



Hurricane Helene Update

As of 5 p.m. May 9, 2025

Latest News

- Crews and contractors have now completed repair or replacement of 427 (or 51%) of the 843 bridges, 53 (58%) of the 91 large culverts, and 1,032 of the 1,036 smaller culverts damaged by the storm.
 - We have completed the permanent replacement of 13 bridges and anticipate 154 more bridges need to be replaced.
 - There are now 80 sites with temporary access – 54 sites with temporary bridges and 26 with temporary culverts.
 - To date, the Department has spent \$704M on Helene recovery and has been reimbursed with \$142.5M in federal funding (\$89.7M FEMA, \$52.8M FHWA).
 - NCDOT staff and Board of Transportation members helped host a field visit of major damage corridors on Wednesday, May 7, to give representatives from SELC and some of their nonprofit partners an overview of recovery efforts, answer questions from the environmental groups, and gather input as we progress into permanent repairs. Staff led the groups through Chimney Rock in the morning and the I-40 Pigeon River Gorge site in the afternoon.
- nearby federal land to support the recovery of Interstate 40 in the Pigeon River Gorge.
- NCDOT and its contract partners continue to make progress testing rock cores from several potential material borrow locations under a Special Use Permit from the Forest Service, to help identify which areas may be sufficient to help rebuild I-40 in the Pigeon River Gorge. We anticipate selecting a site or sites in the month of May.
 - The Special Use Permit allows NCDOT to test up to seven sites, but we do not anticipate utilizing all seven locations.
 - It's important to note that state and federal environmental permits will be needed before NCDOT can construct a bridge to the sites where the rock is located or start any borrow operations.
 - No permits or environmental requirements were waived; NCDOT will need a 404 permit from USACOE and a 401 certification from NCDWR before it can construct a bridge to the site or sites where suitable rock is located to start any borrow extraction. NCDOT will continue protected species coordination as needed for compliance.
 - We will pursue the 404 and 401 permits once a site or sites have been selected.
 - The public can track our efforts to reopen roads on a [dashboard](#) created for this recovery, which is linked on [DriveNC.gov](#).

Other Items of Interest

- NCDOT has completed the environmental documentation needed to move forward with the land use agreement between FHWA and USFS to potentially borrow rock material from