

**File Code:** 6270  
**Date:** December 9, 2024

Elizabeth Haddix  
American Oversight  
foia@americanoversight.org

Dear Elizabeth Haddix:

This letter is in response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, from October 24, 2024, received by the USDA Forest Service - Southern Region (R8), Southern Region Law Enforcement and Investigations Office, on October 28, 2024, and assigned tracking number **2025-FS-R8-01476-F**. You requested:

*“1. All email communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, and calendar invitation attachments) sent or received by any of the U.S. Forest Service officials listed below and containing any of the key terms listed below. U.S. Forest Service Officials: i. Ken Arney, Regional Forester ii. James Melonas, Forest Supervisor Key Terms: a. militia b. “hunting FEMA”*

*2. Any records reflecting guidance, directives, memoranda, advisories, or other documents provided to your office from the FEMA regarding the relocation of workers assisting in Hurricane Helene recovery due to the presence of armed militia groups. (Date Range for Record Search: From 9/24/2024 To 10/28/2024)”*

In response to your request, the staff at the Southern Region Law Enforcement and Investigations, Southern Regional Office, and National Forests in North Carolina office, conducted a search for electronic and hardcopy information everywhere a reasonably knowledgeable professional might expect to find records and located records totaling approximately 44 pages in 12 files, of which we are releasing 44 pages in part, with some information being withheld pursuant to FOIA Exemption 6.

These records are in response to subpart 1 of your request. On or about 5 November 2024, we previously released responsive records to subpart 2 of your request. As we noted in our 5 November communication, one 4-page email chain had been referred to FEMA. We subsequently determined that this is a FEMA record and that release of it would have to be requested directly from FEMA. Contact information for the FEMA FOIA office may be found at: <https://www.fema.gov/about/offices/administrative/foia>.

Within five (5) working days of the date of this letter, you will receive an email with a link to download the responsive records. If you do not receive that link, please notify us at [sm.fs.r9foia@usda.gov](mailto:sm.fs.r9foia@usda.gov).

### **Exemption 6**

Exemption 6 requires the Government to withhold all information about individuals in “personnel and medical and similar files,” where the disclosure of such information “would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy” 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(6). In

determining whether this disclosure would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, the Forest Service must balance the public's right to disclosure against the privacy interest of the individual(s) whose privacy may be affected. The determination of whether the disclosure of private information is required under Exemption 6 is reliant on the nature of the information requested and its relationship to the core purpose for which Congress enacted the FOIA: to shed light on an agency's performance of its statutory duties.

The information that has been withheld under Exemption 6 consists of personal information, specifically personal email addresses, cell phone numbers, and other information of a purely personal and private nature, and we have determined that the individuals to whom this information pertains have a substantial privacy interest in withholding it. Additionally, we have determined that the disclosure of this information would shed little or no light on the performance of the agency's statutory duties. Because the harm to personal privacy is greater than whatever public interest may be served by disclosure, release of the information would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of the privacy of these individuals, and we are withholding it under Exemption 6.

Information withheld under Exemption (b)(6) includes employees' work cell phone numbers. Releasing an employee's cell phone number would unnecessarily intrude upon the employee's privacy, given that Forest Service employees generally are expected to carry their work cell phone(s) on their persons outside of the office and normal work hours. "[C]ell phone numbers implicate a different privacy interest from landline office phone numbers because employees carry cell phones with them outside the office and regular work hours." Smith v. U.S. Dep't of Treasury, No. 17-cv-1796 (TSC), 2020 WL 376641, at \*4 (D.D.C. Jan. 23, 2020). "Disclosing the numbers of work cell phones, which employees maintain in their homes and on their person, could subject them to the type of harassment exemption 6 was designed to prevent." Id. "Cell phone number[s]...implicate[] a substantial privacy interest. On the other side of the ledger, there is limited public interest in disclosing the cell phone number because the public can readily contact the official by emailing...or dialing [a] landline. The balance of interests is thus lopsided against disclosure." Colorado Wild Public Lands v. U.S. Forest Service, No. 21-cv-2802 (CRC), at \*22 (D.D.C. Sept. 11, 2023).

## **Fees**

The FOIA provides that requesters pay the reasonable costs for search, review, and duplication of records. Pursuant to Title 7, Code of Federal Regulations, Subtitle A, Part 1, Subpart A, Appendix A, there is no charge as we have previously granted your fee waiver request.

This concludes the Forest Service's response to your FOIA request. The FOIA provides you the right to appeal this response. Your appeal should be addressed to the Chief, Department of Agriculture Forest Service, and must be submitted in writing within 90 days from the date of this letter. Please submit as follows: 1) by email to [sm.fs.wofoia@usda.gov](mailto:sm.fs.wofoia@usda.gov); 2) by regular mail to Mail Stop 1143, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-1143; 3) or by Fed Ex or UPS to 201 14th Street SW, Washington, DC 20250-1143. The term "FOIA APPEAL" should be placed in capital letters on the subject line of the email or on the front of the envelope. To facilitate appeal processing, please include a copy of this letter and/or the request number listed at the top of this letter.

If you need any further assistance or would like to discuss any aspect of your request, please do not hesitate to contact the FOIA Public Liaison at (202) 205-6560. Additionally, you may contact the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS), National Archives and Records Administration, to inquire about the FOIA mediation services they offer. The contact information for OGIS is as follows: Office of Government Information Services, National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS, College Park, Maryland 20740-6001, email at [ogis@nara.gov](mailto:ogis@nara.gov); telephone at (202) 741-5770; toll free at 1 (877) 684-6448; or facsimile at (202) 741-5769.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kenderick Arney (for)". The signature is written in a cursive style.

KENDERICK ARNEY  
Regional Forester

cc: Steve Watkins; Lauren Onofrio; Kelada Bennett-Wallace

## Haney, Michael - FS, GA

---

**From:** Arney, Ken - FS, GA  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 13, 2024 12:12 PM  
**To:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA  
**Cc:** Sachs, Gordon - FS, DC; Hunter, Edward - FS, GA; Lint, Rick - FS, GA; Reaves, Sherry - FS, GA; Raval, Shardul - FS, GA; Martin, Dave - FS, GA; Neal, Monica - FS, GA; Richardson, Renee - FS, GA; Baker, Andrew - FS, GA; Ellsworth, Dana - FS, GA; Parrish, Steven - FS, FL; Denton, Christopher - FS, VT; Demas, Jason - FS, GA  
**Subject:** FW: Resumption of FEMA ESF4 Operations  
**Attachments:** RE: Status of Resuming Operations in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

Lex, I approve the reengagement of ESF4 resources on FEMA Mission Assignment operations. I request that you ensure that responders are briefed on proper refusal of assignment, and that they feel empowered to say “no” or disengage anytime if conditions/exposures are un-safe. Please remind them of our safety process – Stop, Think, Talk before Acting. Thanks.



**Ken Arney**  
**Regional Forester**  
**Forest Service**  
**Region 8**

p: 404-347-4177

f: 404-347-4821

[kenderick.arney@usda.gov](mailto:kenderick.arney@usda.gov)

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---

**From:** Martin, Dave - FS, GA <[Ben.Martin1@usda.gov](mailto:Ben.Martin1@usda.gov)>  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 13, 2024 9:37 AM  
**To:** Arney, Ken - FS, GA <[Kenderick.Arney@usda.gov](mailto:Kenderick.Arney@usda.gov)>; Reaves, Sherry - FS, GA <[sherry.reaves@usda.gov](mailto:sherry.reaves@usda.gov)>; Lint, Rick - FS, GA <[John.Lint@usda.gov](mailto:John.Lint@usda.gov)>; Hunter, Edward - FS, GA <[edward.hunter@usda.gov](mailto:edward.hunter@usda.gov)>; Raval, Shardul - FS, GA <[shardul.raval@usda.gov](mailto:shardul.raval@usda.gov)>; Demas, Jason - FS, GA <[jason.demas@usda.gov](mailto:jason.demas@usda.gov)>; Parrish, Steven - FS, FL <[steven.parrish@usda.gov](mailto:steven.parrish@usda.gov)>; Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <[alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov](mailto:alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov)>; Ellsworth, Dana - FS, GA <[dana.ellsworth@usda.gov](mailto:dana.ellsworth@usda.gov)>; Denton, Christopher - FS, VT <[Christopher.Denton@usda.gov](mailto:Christopher.Denton@usda.gov)>; Baker, Andrew - FS, GA <[andrew.baker@usda.gov](mailto:andrew.baker@usda.gov)>  
**Cc:** Neal, Monica - FS, GA <[monica.neal@usda.gov](mailto:monica.neal@usda.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Resumption of FEMA ESF4 Operations

The attached email thread gives some additional context to our 1100 discussion/request.

v/r

-Dave



**Dave Martin**

**Assistant Director-Operations**

*NON SIBI SED PATRIAE*

Forest Service

Southern Region Fire & Aviation Management

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Retirement Personal Cell(after 31OCT2024) (b) (6)

Desk:404-347-2726

1720 Peachtree Road, Ste 746N  
Atlanta, GA 30309

-----Original Appointment-----

**From:** Martin, Dave - FS, GA <[Ben.Martin1@usda.gov](mailto:Ben.Martin1@usda.gov)>

**Sent:** Sunday, October 13, 2024 9:47 AM

**To:** Martin, Dave - FS, GA; Arney, Ken - FS, GA; Reaves, Sherry - FS, GA; Lint, Rick - FS, GA; Hunter, Edward - FS, GA; Raval, Shardul - FS, GA; Demas, Jason - FS, GA; Parrish, Steven - FS, FL; Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA; Ellsworth, Dana - FS, GA; Denton, Christopher - FS, VT; Baker, Andrew - FS, GA

**Cc:** Neal, Monica - FS, GA

**Subject:** Resumption of FEMA ESF4 Operations

**When:** Sunday, October 13, 2024 11:00 AM-11:30 AM (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada).

**Where:** Microsoft Teams Meeting

Task:

RFT/Exec make an informed decision on resuming operations of ESF4 Resources assigned to FEMA Mission Assignments in NC.

Purpose/Intent:

-Provide RFT/Exec with facts surrounding yesterdays IWI that led to operational pause of all FEMA response operations.

-Provide best available information on current exposures/conditions to Agency responders assigned to FEMA MAs

End State:

NLT 1200p.m. today, advise FEMA through our ESFL on the RFT/Exec decision to allow ESF4 resources to continue operations.



