessment of natural
and cultural features in
recovery area

12,287
acres of forest
canopy impacted



Record low visitation
decimates local
economies

740K visitors in Oct. 2024



YEAR 1 RECOVERY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



350,000

cubic feet of storm debris removed from 11-mile Asheville corridor within the first six weeks

400+

miles of the Parkway restored for public use



579+



volunteers supported recovery

22,606+

hours contributed from volunteers

140

miles of trails reopened



14

contracts awarded

58

sites under contract

10

comprehensive compliance packages supporting slope failures, debris removal, building repairs and more

11

roof replacements on damaged structures



8

impacted vistas restored
by March 2026 number will jump to 28



13

slide stabilization and road repair projects complete

18

sites completed



50+

community meetings and presentations



2

historic structures repaired in partnership with HPTC

2.3 Million
park visitors in October 2025

Up 70% from 2024



SHOW & TELL



Milepost 375 – Work Progression



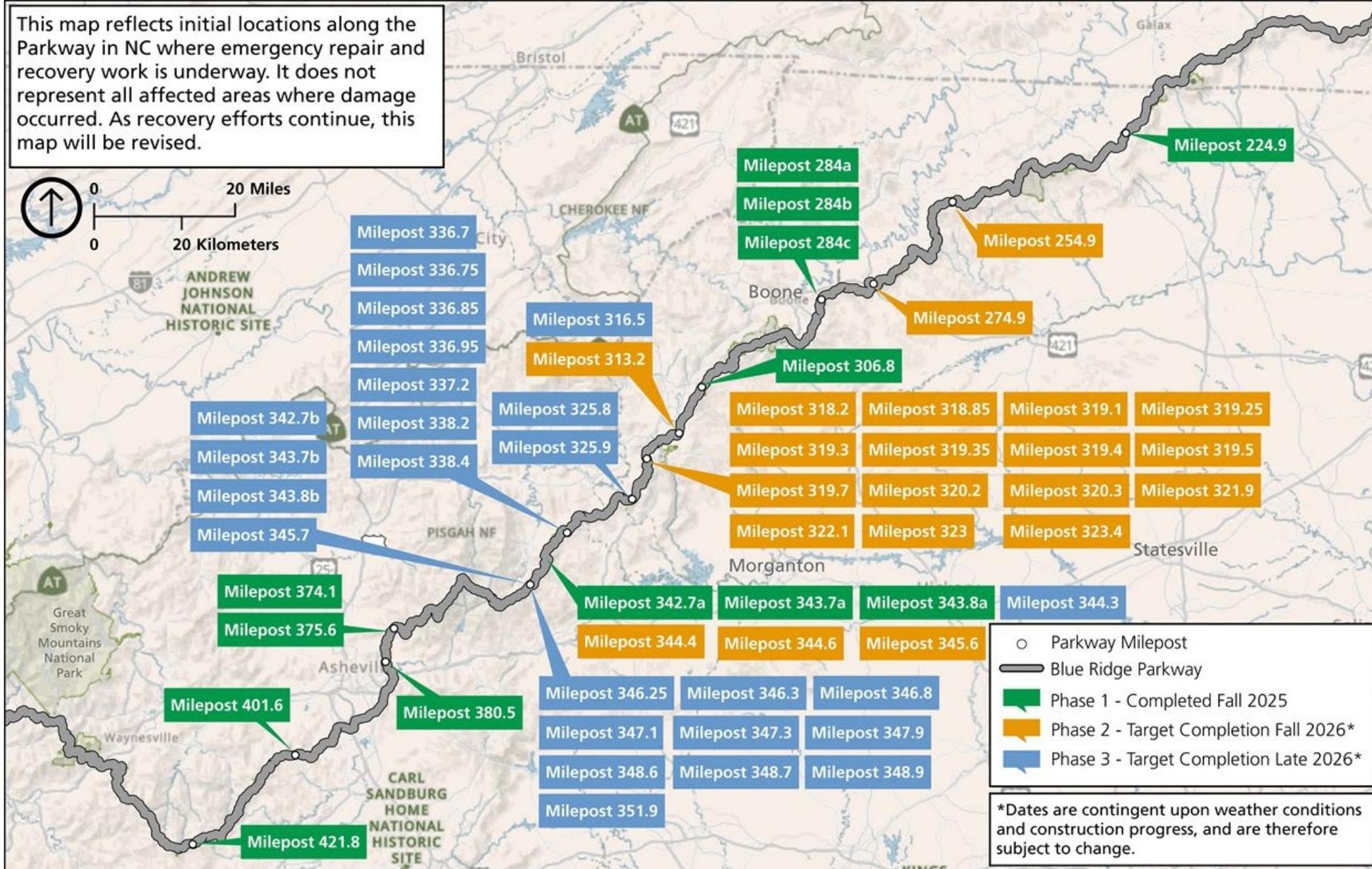
Milepost 401 – Work Progression



HELENE ROAD PROJECTS



This map reflects initial locations along the Parkway in NC where emergency repair and recovery work is underway. It does not represent all affected areas where damage occurred. As recovery efforts continue, this map will be revised.



TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS



Helene Recovery Road Project Phases 2 & 3

- All Phase 2 & 3 Task Orders are Awarded, Construction Underway
- FHWA Task Orders using Multiple Award Task Order Contract (MATOC) with incentives.
- Recent winter storms impacting work crews' access to sites.
- Anticipated Summer 2026: 35 miles of shared public/construction route from Asheville to active construction sites.

Additional road project work...

