Fuels Removal Program Guidelines - Summer 2026

Purpose

The intent of the Fuels Removal Program is to reduce wildfire risks by providing a roadside debris pile removal service. This is a free service to communities / homeowners within North Carolina. This program is funded by the following grants: Helene Supplemental, Cross Boundary Wildfire Mitigation and Southern Area State Fire Capacity Wildfire Hazard Mitigation.

Eligibility Requirements and Program Limitations

All applications must be received by Aug. 20. Communities must have a minimum of 20 piles but no more than 100 piles to apply. Before a contractor arrives on-site, homeowners must assemble debris piles within 5 feet of roadsides.

Pile Guidelines

- Piles must be 4 feet tall, 4 feet wide and 8 feet deep.
- Piles must be placed within 5 feet of roadway but not touching the road.
- Piles must not impede water drainage or traffic.
- Each pile must be separated; piles must have distance between them.

Debris Guidelines

- All debris will be hauled off and disposed of by a contractor at their expense.
- The only exception is if the contractor chips the debris, and the community agrees to on-site disposal.

Restrictions

- No logs/branches greater than 6 inches in diameter.
- No construction or other man-made materials.
- No lumber, fence posts or signs.
- No roots, root wads, stumps or anything that grows below the soil.
- No materials that contain dirt, sand, gravel or rocks.
- No materials that contain string, metal (nails, screws, fencing) or other man-made materials.
- No herbaceous / nonwoody plant material.
- No invasive species. Common list can be found at: https://www.ncagr.gov/divisions/nc-forest-service/forest-health/invasive-plants

Application / Approval Process

1. Complete applications must be sent to the N.C. Forest Service by email. **(address below)**
    - Each participating homeowner must be identified by number on the Fuels Removal Program Participant Log and map.
    - The required map must include numbered labels of each participant's property, which match the participants by number on the Fuels Removal Program Participant Log.
2. N.C. Forest Service will rank projects. Preference is given to Firewise USA® sites, those with high fuel loads resulting from impacts of natural disasters, communities inside areas of concern documented in a community wildfire protection plan, etc.
3. The N.C. Forest Service will notify selected projects by email and bid work out to contractors.
4. Selected communities will be responsible for constructing piles by the communicated deadline.
5. Contractors will have 30 days from then to complete and invoice debris removal.

Questions concerning this Fuels Removal Program may be emailed to **NCFS_Mitigation@ncagr.gov.**