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## Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

### [Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: [REDACTED]

Passcode: [REDACTED]

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### Dial in by phone

[REDACTED] United States, Washington

[Find a local number](#)

Phone conference ID: 957 883 629#

For organizers: [Meeting options](#) | [Reset dial-in PIN](#)

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## Haney, Michael - FS, GA

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**From:** Abernethy, Alan - FS, GA  
**Sent:** Monday, October 14, 2024 10:26 AM  
**To:** FS-pdl r8 exec  
**Cc:** r8-oc\_pulse\_7628152039\_0160efd4bff32c0cb489\_\_26596195@use1.mx.monday.com; Meg Ciciarella; Hollowell, Meredith - FS, GA  
**Subject:** FW: US Forest Service email of armed militia threat

Good morning,

You may have seen news coverage of some resistance to the federal presence in Western N.C. The FS was mentioned in a Washington Post article: [Hurricane recovery officials in N.C. relocated amid report of 'armed militia,' email shows - The Washington Post](#)

NFs in NC received the inquiry below. They are working on a initial response, which we'll coordinate with the WO press desk.

There is no stated deadline, so Tuesday is likely the earliest we can respond.

Thanks,



**Alan Abernethy**  
**Deputy Director**

Office of Communication  
Forest Service  
Southern Region

cell: (b) (6)  
[alan.abernethy@usda.gov](mailto:alan.abernethy@usda.gov)

---

**From:** Ober, Ryley <[ROber@citizentimes.com](mailto:ROber@citizentimes.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 14, 2024 9:30 AM  
**To:** Rondeau, Adam - FS, NC <[Adam.Rondeau@usda.gov](mailto:Adam.Rondeau@usda.gov)>  
**Subject:** [External Email]US Forest Service email of armed militia threat

**[External Email]**

If this message comes from an **unexpected sender** or references a **vague/unexpected topic**;  
Use caution before clicking links or opening attachments.  
Please send any concerns or suspicious messages to: [Spam.Abuse@usda.gov](mailto:Spam.Abuse@usda.gov)

Good morning, Adam –

Hope you are doing well. I saw a report regarding an email sent from the US Forest Service about a potential armed militia “hunting” FEMA workers in Rutherford County. Can you confirm this email exists? And if so, I’d like to request a copy of the email along with all email threads and/or responses corresponding with the original email.

Ryley Ober  
Public Safety Reporter

# Citizen Times

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

[REDACTED]  
Asheville, NC 28801  
Mobile: (b) (6) [REDACTED]  
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[www.citizentimes.com](http://www.citizentimes.com)  
Twitter: @rleyober

## Haney, Michael - FS, GA

---

**From:** Martin, Dave - FS, GA  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 13, 2024 8:56 AM  
**To:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA; Parrish, Steven - FS, FL; Arney, Ken - FS, GA; Hunter, Edward - FS, GA; Fitzsimmons, Cavan - FS, NC; Melonas, James - FS, NC; Ellsworth, Dana - FS, GA; Demas, Jason - FS, GA  
**Cc:** Raval, Shardul - FS, GA; Baker, Andrew - FS, GA  
**Subject:** RE: Status of Resuming Operations in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

Lex,  
Speaking with RF Ken Arny, the USDA FS Southern Region recommends maintaining the operational pause on ESF4 Resources until noon today.  
Thus allowing leadership to better assess facts around yesterday's IWI as well as current conditions /exposure to our responders.

v/r  
-Dave



**Dave Martin**  
**Assistant Director-Operations**  
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Southern Region Fire & Aviation Management  
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Retirement Personal Cell(after 31OCT2024) (b) (6)  
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Atlanta, GA 30309

---

**From:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov>  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 13, 2024 8:38 AM  
**To:** Martin, Dave - FS, GA <Ben.Martin1@usda.gov>; Parrish, Steven - FS, FL <steven.parrish@usda.gov>  
**Cc:** Raval, Shardul - FS, GA <shardul.raval@usda.gov>; Baker, Andrew - FS, GA <andrew.baker@usda.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: Status of Resuming Operations in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

Sharing.

V/r



**Lex Gabaldo**  
**Cooperative Fire and All-Hazard Program Manager**

**Forest Service**  
Southern Region Fire & Aviation Management

C: (b) (6)  
[alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov](mailto:alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov)

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Atlanta, GA 30309



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---

**From:** Sachs, Gordon - FS, DC <[gordon.sachs@usda.gov](mailto:gordon.sachs@usda.gov)>

**Sent:** Sunday, October 13, 2024 8:35 AM

**To:** FS-pdl wo spf fam5 <[pd\\_l\\_wo\\_spf\\_fam5@usda.gov](mailto:pd_l_wo_spf_fam5@usda.gov)>; Haston, David - FS, ID <[david.haston@usda.gov](mailto:david.haston@usda.gov)>; Christensen, Kim - FS, ID <[kim.christensen@usda.gov](mailto:kim.christensen@usda.gov)>; NICC Coordinator on Duty <[nicc.cod@firenet.gov](mailto:nicc.cod@firenet.gov)>; VanHemelryck, Kimberly <[kimberly\\_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov](mailto:kimberly_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov)>; [doi\\_watch\\_office@ios.doi.gov](mailto:doi_watch_office@ios.doi.gov); Webb, Larry (Brian) - FS, DC <[larry.webb@usda.gov](mailto:larry.webb@usda.gov)>; Hower, Andrew - FS, DC <[Andrew.Hower@usda.gov](mailto:Andrew.Hower@usda.gov)>; FS-pdl WO SPF FAM ESF4 <[pd\\_l\\_WO\\_SPF\\_FAM\\_ESF4@usda.gov](mailto:pd_l_WO_SPF_FAM_ESF4@usda.gov)>; OpsCenter - OHS, Washington - OHS, DC <[OpsCenter@USDA.GOV](mailto:OpsCenter@USDA.GOV)>

**Cc:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <[alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov](mailto:alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov)>; Kendall, Aaron - FS, WV <[aaron.kendall@usda.gov](mailto:aaron.kendall@usda.gov)>

**Subject:** Status of Resuming Operations in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

Per the attached direction, FEMA has left the resumption of operations in North Carolina to the discretion of ESFs/agencies for today. Field resources mobilized through ESF #4 remain at a tactical pause awaiting direction/guidance from Regional leadership in the Forest Service Southern Region.

Moving into the rest of the week, FEMA will continue to evaluate the safety of the workforce and needs of the survivors and will continue development of force protection measures and courses of action that will support the safety of responders.



**Gordy Sachs**  
**Chief, All Hazard & International Fire Support Branch**  
**National ESF #4 Coordinator**

**Forest Service**  
**Fire & Aviation Management**

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**From:** Sachs, Gordon - FS, DC

**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 7:15 PM

**To:** FS-pdl wo spf fam5 <[pd\\_l\\_wo\\_spf\\_fam5@usda.gov](mailto:pd_l_wo_spf_fam5@usda.gov)>; Haston, David - FS, ID <[david.haston@usda.gov](mailto:david.haston@usda.gov)>; Christensen, Kim - FS, ID <[kim.christensen@usda.gov](mailto:kim.christensen@usda.gov)>; NICC Coordinator on Duty <[nicc.cod@firenet.gov](mailto:nicc.cod@firenet.gov)>; VanHemelryck, Kimberly <[kimberly\\_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov](mailto:kimberly_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov)>; [doi\\_watch\\_office@ios.doi.gov](mailto:doi_watch_office@ios.doi.gov); Webb, Larry (Brian) - FS, DC <[larry.webb@usda.gov](mailto:larry.webb@usda.gov)>; Hower, Andrew - FS, DC <[Andrew.Hower@usda.gov](mailto:Andrew.Hower@usda.gov)>; FS-pdl WO SPF FAM ESF4

<[pdl\\_WO\\_SPF\\_FAM\\_ESF4@usda.gov](mailto:pdl_WO_SPF_FAM_ESF4@usda.gov)>; OpsCenter - OHS, Washington - OHS, DC <[OpsCenter@USDA.GOV](mailto:OpsCenter@USDA.GOV)>

**Cc:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <[alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov](mailto:alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov)>; Kendall, Aaron - FS, WV <[aaron.kendall@usda.gov](mailto:aaron.kendall@usda.gov)>

**Subject:** Update: ALL PERSONNEL ACCOUNTED FOR, IN SAFE LOCATIONS: IWI in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

All personnel/resources mobilized to Hurricane Helene through ESF #4 have been accounted for and are in secure locations outside of the threat area.

- Rocky Mountain CIMT – reported to ICP in Weaverville, NC
- PNW 10 – reported to ICP
- Southwest Team 2 – reported to ICP
- Washington State Team 2 – reported to ICP
- New Jersey AHIMT – reported to ICP
- ESF #4 field liaisons – accounted for in Newton, NC
- FDNY IMT – accounted for in Knoxville, TN

FEMA, North Carolina, and ESF #13 have advised that initial investigation has determined that the threat environment has diminished but Federal resources are still on heightened alert. Local law enforcement authorities are continuing the investigation. Information on resuming an active response posture in North Carolina will be provided in the morning.



**Gordy Sachs**  
Chief, All Hazard & International Fire Support Branch  
National ESF #4 Coordinator

**Forest Service**  
**Fire & Aviation Management**

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**From:** Sachs, Gordon - FS, DC

**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 2:58 PM

**To:** FS-pdl wo spf fam5 <[pdl\\_wo\\_spf\\_fam5@usda.gov](mailto:pdl_wo_spf_fam5@usda.gov)>; Haston, David - FS, ID <[david.haston@usda.gov](mailto:david.haston@usda.gov)>; Christensen, Kim - FS, ID <[kim.christensen@usda.gov](mailto:kim.christensen@usda.gov)>; NICC Coordinator on Duty <[nicc.cod@firenet.gov](mailto:nicc.cod@firenet.gov)>; VanHemelryck, Kimberly <[kimberly\\_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov](mailto:kimberly_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov)>; [doi\\_watch\\_office@ios.doi.gov](mailto:doi_watch_office@ios.doi.gov); Webb, Larry (Brian) - FS, DC

<[larry.webb@usda.gov](mailto:larry.webb@usda.gov)>; Hower, Andrew - FS, DC <[Andrew.Hower@usda.gov](mailto:Andrew.Hower@usda.gov)>; FS-pdl WO SPF FAM ESF4 <[pdl\\_WO\\_SPF\\_FAM\\_ESF4@usda.gov](mailto:pdl_WO_SPF_FAM_ESF4@usda.gov)>; OpsCenter - OHS, Washington - OHS, DC <[OpsCenter@USDA.GOV](mailto:OpsCenter@USDA.GOV)>

**Cc:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <[alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov](mailto:alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov)>; Kendall, Aaron - FS, WV <[aaron.kendall@usda.gov](mailto:aaron.kendall@usda.gov)>

**Subject:** Update: URGENT: IWI in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

Update: FEMA has now instituted a full “field standdown” for Federal employees and contractors operating on Hurricane Helene mission in North Carolina:

Based on threatening information passed to field leadership in North Carolina, a determination was made to implement a full field standdown for all federal employees and contractors. Field leadership will continue assessing the situation and we will share updates as appropriate.

