



News Release

For more information, contact:

Wendy Burnett

478.365.6233

wburnett@gfc.state.ga.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE...NOVEMBER 8, 2018

FORESTRY SPECIALISTS ASSESS LOCAL STORM DAMAGE

A team of Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) specialists is analyzing local tree damage in the wake of Hurricane Michael. The Urban Forest Strike Team (USFT) has fanned out across 13 counties to map and assess the condition of impacted trees for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

“Certain neighborhoods will look completely different than they have for 50 years,” said UFST member Joan Scales, who coordinates the Georgia Forestry Commission’s Sustainable Community Forestry Program. “We’re seeing huge pine trees and live oaks completely uprooted, and others snapped off, with lots of limb breakage,” Scales said.

The GFC’s UFST arrived on scene Friday, November 2, and is expected to serve through November 9. Team members work with special mobile technology to plot the location of hazardous trees that must be removed or pruned to protect public safety. Trees are categorized according to FEMA protocols, including Global Information System coordinates, species and diameter, and remedial action needed. Trees that are leaning, have limbs attached hanging are noted, and all are marked with paint for easy identification.

“Early on, we knew this storm would have a devastating effect on our rural and urban forests,” said Georgia Forestry Commission Director Chuck Williams. “This team has trained extensively to respond quickly and work with our partners at FEMA and the Corps of Engineers. The data they collect will be of great use in helping southwest Georgia recover.”

The Urban Forest Strike Team is assessing damage in 13 counties that were part of Georgia Governor Nathan Deal’s declared major disaster zones when Hurricane Michael plowed into the state October 10. The counties are: Miller, Baker, Early, Calhoun, Lee, Crisp, Worth, Mitchell, Grady, Seminole, Terrell, Decatur and Dougherty.

For more information about Hurricane Michael’s impact on Georgia’s forests, tree safety and storm cleanup, and other services of the Georgia Forestry Commission, visit GaTrees.org.

#