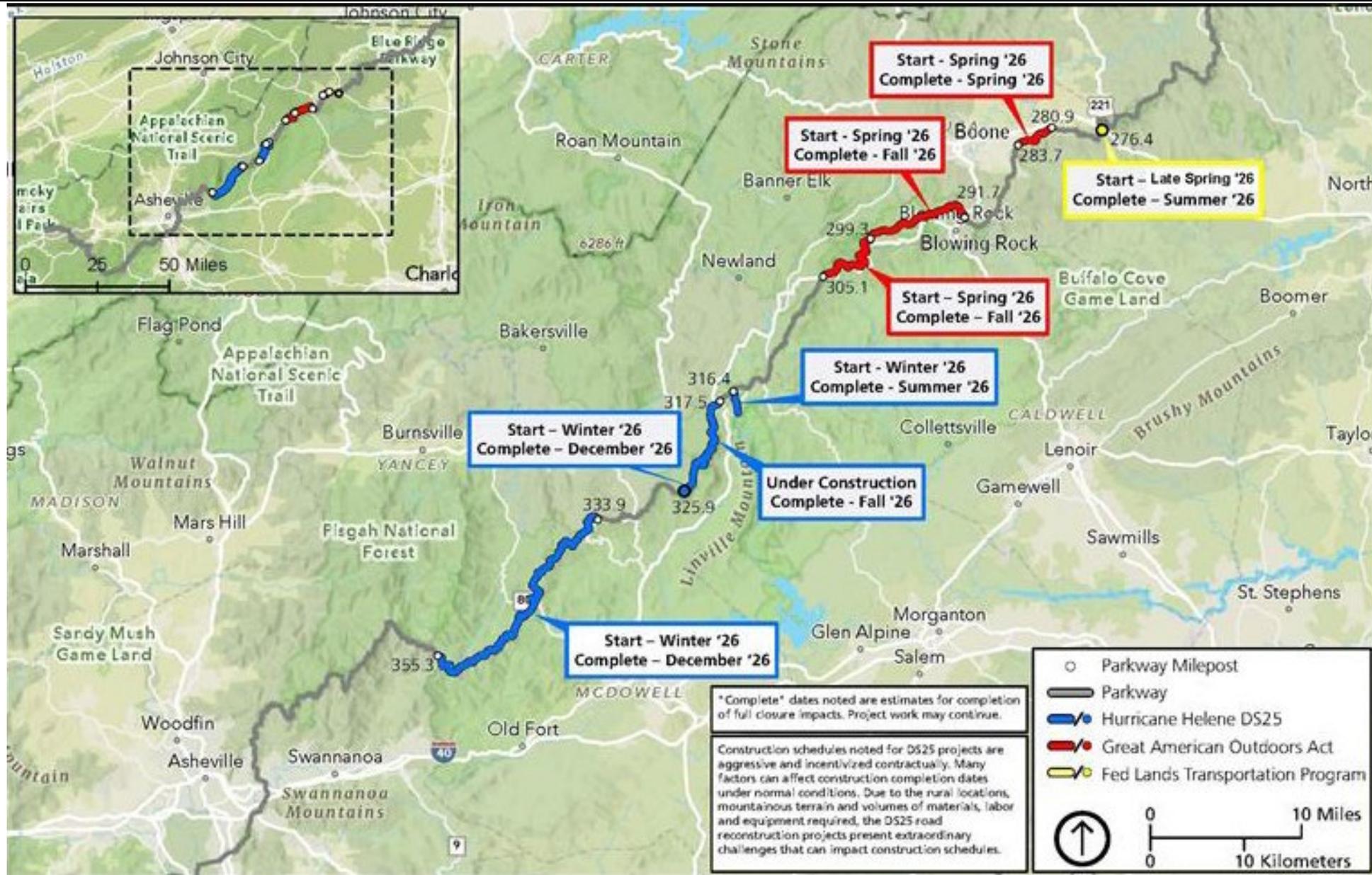


NC ROAD PROJECTS



Blue Ridge Parkway – 2026 Road Projects (N to S)				
Milepost/Location	Location /Park neighbors affected	Project	Target completion dates	What to expect
MP 276	Deep Gap/FLTP	Bridge project (over US 421)	Early Spring – Early Winter 2026	Full closure: MP 274.3 to MP 276.4 Detour: MP 269.8 to MP 276.4
MP 280-285 MP 291.7 – 305.1	Last section of remaining of ongoing GAOA investment project.	Reconstruct pavement, repair drainage structures, repair bridges, and slope reconstruction	Fall 2026	Variable full closures maintaining access to key nodes including Cone Memorial Park, Price Lake, Rough Ridge trail head parking and Linn Cove parking.
MP 317.5-324.7^	Mainline Parkway south of Linville Falls McDowell/Burke counties	Slope reconstruction and stabilization, repair drainage structures, rebuild and pave road and curbing as needed	Summer 2026	Full closure Restores access from US 221 (MP 317.5) to Heffner Gap (MP 324.7) when complete
MP 316.4 ^	Linville Falls spur road	Repair and reconstruct	Summer 2026	Several trails remain accessible from the USFS gravel parking area on Old NC 105
MP 336.3 – 355^	Little Switzerland to Mount Mitchell	Slope reconstruction and stabilization, repair drainage structures, rebuild and pave road and curbing as needed	December 2026	
344.4 – 345.6^	Near Buck Creek Gap	Slope reconstruction and stabilization, repair drainage structures, rebuild and pave road and curbing as needed	December 2025 (section will remain closed after completion due to other slides)	Full Closure Public access to this section will be restored as part of Phase 3.

NC ROAD PROJECT MAP



NON-TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS



FACILITY RECOVERY PROJECTS



Ongoing Cleanup and Removal Efforts

Clearing and removal of debris from waterways and flood-affected zones

Demolition of compromised structures

Dredging operations in historic millponds

Facility and Grounds Maintenance

Repairs to both historic and non-historic buildings

Mitigation of hazardous trees; Restoration of roadside landscapes, vistas, and features

Trail maintenance, including backcountry, front country, and Cone Estate Carriage Trails

Infrastructure Repair and Reliability Enhancements

Dam repair and measures to enhance reliability

Repairs and reliability improvements for telecommunications

Utility repairs, including relocating comfort stations away from flood-prone regions

Planning for Restored Visitor Services

Area planning focused on visitor service requirements, such as Linville Falls Campground, trails, picnic sites, and housing facilities

RESOURCE RECOVERY PROJECTS



Cultural Resource Projects

Archeology & Cemeteries – Surveys and stabilization of cemeteries along the Parkway.

Collections – Repair/conservation of impacted collection pieces.

Cultural Landscapes – Restoration of impacted landscapes along the motor road, slide areas, and flooded areas; includes Cone Manor and Price Park

Natural Resource Projects

Wetlands and Streams - Stabilizing and restoring aquatic systems impacted by flooding and erosion to protect water quality and habitat connectivity.

Invasive Plants - Addressing the spread of invasive plant species accelerated by Hurricane Helene's disturbance, which created openings for rapid spread and displacement of native vegetation.

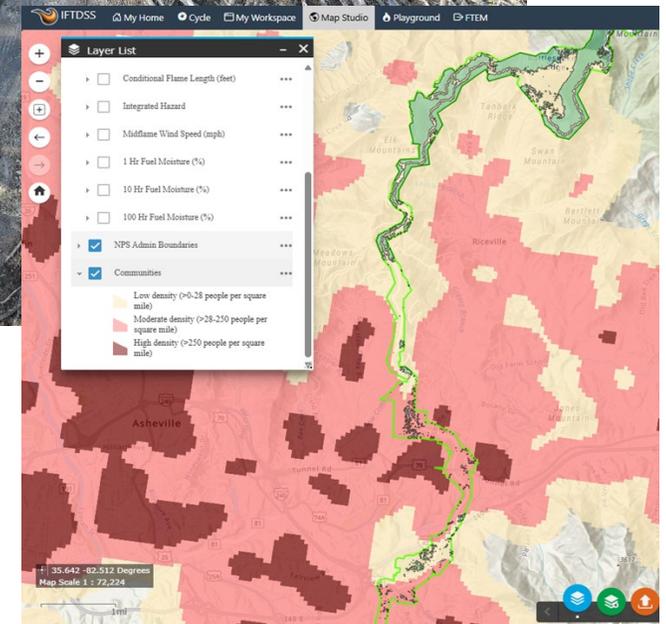
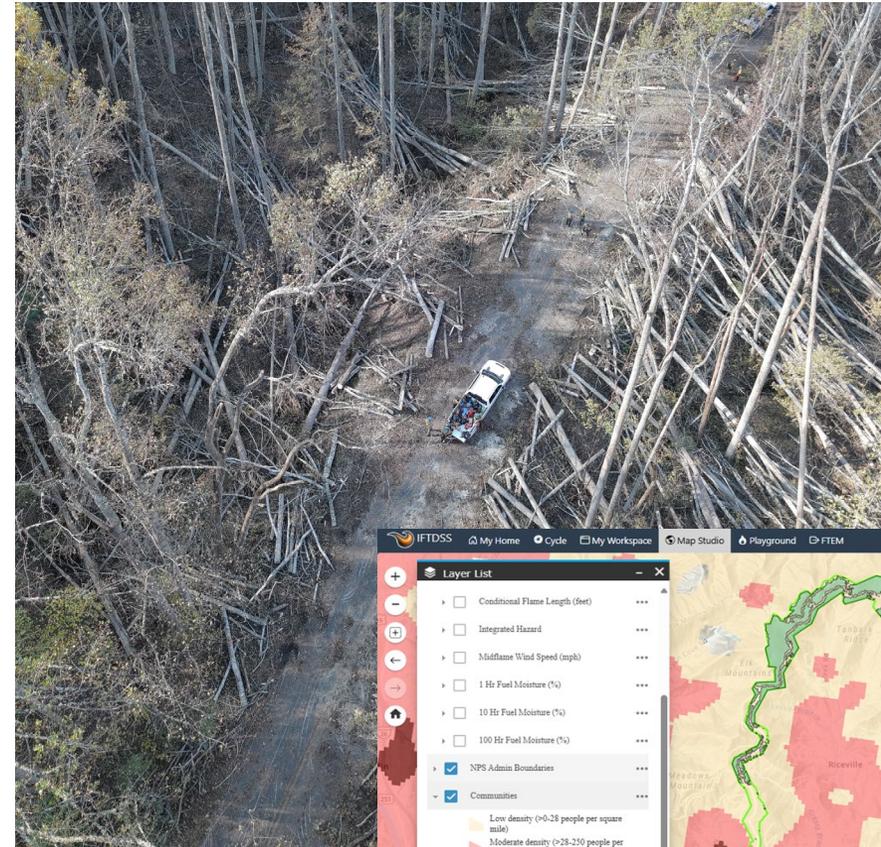
Habitat- uplands and Wildlife- Repairing upland habitats and ensuring wildlife corridors remain intact to sustain biodiversity and ecological balance.

FOCUS: WILDFIRE FUEL REDUCTION



Woody debris left by Hurricane Helene in forested Wildland–Urban Interface (WUI) areas along the Parkway has increased wildfire risk, requiring removal to restore park lands and reduce potential fuel loads.