Thanks,  
AB  
--  
Anthony J. Battaglia  
Chief, National Response Coordination Staff

The Region has made the IMTs and other personnel operating on NFS lands aware of the situation. USDA Operations Center has also been advised.

Additional information, including confirmation of accountability of personnel assigned through ESF #4, will be provided.



**Gordy Sachs**  
Chief, All Hazard & International Fire Support Branch  
National ESF #4 Coordinator

Forest Service  
Fire & Aviation Management

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**From:** Sachs, Gordon - FS, DC  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 1:56 PM  
**To:** FS-pdl wo spf fam5 <[pd\\_l\\_wo\\_spf\\_fam5@usda.gov](mailto:pd_l_wo_spf_fam5@usda.gov)>; Haston, David - FS, ID <[david.haston@usda.gov](mailto:david.haston@usda.gov)>; Christensen, Kim - FS, ID <[kim.christensen@usda.gov](mailto:kim.christensen@usda.gov)>; NICC Coordinator on Duty <[nicc.cod@firenet.gov](mailto:nicc.cod@firenet.gov)>; VanHemelryck, Kimberly <[kimberly\\_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov](mailto:kimberly_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov)>; [doi\\_watch\\_office@ios.doi.gov](mailto:doi_watch_office@ios.doi.gov); Webb, Larry (Brian) - FS, DC <[larry.webb@usda.gov](mailto:larry.webb@usda.gov)>; Hower, Andrew - FS, DC <[Andrew.Hower@usda.gov](mailto:Andrew.Hower@usda.gov)>  
**Cc:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <[alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov](mailto:alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov)>; Kendall, Aaron - FS, WV <[aaron.kendall@usda.gov](mailto:aaron.kendall@usda.gov)>  
**Subject:** URGENT: IWI in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

FEMA has advised all Federal responders in Rutherford County, NC to stand down and evacuate the county immediately. The message stated that "Title 10 troops had come across x2 trucks of armed militia saying they were out hunting FEMA. Specifically occurred in Chimney Rock."

The IMTs have been notified and are coordinating the evacuation of all assigned personnel in that county. Regional ESF #4 staff will maintain contact with the IMTs and will ensure accountability of all personnel (IMTs, crews, and single resources) once the evacuation is completed.

We will maintain contact with FEMA as they evaluate the potential risks to responders in other counties in North Carolina. We will take appropriate action based on FEMA and NC State Emergency Management guidance.

I will be the HQ-level POC for this IWI.



**Gordy Sachs**  
**Chief, All Hazard & International Fire Support Branch**  
**National ESF #4 Coordinator**

**Forest Service**  
**Fire & Aviation Management**

c: (b) (6)

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## Haney, Michael - FS, GA

---

**From:** Martin, Dave - FS, GA  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 13, 2024 8:56 AM  
**To:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA; Parrish, Steven - FS, FL; Arney, Ken - FS, GA; Hunter, Edward - FS, GA; Fitzsimmons, Cavan - FS, NC; Melonas, James - FS, NC; Ellsworth, Dana - FS, GA; Demas, Jason - FS, GA  
**Cc:** Raval, Shardul - FS, GA; Baker, Andrew - FS, GA  
**Subject:** RE: Status of Resuming Operations in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

Lex,  
Speaking with RF Ken Arny, the USDA FS Southern Region recommends maintaining the operational pause on ESF4 Resources until noon today.  
Thus allowing leadership to better assess facts around yesterday's IWI as well as current conditions /exposure to our responders.

v/r  
-Dave



**Dave Martin**  
**Assistant Director-Operations**  
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Atlanta, GA 30309

---

**From:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov>  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 13, 2024 8:38 AM  
**To:** Martin, Dave - FS, GA <Ben.Martin1@usda.gov>; Parrish, Steven - FS, FL <steven.parrish@usda.gov>  
**Cc:** Raval, Shardul - FS, GA <shardul.raval@usda.gov>; Baker, Andrew - FS, GA <andrew.baker@usda.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: Status of Resuming Operations in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

Sharing.

V/r

AMERICAN  
OVERSIGHT



**Lex Gabaldo**  
**Cooperative Fire and All-Hazard Program Manager**

**Forest Service**  
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Atlanta, GA 30309



**Caring for the land and serving people**

---

**From:** Sachs, Gordon - FS, DC <[gordon.sachs@usda.gov](mailto:gordon.sachs@usda.gov)>

**Sent:** Sunday, October 13, 2024 8:35 AM

**To:** FS-pdl wo spf fam5 <[pdl\\_wo\\_spf\\_fam5@usda.gov](mailto:pdl_wo_spf_fam5@usda.gov)>; Haston, David - FS, ID <[david.haston@usda.gov](mailto:david.haston@usda.gov)>; Christensen, Kim - FS, ID <[kim.christensen@usda.gov](mailto:kim.christensen@usda.gov)>; NICC Coordinator on Duty <[nicc.cod@firenet.gov](mailto:nicc.cod@firenet.gov)>; VanHemelryck, Kimberly <[kimberly\\_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov](mailto:kimberly_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov)>; [doi\\_watch\\_office@ios.doi.gov](mailto:doi_watch_office@ios.doi.gov); Webb, Larry (Brian) - FS, DC <[larry.webb@usda.gov](mailto:larry.webb@usda.gov)>; Hower, Andrew - FS, DC <[Andrew.Hower@usda.gov](mailto:Andrew.Hower@usda.gov)>; FS-pdl WO SPF FAM ESF4 <[pdl\\_WO\\_SPF\\_FAM\\_ESF4@usda.gov](mailto:pdl_WO_SPF_FAM_ESF4@usda.gov)>; OpsCenter - OHS, Washington - OHS, DC <[OpsCenter@USDA.GOV](mailto:OpsCenter@USDA.GOV)>

**Cc:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <[alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov](mailto:alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov)>; Kendall, Aaron - FS, WV <[aaron.kendall@usda.gov](mailto:aaron.kendall@usda.gov)>

**Subject:** Status of Resuming Operations in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

Per the attached direction, FEMA has left the resumption of operations in North Carolina to the discretion of ESFs/agencies for today. Field resources mobilized through ESF #4 remain at a tactical pause awaiting direction/guidance from Regional leadership in the Forest Service Southern Region.

Moving into the rest of the week, FEMA will continue to evaluate the safety of the workforce and needs of the survivors and will continue development of force protection measures and courses of action that will support the safety of responders.



**Gordy Sachs**  
**Chief, All Hazard & International Fire Support Branch**  
**National ESF #4 Coordinator**

**Forest Service**  
**Fire & Aviation Management**

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---

**From:** Sachs, Gordon - FS, DC

**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 7:15 PM

**To:** FS-pdl wo spf fam5 <[pdl\\_wo\\_spf\\_fam5@usda.gov](mailto:pdl_wo_spf_fam5@usda.gov)>; Haston, David - FS, ID <[david.haston@usda.gov](mailto:david.haston@usda.gov)>; Christensen, Kim - FS, ID <[kim.christensen@usda.gov](mailto:kim.christensen@usda.gov)>; NICC Coordinator on Duty <[nicc.cod@firenet.gov](mailto:nicc.cod@firenet.gov)>; VanHemelryck, Kimberly <[kimberly\\_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov](mailto:kimberly_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov)>; [doi\\_watch\\_office@ios.doi.gov](mailto:doi_watch_office@ios.doi.gov); Webb, Larry (Brian) - FS, DC <[larry.webb@usda.gov](mailto:larry.webb@usda.gov)>; Hower, Andrew - FS, DC <[Andrew.Hower@usda.gov](mailto:Andrew.Hower@usda.gov)>; FS-pdl WO SPF FAM ESF4

<[pdl\\_WO\\_SPF\\_FAM\\_ESF4@usda.gov](mailto:pdl_WO_SPF_FAM_ESF4@usda.gov)>; OpsCenter - OHS, Washington - OHS, DC <[OpsCenter@USDA.GOV](mailto:OpsCenter@USDA.GOV)>

**Cc:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <[alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov](mailto:alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov)>; Kendall, Aaron - FS, WV <[aaron.kendall@usda.gov](mailto:aaron.kendall@usda.gov)>

**Subject:** Update: ALL PERSONNEL ACCOUNTED FOR, IN SAFE LOCATIONS: IWI in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

All personnel/resources mobilized to Hurricane Helene through ESF #4 have been accounted for and are in secure locations outside of the threat area.

- Rocky Mountain CIMT – reported to ICP in Weaverville, NC
- PNW 10 – reported to ICP
- Southwest Team 2 – reported to ICP
- Washington State Team 2 – reported to ICP
- New Jersey AHIMT – reported to ICP
- ESF #4 field liaisons – accounted for in Newton, NC
- FDNY IMT – accounted for in Knoxville, TN

FEMA, North Carolina, and ESF #13 have advised that initial investigation has determined that the threat environment has diminished but Federal resources are still on heightened alert. Local law enforcement authorities are continuing the investigation. Information on resuming an active response posture in North Carolina will be provided in the morning.



