



USDA Approves Emergency Forest Restoration Assistance for All Counties in Georgia to Address Southern Pine Beetle Damage

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ATHENS, Ga., June 12, 2025 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Georgia is accepting applications for the Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) in all 159 counties in Georgia to address damages from the southern pine beetle infestation. EFRP provides financial cost-share and technical assistance to restore nonindustrial private forestland (NIPF) damaged by a qualifying natural disaster. The EFRP sign-up period opened May 14, 2025, and ends on Aug. 14, 2025.

"Southern pine beetle damage to forestlands is extensive and recovery from the impact is never easy, but EFRP can provide much-needed financial support," said Duncan Johnson, State Executive Director for FSA in Georgia. "If you have an immediate need to restore your operation, please call your local office to discuss authorized restoration practices and approval to start recovery efforts before you take any action."

EFRP Participation Requirements

Approved EFRP practices include hardwood forest restoration, softwood forest restoration, mixed forest restoration, and longleaf pine restoration.

Cost-share is reimbursed for up to 75% of the lesser of the actual costs incurred or allowable cost after a restoration activity is complete. If an EFRP application is approved, the program participant is expected to perform restoration and conservation practices based on the FSA-848A *Cost-Share Agreement* and restoration plan provided. Maximum cost share for EFRP is \$500,000 per entity, per natural disaster event.

To participate in EFRP, eligible applicants must:

- complete restoration to meet technical standards established through FSA by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service or the state forestry agency, and
- document and keep records of all costs incurred to complete the restoration activities, including costs associated with personal labor.

To meet eligibility requirements, NIPF land must have existing tree cover or had tree cover immediately before the natural disaster occurred and be suitable for growing trees. The land must also be owned or leased by a nonindustrial private individual, group, association, corporation or other private legal entity that has definitive decision-making authority over the land.

To expedite approvals of restoration work for EFRP, FSA has waived the onsite inspection for all EFRP forest types to remove hazard trees, surface debris, and fence repair to expedite needs determinations and approvals of restoration work. Additionally, FSA waived the requirement for applicants to obtain prior approval to conduct surface debris removal, fence repair and hazard tree removal to support critical disaster recovery efforts. Applicants should not begin any restoration activities that could be potentially ground-disturbing prior to notifying FSA and receiving approval to begin restorative activities.

Applicants should contact FSA with questions on eligibility, authorized activities and applying for EFRP assistance.

More Information

To learn more about FSA programs, producers can contact their local [USDA Service Center](#) or visit farmers.gov/protection-recovery. USDA disaster assistance information can also be found on farmers.gov, including the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#), and [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#). Additionally, [FarmRaise](#) partnered with FSA to launch an online education hub comprised of videos, tools and interactive resources, including farm loan information and Livestock Indemnity Program and Emergency Livestock Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program decision tools.

FSA helps America's farmers, ranchers and forest landowners invest in, improve, protect and expand their agricultural operations through the delivery of agricultural programs for all Americans. FSA implements agricultural policy, administers credit and loan programs, and manages conservation, commodity, disaster recovery and marketing programs through a national network of state and county offices and locally elected county committees. For more information, visit fsa.usda.gov.

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