



HELENE UPDATE

Board of Commissioners | March 18, 2025



Topics for Today

PRESENTATIONS:

- **Debris** – Dane Pedersen
- **FEMA** – Deputy Federal Coordinating Officer Benji Abbott
- **Disaster Case Management** – Nathan Greene & Lizzi Shimer
- **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program** – Brad Hughes

APPENDIX:

- **Data Updates by Recovery Support Function**



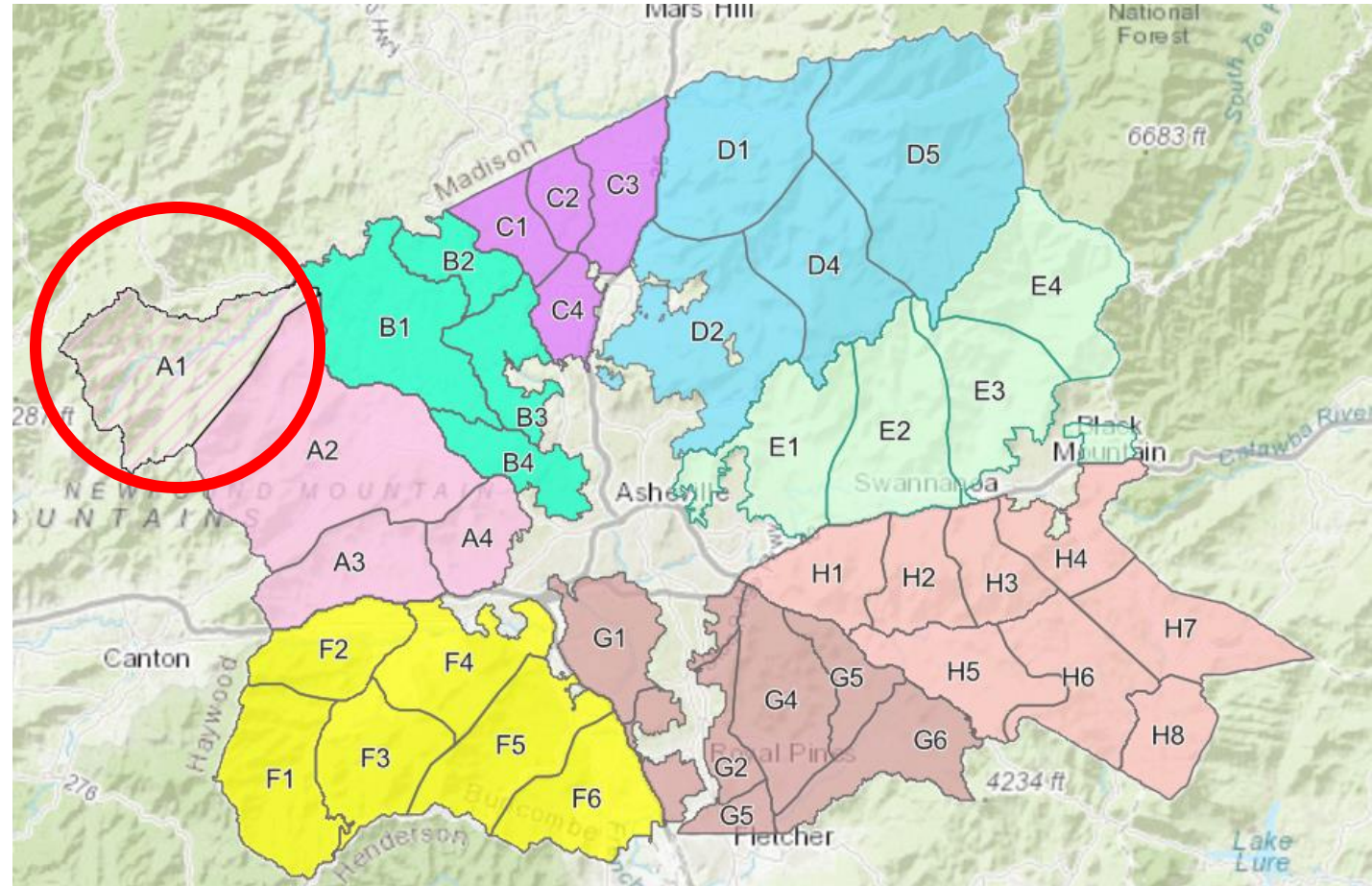
Right of Way Debris Removal



- Right of Way Debris Removal continues through March 31st
- **Over 1.1 million cubic yards** of debris has been removed from right of way in City of Asheville, Black Mountain, and unincorporated Buncombe County
- Including some of the largest trees and stumps ever seen in a disaster

Right of Way Close Out Map

- The debris contractor subdivided the original right of way zone maps into smaller sections, resulting in 38 smaller zones
- A1 is the only zone closed out. As zones are closed out, they will look like A1. Spots without coloring or zone labels are other municipal borders