- NPS/USFS used Interagency Fuel Treatment Decision Support System (IFTDSS) to perform risk assessment and plan for initial treatments along the Parkway post-Helene
- Underway: Contract development and NEPA/S106/Section 7 compliance reviews for summer and fall debris removal work
- Summer/Fall 2026: Contracting with USFS
- Revegetation and invasives treatment 2026-2029, requires three growing seasons post-debris removal
- Continued collaboration with USDA/USFS and local fire reps in support of community firewise actions



FOCUS: DEVELOPED AREA RECOVERY



Problem Statement: Flooding from Hurricane Helene severely damaged facilities and infrastructure at the Linville Falls developed area, creating urgent need for redevelopment incorporating resilient design to withstand future floods

Linville Falls Site Plan includes:

- Restoration of the Linville Falls Visitor Use Area (visitor center, picnic area, campground, utilities)
- Facility relocation out of floodplain and upgrades to septic and water systems to restore function, improve resiliency
- Repairs to the Linville Gorge Trail, site features, and park residences and quarters.
- Provides framework for investments, facility types, locations and relationships, and ensures that components function together as a cohesive system, resilient to future storms.

Timeline: Planning and public engagement now through late 2027, Construction timeline TBD

Compliance: An Environmental Assessment (EA) is anticipated for this planning effort.

Cost: \$46M+

Partners: NPS-DSC, A/E contractors, civic engagement, gateway communities



FOCUS: TRAILS RECOVERY



Problem Statement: Hurricane Helene's heavy rain and wind caused ground instability, washouts and downed trees along dozens of miles of Blue Ridge Parkway trails, blocking access and creating unsafe conditions requiring immediate repair and rehab to restore safe visitor use.

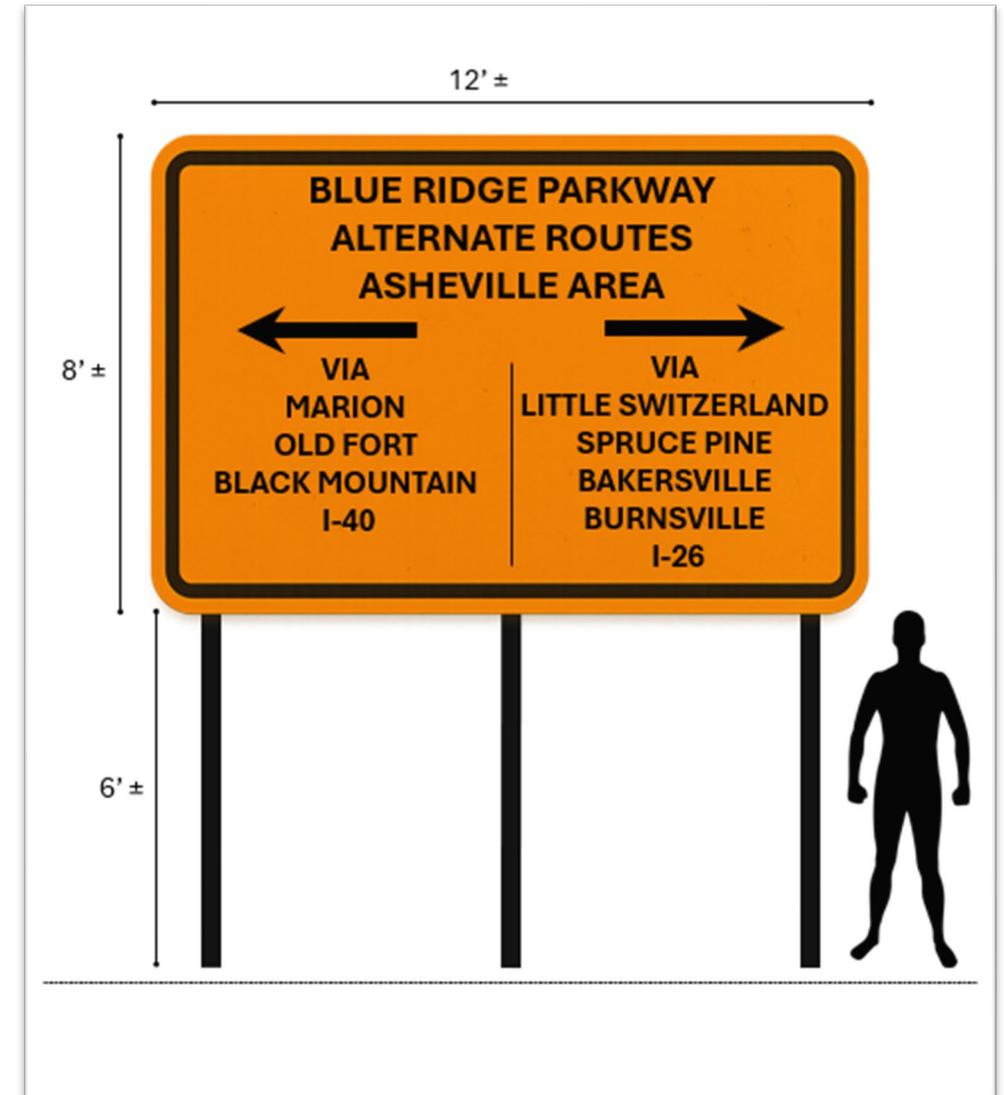
- NPS has developed a damage characterization map for trails based on remotely sensed tree damage data and site visits.
- Developing Cooperative Management Agreement with State of NC to expedite repairs to the Mountains-to-Sea Trail (MST). Work will include volunteer orgs.
- Conservation Corp Trail Crew tours and GIS Support provided by Park Philanthropic Partner.
- Team will continue to develop additional contracts and agreements to support trail recovery and reconstruction.



WRAP UP

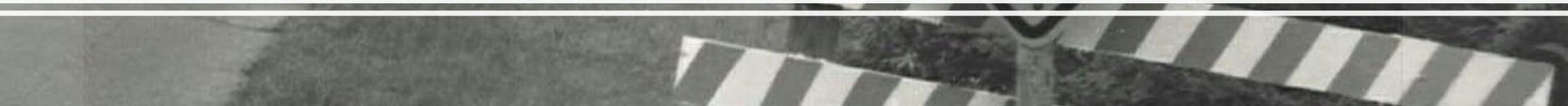


- Anticipate another strong year in visitation based on 2025 figures
- Visitors and Communities will continue to see majority of facilities open.
 - 390+ miles of Parkway open
 - 6 of 8 campgrounds open – Linville Falls, Crabtree Falls out years
- Restored visitor access to Linville Falls trails from NPS lands coming this summer
- Completion of Phase 2 & 3 critical landslide and road repairs by end of 2026.
- Continue stakeholder engagement and strategic communications- (upcoming High Country & 2-state)





QUESTIONS





Update from the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation

Dr. Carolyn Widner, Chief Executive Officer,
Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation





The Critical Role of Philanthropy in Recovery

Tara Scholtz, Vice President, Programs,
Community Foundation of Western North Carolina

Sarah Grymes, Vice President of Community Engagement, Dogwood Health Trust

Luke Howe, Executive Director, AMY Wellness Foundation

Ret Boney, Disaster Relief Fund Program Director,
NC Community Foundation

Philanthropic and private funding: GROW NC and our partners continue to pursue all available sources of financial support for Helene recovery.

At least \$1.4 billion in direct private and philanthropic support for Helene recovery

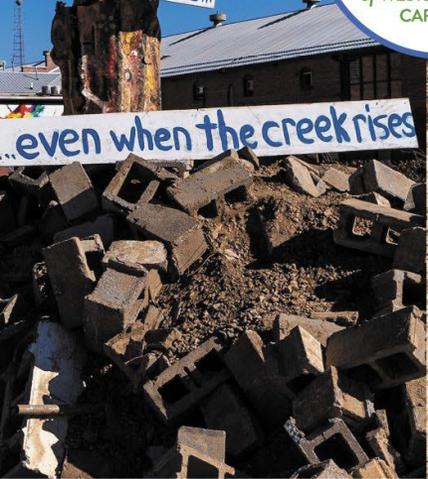
- The total impact of neighbors helping neighbors in the aftermath of this storm can never be fully quantified.
- The \$1.4 billion number shared here is a conservative estimate based on documented support by business, nonprofit, and volunteer partners.
- GROW NC continues to coordinate with the private and nonprofit sectors to fill funding gaps in the areas of housing, utility assistance, and small business support.

Emergency and Disaster Response Fund (EDRF)

March 2026



HURRICANE RELIEF AND RECOVERY





EDRF Timeline

View our
Helene
Recovery
website



Quick Facts:

- Total number of gifts: 10,734
- More than 5,000 gifts were received within the first two weeks of opening EDRF
- Early communication and commitments from funding partners and many NC funders
- Individuals from all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and several Canadian territories contributed





530 Grants totaling \$39,724,315

Economic Impact

[Reset all filters](#)

County

- Avery
- Buncombe
- Burke
- Cherokee
- Clay
- Graham
- Haywood
- Henderson
- Jackson
- Macon

[Show all regions +](#)

Amount Awarded

- All Amounts
- Less than \$25,000
- \$25,000 – \$49,999
- \$50,000 – \$99,999
- \$100,000 – \$499,999
- \$500,000 or More

Type of Support

- Immediate Emergency Needs
- Children and Families
- Housing
- Environment

Abernethy Memorial United Methodist Church

- \$25,000
- Burke
- Immediate Emergency Needs
- Housing
- Environment
- Economic Impact

To purchase pharmaceutical supplies and building materials used in home repairs needed by community members.

