

File Code: 6270
Date: December 9, 2024

Chloe Dennison
American Oversight
Via email: foia@americanoversight.org

Dear Chloe Dennison:

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 Regional Office on November 15, 2024, and assigned tracking number **2025-FS-R8-01722-F**. You requested:

“1. All email communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, and calendar invitation attachments) sent by any of the officials listed below and containing any of the key terms listed below. U.S. Forest Service Officials:

- i. Ken Arney, Regional Forester*
- ii. Rick Lint, Deputy Forester*
- iii. Ed Hunter, Deputy Forester*
- iv. Sherry Reaves, Deputy Forester*
- v. James Melonas, Forest Supervisor*
- vi. Jennifer Barnhart, District Ranger*
- vii. Jen Bunty, Acting District Ranger*
- viii. David Casey, District Ranger*
- ix. Brian Browning, District Ranger*
- x. Troy Waskey, District Ranger*

Key Terms:

- a. militia*
- b. supremacy*
- c. supremacist*
- d. patriot*
- e. armed*
- f. vigilante*
- g. nationalist*
- h. III%*

2. All final formal or informal directives (including informal email communications), guidance, protocol, assessments, reports, analyses, or recommendations concerning armed militia groups threatening or interfering with the work of emergency relief workers.

(Date Range for Record Search: From 9/28/2024 To 11/15/2024)”

In response to your request, the staff at the Southern Regional Office conducted a search for electronic and hardcopy information everywhere a reasonably knowledgeable professional might



expect to find records and located six records totaling approximately 5 MB, which we are releasing, with some information being withheld pursuant to FOIA Exemption (b)(6).

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.

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 the amount falls below the minimum required to collect fees.

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; 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; 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 "John Richard Arney (for)".

KENDERICK ARNEY
Regional Forester

cc: Steve Watkins

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.

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-Dave



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Assistant Director-Operations
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Desk:404-347-2726

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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
Southern Region Fire & Aviation Management

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

1720 Peachtree Rd NW Suite 746N
Atlanta, GA 30309



Caring for the land and serving people

From: Sachs, Gordon - FS, DC <gordon.sachs@usda.gov>

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

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: 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

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

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

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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.

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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.



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Cc: Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov>; Kendall, Aaron - FS, WV <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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Cc: Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov>; Kendall, Aaron - FS, WV <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: 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

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Atlanta, GA 30309-2405

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Caring for the land and serving people

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>
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

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

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

From: Martin, Dave - FS, GA <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

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Sent: Sunday, October 13, 2024 8:56 AM
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Assistant Director-Operations
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Sharing.

V/r



Lex Gabaldo
Cooperative Fire and All-Hazard Program Manager

Forest Service
Southern Region Fire & Aviation Management

C: (b) (6)
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Subject: Update: ALL PERSONNEL ACCOUNTED FOR, IN SAFE LOCATIONS: IWI in North Carolina (Hurricane Helene ESF #4 response)

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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>; 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>
Cc: Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov>; Kendall, Aaron - FS, WV <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)

gordon.sachs@usda.gov

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

www.fs.usda.gov



Caring for the land and serving people

Haney, Michael - FS, GA

From: Barnhart, Jennifer - FS, NC
Sent: Saturday, October 12, 2024 4:16 PM
To: Galloway, Casey - FS, AR; Brown, Lani - FS, CA; Peters, Nicholas - FS, GA; Hayes, Aaron - FS, NC
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL]FW: 📧 Christopher - URGENT: URGENT in DR-4827-NC Emergency Services
Attachments: ATT00004.png; image001.png; image007.png; image009.png; image002.png; image008.png; image010.png; image003.png; image004.png; image006.png; image005.png

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From: Fitzsimmons, Cavan - FS, NC <cavan.fitzsimmons@usda.gov>
Sent: Saturday, October 12, 2024 1:52 PM
To: FS-pdl r8 nc flt <pdl_r8_nc_flt@usda.gov>
Cc: Khung, Kevin - FS, CO <kevin.khung@usda.gov>; Ibarguen, Derek - FS, NH <derek.ibarguen@usda.gov>; Kuiken, Jason - FS, CA <jason.kuiken@usda.gov>
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

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Asheville, NC 28801

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Caring for the land and serving people

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>

AMERICAN
OVERSIGHT

Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL]FW: 📧 Christopher - URGENT: URGENT in DR-4827-NC Emergency Services
Importance: High

From: Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov>

Sent: Saturday, October 12, 2024 1:43 PM

To: Raval, Shardul - FS, GA <shardul.raval@usda.gov>; Baker, Andrew - FS, GA <andrew.baker@usda.gov>; Martin, Dave - FS, GA <Ben.Martin1@usda.gov>; Parrish, Steven - FS, FL <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>

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

To: LAWSON, ALAN (DNR) <alan.lawson@dnr.wa.gov>; Dallas, Dan - FS, CO <dan.dallas@usda.gov>; keith519long (b) (6) >; John Truett <jtruett@dffm.az.gov>; Ken.stanford@dnr.wa.gov; Steve North <snorth@mclanefire.org>; Day, Barbara - FS, NM <barbara.day@usda.gov>; Caldwell, Mathew (DNR) <mathew.caldwell@dnr.wa.gov>