- PPDR continues through 6/30
- All residents & local businesses must **apply by April 15th** to complete the application process
 - 4,054 applications received as of 3/17
- Demolition requested by residents and local businesses will begin soon
 - 289 demolition requests as of 3/17



Private Property Debris Removal (PPDR) & Demolition

Commercial Demolition

- Voluntary Commercial Demolition will occur simultaneously with residential demolition requests that have applied for this service
- Private Property and Commercial Property Debris Removal and demolitions are open for application through April 15, 2025
- Asbestos management process has been approved by all parties involved



Waterway Debris Removal



- Waterway debris removal continues through June 30th
- Over **360,000 cubic yards** have been removed from the waterways
- Crews are currently removing debris from Beetree Creek, Cane Creek, French Broad River, Ivy Creek, and the Swannanoa River



Waterway Debris Removal



Title Property Removal

- 11 vehicles have been towed
- 2 owners have claimed their title property
- Continue to tow out of waterway and private property
- Reminder that title property on private property is only eligible for tow if it is not owned by the private property owner

Questions?



March 18, 2025

Tropical Storm Helene Recovery

Buncombe County Update

Deputy Federal Coordinating Officer Benji Abbott



FEMA



Individual Assistance

Deadline for IA applications extended to April 7, 2025

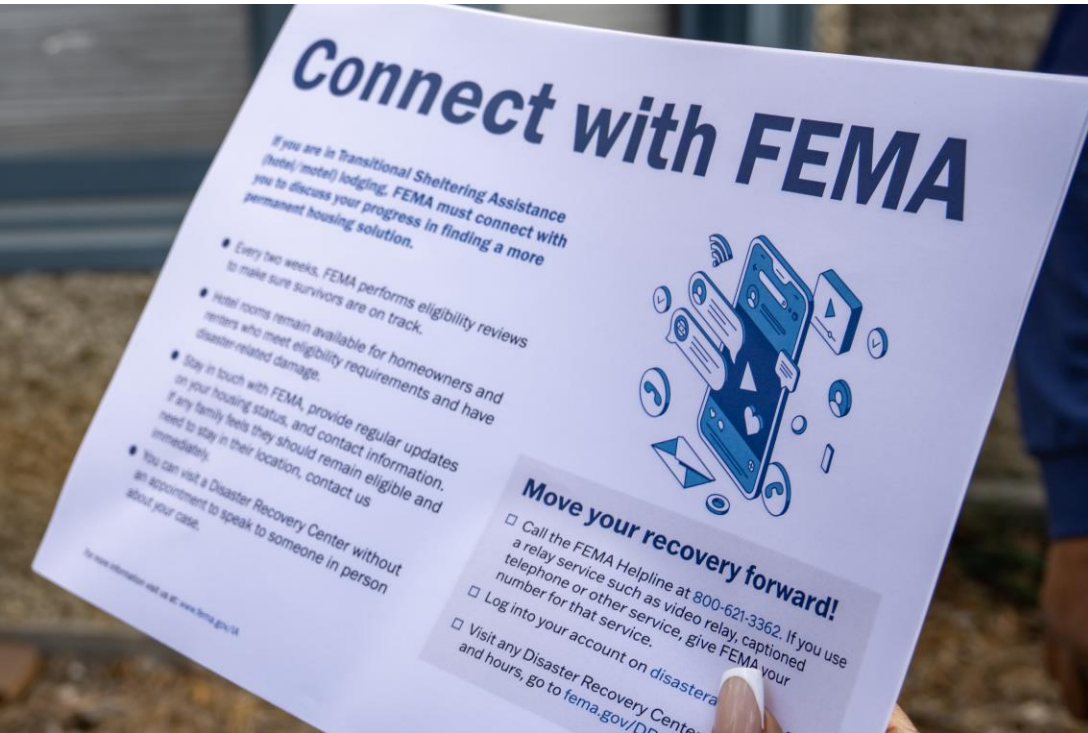
Individuals & Households Program

- 157,500 households receiving \$404 million in FEMA Assistance
 - Buncombe County Eligible Applicants: 59,639 (37%)
 - Buncombe County IHP Amount: \$127 million (32%)

Transitional Sheltering Assistance

- 13,300 applicants received temporary hotel lodging; 484 households remain in hotels
 - Buncombe County: 116 remain in TSA lodging (24%)
 - Buncombe County: 5,280 Ever Checked In

Individual Assistance



Direct Housing

223 applicants given keys to direct housing units

- Buncombe County: 80 applicants total ever licensed in
- Buncombe County: 74 current applicants licensed in (6 vacates)

Rental Assistance

3,914 applicants received rental funds

- Buncombe County: 1,080 applicants
- Buncombe County: \$3,662,105 (Avg: \$3,419)

Private Road and Bridge Repair

6,523 applicants received funds

- Buncombe County: 1,658 Applicants
- Buncombe County total repaired/replaced: \$4,980,755

Disaster Recovery Centers

How to apply:

- Visit a Disaster Recovery Center
- Call 800-621-3362
- [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://www.DisasterAssistance.gov)
- FEMA App

Disaster Recovery Centers

- 11 Total DRCs in Impacted Area, 2 Active DRCs in Buncombe County:
 - Fairview Public Library
 - Traffic Cumulative: 2,227
 - Traffic on 3/15: 25
 - First Time Visitors on 3/15: 15
 - Weaverville Town Hall
 - Traffic Cumulative: 1,116
 - Traffic on 3/15: 5
 - First Time Visitors on 3/15: 1

Questions?