**Gordy Sachs**  
Chief, All Hazard & International Fire Support Branch  
National ESF #4 Coordinator

**Forest Service**  
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---

**From:** Sachs, Gordon - FS, DC

**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 2:58 PM

**To:** FS-pdl wo spf fam5 <[pdl\\_wo\\_spf\\_fam5@usda.gov](mailto:pdl_wo_spf_fam5@usda.gov)>; Haston, David - FS, ID <[david.haston@usda.gov](mailto:david.haston@usda.gov)>; Christensen, Kim - FS, ID <[kim.christensen@usda.gov](mailto:kim.christensen@usda.gov)>; NICC Coordinator on Duty <[nicc.cod@firenet.gov](mailto:nicc.cod@firenet.gov)>; VanHemelryck, Kimberly <[kimberly\\_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov](mailto:kimberly_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov)>; [doi\\_watch\\_office@ios.doi.gov](mailto:doi_watch_office@ios.doi.gov); Webb, Larry (Brian) - FS, DC

<[larry.webb@usda.gov](mailto:larry.webb@usda.gov)>; Hower, Andrew - FS, DC <[Andrew.Hower@usda.gov](mailto:Andrew.Hower@usda.gov)>; FS-pdl WO SPF FAM ESF4 <[pdl\\_WO\\_SPF\\_FAM\\_ESF4@usda.gov](mailto:pdl_WO_SPF_FAM_ESF4@usda.gov)>; OpsCenter - OHS, Washington - OHS, DC <[OpsCenter@USDA.GOV](mailto:OpsCenter@USDA.GOV)>

**Cc:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <[alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov](mailto:alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov)>; Kendall, Aaron - FS, WV <[aaron.kendall@usda.gov](mailto:aaron.kendall@usda.gov)>

**Subject:** Update: URGENT: IWI in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

Update: FEMA has now instituted a full “field standdown” for Federal employees and contractors operating on Hurricane Helene mission in North Carolina:

Based on threatening information passed to field leadership in North Carolina, a determination was made to implement a full field standdown for all federal employees and contractors. Field leadership will continue assessing the situation and we will share updates as appropriate.

Thanks,  
AB  
--  
Anthony J. Battaglia  
Chief, National Response Coordination Staff

The Region has made the IMTs and other personnel operating on NFS lands aware of the situation. USDA Operations Center has also been advised.

Additional information, including confirmation of accountability of personnel assigned through ESF #4, will be provided.



**Gordy Sachs**  
Chief, All Hazard & International Fire Support Branch  
National ESF #4 Coordinator

Forest Service  
Fire & Aviation Management

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**From:** Sachs, Gordon - FS, DC  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 1:56 PM  
**To:** FS-pdl wo spf fam5 <[pd\\_l\\_wo\\_spf\\_fam5@usda.gov](mailto:pd_l_wo_spf_fam5@usda.gov)>; Haston, David - FS, ID <[david.haston@usda.gov](mailto:david.haston@usda.gov)>; Christensen, Kim - FS, ID <[kim.christensen@usda.gov](mailto:kim.christensen@usda.gov)>; NICC Coordinator on Duty <[nicc.cod@firenet.gov](mailto:nicc.cod@firenet.gov)>; VanHemelryck, Kimberly <[kimberly\\_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov](mailto:kimberly_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov)>; [doi\\_watch\\_office@ios.doi.gov](mailto:doi_watch_office@ios.doi.gov); Webb, Larry (Brian) - FS, DC <[larry.webb@usda.gov](mailto:larry.webb@usda.gov)>; Hower, Andrew - FS, DC <[Andrew.Hower@usda.gov](mailto:Andrew.Hower@usda.gov)>  
**Cc:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <[alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov](mailto:alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov)>; Kendall, Aaron - FS, WV <[aaron.kendall@usda.gov](mailto:aaron.kendall@usda.gov)>  
**Subject:** URGENT: IWI in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

FEMA has advised all Federal responders in Rutherford County, NC to stand down and evacuate the county immediately. The message stated that "Title 10 troops had come across x2 trucks of armed militia saying they were out hunting FEMA. Specifically occurred in Chimney Rock."

The IMTs have been notified and are coordinating the evacuation of all assigned personnel in that county. Regional ESF #4 staff will maintain contact with the IMTs and will ensure accountability of all personnel (IMTs, crews, and single resources) once the evacuation is completed.

We will maintain contact with FEMA as they evaluate the potential risks to responders in other counties in North Carolina. We will take appropriate action based on FEMA and NC State Emergency Management guidance.

I will be the HQ-level POC for this IWI.



**Gordy Sachs**  
Chief, All Hazard & International Fire Support Branch  
National ESF #4 Coordinator

**Forest Service**  
**Fire & Aviation Management**

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## Haney, Michael - FS, GA

---

**From:** Neal, Monica - FS, GA  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 13, 2024 11:46 AM  
**To:** Arney, Ken - FS, GA  
**Subject:** Resumption of FEMA ESF4 Operations  
**Attachments:** RE: Status of Resuming Operations in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

Ken – Please send this to Lex, cc'ing who you feel necessary (including your Exec Team, Dave, Shardul, Gordie). If you only forward from Dave's message below it might reduce confusion. Please let me or Dave know if you have any questions and thank you for your quick response this morning – not a fun welcome back from vacation!

Lex, I approve the reengagement of ESF4 resources on FEMA Mission Assignment operations. I request that you ensure that responders are briefed on proper refusal of assignment, and that they feel empowered to say “no” or disengage anytime if conditions/exposures are un-safe. Please remind them of our safety process – Stop, Think, Talk before Acting.



**Monica L. Neal**  
**Fire & Aviation Staff Officer**  
**Forest Service**  
**Southern Region Fire & Aviation Management**

618-694-8435

[monica.neal@usda.gov](mailto:monica.neal@usda.gov)

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---

**From:** Martin, Dave - FS, GA <Ben.Martin1@usda.gov>  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 13, 2024 9:37 AM  
**To:** Arney, Ken - FS, GA <Kenderick.Arney@usda.gov>; Reaves, Sherry - FS, GA <sherry.reaves@usda.gov>; Lint, Rick - FS, GA <John.Lint@usda.gov>; Hunter, Edward - FS, GA <edward.hunter@usda.gov>; Raval, Shardul - FS, GA <shardul.raval@usda.gov>; Demas, Jason - FS, GA <jason.demas@usda.gov>; Parrish, Steven - FS, FL <steven.parrish@usda.gov>; Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov>; Ellsworth, Dana - FS, GA <dana.ellsworth@usda.gov>; Denton, Christopher - FS, VT <Christopher.Denton@usda.gov>; Baker, Andrew - FS, GA <andrew.baker@usda.gov>

AMERICAN  
OVERSIGHT

Cc: Neal, Monica - FS, GA <monica.neal@usda.gov>

Subject: RE: Resumption of FEMA ESF4 Operations

The attached email thread gives some additional context to our 1100 discussion/request.

v/r

-Dave



**Dave Martin**

**Assistant Director-Operations**

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-----Original Appointment-----

**From:** Martin, Dave - FS, GA <[Ben.Martin1@usda.gov](mailto:Ben.Martin1@usda.gov)>

**Sent:** Sunday, October 13, 2024 9:47 AM

**To:** Martin, Dave - FS, GA; Arney, Ken - FS, GA; Reaves, Sherry - FS, GA; Lint, Rick - FS, GA; Hunter, Edward - FS, GA; Raval, Shardul - FS, GA; Demas, Jason - FS, GA; Parrish, Steven - FS, FL; Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA; Ellsworth, Dana - FS, GA; Denton, Christopher - FS, VT; Baker, Andrew - FS, GA

**Cc:** Neal, Monica - FS, GA

**Subject:** Resumption of FEMA ESF4 Operations

**When:** Sunday, October 13, 2024 11:00 AM-11:30 AM (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada).

**Where:** Microsoft Teams Meeting

Task:

RFT/Exec make an informed decision on resuming operations of ESF4 Resources assigned to FEMA Mission Assignments in NC.

Purpose/Intent:

-Provide RFT/Exec with facts surrounding yesterdays IWI that led to operational pause of all FEMA response operations.

-Provide best available information on current exposures/conditions to Agency responders assigned to FEMA MAs

End State:



NLT 1200p.m. today, advise FEMA through our ESFL on the RFT/Exec decision to allow ESF4 resources to continue operations.

---

## Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

### [Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: [REDACTED]

Passcode: [REDACTED]

---

### Dial in by phone

+ [REDACTED] United States, Washington

[Find a local number](#)

Phone conference ID: [REDACTED]

For organizers: [Meeting options](#) | [Reset dial-in PIN](#)

---

## Haney, Michael - FS, GA

---

**From:** Rondeau, Adam - FS, NC  
**Sent:** Monday, October 14, 2024 9:48 AM  
**To:** Meg Ciciarella; Hollowell, Meredith - FS, GA; Abernethy, Alan - FS, GA  
**Cc:** Nedlo, Jason - FS, KY; Melonas, James - FS, NC  
**Subject:** FW: [External Email]US Forest Service email of armed militia threat

Good morning,

We received the following request from the Asheville Citizen Times related to the Washington Post article on threats to responding federal employees. Do we have any talking points or a prepared statement we can share? I imagine this won't be the only request we'll receive on this situation. I'm more than happy to refer the reporter to the ESF-15 desk, but any regional guidance would be appreciated.

Adam



**Adam Rondeau**  
**Public Affairs Officer**  
**Forest Service**  
**National Forests in North Carolina**

p: 828-257-4215

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160 Zillicoa St., Suite A

Asheville, NC 28801

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---

**From:** Ober, Ryley <ROber@citizentimes.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 14, 2024 9:30 AM  
**To:** Rondeau, Adam - FS, NC <Adam.Rondeau@usda.gov>  
**Subject:** [External Email]US Forest Service email of armed militia threat

**[External Email]**

If this message comes from an **unexpected sender** or references a **vague/unexpected topic**;  
Use caution before clicking links or opening attachments.  
Please send any concerns or suspicious messages to: [Spam.Abuse@usda.gov](mailto:Spam.Abuse@usda.gov)

Good morning, Adam –

Hope you are doing well. I saw a report regarding an email sent from the US Forest Service about a potential armed militia "hunting" FEMA workers in Rutherford County. Can you confirm this email exists? And if so, I'd like to request a copy of the email along with all email threads and/or responses corresponding with the original email.