Cc: Gabaldo, Alexis - FS, GA <alexis.gabaldo@usda.gov>; Griffin, Steve - FS, DC <Steven.Griffin@usda.gov>; Billy Zamora <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

cell: (b) (6)

From: Harmon, Marcus <marcus.harmon@fema.dhs.gov>

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

To: Michael Shipley <michael_shipley@firenet.gov>

Cc: Berens, Dave- FS <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

Federal Emergency Management Agency
fema.gov



FEMA

From: McGough, Christopher in Teams <noreply@gcc-email.teams.microsoft.com>

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

To: Harmon, Marcus <marcus.harmon@fema.dhs.gov>

Subject: 🔔 Christopher - URGENT

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of DHS. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize and/or trust the sender. Please select the Phish Alert Report button on the top right of your screen to report this email if it is unsolicited or suspicious in nature.

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Your teammates are trying to reach you in **Microsoft Teams**.

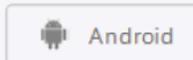


🔔 **Christopher - URGENT in DR-4827-NC Emergency Services**

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.

Reply in Teams

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Haney, Michael - FS, GA

From: Casey, David - FS, NC
Sent: Tuesday, October 15, 2024 7:02 AM
To: Casey, David - FS, NC
Subject: District Meeting Notes

- 1) Just want to acknowledge how different some of our experiences have been over the last 3 weeks and continues to be. Some of us are continuing to see devastated communities on a daily basis. Some don't have a great roof over their heads. Some still don't have water and bad communication.
- 2) No p-code after Sunday. This was literally the first time the agency has issued a P-code for a natural disaster. This was for "emergency" response. There have been a lot of differences between this and a fire.
- 3) Starting next week, there will be a shift – basically no outside resources for storm-related response/recovery, each District will have some IA resources that can still help some, no OT related to response/recovery. This will be our situation for at least a month.
- 4) Until now, work has affected personal plans but we're transitioning to a period where you need to stick to your plans as much as possible, e.g. vacations, time off, etc.
- 5) Opening up roads and trails won't be done when our response resources leave. This will need to be accomplished by a combination of IA resources, District employees, Volunteers/Partners.
- 6) We'll work diligently but we're not in a rush. DART will lead surveys.
- 7) Extra funds will come – ERFO/Supplemental package. There are a lot of unknowns about how that looks.
- 8) Assignments may change, e.g. pulling a tape after Francis and Ivan, POW will change.
- 9) Work vs. Helping Out in the Community vs. Dealing with stuff at home vs. Other Variables.
 - a. Admin Leave – done.
 - b. Weather and Safety Leave – shrinking but still available.
 - c. Talk to your supervisor and I'll ask Sherrie to pull those request together. These requests are getting approved at the DRF level.
- 10) Corrected T&A. Sherrie can help.
- 11) GOV to home – trucks need to be in workcenter Thursday night.
- 12) Next steps – Tentatively Opening this Friday. Financial and community impact of being closed.
 - a. Checking back in with the DOT, Transylvania, Haywood at 1000 this morning.
 - i. 276, 215, DVR Road -
 - ii. Skyland FD –
 - iii. Henderson –
 - b. Potentially shift to more trail clearing.
 - c. PIO – messaging.
 - d. Time with volunteers/partners before the start trail work – Finnan (sawing, medical plan, etc.). Potentially go out with them next week as well.
 - e. Campgrounds, Arb, Hatchery, O/Gs.
 - f. PVC and Cradle Opening.
 - g. On-the-ground signage at trailheads, rec areas, closed and open roads talking about conditions.
 - h. Cleaning contracts.
- 13) Other needs / questions?

Dave Casey
District Ranger
Forest Service



**Pisgah RD, National Forests in
North Carolina**

c: (b) (6)

david.casey@usda.gov

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Pisgah Forest, NC 28768
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**Caring for the land and serving
people**

From: Casey, David - FS, NC on behalf of Casey, David - FS, NC <david.casey@usda.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, October 08, 2024 6:10 PM EDT
To: Ibarguen, Derek - FS, NH <derek.ibarguen@usda.gov>
Subject: Fw: Debunking Helene Response Myths

Dave Casey
District Ranger
Pisgah Ranger District

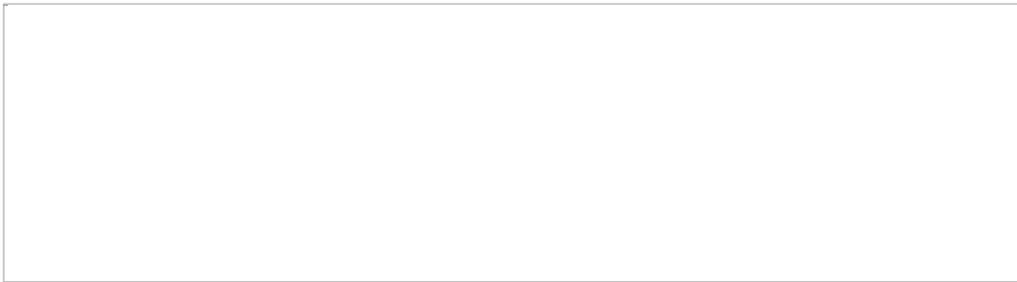
From: Aldridge, Michelle - FS, NC <michelle.aldridge@usda.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, October 8, 2024 5:03:44 PM
To: FS-pdl r8 nc flt <pd_l_r8_nc_flt@usda.gov>
Subject: FW: Debunking Helene Response Myths

