

Georgia Forestry Foundation launches wildfire recovery fund

Wildfires are causing significant damage across South Georgia, threatening homes, forestland, property, and rural livelihoods.

In response, the Georgia Forestry Foundation (GFF) is launching the Forest Wildfire Recovery Fund to provide direct, practical support to communities, forest landowners, and rural families impacted by wildfire and related disaster recovery needs. The Foundation will seed the fund with an initial investment of \$10,000. Those interested in supporting the effort may

donate online at www.gffgrow.org/wildfire-recovery.

As of April 23, according to the Georgia Forestry Commission, the Pineland Road Fire in Clinch County was estimated at 31,307 acres and 10% contained. In Brantley County, the Highway 82 Fire had burned more than 5,000 acres and was 15% contained. Across the affected area in Brantley County, 90 homes had been lost, and an estimated 700 homes were threatened. Hundreds of brave firefighters, wildfire experts, and co-

operating agencies are actively working to contain these fires. Drought conditions, downed timber from Hurricane Helene, low humidity, and high winds are making suppression efforts especially difficult.

"When disaster strikes rural Georgia, we have a responsibility to support," said Tim Lowrimore, President & CEO of the Georgia Forestry Association and Georgia Forestry Foundation. "These wildfires have already caused real losses for families, landowners, and communities across South

Georgia. This fund gives people a practical way to help, and it allows us to direct support where it can make a meaningful difference."

Gifts designated to the Forest Wildfire Recovery Fund will be used to support Georgia forest landowners, families, wildland firefighters, first responders, and communities impacted by wildfire. Support may include direct recovery grants, cleanup and restoration assistance, reforestation support, or other immediate needs connected to damage and recovery.

Funds will be distributed through a documented review process based on need, impact, and eligibility. The Foundation will also work with state agencies, local community leaders, and partners to help ensure support reaches affected families, landowners, and communities as directly and responsibly as possible.

While recovery efforts are beginning, wildfire response remains active and dangerous. On April 22, Governor Brian Kemp declared a State of Emergency for

91 Georgia counties in response to the ongoing South Georgia wildfires and directed the Georgia Forestry Commission and other state agencies to mobilize necessary resources to assist with active response efforts. The State of Emergency will remain in effect for 30 days unless renewed. The emergency declaration is in addition to the State Forester's burn ban order for the same 91 counties, which prohibits prescribed burning, yard debris burning, and agricultural burning in the affected area during the order period.

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“ Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you. ”
Proverbs 4:25 (NIV)

Decluttering for Clarity

People often talk about “spring cleaning,” though winter can often be a great time for decluttering as well. In a season with days of poor weather when we may find ourselves stuck inside, there are a few forms of decluttering which we may undertake. We might find ourselves desiring to declutter, spiritually. This can be done by examining our conscience and thinking about how we can have a refreshed approach to the coming days, weeks, and months. We may also find the time to declutter our to-do lists, which can certainly provide a beneficial jolt in productivity or motivation. Finally, we might declutter in the most basic form, that is, our homes, office or anywhere else that needs organization. This often seems to help in decreasing our stress and worries, and taking time to do so this winter can certainly bring about these feelings earlier.

—James Stone

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