Thank you,  
Ryley Ober  
Public Safety Reporter

## Citizen Times

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

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[rober@gannett.com](mailto:rober@gannett.com)  
[www.citizentimes.com](http://www.citizentimes.com)  
Twitter: @rleyober

## Haney, Michael - FS, GA

---

**From:** Melonas, James - FS, NC  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 13, 2024 9:08 AM  
**To:** Lint, Rick - FS, GA  
**Subject:** FW: Status of Resuming Operations in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)



**James E. Melonas**  
Forest Supervisor  
Forest Service  
National Forests in North Carolina

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**Cc:** Raval, Shardul - FS, GA <shardul.raval@usda.gov>; Baker, Andrew - FS, GA <andrew.baker@usda.gov>

**Subject:** RE: Status of Resuming Operations in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

Lex,  
Speaking with RF Ken Army, the USDA FS Southern Region recommends maintaining the operational pause on ESF4 Resources until noon today.  
Thus allowing leadership to better assess facts around yesterday's IWI as well as current conditions /exposure to our responders.

v/r  
-Dave



**Dave Martin**  
Assistant Director-Operations  
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**Cc:** Raval, Shardul - FS, GA <[shardul.raval@usda.gov](mailto:shardul.raval@usda.gov)>; Baker, Andrew - FS, GA <[andrew.baker@usda.gov](mailto:andrew.baker@usda.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: Status of Resuming Operations in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

Sharing.

V/r



**Lex Gabaldo**  
Cooperative Fire and All-Hazard Program Manager

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**Cc:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <[alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov](mailto:alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov)>; Kendall, Aaron - FS, WV <[aaron.kendall@usda.gov](mailto:aaron.kendall@usda.gov)>  
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Moving into the rest of the week, FEMA will continue to evaluate the safety of the workforce and needs of the survivors and will continue development of force protection measures and courses of action that will support the safety of responders.



**Gordy Sachs**  
**Chief, All Hazard & International Fire Support Branch**  
**National ESF #4 Coordinator**

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**From:** Sachs, Gordon - FS, DC

**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 7:15 PM

**To:** FS-pdl wo spf fam5 <[pd\\_l\\_wo\\_spf\\_fam5@usda.gov](mailto:pd_l_wo_spf_fam5@usda.gov)>; Haston, David - FS, ID <[david.haston@usda.gov](mailto:david.haston@usda.gov)>; Christensen, Kim - FS, ID <[kim.christensen@usda.gov](mailto:kim.christensen@usda.gov)>; NICC Coordinator on Duty <[nicc.cod@firenet.gov](mailto:nicc.cod@firenet.gov)>; VanHemelryck, Kimberly <[kimberly\\_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov](mailto:kimberly_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov)>; [doi\\_watch\\_office@ios.doi.gov](mailto:doi_watch_office@ios.doi.gov); Webb, Larry (Brian) - FS, DC <[larry.webb@usda.gov](mailto:larry.webb@usda.gov)>; Hower, Andrew - FS, DC <[Andrew.Hower@usda.gov](mailto:Andrew.Hower@usda.gov)>; FS-pdl WO SPF FAM ESF4 <[pd\\_l\\_WO\\_SPF\\_FAM\\_ESF4@usda.gov](mailto:pd_l_WO_SPF_FAM_ESF4@usda.gov)>; OpsCenter - OHS, Washington - OHS, DC <[OpsCenter@USDA.GOV](mailto:OpsCenter@USDA.GOV)>

**Cc:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <[alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov](mailto:alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov)>; Kendall, Aaron - FS, WV <[aaron.kendall@usda.gov](mailto:aaron.kendall@usda.gov)>

**Subject:** Update: ALL PERSONNEL ACCOUNTED FOR, IN SAFE LOCATIONS: IWI in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

All personnel/resources mobilized to Hurricane Helene through ESF #4 have been accounted for and are in secure locations outside of the threat area.

- Rocky Mountain CIMT – reported to ICP in Weaverville, NC
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- New Jersey AHIMT – reported to ICP
- ESF #4 field liaisons – accounted for in Newton, NC
- FDNY IMT – accounted for in Knoxville, TN

FEMA, North Carolina, and ESF #13 have advised that initial investigation has determined that the threat environment has diminished but Federal resources are still on heightened alert. Local law enforcement authorities are continuing the investigation. Information on resuming an active response posture in North Carolina will be provided in the morning.



**Gordy Sachs**  
**Chief, All Hazard & International Fire Support Branch**  
**National ESF #4 Coordinator**

**Forest Service**  
**Fire & Aviation Management**

c: (b) (6)  
[gordon.sachs@usda.gov](mailto:gordon.sachs@usda.gov)

201 14th St. SW; Yates 3CE; MS 1107  
 Washington, DC 20250

[www.fs.usda.gov](http://www.fs.usda.gov)



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---

**From:** Sachs, Gordon - FS, DC

**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 2:58 PM

**To:** FS-pdl wo spf fam5 <[pd\\_l\\_wo\\_spf\\_fam5@usda.gov](mailto:pd_l_wo_spf_fam5@usda.gov)>; Haston, David - FS, ID <[david.haston@usda.gov](mailto:david.haston@usda.gov)>; Christensen, Kim - FS, ID <[kim.christensen@usda.gov](mailto:kim.christensen@usda.gov)>; NICC Coordinator on Duty <[nicc.cod@firenet.gov](mailto:nicc.cod@firenet.gov)>; VanHemelryck, Kimberly <[kimberly\\_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov](mailto:kimberly_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov)>; [doi\\_watch\\_office@ios.doi.gov](mailto:doi_watch_office@ios.doi.gov); Webb, Larry (Brian) - FS, DC <[larry.webb@usda.gov](mailto:larry.webb@usda.gov)>; Hower, Andrew - FS, DC <[Andrew.Hower@usda.gov](mailto:Andrew.Hower@usda.gov)>; FS-pdl WO SPF FAM ESF4 <[pd\\_l\\_WO\\_SPF\\_FAM\\_ESF4@usda.gov](mailto:pd_l_WO_SPF_FAM_ESF4@usda.gov)>; OpsCenter - OHS, Washington - OHS, DC <[OpsCenter@USDA.GOV](mailto:OpsCenter@USDA.GOV)>

**Cc:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <[alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov](mailto:alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov)>; Kendall, Aaron - FS, WV <[aaron.kendall@usda.gov](mailto:aaron.kendall@usda.gov)>

**Subject:** Update: URGENT: IWI in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

Update: FEMA has now instituted a full “field standdown” for Federal employees and contractors operating on Hurricane Helene mission in North Carolina:

Based on threatening information passed to field leadership in North Carolina, a determination was made to implement a full field standdown for all federal employees and contractors. Field leadership will continue assessing the situation and we will share updates as appropriate.

Thanks,

AB

--

Anthony J. Battaglia

Chief, National Response Coordination Staff

The Region has made the IMTs and other personnel operating on NFS lands aware of the situation. USDA Operations Center has also been advised.

Additional information, including confirmation of accountability of personnel assigned through ESF #4, will be provided.



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Chief, All Hazard & International Fire Support Branch  
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Forest Service  
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---

**From:** Sachs, Gordon - FS, DC

**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 1:56 PM

**To:** FS-pdl wo spf fam5 <[pdl\\_wo\\_spf\\_fam5@usda.gov](mailto:pdl_wo_spf_fam5@usda.gov)>; Haston, David - FS, ID <[david.haston@usda.gov](mailto:david.haston@usda.gov)>; Christensen, Kim - FS, ID <[kim.christensen@usda.gov](mailto:kim.christensen@usda.gov)>; NICC Coordinator on Duty <[nicc.cod@firenet.gov](mailto:nicc.cod@firenet.gov)>; VanHemelryck, Kimberly <[kimberly\\_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov](mailto:kimberly_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov)>; [doi\\_watch\\_office@ios.doi.gov](mailto:doi_watch_office@ios.doi.gov); Webb, Larry (Brian) - FS, DC <[larry.webb@usda.gov](mailto:larry.webb@usda.gov)>; Hower, Andrew - FS, DC <[Andrew.Hower@usda.gov](mailto:Andrew.Hower@usda.gov)>

**Cc:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <[alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov](mailto:alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov)>; Kendall, Aaron - FS, WV <[aaron.kendall@usda.gov](mailto:aaron.kendall@usda.gov)>

**Subject:** URGENT: IWI in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

FEMA has advised all Federal responders in Rutherford County, NC to stand down and evacuate the county immediately. The message stated that “Title 10 troops had come across x2 trucks of armed militia saying they were out hunting FEMA. Specifically occurred in Chimney Rock.”

The IMTs have been notified and are coordinating the evacuation of all assigned personnel in that county. Regional ESF #4 staff will maintain contact with the IMTs and will ensure accountability of all personnel (IMTs, crews, and single resources) once the evacuation is completed.

We will maintain contact with FEMA as they evaluate the potential risks to responders in other counties in North Carolina. We will take appropriate action based on FEMA and NC State Emergency Management guidance.

I will be the HQ-level POC for this IWI.



**Gordy Sachs**  
Chief, All Hazard & International Fire Support Branch  
National ESF #4 Coordinator

Forest Service  
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## Haney, Michael - FS, GA

---

**From:** Baker, Andrew - FS, GA  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 7:54 PM  
**To:** Melonas, James - FS, NC; Kuiken, Jason - FS, CA; Khung, Kevin - FS, CO; Ibarguen, Derek - FS, NH  
**Subject:** Fw: Update: ALL PERSONNEL ACCOUNTED FOR, IN SAFE LOCATIONS: IWI in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

See below message from Gordy Sachs...FEMA will determine their response posture in the morning (i.e. whether they will lift their stand down or not). I also just heard from Jody Bandy that a suspect in Rutherford Co. has been arrested regarding the original threats to FEMA.

Andy

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---

**From:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov>  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 7:31 PM  
**To:** Raval, Shardul - FS, GA <shardul.raval@usda.gov>; Berens, Dave - FS, MS <David.Berens@usda.gov>; Baker, Andrew - FS, GA <andrew.baker@usda.gov>; Parrish, Steven - FS, FL <steven.parrish@usda.gov>; Berens, Dave - FS, MS <David.Berens@usda.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: Update: ALL PERSONNEL ACCOUNTED FOR, IN SAFE LOCATIONS: IWI in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

Sharing.

