

Division News: *Georgia*



Caleb Warnock
Georgia Division
Chair



Hello from Georgia.

We have been busy for the past month dealing with the effects of Hurricane Helene, and it seems that will be the new normal as we move into 2025. The Georgia Forestry Commission reports that 88% of the land impacted by Hurricane Helene in Georgia was private forestland. The extraordinary winds blew right through one of the most important wood baskets in the world, destroying an estimated \$1.28 billion of timber across millions of acres. It is estimated that an average investment of nearly 20 years was lost overnight.

Such an event requires an equally extraordinary response. Most logging crews within 50 miles of the impact have delayed their other obligations to salvage as much of the damaged timber as possible. This salvage work will likely continue through the winter as long as the wood remains viable. There is enough wood on the ground to feed the surrounding mills for months, and we are going to do our best to get as much of that wood delivered as possible.

Hurricane Helene damaged millions of acres of timberland from newly planted pines to 50 year old stands. It is hard for us to understand what this will do to the future of the timber market in the area. All of the damaged acres will have to be salvaged and cleaned so they can be replanted. This means that no significant amount of timber will come from this area for the next 15 years. The local mills will extend their reach for supply, and foresters and loggers will have to do the same. But we will find a way to make it work. One thing we have all had to learn over the past decade is to roll with the punches, adjust and adapt, and that is what we will continue to do.

Caleb Warnock
GA Division Chair