Disaster Case Management

- North Carolina Emergency Management (NCEM) working to increase staff numbers
 - 15 assigned case managers to Buncombe County
 - 4 additional case managers are in training and expected to begin work in 1 – 2 weeks
- Meeting cadence established
 - Data
 - Strategic Leadership
 - Service Delivery
- Partnering to determine outreach
 - Existing community connection events
 - Disaster Recovery Center (DRC)



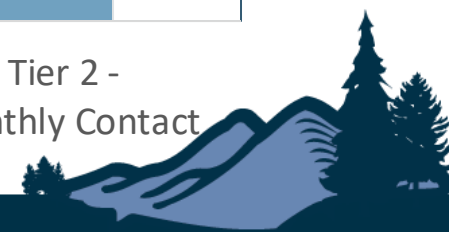
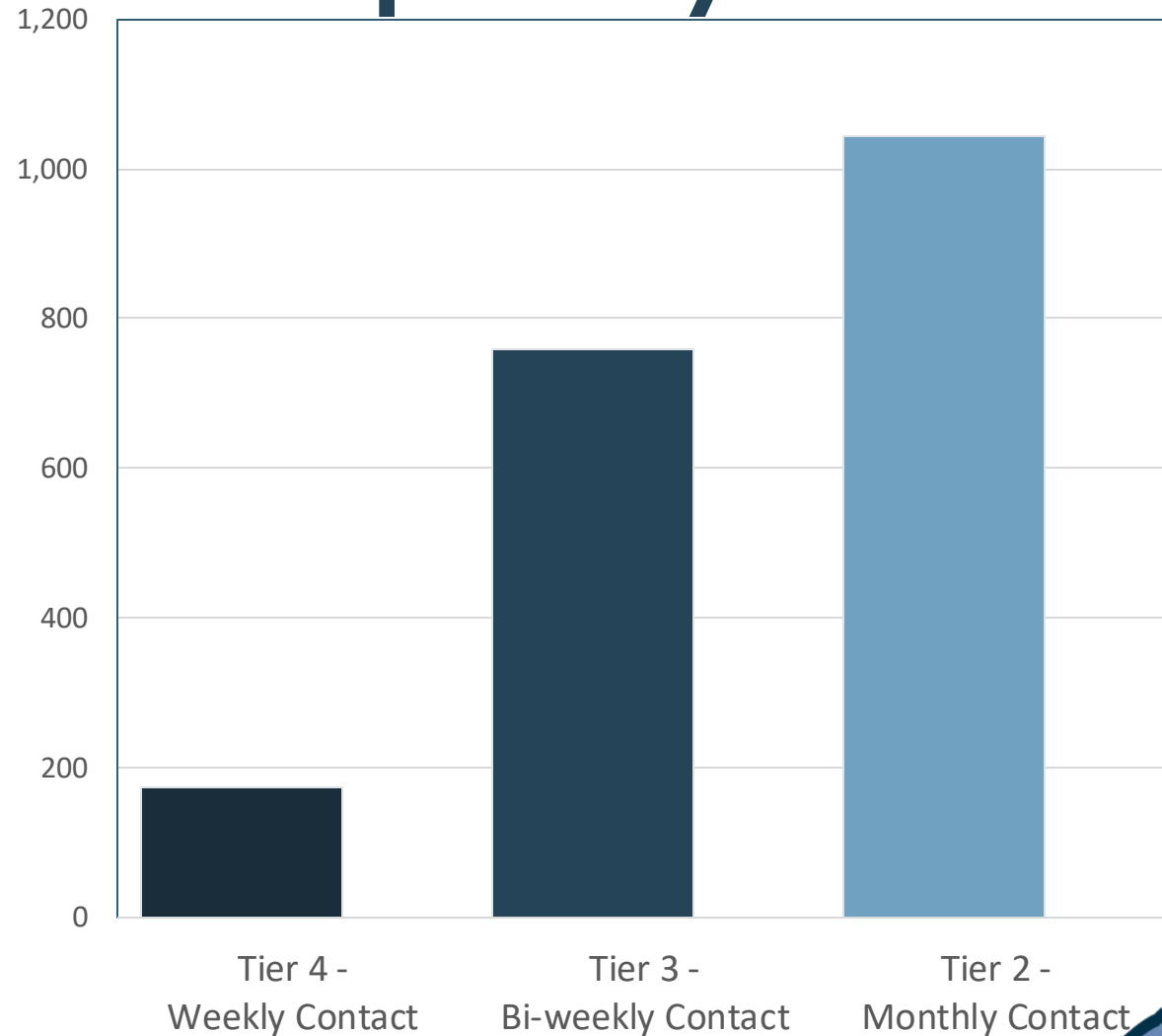
DCM Case Status

