



News Release

For more information, contact:
Sharon Dolliver
Phone: 478-751-3535
Fax: 478-751-3559
Email: dolliver@gfc.state.ga.us

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GEORGIA FORESTRY COMMISSION SEEKS FIRE RELIEF

As record losses continue to mount in the devastating south Georgia and Florida wildfires, the Georgia Forestry Commission is working to secure funding for alleviating damages and developing recovery plans.

"The latest figures show more than \$27 million state dollars have already been spent on the four federally declared fires," said Robert Farris, Interim Director of the Georgia Forestry Commission. "Preliminary estimates show \$43 million will be needed to pay for fire suppression efforts and that \$48 million of timber has been lost in Georgia. In addition, it will take about \$25 million to replant forestlands burned in Georgia and Florida." Farris added that an average 30 additional fires burn every day, whose impacts are not included in the current cost estimates.

Farris personally updated President Bush on the impact of the fires in meetings held earlier this week in Brunswick. Florida State Forester Mike Long, U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff, Georgia Senator Saxby Chambliss and Florida Senator Mel Martinez also attended.

"President Bush asked us how he could help," said Farris. "We told him that as we encounter additional losses and develop recovery plans, we will need more national support."

"The Georgia Forestry Commission is working with a wide host of partners to develop recovery and mitigation plans," Farris said.

"The President said he understands that people's livelihoods are being affected and he is grateful for the dedicated effort our firefighters are demonstrating in battling these fires," said Farris. "The Georgia Forestry Commission will work tirelessly to secure the funding needed to provide protection from fire to people and property. We vow also to do everything possible to give these brave firefighters the tools they need to do their job safely and effectively. They are the heroes here."

For updates on fire safety, the current wildfire situation, and loss projections and relief efforts, visit the GFC website at www.gatrees.org.

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