Abounding Grace Ministry

- \$25,000
- Rutherford
- Immediate Emergency Needs

To provide essential supplies and services to low-income people affected by the hurricane.

Adults Working and Advocating for Kids Empowerment (AWAKE)

- \$25,000
- Multiple
- Jackson
- Qualla Boundary
- Swain
- Immediate Emergency Needs
- Housing
- Economic Impact

To assist families with housing repairs, food and other essential items to ensure the basic needs of abused children are met.



Lessons Learned

- Getting out early was critical
- Flexible application process (phone/email/text/Spanish)
- Important that State Agencies (schools/fire departments) were eligible to apply for grants



Dear CFWNC Staff,
Thank you for the Emergency Disaster Response Fund Grant. Our schools run on a tight budget & the disaster spending takes funds from already stretched line items. Your quick response is appreciated & helps our staff get back to the work of educating our kids.



Lessons Learned

- Length of the response and recovery required adapting the grant program to the different phases
- Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) helped get funds out quickly
- Collaboration with trusted funding partners

Thank you for your quick response to our request. We are grateful for this grant for our children.





Next Steps/Future Plans

- Stay engaged with NPO partners to understand ongoing recovery needs
- Grant out remaining EDRF funds
- Continue to collaborate with other funders engaged in WNC
- Share information about what worked with others
- Lobby/advocate for changes/funding for future resiliency

Our Role in Hurricane Helene Recovery **2024-2025**

Presentation to the Governor's Advisory
Committee on WNC Recovery

March 6, 2026



Our Purpose: To dramatically improve the health and wellbeing of all people and communities of Western North Carolina.

western north carolina



Community Investments

\$356+ million in two years

2024

Annual Grants
\$78 million

Impact Investments
\$53 million

Additional Relief Grants
\$70 million

2025

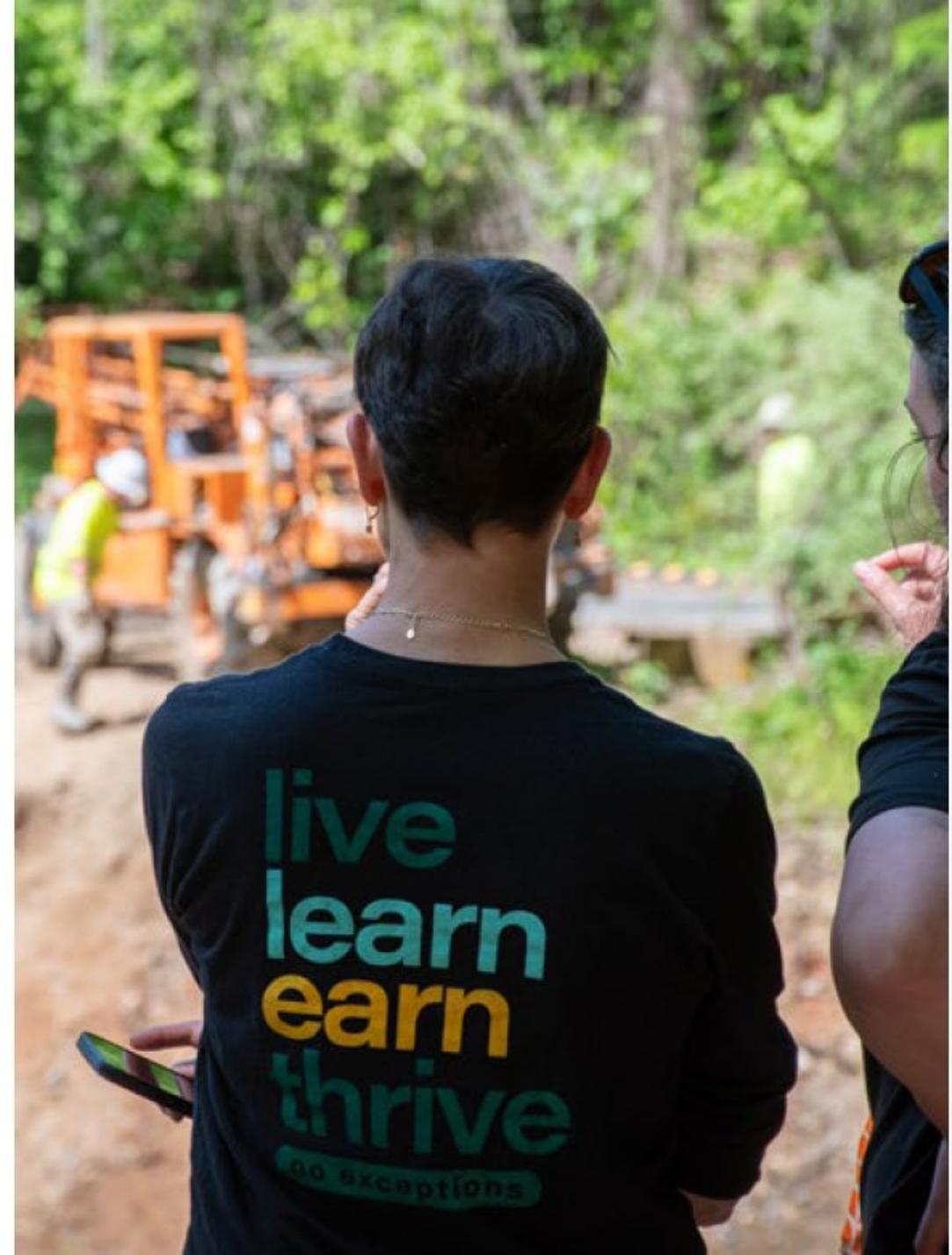
Annual Grants
\$79 million

Impact Investments
\$24 million

Additional Allocation
~\$53 million

Helene Relief - 2024

- Deploy resources quickly to people and areas most affected (foundation and organizational partners)
- FEMA assessment, navigation and legal services
- Critical health services across the region
- Housing stability
- WNC Small Business Initiative
- Early Childhood Education & Out-of-School Time
- Mental and Behavioral Health
- Care for Grantees and support for Individuals



2025-2030: From Project Support to...

- **Stronger Organizations – General Operating Support**
*429 applications received and **99** organizations funded*
- **Organizational Capacity Building**
*348 applications received and **84** organizations funded*
- **Collaboration & Innovation**
*230 applications received and **59** collaborative hubs funded*

2025-2026: Strategic Initiatives

Digital Opportunities



Early Care & Education



Behavioral Health



Other 2025 Investments Contributing to Recovery

- Older Adults & Aging
- Long-term Recovery Groups
- EDA Matches
- Community Development
- Policy & Advocacy
- Local News