Status	Definition	Count
Intake	Client DCM intake form received	2
Assigned	Client has been assigned to CM	1,240
Needs Assessment in Progress	Client and CM are working thru assessments; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• At least one resource referrals provided to client	626
Needs Assessment Complete	Client and CM have completed all assessments; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resource referrals provided to client	8
Recovery Plan in Progress	Client is working through recovery plan for all remaining unmet needs with CM guidance	177
Recovery Plan Complete	Client has resolved all unmet needs and does not require DCM services <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Client may reopen case as new needs are identified	4
TOTAL		2,057

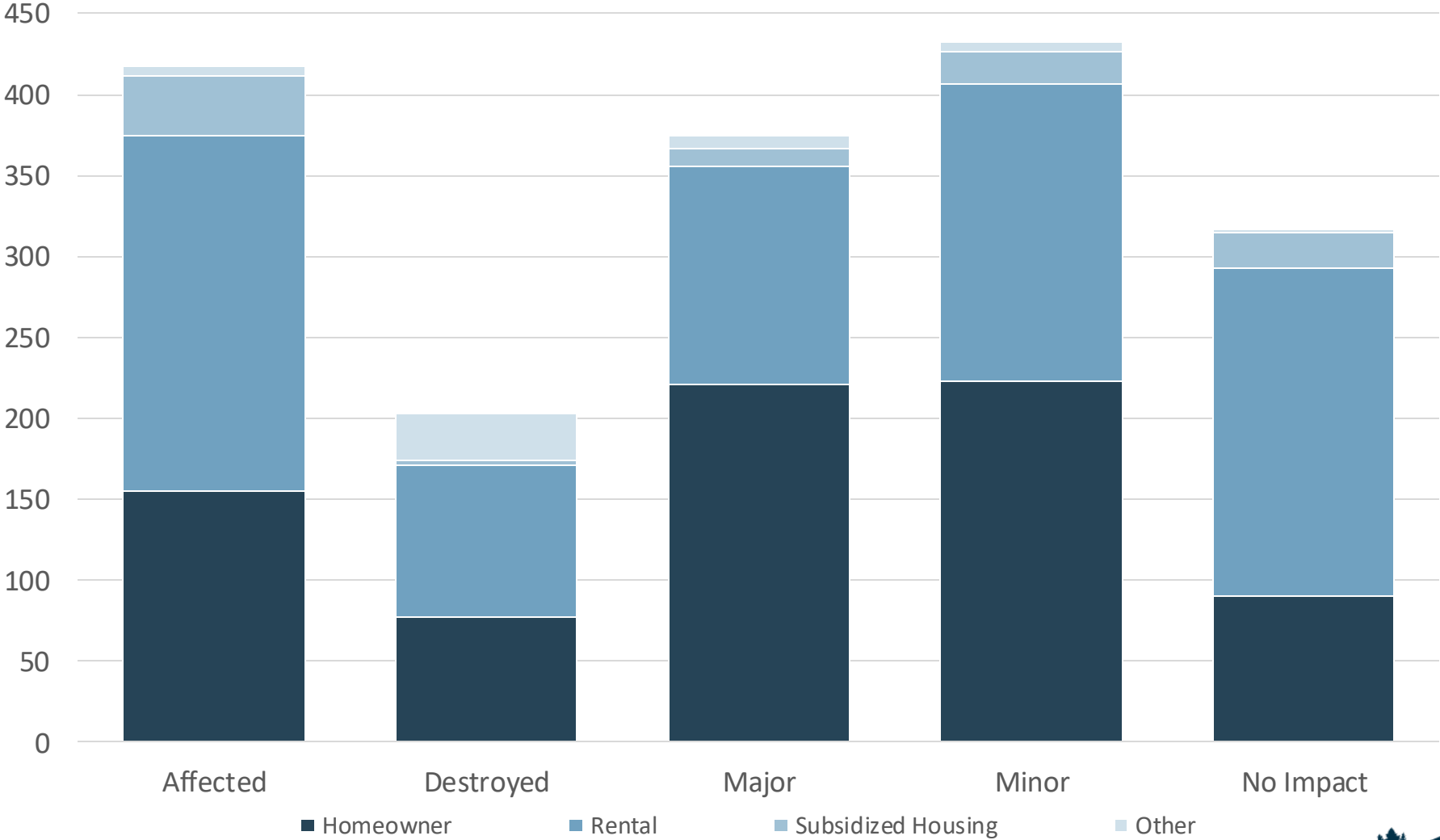
DCM Case Complexity

2,057 Applications (As of 3/17/2025)

- **Tier 2 – 1084**
 - Guidance, referrals and/or few critical resources need to achieve recovery goals.
- **Tier 3 – 788**
 - Limited ability to address disaster-caused unmet needs due to a vulnerability (elderly, individual with a disability, children, LEP, literacy challenges).
- **Tier 4 – 180**
 - “Severe” mental trauma, physical limitation, member of functional needs community needing intensive support to achieve the plan.