V/r

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**From:** Sachs, Gordon - FS, DC <gordon.sachs@usda.gov>  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 7:15 PM  
**To:** FS-pdl wo spf fam5 <pdl\_wo\_spf\_fam5@usda.gov>; Haston, David - FS, ID <david.haston@usda.gov>; Christensen, Kim - FS, ID <kim.christensen@usda.gov>; NICC Coordinator on Duty <nicc.cod@firenet.gov>; VanHemelryck, Kimberly <kimberly\_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov>; doi\_watch\_office@ios.doi.gov; Webb, Larry (Brian) - FS, DC <larry.webb@usda.gov>; Hower, Andrew - FS, DC <Andrew.Hower@usda.gov>; FS-pdl WO SPF FAM ESF4 <pdl\_WO\_SPF\_FAM\_ESF4@usda.gov>; OpsCenter - OHS, Washington - OHS, DC <OpsCenter@USDA.GOV>  
**Cc:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov>; Kendall, Aaron - FS, WV <aaron.kendall@usda.gov>  
**Subject:** Update: ALL PERSONNEL ACCOUNTED FOR, IN SAFE LOCATIONS: IWI in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

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**National ESF #4 Coordinator**

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**Fire & Aviation Management**

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**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 1:56 PM

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**Cc:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <[alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov](mailto:alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov)>; Kendall, Aaron - FS, WV <[aaron.kendall@usda.gov](mailto:aaron.kendall@usda.gov)>

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**Gordy Sachs**  
Chief, All Hazard & International Fire Support Branch  
National ESF #4 Coordinator

Forest Service  
Fire & Aviation Management

c: (b) (6)  
[gordon.sachs@usda.gov](mailto:gordon.sachs@usda.gov)

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Washington, DC 20250  
[www.fs.usda.gov](http://www.fs.usda.gov)



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## Haney, Michael - FS, GA

---

**From:** Fitzsimmons, Cavan - FS, NC  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 1:52 PM  
**To:** FS-pdl r8 nc flt  
**Cc:** Khung, Kevin - FS, CO; Ibarguen, Derek - FS, NH; Kuiken, Jason - FS, CA  
**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL]FW: 📧 Christopher - URGENT: URGENT in DR-4827-NC Emergency Services

FYI folks—

This is for your situational awareness and we are coordinating with the Team and law enforcement.



**Cavan Fitzsimmons**  
**Deputy Forest Supervisor**  
**Forest Service**  
**National Forests in North Carolina**

**p: 828-257-4270**

**c: (b) (6)**

**f: 828-259-0584**

[cavan.fitzsimmons@usda.gov](mailto:cavan.fitzsimmons@usda.gov)

160A Zillicoa Street  
Asheville, NC 28801

[www.fs.fed.us](http://www.fs.fed.us)



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---

**From:** Martin, Dave - FS, GA <Ben.Martin1@usda.gov>  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 1:48 PM  
**To:** Fitzsimmons, Cavan - FS, NC <cavan.fitzsimmons@usda.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL]FW: 📧 Christopher - URGENT: URGENT in DR-4827-NC Emergency Services  
**Importance:** High

---

**From:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <[alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov](mailto:alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov)>  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 1:43 PM  
**To:** Raval, Shardul - FS, GA <[shardul.raval@usda.gov](mailto:shardul.raval@usda.gov)>; Baker, Andrew - FS, GA <[andrew.baker@usda.gov](mailto:andrew.baker@usda.gov)>; Martin, Dave - FS, GA <[Ben.Martin1@usda.gov](mailto:Ben.Martin1@usda.gov)>; Parrish, Steven - FS, FL <[steven.parrish@usda.gov](mailto:steven.parrish@usda.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL]FW: 📧 Christopher - URGENT: URGENT in DR-4827-NC Emergency Services  
**Importance:** High

All IC's have been notified and confirming contacted, message received. Same for all ESFLs in the field, they have been advised via email and phone conversation.

Field resources are expediting removing their personnel, themselves from Rutherford county

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---

**From:** Michael Shipley <[michael\\_shipley@firenet.gov](mailto:michael_shipley@firenet.gov)>

**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 1:21 PM

**To:** LAWSON, ALAN (DNR) <[alan.lawson@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:alan.lawson@dnr.wa.gov)>; Dallas, Dan - FS, CO <[dan.dallas@usda.gov](mailto:dan.dallas@usda.gov)>; keith519long <[keith519long@gmail.com](mailto:keith519long@gmail.com)>; John Truett <[jtruett@dffm.az.gov](mailto:jtruett@dffm.az.gov)>; [Ken.stanford@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:Ken.stanford@dnr.wa.gov); Steve North <[snorth@mclanefire.org](mailto:snorth@mclanefire.org)>; Day, Barbara - FS, NM <[barbara.day@usda.gov](mailto:barbara.day@usda.gov)>; Caldwell, Mathew (DNR) <[mathew.caldwell@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:mathew.caldwell@dnr.wa.gov)>

**Cc:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <[alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov](mailto:alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov)>; Griffin, Steve - FS, DC <[Steven.Griffin@usda.gov](mailto:Steven.Griffin@usda.gov)>; Billy Zamora <[billy\\_zamora@firenet.gov](mailto:billy_zamora@firenet.gov)>

**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL]FW: 🔔 Christopher - URGENT

Please reply that you received this URGENT message about militia on road!

Thanks

Mike

Michael H Shipley

email: [michael\\_shipley@firenet.gov](mailto:michael_shipley@firenet.gov)

cell: (b) (6)

---

**From:** Harmon, Marcus <[marcus.harmon@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:marcus.harmon@fema.dhs.gov)>

**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 1:12 PM

**To:** Michael Shipley <[michael\\_shipley@firenet.gov](mailto:michael_shipley@firenet.gov)>

**Cc:** Berens, Dave- FS <[david.berens@usda.gov](mailto:david.berens@usda.gov)>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]FW: 🔔 Christopher - URGENT

FYSA

**Marcus Harmon**

Deputy Emergency Services Branch Director | Response Division

Federal Emergency Management Agency | Region 4

Mobile: (b) (6)

Email: [marcus.harmon@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:marcus.harmon@fema.dhs.gov)

Federal Emergency Management Agency

[fema.gov](http://fema.gov)



**FEMA**

---

**From:** McGough, Christopher in Teams <[noreply@gcc-email.teams.microsoft.com](mailto:noreply@gcc-email.teams.microsoft.com)>

**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 12:57 PM

**To:** Harmon, Marcus <[marcus.harmon@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:marcus.harmon@fema.dhs.gov)>

**Subject:** 🔔 Christopher - URGENT

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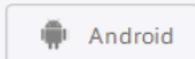


 **Christopher - URGENT in DR-4827-NC Emergency Services**

ALCON - if you have DSA or any FEMA personnel in Rutherford Co - ANYWHERE - stand them down immediately and get them out of the county. We just had T10 troops come across x2 trucks of armed militia saying they were out hunting FEMA. Specifically occurred in Chimney Rock.

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## Haney, Michael - FS, GA

---

**From:** Fitzsimmons, Cavan - FS, NC  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 2:17 PM  
**To:** Baker, Andrew - FS, GA; Breedlove, Derik - FS, NC; Bandy, Jody - FS, NC; Martin, Dave - FS, GA; Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA  
**Cc:** Melonas, James - FS, NC; Khung, Kevin - FS, CO  
**Subject:** RE: 📣 Christopher - URGENT

Thanks Andy—

We tied in with Kevin and he is also in the loop.



**Cavan Fitzsimmons**  
**Deputy Forest Supervisor**  
**Forest Service**  
**National Forests in North Carolina**

p: 828-257-4270

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160A Zillicoa Street  
Asheville, NC 28801

[www.fs.fed.us](http://www.fs.fed.us)



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**From:** Baker, Andrew - FS, GA <[andrew.baker@usda.gov](mailto:andrew.baker@usda.gov)>  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 2:07 PM  
**To:** Fitzsimmons, Cavan - FS, NC <[cavan.fitzsimmons@usda.gov](mailto:cavan.fitzsimmons@usda.gov)>; Breedlove, Derik - FS, NC <[derik.breedlove@usda.gov](mailto:derik.breedlove@usda.gov)>; Bandy, Jody - FS, NC <[jody.bandy@usda.gov](mailto:jody.bandy@usda.gov)>; Martin, Dave - FS, GA <[Ben.Martin1@usda.gov](mailto:Ben.Martin1@usda.gov)>; Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <[alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov](mailto:alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov)>  
**Cc:** Melonas, James - FS, NC <[james.melonas@usda.gov](mailto:james.melonas@usda.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: 📣 Christopher - URGENT

Operations is notifying all Divisions of the potential threat. At this point, since we have no responders in that area we are just keeping situational awareness high and will be prepared for further steps if further credible threat locations are established or if our LEI recommend further action

Andy

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---

**From:** Fitzsimmons, Cavan - FS, NC <[cavan.fitzsimmons@usda.gov](mailto:cavan.fitzsimmons@usda.gov)>  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 2:00:32 PM

**To:** Baker, Andrew - FS, GA <[andrew.baker@usda.gov](mailto:andrew.baker@usda.gov)>; Breedlove, Derik - FS, NC <[derik.breedlove@usda.gov](mailto:derik.breedlove@usda.gov)>; Bandy, Jody - FS, NC <[jody.bandy@usda.gov](mailto:jody.bandy@usda.gov)>  
**Cc:** Melonas, James - FS, NC <[james.melonas@usda.gov](mailto:james.melonas@usda.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: 📧 Christopher - URGENT

Copy –thanks Andy—

I just talked to Dave Martin and forwarded it to the FLT. Making sure our folks are coordinated with yours on next steps.

Let us know when we need to visit on our next steps.

