

## **USDA Approves Emergency Forest Restoration Assistance for Counties in South Carolina**

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(Columbia, South Carolina), November 26, 2018 – South Carolina USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director, Boone S. Peeler, announced that counties in SC are approved to accept applications for the Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) to address hurricane damages. Those counties are:

Chesterfield Marion Florence Marlboro Horry

EFRP provides payments to eligible owners of nonindustrial private forest (NIPF) land to enable the owners to carry out emergency measures to restore land damaged by a natural disaster. EFRP sign-up begins on Nov. 26, 2018, and will end on Jan. 24, 2019.

"It is important that producers apply for EFRP assistance timely because program funds will be allocated based on the number of applications received as well as by on-site inspections that will determine the extent of the damage," said Peeler. "I encourage eligible landowners who haven't participated in FSA programs to contact their local county FSA office as soon as possible because FSA records will have to be created for these individuals."

After applications are received the South Carolina Forestry Commission will provide technical assistance by evaluating the damage and developing a plan to restore the NIPF land. The local FSA county committee will determine land eligibility and approve applications.

In order to meet eligibility requirements, NIPF land must have existing tree cover or had tree cover immediately before the natural disaster occurred and be sustainable for growing trees. The land must also be owned by any nonindustrial private individual, group, association, corporation or other private legal entity that has definitive decision-making authority over the land. The natural disaster must have resulted in damage that if untreated would impair or endanger the natural resources on the land and/or materially affect future use of the land. Individuals may receive up to 75 percent of the eligible cost of restoring the damage. The minimum qualifying cost of restoration will be approved at \$1000 per participant, approximately five acres, unless a waiver is requested. Please contact your local County FSA office for more information or visit <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>.