

Disaster Recovery for Beekeepers in WNC

— Written By [David Tarpy](#)

As a beekeeping community, we are all saddened by the devastation in Western North Carolina and adjacent states. Clearly the immediate focus needs to remain on shelter, potable water, power, fuel, and infrastructure to help with the ongoing humanitarian efforts. Our sincerest thanks go out to all who have been tirelessly doing so, and please [continue to donate your resources and time](#) to help in the recovery efforts.

Information is still coming in, and we do not have a complete picture about the population of managed honey bees in the region. Anecdotally, some beekeepers and their hives were left unscathed, others have been completely wiped out, with who knows how many in between. There are some immediate efforts currently underway, such as the [Greater Good Charities honey bee project to provide sugar](#) syrup for starving bees (since much of the forage in the region has been stripped away), so if you have such an immediate need or wish to make a donation please so.



In the more intermediate term, however, we do not want to have beekeepers and their colonies in the affected areas fall through the cracks. In the greater efforts

concerning livestock or local agriculture, so often the focus is on more prominent sectors other than beekeeping. It is also clear that this recovery is going to take a protracted period to fully restore the environment and infrastructure in the region.

With that in mind, **we propose an initiative to provide nucleus colonies and hive equipment to affected beekeepers** starting next spring when new colonies are typically established. This is not something that can be done overnight, and it will take substantial coordination among beekeepers, the [NCSBA](#) and its [local chapters](#), the [NCDA&CS Apiary Inspection Service](#), and the [N.C. Cooperative Extension Service](#), so we look forward to developing a logistical structure to disseminate bees and hives to those who have lost them from flood damage. [Our program](#) will be seeking some external funding for responding to extreme weather events, so hopefully we may also be able to bring to bear some external inputs.

Please fill out these online forms so that we start to solicit information from both beekeepers in affected areas (those with need) as well as beekeepers in unaffected areas (those who are willing to help):

[Beekeepers needing assistance from Helene](#)

[Beekeepers willing to provide assistance to beekeepers in WNC](#)

In the meantime, help us spread the word about plans to assist the beekeeping community in WNC. Please also share these important links with further information for beekeepers in your area:

[NC State Extension Disaster Information Center](#)
[Hay and Livestock Assistance Form \(NCDA&CS\)](#)
[USDA Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-raised Fish \(ELAP\)](#)

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UPDATED ON OCT 9, 2024