Employees can sign up for these emails if they find them useful. - M

----- Forwarded message -----

From: U.S. Congressman Chuck Edwards <NC11CE.Outreach@mail.house.gov>
Date: Tue, Oct 8, 2024, 2:53PM
Subject: Debunking Helene Response Myths

News from Congressman Chuck Edwards



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Dear Michelle,

Over the past 10 days, I have been proud of how our mountain communities have come together to help one another. We have seen a level of support that is unmatched by most any other disaster nationwide; but amidst all of the support, we have also seen an uptick in untrustworthy sources trying to spark chaos by sharing hoaxes, conspiracy theories, and hearsay about hurricane response efforts across our mountains.

While it is true, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's response to Hurricane Helene has had its shortfalls, I'm here to dispel the outrageous rumors that have been circulated online:

1. Hurricane Helene was NOT geoengineered by the government to seize and access lithium deposits in Chimney Rock.
 - a. Nobody can control the weather.
 - b. Charles Konrad, director of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Southeast Regional Climate Center, has confirmed that no one has the technology or ability to geoengineer a hurricane.
 - i. Current geoengineering technology can serve as a large-scale intervention to mitigate the negative consequences of naturally occurring weather phenomena, but it cannot be used to create or manipulate hurricanes.
 - c. Local officials have confirmed the government is NOT seizing Chimney Rock.
 - i. There was no "special meeting" held in Chimney Rock between federal, state or local governments about seizing the town.
2. Local officials are NOT abandoning search and rescue efforts to bulldoze over Chimney Rock.
 - a. Chimney Rock is NOT being bulldozed over.
 - b. Rutherford County emergency services personnel are going to extensive lengths to search for missing people, including in debris by using cadaver dogs to locate any remains of individuals trapped in the debris.
 - c. Just as every other community in Western North Carolina, Chimney Rock officials are focused first and foremost on recovery efforts, followed by plans to rebuild in the future.

3. FEMA is NOT stopping trucks or vehicles with donations, confiscating or seizing supplies, or otherwise turning away donations.
 - a. FEMA does not conduct vehicle stops or handle road closures with armed guards - all road closures are managed by local law enforcement who are prioritizing getting resources to their fellow community members.
4. FEMA has NOT diverted disaster response funding to the border or foreign aid.
 - a. Disaster response efforts and individual assistance are funded through the Disaster Relief Fund, which is a dedicated fund for disaster efforts.
 - i. FEMA's non-disaster related presence at the border has always been of major concern to me, even before Hurricane Helene, and I will continue to condemn their deployment of personnel to the southern border, but we must separate the two issues.
5. FEMA is NOT going to run out of money.
 - a. FEMA officials have repeatedly affirmed that the agency has enough money for immediate response and recovery needs over the next few months.
 - i. Secretary Mayorkas' statement indicating otherwise was an irresponsible attempt to politicize a tragedy for personal gain.
 - b. In the coming months, Western North Carolina is going to need more disaster relief funding than is currently available to assist with recovery efforts.
 - i. I'm confident that supplemental disaster relief funding, which I am already involved in the process of creating, will be considered in the House once we return to session in mid-November.
6. FEMA cannot seize your property or land.
 - a. Applying for disaster assistance does not grant FEMA or the federal government authority or ownership of your property or land.
7. The FAA is NOT restricting access to airspace for Helene rescue and recovery operations.
 - a. Nobody seeking to fly resources into Western North Carolina will be prohibited from doing so by the FAA or North Carolina Emergency Management so long as they coordinate their efforts with NC Aviation.
 - i. If you are looking to conduct an airdrop of resources but don't know who to contact for approval, please reach out to my office and we will share that information with you.
8. FEMA is NOT only providing \$750 to disaster survivors to support their recovery.
 - a. The initial \$750 provided to disaster survivors is an immediate type of assistance called Serious Needs Assistance that may be made to individuals in need as soon as they apply for FEMA assistance.
 - i. The \$750 is an upfront, flexible payment to help cover essential items like food, water, baby formula and medication while FEMA assesses the applicant's eligibility for additional funds.
 - ii. This award is just the first step of a longer process to provide financial assistance to disaster survivors in need of federal support.
 - b. As an application moves through the review process, individuals are eligible to receive additional forms of assistance for other needs such as temporary housing, personal property and home repair costs, etc.

I encourage you to remember that everything you see on Facebook, X, or any other social media platform is not always fact. Please make sure you are fact checking what you read online with a reputable source.

With my warmest regards,

Image

Chuck Edwards
Member of Congress

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