Thanks again-



**Cavan Fitzsimmons**  
**Deputy Forest Supervisor**  
**Forest Service**  
**National Forests in North Carolina**

p: 828-257-4270

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Asheville, NC 28801

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**From:** Baker, Andrew - FS, GA <[andrew.baker@usda.gov](mailto:andrew.baker@usda.gov)>

**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 1:58 PM

**To:** Breedlove, Derik - FS, NC <[derik.breedlove@usda.gov](mailto:derik.breedlove@usda.gov)>; Bandy, Jody - FS, NC <[jody.bandy@usda.gov](mailto:jody.bandy@usda.gov)>; Fitzsimmons, Cavan - FS, NC <[cavan.fitzsimmons@usda.gov](mailto:cavan.fitzsimmons@usda.gov)>

**Subject:** Fw: 📧 Christopher - URGENT

Scroll down for specific threat in Rutherford & Polk county..Marcus Harmon is the FEMA rep(contact info below)

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---

**From:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <[alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov](mailto:alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov)>

**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 1:53 PM

**To:** Griffin, Steve - FS, DC <[Steven.Griffin@usda.gov](mailto:Steven.Griffin@usda.gov)>; Michael Shipley <[michael\\_shipley@firenet.gov](mailto:michael_shipley@firenet.gov)>; Billy Zamora <[billy\\_zamora@firenet.gov](mailto:billy_zamora@firenet.gov)>

**Cc:** Raval, Shardul - FS, GA <[shardul.raval@usda.gov](mailto:shardul.raval@usda.gov)>; Baker, Andrew - FS, GA <[andrew.baker@usda.gov](mailto:andrew.baker@usda.gov)>; Martin, Dave - FS, GA <[Ben.Martin1@usda.gov](mailto:Ben.Martin1@usda.gov)>; Parrish, Steven - FS, FL <[steven.parrish@usda.gov](mailto:steven.parrish@usda.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: FW: 📧 Christopher - URGENT

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---

**From:** Griffin, Steve - FS, DC <[Steven.Griffin@usda.gov](mailto:Steven.Griffin@usda.gov)>

**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 1:52 PM

**To:** Michael Shipley <[michael\\_shipley@firenet.gov](mailto:michael_shipley@firenet.gov)>; Billy Zamora <[billy\\_zamora@firenet.gov](mailto:billy_zamora@firenet.gov)>; Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <[alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov](mailto:alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov)>

**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL]FW: 🔔 Christopher - URGENT

PNW#10 has few in the field will notify when they are back in. They are monitoring social media and it appears Polk county is also involved.

WA DNR is good.

FDNY why will be notified for SA.



**Steve Griffin**  
**Emergency Management Specialist**

**Forest Service**

**Washington Office, Fire and Aviation Management, All-Hazard and International Fire Support**

**p: 760-417-0728**

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---

**From:** Michael Shipley <[michael\\_shipley@firenet.gov](mailto:michael_shipley@firenet.gov)>

**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 1:21 PM

**To:** LAWSON, ALAN (DNR) <[alan.lawson@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:alan.lawson@dnr.wa.gov)>; Dallas, Dan - FS, CO <[dan.dallas@usda.gov](mailto:dan.dallas@usda.gov)>; keith519long <[keith519long@gmail.com](mailto:keith519long@gmail.com)>; John Truett <[jtruett@dffm.az.gov](mailto:jtruett@dffm.az.gov)>; Ken.stanford@dnr.wa.gov; Steve North <[snorth@mclanefire.org](mailto:snorth@mclanefire.org)>; Day, Barbara - FS, NM <[barbara.day@usda.gov](mailto:barbara.day@usda.gov)>; Caldwell, Mathew (DNR) <[mathew.caldwell@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:mathew.caldwell@dnr.wa.gov)>

**Cc:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <[alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov](mailto:alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov)>; Griffin, Steve - FS, DC <[Steven.Griffin@usda.gov](mailto:Steven.Griffin@usda.gov)>; Billy Zamora <[billy\\_zamora@firenet.gov](mailto:billy_zamora@firenet.gov)>

**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL]FW: 🔔 Christopher - URGENT

Please reply that you received this URGENT message about militia on road!

Thanks

Mike

AM  
Michael H Shipley  
email: [michael\\_shipley@firenet.gov](mailto:michael_shipley@firenet.gov)

cell: (b) (6)

---

**From:** Harmon, Marcus <[marcus.harmon@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:marcus.harmon@fema.dhs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 1:12 PM  
**To:** Michael Shipley <[michael\\_shipley@firenet.gov](mailto:michael_shipley@firenet.gov)>  
**Cc:** Berens, Dave- FS <[david.berens@usda.gov](mailto:david.berens@usda.gov)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]FW: 📢 Christopher - URGENT

FYSA

**Marcus Harmon**  
Deputy Emergency Services Branch Director | Response Division  
Federal Emergency Management Agency | Region 4  
Mobile: (b) (6)  
Email: [marcus.harmon@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:marcus.harmon@fema.dhs.gov)

Federal Emergency Management Agency  
[fema.gov](http://fema.gov)



---

**From:** McGough, Christopher in Teams <[noreply@gcc-email.teams.microsoft.com](mailto:noreply@gcc-email.teams.microsoft.com)>  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 12:57 PM  
**To:** Harmon, Marcus <[marcus.harmon@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:marcus.harmon@fema.dhs.gov)>  
**Subject:** 📢 Christopher - URGENT

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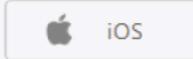


📢 **Christopher - URGENT in DR-4827-NC Emergency Services**

ALCON - if you have DSA or any FEMA personnel in Rutherford Co - ANYWHERE - stand them down immediately and get them out of the county. We just had T10 troops come across x2 trucks of armed militia saying they were out hunting FEMA. Specifically occurred in Chimney Rock.

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## Haney, Michael - FS, GA

---

**From:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 13, 2024 9:08 AM  
**To:** Martin, Dave - FS, GA; Parrish, Steven - FS, FL; Arney, Ken - FS, GA; Hunter, Edward - FS, GA; Fitzsimmons, Cavan - FS, NC; Melonas, James - FS, NC; Ellsworth, Dana - FS, GA; Demas, Jason - FS, GA  
**Cc:** Raval, Shardul - FS, GA; Baker, Andrew - FS, GA  
**Subject:** RE: Status of Resuming Operations in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

Thank you, Dave.

Message received and understood.

V/r  
Lex



**Lex Gabaldo**  
**Cooperative Fire and All-Hazard Program Manager**

**Forest Service**  
Southern Region Fire & Aviation Management

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Atlanta, GA 30309



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**From:** Martin, Dave - FS, GA <Ben.Martin1@usda.gov>  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 13, 2024 8:56 AM  
**To:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov>; Parrish, Steven - FS, FL <steven.parrish@usda.gov>; Arney, Ken - FS, GA <Kenderick.Arney@usda.gov>; Hunter, Edward - FS, GA <edward.hunter@usda.gov>; Fitzsimmons, Cavan - FS, NC <cavan.fitzsimmons@usda.gov>; Melonas, James - FS, NC <james.melonas@usda.gov>; Ellsworth, Dana - FS, GA <dana.ellsworth@usda.gov>; Demas, Jason - FS, GA <jason.demas@usda.gov>  
**Cc:** Raval, Shardul - FS, GA <shardul.raval@usda.gov>; Baker, Andrew - FS, GA <andrew.baker@usda.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Status of Resuming Operations in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

Lex,  
Speaking with RF Ken Arney, the USDA FS Southern Region recommends maintaining the operational pause on ESF4 Resources until noon today.  
Thus allowing leadership to better assess facts around yesterday's IWI as well as current conditions /exposure to our responders.

v/r  
-Dave



**Dave Martin**  
**Assistant Director-Operations**

*NON SIBI SED PATRIAE*

Forest Service

Southern Region Fire & Aviation Management

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Retirement Personal Cell(after 31OCT2024)(b) (6)

Desk:404-347-2726

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Atlanta, GA 30309

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**From:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <[alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov](mailto:alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov)>

**Sent:** Sunday, October 13, 2024 8:38 AM

**To:** Martin, Dave - FS, GA <[Ben.Martin1@usda.gov](mailto:Ben.Martin1@usda.gov)>; Parrish, Steven - FS, FL <[steven.parrish@usda.gov](mailto:steven.parrish@usda.gov)>

**Cc:** Raval, Shardul - FS, GA <[shardul.raval@usda.gov](mailto:shardul.raval@usda.gov)>; Baker, Andrew - FS, GA <[andrew.baker@usda.gov](mailto:andrew.baker@usda.gov)>

**Subject:** FW: Status of Resuming Operations in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

Sharing.

V/r



**Lex Gabaldo**

**Cooperative Fire and All-Hazard Program Manager**

Forest Service

Southern Region Fire & Aviation Management

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**From:** Sachs, Gordon - FS, DC <[gordon.sachs@usda.gov](mailto:gordon.sachs@usda.gov)>

**Sent:** Sunday, October 13, 2024 8:35 AM

**To:** FS-pdl wo spf fam5 <[pdl\\_wo\\_spf\\_fam5@usda.gov](mailto:pdl_wo_spf_fam5@usda.gov)>; Haston, David - FS, ID <[david.haston@usda.gov](mailto:david.haston@usda.gov)>; Christensen,

Kim - FS, ID <[kim.christensen@usda.gov](mailto:kim.christensen@usda.gov)>; NICC Coordinator on Duty <[nicc.cod@firenet.gov](mailto:nicc.cod@firenet.gov)>; VanHemelryck, Kimberly

<[kimberly\\_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov](mailto:kimberly_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov)>; [doi\\_watch\\_office@ios.doi.gov](mailto:doi_watch_office@ios.doi.gov); Webb, Larry (Brian) - FS, DC

<[larry.webb@usda.gov](mailto:larry.webb@usda.gov)>; Hower, Andrew - FS, DC <[Andrew.Hower@usda.gov](mailto:Andrew.Hower@usda.gov)>; FS-pdl WO SPF FAM ESF4

<[pdl\\_WO\\_SPF\\_FAM\\_ESF4@usda.gov](mailto:pdl_WO_SPF_FAM_ESF4@usda.gov)>; OpsCenter - OHS, Washington - OHS, DC <[OpsCenter@USDA.GOV](mailto:OpsCenter@USDA.GOV)>

**Cc:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <[alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov](mailto:alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov)>; Kendall, Aaron - FS, WV <[aaron.kendall@usda.gov](mailto:aaron.kendall@usda.gov)>

**Subject:** Status of Resuming Operations in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

Per the attached direction, FEMA has left the resumption of operations in North Carolina to the discretion of ESFs/agencies for today. Field resources mobilized through ESF #4 remain at a tactical pause awaiting direction/guidance from Regional leadership in the Forest Service Southern Region.

Moving into the rest of the week, FEMA will continue to evaluate the safety of the workforce and needs of the survivors and will continue development of force protection measures and courses of action that will support the safety of responders.