Older Adults Collaborative – Grantee Cohort

EDA Matches - Map



\$40M for WNC Affordable Housing Loan Fund



Self-Help
Ventures Fund



Capital Attraction

\$80M+ to WNC in 2025

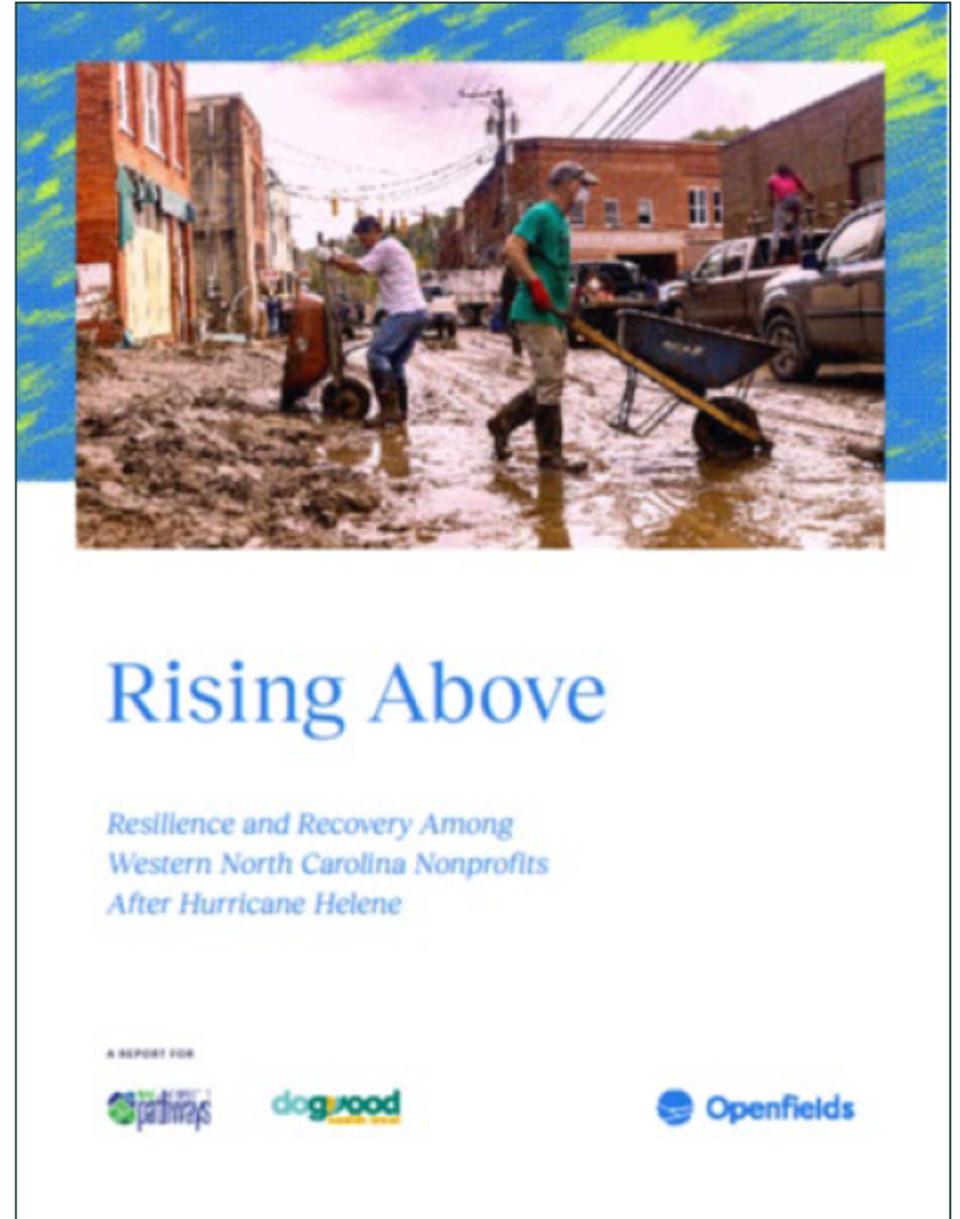
- \$20M WNC Affordable Housing Loan Fund
- \$25M for WNC Small Business Initiative
- \$20M through the Leverage Fund
- \$20M+ in other philanthropic investments



Conducted in partnership with WNC Nonprofit Pathways and Openfields

May 28 – July 6, 2025

251 organizations
represented



Key Findings

Immediate Impacts

- Nearly 6 in 10 nonprofits sustained property damage
- Over half of nonprofits provided frontline assistance
- Steep emotional toll on staff

Recovery

- 76% of nonprofits received recovery assistance
- Staff burnout and limited capacity are top barriers
- 52% are still critically short of operating funds

Impacts of federal shifts

- 54% of nonprofits changed their finances, programs or staffing
- Increased stress, fear, and needs in communities

What nonprofits need now

- Revenue and capacity building are top organizational needs
- Staff seek ongoing collaboration, peer connection, and mental health support

Grant Opportunities – Opening April 20



Organizational Capacity Building

Strengthening Operations and Organizational Health

This opportunity will strengthen aligned organizations' internal operations to achieve long-term performance and sustainability through things like strategic planning; board and staff development; fundraising; evaluation; technology; and more.



Collaboration & Innovation

Investing in Strategic Networks and Approaches that Tackle Complex Challenges

This opportunity will support collaborations spanning organizations, sectors and geographic locations to plan, pilot and scale breakthrough solutions to complex community challenges in WNC.



Digital Opportunities

Sustaining Momentum for Digital Opportunities

This opportunity will support continued and expanding efforts across Western North Carolina to make high-speed internet more available, affordable and useful for everyone. New grant seeking partners and current Digital Opportunities initiative grantees will be encouraged to apply.

Working to create a Western North Carolina where
every generation can

**live, learn,
earn & thrive**

with dignity and opportunity for all

no exceptions



Hurricane Helene Response

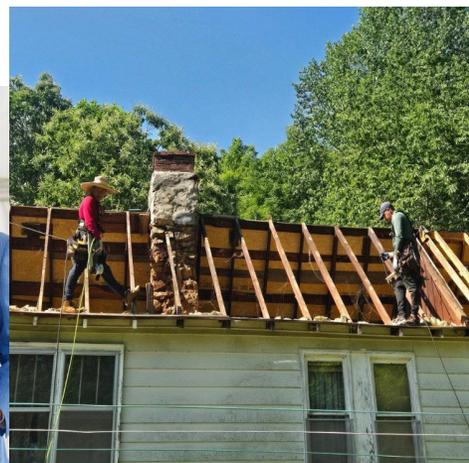
- 31 Emergency Response Grants distributed across Avery, Mitchell & Yancey Counties
- **\$1,756,550** distributed during Emergency Response phase
- Key Partners: Dogwood Health Trust (\$1,000,000) & The Duke Endowment (\$1,050,000)
- AMY Wellness Foundation direct commitment: \$750,000
- Community Donations supporting Recovery Fund

Transitioned from Emergency Response to Long-Term Recovery Phase (2025)



Long-Term Recovery Investments

- \$3 Million American Red Cross Grant secured for Long-Term Recovery Groups (LTRGs)
- Funding supports: Home Repair, Disaster Case Management, Volunteer Coordination
- \$10 Million Housing Partnership (AmeriHealth Caritas NC & Chief Cares Foundation)
- 120+ Housing Units planned across AMY Region
- Workforce Housing redevelopment in Downtown Burnsville





Looking Forward: Building Regional Resilience

- Blue Haven Development (Avery County) – Families transitioning into permanent housing - \$2 Million Investment
- New Neighborhood Breaking Ground in Yancey County 2026. Mitchell County 2027 - \$4 Million Investment Combined
- Regional Long Term Recovery Groups - 258 Active Cases
- Continued Investment in Mental Health, Food Security & Housing Stability



Continuing Recovery. Strengthening Systems. Building What Comes Next.

2025 Financials



Grants Made



Fall Grant Cycle

Total: \$1,199,012.06 to 24 Organizations

- Capacity Building
- Hurricane Helene
- Food Security
- Housing
- Access to Health