NC Disaster Case Management



Legend

Major Roads

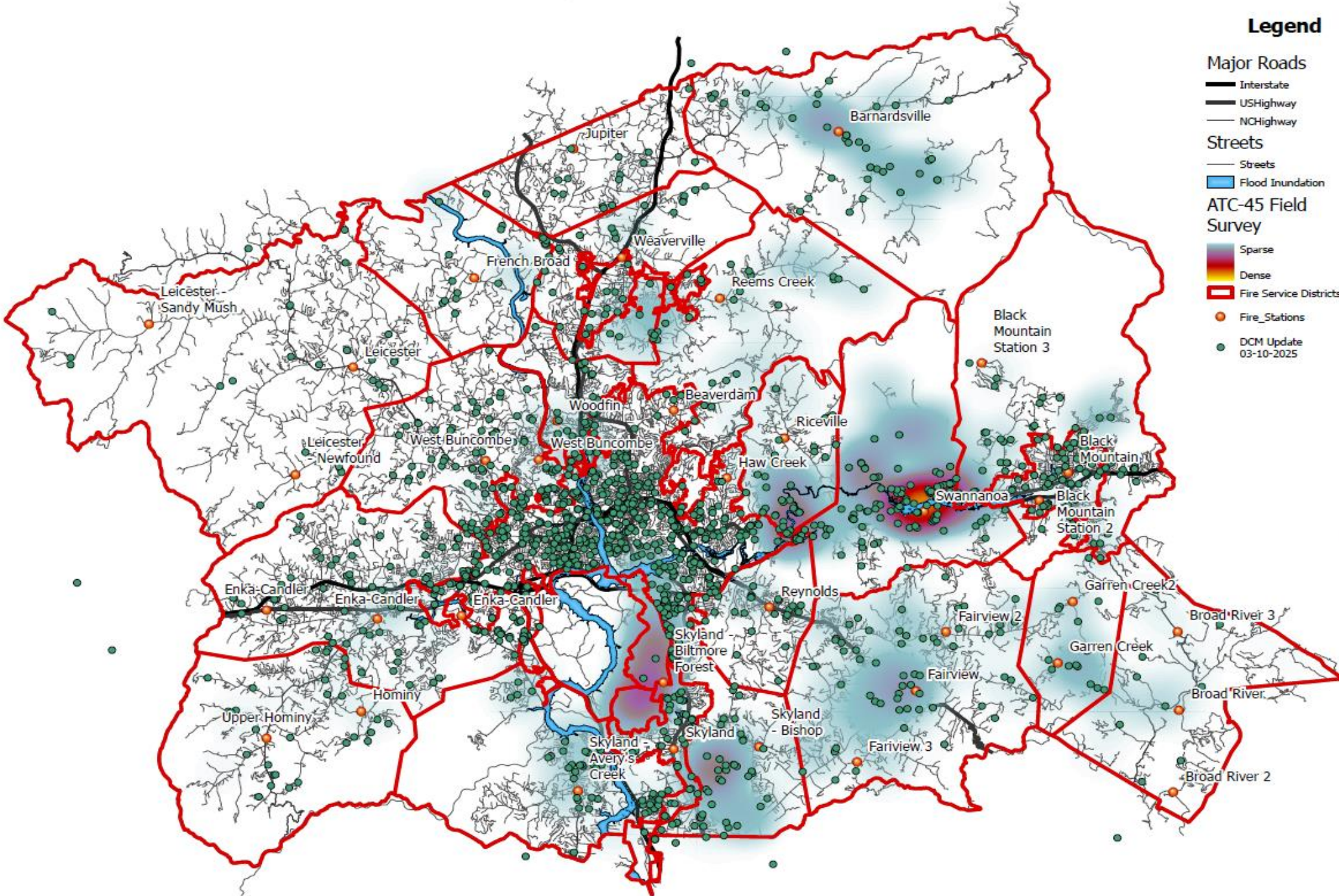
- Interstate
- USHighway
- NCHighway

Streets

- Streets
- Flood Inundation

ATC-45 Field Survey

- Sparse
- Dense
- Fire Service Districts
- Fire_Stations
- DCM Update 03-10-2025



Questions?



Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

Acquisition Group 1

23

Properties

17

Residential

6

Commercial



- Town of Black Mountain
- City of Asheville
- Unincorporated Buncombe County



02/20/25
Submitted to State EM



HMGP Private Property Applications

Application Type Distribution by Municipality

Municipality	Acquisition	Elevation Landslide	Elevation Mitigation Reconstruction	Land Stabilization	Mitigation Reconstruction	No App	Slope Stabilization	Total
Black Mountain	14	5	1					20
City of Asheville	31	14		1			1	47
Montreat				1				1
Unincorporated	164	40	3	7	3	6	2	227
Weaverville	2			2				4
Total	211	59	4	11	3	6	3	299

Data as of February 25, 2025



Intergovernmental Coordination for HMGP Private Property Projects

- **Inter-Local Agreement (ILA)**
 - Black Mountain – Approved March 10
 - Weaverville – Scheduled for March 18
 - City of Asheville – Scheduled for March 25
- **Data Updates**
 - Finalizing communication plan for application milestones
 - Working with NCEM to schedule a bi-weekly meeting to engage in open communication
 - Awaiting NCEM to provide the next single project application



HMGP Funding Overview

- **Total Funding:** The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) is funded based on a percentage of total disaster-related damages. For Hurricane Helene, North Carolina has been allocated \$1.5 billion in HMGP funding.
- **Funding Prioritization:** The following project types will be funded in priority order within Buncombe County:
 1. Acquisition, elevation, or mitigation reconstruction of residential properties
 2. Acquisition of commercial properties for hazard mitigation purposes
 3. Landslide stabilization and mitigation efforts
 4. Government-led resilience projects designed to enhance community-wide disaster preparedness and risk reduction



HMGP Non-Residential Mitigation Projects

- Staff are actively identifying potential mitigation projects to enhance resilience and reduce disaster impacts
- When preparing applications, staff will prioritize projects that:
 - Align with the Comprehensive Plan and Hazard Mitigation Plan
 - Effectively mitigate risk and strengthen community resilience against future disasters
 - Take a countywide approach to promote equitable hazard mitigation and protect the entire community



HMGP Mitigation and Resiliency Project Examples

- Shelter Generator Projects
- Wildland/Urban Interface Projects
- Enhanced Mitigation Planning
- Stream Gauge and Mass Notification Systems
- Flood Mitigation and Infrastructure Resiliency



Questions?