**Gordy Sachs**  
Chief, All Hazard & International Fire Support Branch  
National ESF #4 Coordinator

Forest Service  
Fire & Aviation Management

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---

**From:** Sachs, Gordon - FS, DC

**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 7:15 PM

**To:** FS-pdl wo spf fam5 <[pd\\_l\\_wo\\_spf\\_fam5@usda.gov](mailto:pd_l_wo_spf_fam5@usda.gov)>; Haston, David - FS, ID <[david.haston@usda.gov](mailto:david.haston@usda.gov)>; Christensen, Kim - FS, ID <[kim.christensen@usda.gov](mailto:kim.christensen@usda.gov)>; NICC Coordinator on Duty <[nicc.cod@firenet.gov](mailto:nicc.cod@firenet.gov)>; VanHemelryck, Kimberly <[kimberly\\_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov](mailto:kimberly_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov)>; [doi\\_watch\\_office@ios.doi.gov](mailto:doi_watch_office@ios.doi.gov); Webb, Larry (Brian) - FS, DC <[larry.webb@usda.gov](mailto:larry.webb@usda.gov)>; Hower, Andrew - FS, DC <[Andrew.Hower@usda.gov](mailto:Andrew.Hower@usda.gov)>; FS-pdl WO SPF FAM ESF4 <[pd\\_l\\_WO\\_SPF\\_FAM\\_ESF4@usda.gov](mailto:pd_l_WO_SPF_FAM_ESF4@usda.gov)>; OpsCenter - OHS, Washington - OHS, DC <[OpsCenter@USDA.GOV](mailto:OpsCenter@USDA.GOV)>

**Cc:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <[alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov](mailto:alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov)>; Kendall, Aaron - FS, WV <[aaron.kendall@usda.gov](mailto:aaron.kendall@usda.gov)>

**Subject:** Update: ALL PERSONNEL ACCOUNTED FOR, IN SAFE LOCATIONS: IWI in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

All personnel/resources mobilized to Hurricane Helene through ESF #4 have been accounted for and are in secure locations outside of the threat area.

- Rocky Mountain CIMT – reported to ICP in Weaverville, NC
- PNW 10 – reported to ICP
- Southwest Team 2 – reported to ICP
- Washington State Team 2 – reported to ICP
- New Jersey AHIMT – reported to ICP
- ESF #4 field liaisons – accounted for in Newton, NC
- FDNY IMT – accounted for in Knoxville, TN

FEMA, North Carolina, and ESF #13 have advised that initial investigation has determined that the threat environment has diminished but Federal resources are still on heightened alert. Local law enforcement authorities are continuing the investigation. Information on resuming an active response posture in North Carolina will be provided in the morning.



**Gordy Sachs**  
Chief, All Hazard & International Fire Support Branch  
National ESF #4 Coordinator

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**From:** Sachs, Gordon - FS, DC

**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 2:58 PM

**To:** FS-pdl wo spf fam5 <[pdl\\_wo\\_spf\\_fam5@usda.gov](mailto:pdl_wo_spf_fam5@usda.gov)>; Haston, David - FS, ID <[david.haston@usda.gov](mailto:david.haston@usda.gov)>; Christensen, Kim - FS, ID <[kim.christensen@usda.gov](mailto:kim.christensen@usda.gov)>; NICC Coordinator on Duty <[nicc.cod@firenet.gov](mailto:nicc.cod@firenet.gov)>; VanHemelryck, Kimberly <[kimberly\\_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov](mailto:kimberly_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov)>; [doi\\_watch\\_office@ios.doi.gov](mailto:doi_watch_office@ios.doi.gov); Webb, Larry (Brian) - FS, DC <[larry.webb@usda.gov](mailto:larry.webb@usda.gov)>; Hower, Andrew - FS, DC <[Andrew.Hower@usda.gov](mailto:Andrew.Hower@usda.gov)>; FS-pdl WO SPF FAM ESF4 <[pdl\\_WO\\_SPF\\_FAM\\_ESF4@usda.gov](mailto:pdl_WO_SPF_FAM_ESF4@usda.gov)>; OpsCenter - OHS, Washington - OHS, DC <[OpsCenter@USDA.GOV](mailto:OpsCenter@USDA.GOV)>

**Cc:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <[alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov](mailto:alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov)>; Kendall, Aaron - FS, WV <[aaron.kendall@usda.gov](mailto:aaron.kendall@usda.gov)>

**Subject:** Update: URGENT: IWI in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

Update: FEMA has now instituted a full “field standdown” for Federal employees and contractors operating on Hurricane Helene mission in North Carolina:

Based on threatening information passed to field leadership in North Carolina, a determination was made to implement a full field standdown for all federal employees and contractors. Field leadership will continue assessing the situation and we will share updates as appropriate.

Thanks,

AB

--

Anthony J. Battaglia

Chief, National Response Coordination Staff

The Region has made the IMTs and other personnel operating on NFS lands aware of the situation. USDA Operations Center has also been advised.

Additional information, including confirmation of accountability of personnel assigned through ESF #4, will be provided.



**Gordy Sachs**  
Chief, All Hazard & International Fire Support Branch  
National ESF #4 Coordinator

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Fire & Aviation Management

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**From:** Sachs, Gordon - FS, DC

**Sent:** Saturday, October 12, 2024 1:56 PM

**To:** FS-pdl wo spf fam5 <[pd\\_l\\_wo\\_spf\\_fam5@usda.gov](mailto:pd_l_wo_spf_fam5@usda.gov)>; Haston, David - FS, ID <[david.haston@usda.gov](mailto:david.haston@usda.gov)>; Christensen, Kim - FS, ID <[kim.christensen@usda.gov](mailto:kim.christensen@usda.gov)>; NICC Coordinator on Duty <[nicc.cod@firenet.gov](mailto:nicc.cod@firenet.gov)>; VanHemelryck, Kimberly <[kimberly\\_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov](mailto:kimberly_vanhemelryck@ios.doi.gov)>; [doi\\_watch\\_office@ios.doi.gov](mailto:doi_watch_office@ios.doi.gov); Webb, Larry (Brian) - FS, DC <[larry.webb@usda.gov](mailto:larry.webb@usda.gov)>; Hower, Andrew - FS, DC <[Andrew.Hower@usda.gov](mailto:Andrew.Hower@usda.gov)>

**Cc:** Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <[alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov](mailto:alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov)>; Kendall, Aaron - FS, WV <[aaron.kendall@usda.gov](mailto:aaron.kendall@usda.gov)>

**Subject:** URGENT: IWI in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

FEMA has advised all Federal responders in Rutherford County, NC to stand down and evacuate the county immediately. The message stated that "Title 10 troops had come across x2 trucks of armed militia saying they were out hunting FEMA. Specifically occurred in Chimney Rock."

The IMTs have been notified and are coordinating the evacuation of all assigned personnel in that county. Regional ESF #4 staff will maintain contact with the IMTs and will ensure accountability of all personnel (IMTs, crews, and single resources) once the evacuation is completed.

We will maintain contact with FEMA as they evaluate the potential risks to responders in other counties in North Carolina. We will take appropriate action based on FEMA and NC State Emergency Management guidance.

I will be the HQ-level POC for this IWI.



**Gordy Sachs**  
Chief, All Hazard & International Fire Support Branch  
National ESF #4 Coordinator

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**From:** Bronte, Andrew - FS, NC <Andrew.Bronte@usda.gov>

**Sent:** Monday, October 14, 2024 8:01 AM EDT

**To:** Melonas, James - FS, NC <james.melonas@usda.gov>; Aldridge, Michelle - FS, NC <michelle.aldridge@usda.gov>; Bandy, Jody - FS, NC <jody.bandy@usda.gov>; Barnhart, Jennifer - FS, NC <jennifer.barnhart@usda.gov>; Browning, James - FS, NC <james.browning@usda.gov>; Bunty, Jenifer - FS, NC <Jenifer.Bunty@usda.gov>; Casey, David - FS, NC <david.casey@usda.gov>; Cassels, Kara - FS, NC <kara.cassels@usda.gov>; Fitzsimmons, Cavan - FS, NC <cavan.fitzsimmons@usda.gov>; Howard, Jessie - FS, VA <jessie.howard@usda.gov>; Hudson, Rondall - FS, NC <rondall.hudson@usda.gov>; Jones, James - FS, NC <james.b.jones@usda.gov>; Kelley, Keith - FS, NC <keith.kelley@usda.gov>; Kelley, Shelly - FS, NC <shelly.kelley@usda.gov>; Langdon, John - FS, NC <John.Langdon@usda.gov>; Larson, Nicholas - FS, NC <nicholas.larson2@usda.gov>; Milholen, Carol - FS, NC <carol.milholen@usda.gov>; Miller, Susan - FS, NC <susan.l.miller@usda.gov>; Pollock, Clayton - FS, NC <Clayton.Pollock@usda.gov>; Rondeau, Adam - FS, NC <Adam.Rondeau@usda.gov>; Waskey, Troy - FS, NC <Matthew.Waskey@usda.gov>; Moffat, Steverson - FS, GA <steverson.moffat@usda.gov>; Kuiken, Jason - FS, CA <jason.kuiken@usda.gov>; Ibarguen, Derek - FS, NH <derek.ibarguen@usda.gov>; Khung, Kevin - FS, CO <kevin.khung@usda.gov>; Mascher, Fred - FS, NC <fred.mascher@usda.gov>; Good, Michael - FS, NC <Michael.Good@usda.gov>; Philipp, Greg - FS, NC <Gregory.Philipp@usda.gov>; Baker, Andrew - FS, GA <andrew.baker@usda.gov>; Ensley, Rebecca - FS, NC <Rebecca.Ensley@usda.gov>; Langstaff, Angela - FS, NC <angela.langstaff@usda.gov>; Buschmann, Jerry - FS, NC <jerry.buschmann@usda.gov>; Keyser, Tara - FS, NC <tara.keyser@usda.gov>; Carothers, William - FS, NC <william.carothers@usda.gov>; Smith, Rodney - FS, NC <rodney.smith3@usda.gov>; Baker, Joseph - FS, NC <joseph.baker@usda.gov>; King, Ralph - FS, KY <ralph.b.king@usda.gov>; Denton, Christopher - FS, VT <Christopher.Denton@usda.gov>

**Attachment(s):** "Card.html"

[Hurricane recovery officials in N.C. relocated amid report of 'armed militia,' email shows - The Washington Post](#)

## **Hurricane recovery officials in N.C. relocated amid report of “armed militia,” email shows**

Brianna Sacks

The actions underscore growing concerns about safety and security of federal emergency personnel in western North Carolina amid a raft of misinformation.