Increased Impact Grants

Total: \$2,558,500

- Housing
- Access to Health
- Food Security
- Mental Health
- Capacity



Sponsor Grants

Total: \$3,740,000 Hurricane Helene Recovery:
3 Organizations

Total Grant Giving 2025
\$7,865,012

Revenue and Fundraising



Revenue for AMYWF

January 01, 2025 – December 31, 2025 Total:
\$11,778,676.94

- Grants Received
- Donations
- Other



Fundraising to Date Since Hurricane Helene

October 1, 2024 – December 31, 2025
Total: \$16,959,010

- Grants Received Corporate Partnerships
- Individual
- Donors

NORTH CAROLINA
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



North Carolina Community Foundation Disaster Relief Fund

Meeting of the Governor's Advisory Committee on Western North Carolina Recovery

March 6, 2026

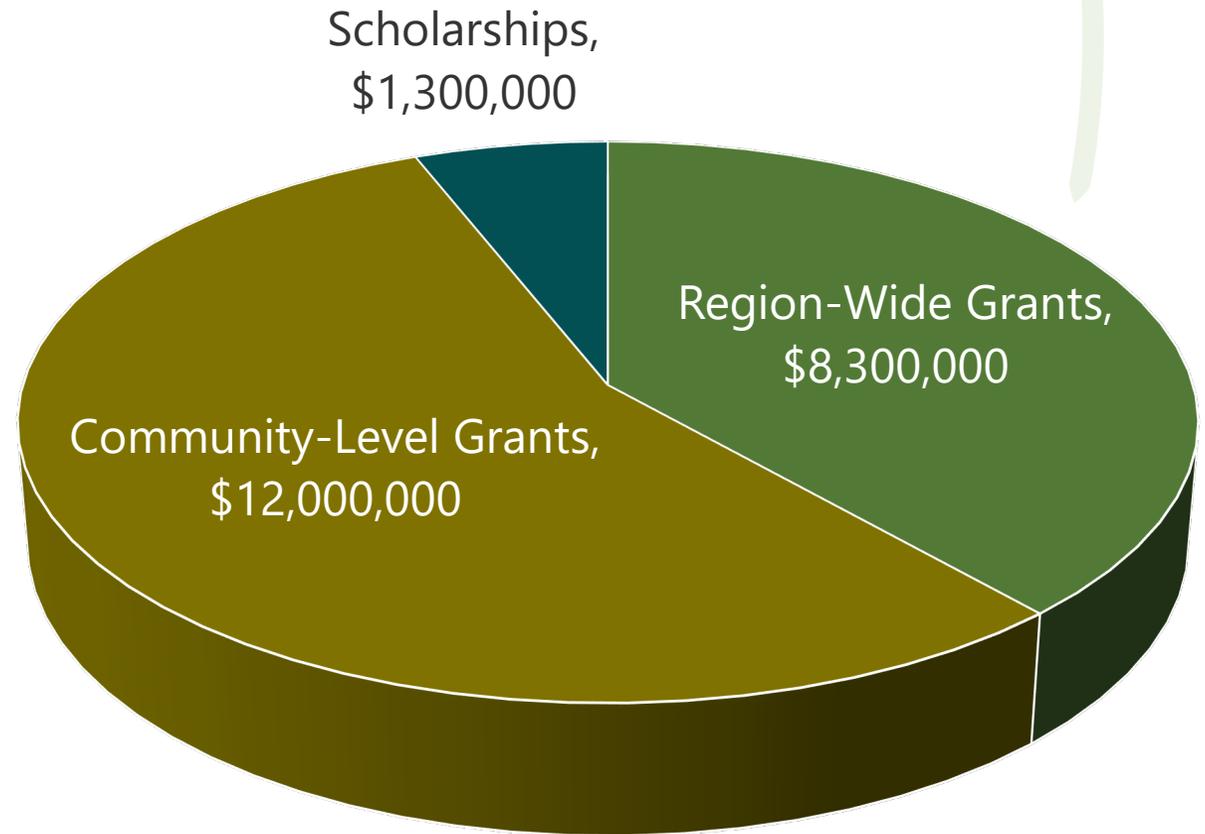
NCCF Disaster Relief Fund

- Created in 1999
- Supports long-term recovery
- Addresses needs not being met by other resources
- Helps communities build community resilience and preparedness for future disasters



Hurricane Helene response

- NCCF Disaster Relief Fund activated on Sept. 29, 2024
- Almost 10,000 gifts to the fund totaling over \$33M
- \$21.6M awarded to date



Grants for region-wide recovery: \$8.3M

- \$3.5M to MANNA FoodBank to upfit new building
- \$1.4M to Pisgah Legal Services and \$1 million to Legal Aid of NC to support legal needs related to recovery
- \$1.4M to Mountain BizWorks for small business grants and technical assistance
- \$1M to ArtsAVL for recovery grants to arts nonprofits
- \$1.3M in renewable scholarships for 100+ students in western NC



Grants for community-level recovery: \$12M

- 2025: \$3M to 94 organizations with the guidance of NCCCF local affiliates serving 18 counties and the Qualla Boundary
- 2026: \$9M to 108 organizations supporting long-term recovery primarily in 16 high-impact counties
 - Includes total of \$1.5M for long-term recovery groups
 - 300+ applications received in the fall requesting \$25M+ in funding



Next steps

- Fund remains open for donations for Helene
- Additional region-wide grants for recovery
- Funding for preparedness efforts
- Scholarships for graduating high school seniors
- Sign up to receive notice of grant future opportunities



Consider Resilience Subcommittee Funding Recommendations from February Meeting





Recovery Updates

Matt Calabria, Director, GROW NC

Emily Gangi, Chief Deputy Director, GROW NC



Select State Program Updates



NC Department of Environmental Quality Awards \$7.3M for Helene-Damaged Dam Repairs

Last month, NC DEQ announced awards of more than \$7.3M for 8 high-hazard dam projects across WNC. Grants will support repair projects to ensure that surrounding communities will be less vulnerable during future flood events.

- Feeney Dam (Henderson)
- Flowers Lake Dam (Catawba)
- Lady Marian Dam (McDowell)
- Lake Junaluska Dam (Haywood)
- Lake Lure Dam (Rutherford)
- Laurel Lakes Dam (Rutherford)
- Warrior Mountain Lake Dam (Polk)



An additional \$2.7M remains available. Round 2 applications are due on June 19, 2026. Eligible dam owners may apply for funding to support design-construction plans for the repair, modification, removal or breach projects related to Hurricane Helene damage.

For more information: bit.ly/Dam-Safety-Grant-Program

NC DEQ Announces \$5.7M for Flood Resilience Projects in the French Broad River Basin

Eight Flood Resiliency Blueprint grants will support efforts to reduce flood risk in the French Broad River Basin. Projects will create new floodwater storage, restore and reconnect floodplains, relocate facilities and infrastructure out of harm's way, and improve water quality.

- Town of Woodfin Riverside Park Flood Mitigation and Stormwater Improvements
- Town of Clyde Downtown Floodable Riverfront Park
- Town of Canton Park Street River Access and Stormwater Improvements
- Town of Canton Chestnut Mountain Floodplain Restoration
- Town of Canton Property Acquisition to Support School Relocation
- Town of Black Mountain Veterans Park Floodplain, Wetland, and Green Infrastructure
- City of Hendersonville Lower Mud Creek Floodplain Restoration Phase 1
- City of Hendersonville Municipal Stormwater Infrastructure Improvements



For more information: bit.ly/flood-resilience-projects

NC Private Roads and Bridges Program

- Estimated Need:
 - 3,569 unique sites
 - \$475.5M to address all sites
- NC-PRB Program Progress
 - 188 sites in progress
 - 60 sites complete
 - 347 households served to date
- NC-PRB Reimbursement Program Progress
 - \$703,765 reimbursements paid so far
 - 274 households served by reimbursement



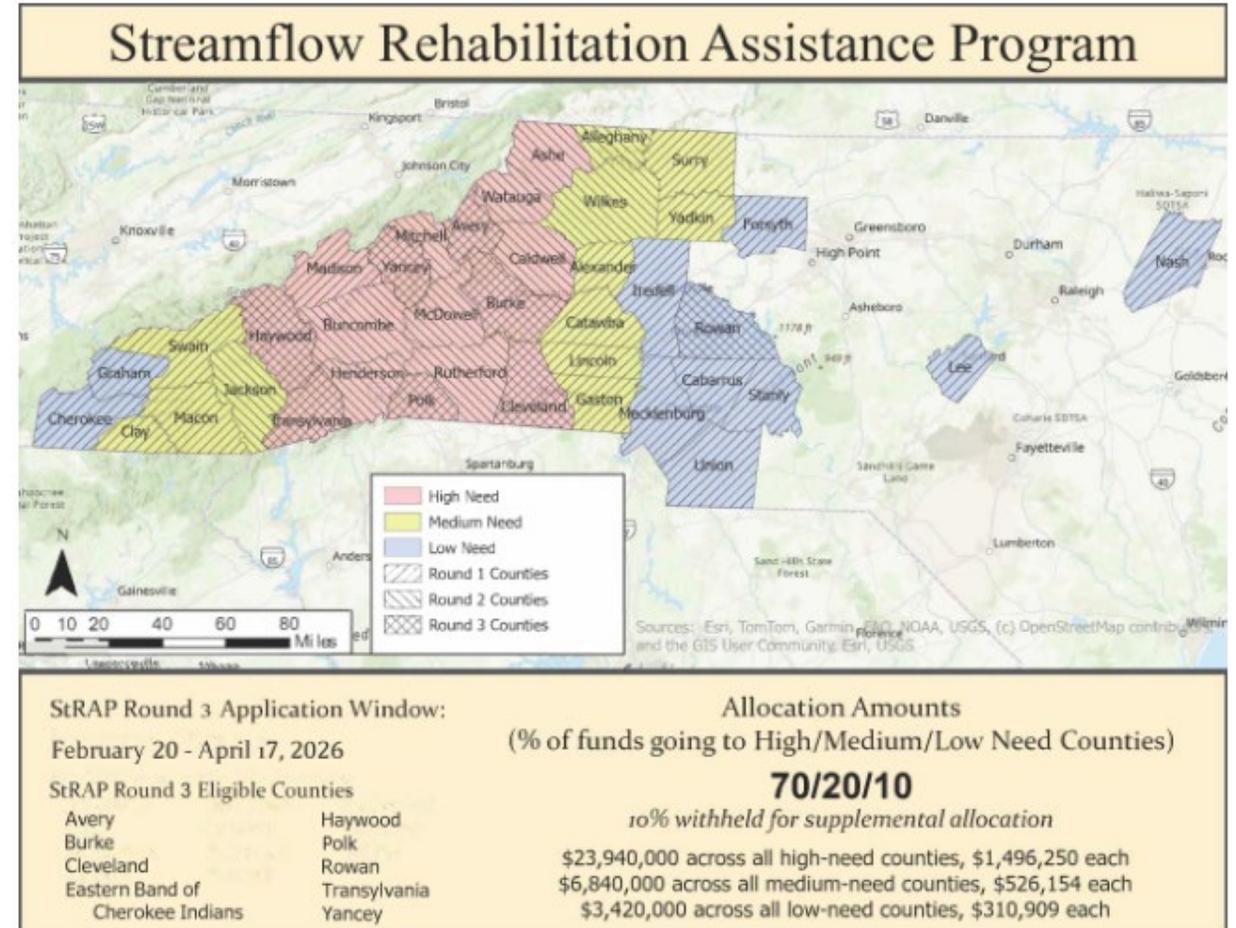
The “Restoring our Infrastructure” page of the GROW NC Recovery Dashboard includes information on the NC Private Roads and Bridges Program.

