



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Storm Causes Severe Damage to Black Rock Forest Buildings, Roads, and Trails**

A powerful storm swept through our region yesterday leaving behind a trail of damage. Many members of our community are now dealing with the impact of over 8 inches of rain within several hours. Black Rock Forest (BRF) sustained extensive damage to its Lumber Barn and Shop buildings (the base for forest conservation operations). Additionally, there was significant damage to roads and trails, including many that are heavily used by the public and BRF staff, students, and research scientists. The damage to the Lumber Barn was so severe that the Cornwall Highway Department supervised demolition of the building on Monday, July 10.

Storm-related damage includes:

- We anticipate financial losses from the Shop and Lumber Barn to be greater than half a million dollars. There will be additional recovery costs.
- Losses include the buildings, bridges, and tools. We also lost irreplaceable scientific samples, historic artifacts from the beginning of the research forest, and milled lumber from special and historic trees in BRF.
- Many forest roads, including the main access road, have sustained considerable damage.
- Trails have also been damaged. Hikers, students and researchers alike can expect to encounter fallen trees, downed tree limbs and erosion which may make trails more difficult to navigate or impassable. Trail bridges may be severely damaged or missing. We ask that visitors exercise extreme caution over the next few weeks as we work to clear the roads and trails.
- Priority is being given to emergency repairs of critical infrastructure. Forest Manager Matt Brady and BRF staff are working to clear debris, repair roadways, and stabilize the damaged structures in the Shop area as rapidly as possible.
- The main parking lot at BRF is temporarily closed. The public is urged to respect any closure notices on Forest and local roads for their safety and to facilitate the recovery process.

The local authorities have been actively engaged in response efforts. On behalf of Black Rock Forest, Executive Director Dr. Isabel Ashton is grateful to the Town of Cornwall for their emergency aid. In particular, thanks to the Town Supervisor, Josh Wojehowski, for his leadership and to the Cornwall Highway Department, Building Department, the Cornwall, NY Office of Emergency Management, the Highland Engine Company #1, and Mickey Bigg's & Sons Quality Auto Body for their tremendous assistance in this unprecedented emergency.

Black Rock Forest is in the heart of Cornwall, offering opportunities for scientific education and research as well as an escape into nature for the general public. The intensity and duration of yesterday's storm remind us that land management and conservation will require continued research and investment to build resilience to climate change. The storms have undoubtedly caused a setback, but with determination and collective support, the Forest and its infrastructure will be restored.