



News Release

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GEORGIA FORESTRY COMMISSION LENDS EXPERTISE TO OIL DISASTER RECOVERY

Specially trained employees of the Georgia Forestry Commission are being commended for their work in response to the BP oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico. Since the April spill, more than 50 GFC employees have served in an Atlanta command center established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and at locations along the Gulf coast being impacted by the oil slick.

"The Georgia Forestry Commission stepped up at a time when we could not fill all our resource needs," said Roger Boykin, Incident Advisor and retired Fire Management and Disaster Coordinator for the southern region of the USFWS. "The large number of GFC employees who are qualified to respond to this type of situation has been a huge help to us."

Those eligible to serve have extensive experience in the National Interagency Incidence Management System and are certified to staff a wide variety of positions on teams that respond to emergencies including wildfires, weather events, and all hazards incidents.

"The Georgia Forestry Commission provides incident management expertise at local, state, and national levels," said Alan Dozier, Chief of Protection at GFC. "Our people have a reputation for being very strong in these capabilities." Dozier added that Georgia is experiencing a record low number of wildfires this year, which gives the GFC team an opportunity to assist with the oil spill. Compensation for expenses is covered through prearranged inter-agency agreements.

According to Boykin, GFC workers have served in the Atlanta center as resource unit leaders, ordering managers, dispatchers, and plans chiefs. Along coastal regions impacted by the oil, the GFC team has assisted with bird search and rescue operations and sensitive habitat protection.

"Supporting these operations helps our team hone their skills and increases our capability to serve Georgia when called upon," said Greg Strenkowski, GFC Staff Forester. "The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is our partner agency, and we are proud to help our partner in their time of need. It is a win-win for us all."

For information about the Georgia Forestry Commission and its services and the agency's Type 2 Incident Command Team, visit GaTrees.org.

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NOTE: GFC employees who have served in the Gulf oil spill operation reside throughout the state of Georgia and are available for media interviews by request.