Streamflow Rehabilitation Assistance Program (StRAP)

Applications Open for Eligible County Groups 2 & 3

Funding to repair stream damage caused by Hurricane Helene. StRAP has \$38M available. Soil & Water Conservation Districts, political subdivisions (city/county gov., water/sewer district, sanitary district, etc.), and nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply.

Application Window 2	January 15, 2026 - March 13, 2026	Alleghany, Ashe, Buncombe, Caldwell, Henderson, Jackson, McDowell, Mitchell, Rutherford, Watauga, Wilkes
Application Window 3	February 20, 2026 - April 17, 2026	Avery, Burke, Cleveland, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Haywood, Polk, Rowan, Transylvania, Yancey



For more information: bit.ly/strap-program-applications

North Carolina Selectsite Readiness Program Adds Five New Locations in WNC

The Selectsite Readiness Program seeks to grow competitive site options of less than 1,000 acres for major manufacturing projects across a range of industries, including aerospace, clean energy, food processing, and life sciences.

The new locations are:

- Alexander County Rail Sites in Hiddenite (Alexander)
- Great Meadows in Morganton (Burke)
- Project Shift in Sylva (Jackson)
- Mitchell Business Park in Spruce Pine (Mitchell)
- ECMD in Wilkesboro (Wilkes)



For more information: edpnc.com/news/north-carolina-selectsite-readiness-program-expansion

ArtsAVL Launches \$1.2 Million Nonprofit Arts Recovery Grant Program

- The Nonprofit Arts Recovery Grant Program will support long-term recovery and stabilization of nonprofit arts and cultural organizations across WNC.
- Funding provided by the North Carolina Community Foundation and Dogwood Health Trust.
- Eligibility: Nonprofit arts organizations in the 16 WNC counties most impacted by Helene: Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Cleveland, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Transylvania, Watauga, and Yancey.
- Applications open March 9



For more information: artsavl.org/recovery



Select Federally Supported Program Updates

Impacts of Homeland Security Shutdown on Helene Recovery

Department-wide impact is delaying some recovery operations

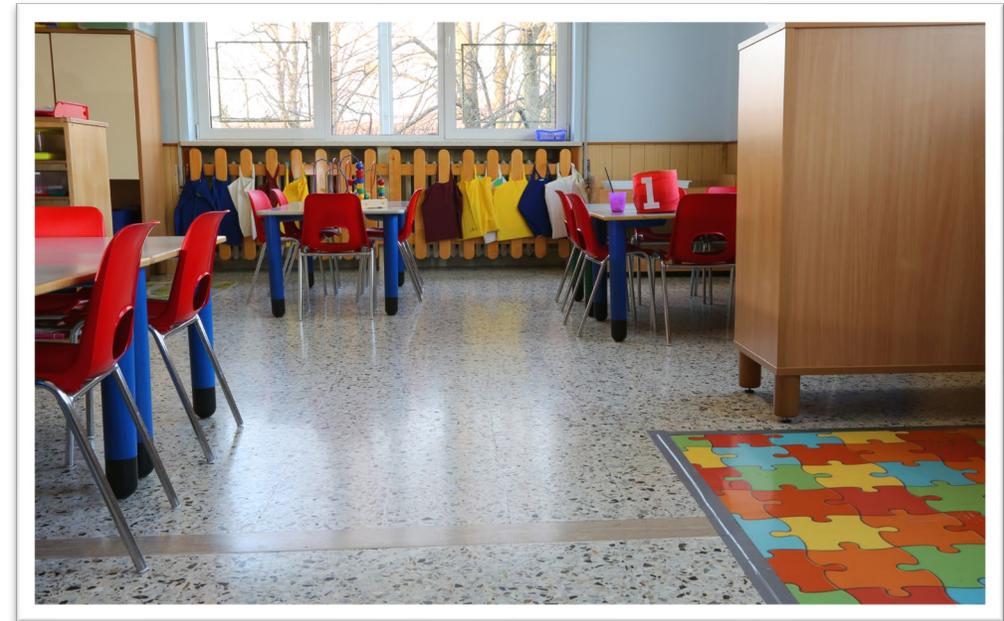


FEMA

- FEMA Public Assistance review of reimbursements for permanent work halted during the shutdown. Review and processing of applications for reimbursement for Debris Removal (Category A) and Emergency Protective Measures (Category B) continues.
- All Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) review and approvals halted, including application assistance and technical consultations between the state and FEMA regarding the program.
- The FEMA grants system, FEMA GO is non-operational. This means payments cannot be processed for non-emergency grants (FEMA Public Assistance categories C-G, the categories reimbursing permanent work).
- Due to FEMA GO inaccessibility, Homeland Security Grant Program and Emergency Management Performance Grant drawdowns to the state will likely be delayed.
- Disaster Relief Fund at risk of running dry in the event of a major disaster, a risk that increases if the shutdown persists.

\$75.8 M Awarded to the NC Department of Health and Human Services for Child Care Facilities

- \$250 million provided in the American Relief Act Disaster Supplemental for child care infrastructure recovery for damages caused by Hurricane Helene and Tropical Storm Debby.
- NC DHHS & GROW NC worked together to submit a proposal requesting \$91.5 million in funds.
 - Over 230 child care facilities damaged by Helene
 - Over 100 damaged by Debby
- Administration for Children & Families, Office of Child Care announced an award of \$75.8 million to NC
- Funds will be used to support the following child care recovery operations:
 - Construction, major renovation, or alteration
 - Materials, supplies, furnishings, vehicles, and equipment
 - Other activities that build child care services in impacted areas
 - Mental health consultation or services
 - Quality improvement activities





Renew NC Single-Family Housing Dashboard

3/4/2026 8:34:52 AM

Latest Data Refresh

Applications in Progress
But Not Submitted

2,168

Total Applications
Submitted

7,924

Total Active
Applications

4,530 i

Inactive or Ineligible
Applications

3,393 i

Application Submission Deadline

January 31, 2026

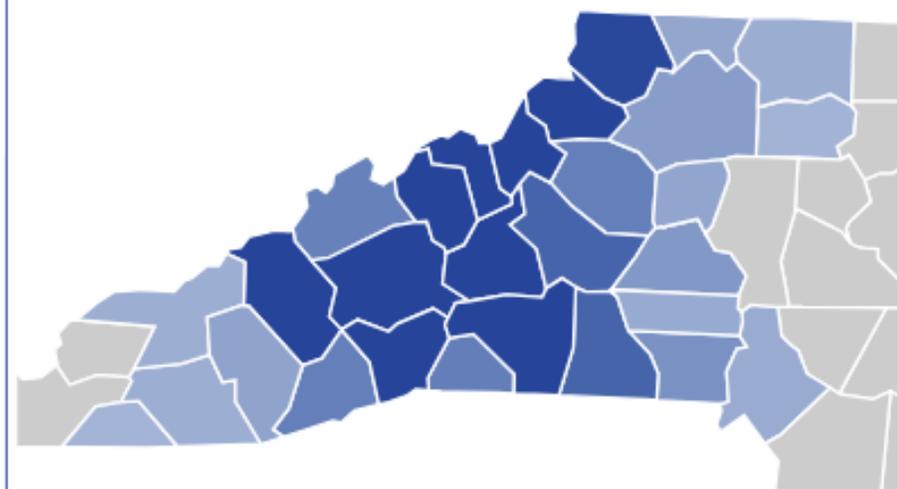
Verified Eligible Phase and Priority i

Phase	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Total
Phase 1	1,280	221	90	11	1,602
Phase 2	193	67	12	6	278
Phase 3	94	4	N/A	N/A	98
Phase 4	387	13	N/A	N/A	400

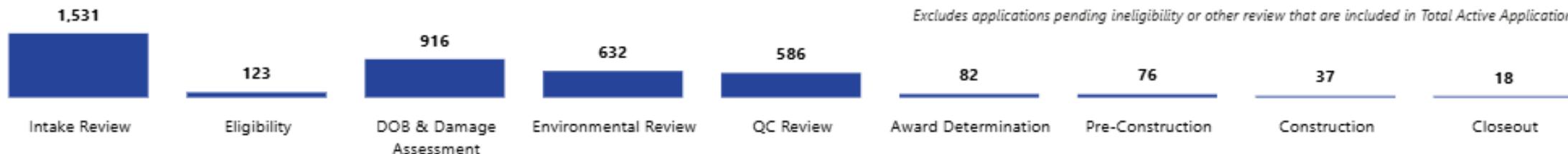
Hover over the information bubble for Phase and Priority definitions.