End of Presentation

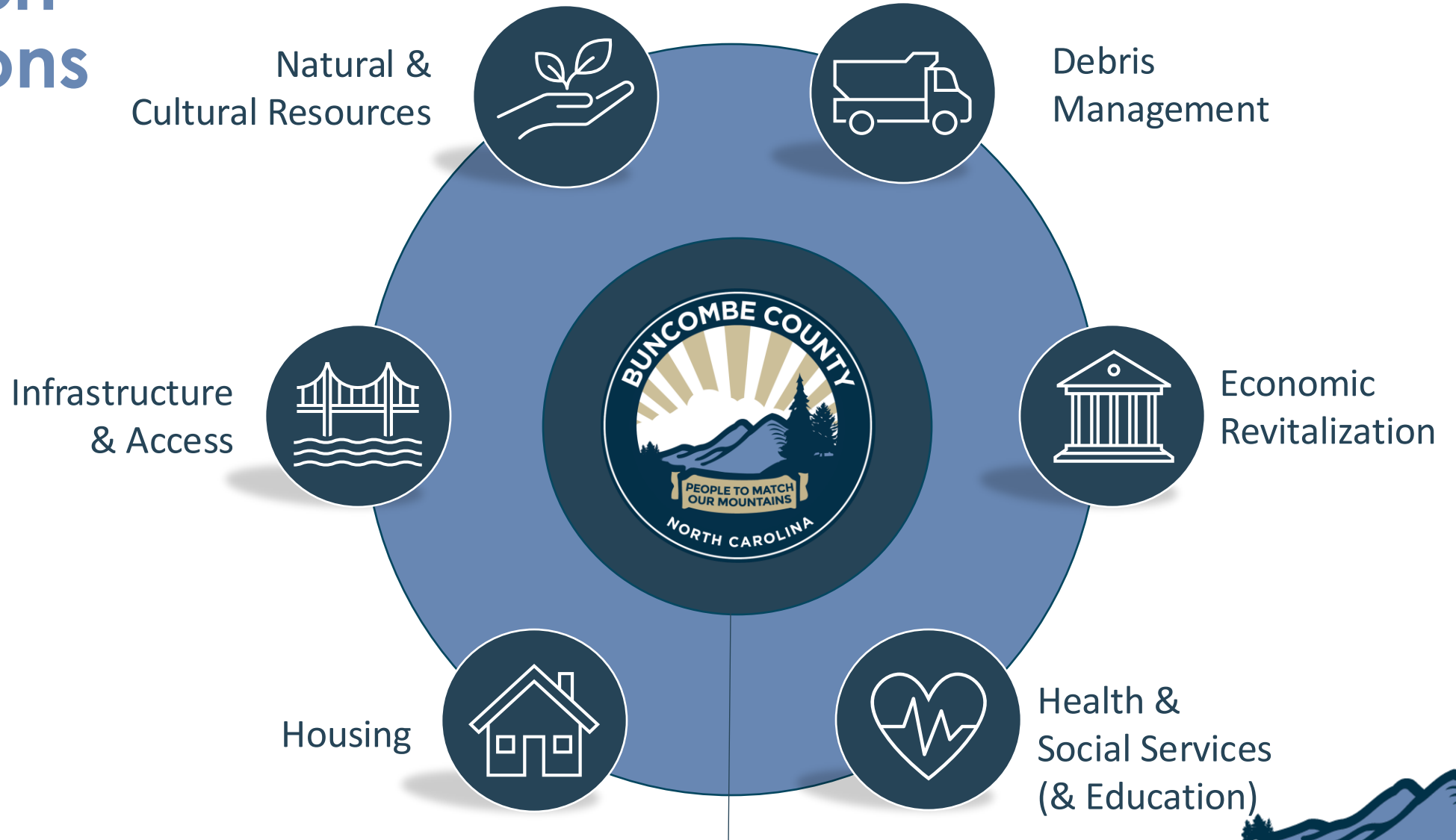


APPENDIX – DATA UPDATES

Reference Data by Recovery Support Function



Recovery Support Functions



Foundational



DEBRIS MANAGEMENT



Focused on storm debris, including solutions for debris removal on public and private property and waterways, managing specialized debris types, evaluating hazardous materials considerations, coordinating disposal, and exploring sustainable re-use of debris.



DEBRIS MANAGEMENT

- Cubic yards of debris collected: 1,173,165 (3% increase over last update)
- Tons of mud, silt and soil collected: 25,515 (11% increase over last update)
- PPDR applications received: 4,055 (13% increase over last update)
- PPDR applications ready for site inspection: 921 (19% increase over last update)
- PPDR applications delivered to FEMA: 1,833 (5% increase over last update)
- PPDR inspections complete: 2,198 (31% increase over last update)
- % of applications received on-line: 54%
- % of applications received in-person: 46%
- % of applications requesting debris removal only: 93%
- % of applications requesting debris and demolition: 6%
- % of applications requesting demolition only: 1%



ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION



Focused on stimulating economic recovery, supporting local businesses, responding to workforce needs, and ensuring the long-term economic stability and prosperity of the area with a focus on revitalization of critical economic sectors



ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION

- Asheville-Buncombe "Rebuilding Together" Business Grant www.mountainbizworks.org/helene/fund/
 - 843 applications received totaling more than \$18M (no change compared to prior update)
 - Buncombe County Only
 - 137 small businesses awarded grants, totaling \$1,567,480 (no change compared to prior update)



ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION

Small Business Association Loans*

	Home Loans	For Profit Business Loans	Nonprofit Business Loans	Total
Number of Applications	3371 (3% increase)	6,703 (3% increase)	230 (0% increase)	10,304 (3% increase)
Number of Loans Disbursed	568 (8% increase)	1808 (167% increase)	4 (100% increase)	2,380 (98% increase)
\$ Amount of Loans Disbursed	\$25,586,471.85 (12% increase)	\$117,519,775 (33% increase)	\$163,000 (159% increase)	\$143,269,247 (29% increase)

*No new data since 3/3 update



ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION

Unemployment Estimates: Revised November 2024 and December 2024 (no change compared to 3/3 update)

	Reported Nov 2024	Revised Nov 2024	Reported Dec 2024*	Reported Feb 2025
Buncombe County	7.2%	7.4%	6.0%	Not yet reported
Asheville Metro**	6.1%	6.2%	5.1%	Not yet reported

*** Asheville Metro includes Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, and Madison counties

Helene Impact on County Unemployment Rankings December 2024 (no change compared to 3/3 update)

County	Labor Force*	Unemployment **	Rate	Rank
Warren	6,011	328	5.5	96
Scotland	11,021	631	5.7	97
Buncombe	145,100	8,636	6.0	98
Madison	10,251	614	6.0	99
Mitchell	6,424	467	7.3	100

*Number of people working and number of people unemployed combined

** Number of people unemployed



HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES



Focused on ensuring the health and well-being of residents with attention to the social determinants of health, including consideration of medical, behavioral, educational, and environmental health concerns and social service recovery needs



HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

- Applications submitted for individual assistance thru Buncombe Co.: 5,826 (no change compared to last update)
- Applications approved for individual assistance: 488 (14% increase over prior update)
- Funds approved for individual assistance: \$1,544,238 (no update compared to prior update)
- Total loads of laundry at Community Care Sites: 58,312 (2% increase over prior update)
- Total number of showers at Community Care Sites: 47,341 (2% increase over prior update)
- Mass care meals provided (avg. / day): 1,200 (no update compared to last update)
- Current individuals in emergency shelters: Shelter closed as of 13/31
- NC DHHS Disaster Energy Assistance: \$1,292,237 (out of \$1,509,509 total allocated)
- NC DHHS Disaster Adult Service Assistance: \$15,714 (out of \$157,618 total allocated)
- NC DHHS Disaster Child Welfare Assistance: \$97,092 (out of \$469,011 total allocated)
- NC DHHS Disaster Rental Assistance: \$0 (out of \$199,296 total allocated)



EDUCATION

- The number of homeless (unhoused) students identified under the McKinney-Vento Act:
 - Asheville City Schools – 262 (3% increase over previous update)
 - **79 of these cases are due to Helene** (4% increase over previous update)
 - Buncombe County School - 1360 (1% increase over previous update)
 - **947 of these cases are due to Helene** (0% increase over previous update)
- 100% of **Buncombe County Schools** sites have resumed normal water usage after receiving lead test results
- 100% of **Asheville City Schools** sites have resumed normal water usage after receiving lead test results



HOUSING



Focused on supporting people in moving toward housing permanence through home repair, removing barriers to temporary housing units, connecting survivors to short- and long-term rental, and coordinating rental and mortgage assistance for survivor households with economic impacts



HOUSING

- Residential units destroyed: 363 (1% increase over prior update)
- Residential units with major damage: 711 (1% increase over prior update)
- Residential units with habitability repairs: 10,738 (2% increase over prior update)
- Total residential units damaged: 11,812 (2% increase over prior update)
- Households currently in TSA: 125 (73% decrease from prior update)
- Households approved for FEMA direct housing: 86 (3% decrease from prior update)
- FEMA temporary housing units complete: 66 (3% decrease since prior update)
- FEMA temporary housing units in-progress: 1 (94% decrease from prior update)
- Households approved for rental assistance: 1,057 (3% increase over prior update)



INFRASTRUCTURE & ACCESS



Focused on restoring and enhancing essential public infrastructure and accessibility to private property, including comprehensive damage assessments, coordination of repairs/restoration, and mitigation of future hazards such as floods and landslides



INFRASTRUCTURE & ACCESS

- 299 Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) applications have been submitted to NCEM (1% increase over last update)
 - 210 for acquisition & 69 for elevation/reconstruction & 14 for slope stabilization
- Helene related building permit apps filed across 1,371 unique locations (2% increase over last update)
- Helene related building inspections conducted at 1,085 unique locations (5% increase over last update)
- 300+ private addresses assessed for bridge damage by Fire Marshall with National Guard conducting additional assessments
- 1,000+ landslides occurred in the County with 400+ damaging roads and structures
- 1,400 assessments conducted of properties in flood plain with letters of significant damage being sent
- 332 (of 332) Floodplain Management Substantial Damage letters sent
- 142 (of 143) Floodplain Management emergency permit holders have been contacted
- 7 (of 7) Floodplain Management new non-emergency permit applicants have been contacted
- 18 (of 143) Floodplain Management applications completed for emergency permit holders*
 - **no new data compared to 3/3 update*
- 9 (of 23) Floodplain Management surveys completed



NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES



Focused on the restoration and sustainable management of natural and cultural resources, including capabilities to maintain, conserve, renew, and rehabilitate resources such as parks, farmland, watersheds and streambanks in alignment with environmental and historical preservation laws



NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

- Emergency watershed protection potential applicants identified: 325 (14% decrease compared to prior update)
- Emergency watershed protection Field Visits Completed: 235 (new data point since 3/3 update)
- Emergency watershed protection applications approved: 25 (new data point since 3/3 update)
- 7 County parks open to the public (no update compared to prior update)
- 12 County libraries open to the public (no update compared to prior update)





FOUNDATIONAL

Focused on coordinating the resources needed for an effective recovery for and linking recovery with organizational operations –such as grants & funding, data sharing, county property damage, staffing considerations, communications, funding, facilities, fleet, human capital and technology



FOUNDATIONAL

- \$ 16.8 M expended for Helene; \$11.3 M committed
- Category A* project submitted in FEMA grants portal
 - Submitted: \$68,240,087.00 (no change compared to prior update)
 - Received: \$34,120,044.00 (no change compared to prior update)
 - **expedited funding*
- Category C,E, & G projects submitted in FEMA grants portal
 - Submitted: \$13,887,100 (no change compared to prior update)
 - Received: \$0
- 28 active staff reassignments being managed by HR
- 115 internal county staffing vacancies (not including BCSO) – 5% increase over prior update
- Insurance claim for County-owned assets:
 - Claims submitted: \$1.07 M (no new data compared to prior update)
 - Claim received: \$128,643 (no new data compared to prior update)
- Recovery-related grant funding:
 - Requested: \$5.6 M (no new data compared to prior update)
 - Awarded: \$2.8 M (no new data compared to prior update)