Applications will be processed beginning with Phase 1, followed by Phase 2, etc.

Applications by County



Active Applications by Workflow Status



Excludes applications pending ineligibility or other review that are included in Total Active Applications count.

RENEW NC SMALL RENTAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

PROGRAM DETAILS

Eligible Properties

- 1-4 units
- Landlord-owned properties in HUD and State MID areas
- Damaged or destroyed by Helene

Award Range

\$250K - \$1.5M

Requirements

Landlords must agree to provide affordable rent rates for a 10-year period for 80% or less AMI.

Apply

- Online at www.renewnc.org
- By phone at 1-888-791-0207
- Through the app

Renew NC Small Rental Rehabilitation Program

Qualifications

Do You Qualify?

- Your property has 1–4 rental units and sustained unrepaired damage from Hurricane Helene (Sept. 27, 2024).
- The property is located in a HUD- or State-designated Most Impacted and Distressed (MID) county.
- Units are VACANT at the time of application (no evictions to qualify).
- You owned the property at the time of the storm and still own it (priority).
- You are current on property taxes or on an approved payment plan, and loan obligations, including mortgages, are current.
- You agree to lease assisted units to income-eligible households at restricted rents for 10 years.

For more information: commercerecovery.nc.gov/smallrentalrehabilitationprogram

Total Applications Submitted

97

Total Number of Units

127

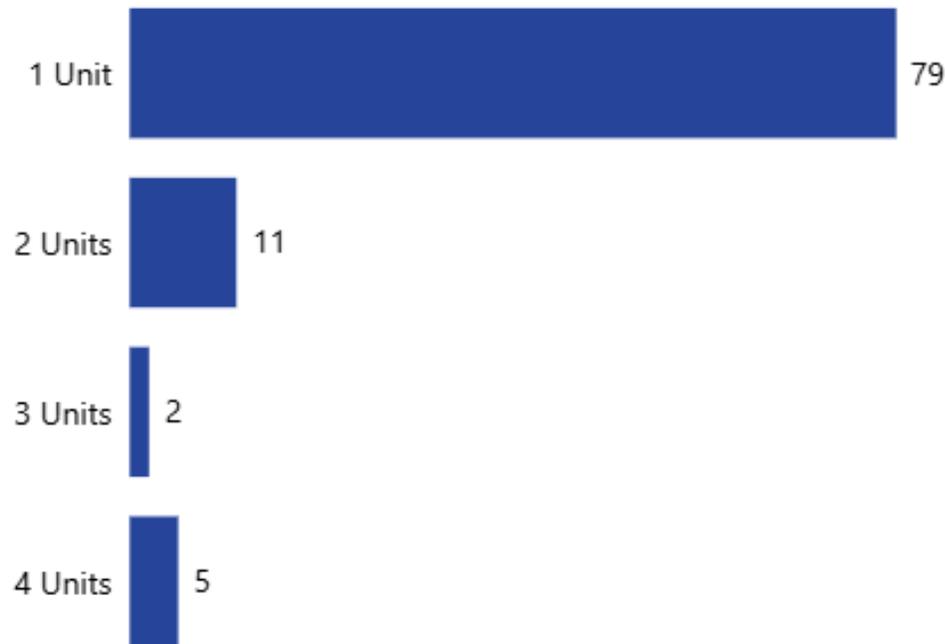
Total Active Applications

86 

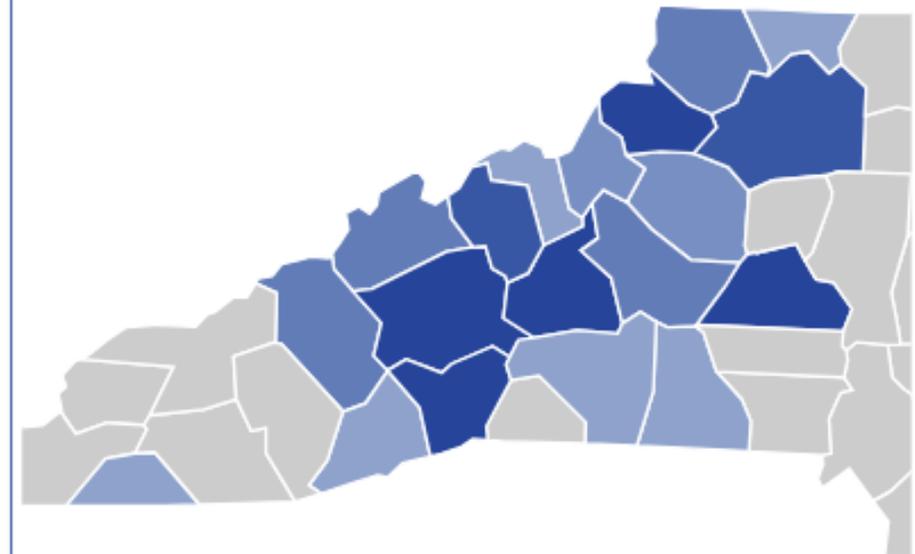
Inactive or Ineligible Applications

11 

Applications by Number of Units



Applications by County



Active Applications by Workflow Status



Excludes applications pending ineligibility or other review that are included in Total Active Applications count.

Prescreening Open for Commercial District Revitalization and Community Infrastructure Programs

Starting February 9, Renew NC is offering a prescreening opportunity to help potential applicants, such as local governments or nonprofit organizations, prepare for the upcoming launch of the Commercial District Revitalization (CDR) and Community Infrastructure programs. While not required for program application submission, prescreening is strongly encouraged.

Commercial District Revitalization

Eligible applicants: local governments and non-profit organizations
Award Range: \$500,000 to \$10 million

Community Infrastructure

Eligible applicants: local governments
Award Range: \$500,000 to \$15 million



NC Wildlife Resources Commission receives \$290 million from the US Forest Service

- The US Department of Agriculture's Forest Service and the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission entered into a \$290 million Good Neighbor Agreement to support Hurricane Helene recovery efforts in Western North Carolina. The agreement is the largest of its kind in the history of the US Forest Service.
- This agreement empowers the commission to perform comprehensive recovery efforts across the Pisgah and Nantahala national forests during the next 10 years.
- The commission will remove storm debris, repair roads and recreation areas, manage invasive species, restore damaged watersheds and improve wildlife habitat.



Volunteer Opportunities in Western North Carolina

The NC Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service offers a listing of organizations hosting volunteer opportunities in Helene-impacted communities. Visit their website to connect with these organizations.

We are grateful to so many state employees who utilize their 24 hours of paid Community Service Leave to participate in recovery efforts.



WNC Helene Volunteer Opportunities

25 entries per page Search:

Organization	Event	Location/s	Website
Resilient Recovery NC	Construction and Labor, equipment operator, electrician, plumber, and fundraising	McDowell, Mitchell, Avery, Buncombe, Rutherford, Yancey, and Watauga Counties	Sign up here
Lost Province Center for Cultural Art/Old Lansing School	Organizing, sorting, receiving, traffic, and personal shopping.	Lansing, NC	Sign up here
Compassion in Action	Load/unload, sort, inventory, stock	North Wilkesboro, NC	Sign up here
Avery County Donation and Volunteer Coordination	Various opportunities for skilled volunteers.	Newland, NC	Sign up here
Appalachian Rebuild Project	Appalachian Rebuild Project is doing home/property repair in Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey Counties. I'm unsure exactly where they will be on that Monday and Tuesday, but can make a connection for more details if this is of interest"	Spruce Pine, NC	Sign up here

For more information: nc.gov/working/volunteer-opportunities/volunteernc



Wrap Up and Next Steps

Matt Calabria, GROW NC

Next meeting: **Monday, April 20**, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Virtual

Stay Connected

GROW NC is sharing recovery news, resources, progress metrics, and more.

