MOUNTAIN PROJECTS

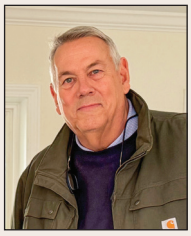
Spring Newsletter 2026



Through the coordinated efforts of Mountain Projects, community partners and generous donors, Roger and Michelle Lee, shown at right with their family, moved into a new home – one built not just with lumber and nails, but with a lot of determination and compassion.

From Crisis to Stability—Because of Your Help

Dear Friends,



Si Simmons

Because of you, families across our mountain communities were warmer through the winter—and many who lost so much in the September 2024 floods are now taking their first steps toward stable housing.

Your generosity has helped move hundreds of families out of crisis and into safer, more secure ground. That kind of progress doesn't happen on its own. It happens because neighbors like you choose to contribute.

As you'll see in this newsletter, flood recovery remains a major focus of our work. But every day, Mountain Projects is also supporting seniors aging safely at home, helping families find and keep stable housing, investing in early childhood programs, and providing transportation and food to those who need it most. These services are lifelines—and they continue because of you.

At the same time, many of our neighbors are feeling new strain. Rising gas prices are making it harder to get to work, school, and medical appointments. And uncertainty around Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funding could impact critical support for low-income families. We're already seeing the effects in increased demand for help for food and fuel.

Recovery doesn't happen all at once. It takes time, steady support, and a community that stays committed.

We are deeply grateful for all you've made possible—and for the compassion you continue to show. With your help, we can keep walking alongside our neighbors as they rebuild, recover, and move forward.

Thank you for supporting community action.

In gratitude, Si Simmons

Executive Director
ssimmons@mountainprojects.org



"Don't Give Up." A Clyde Family Rebuilds After Hurricane

Carmen Cronon, an Asheville pediatric nurse, has lived in a camper for more than 500 days after Hurricane Helene destroyed her Clyde home. The flood displaced Cronon and her two sons, leaving them in deteriorating campers with unreliable heat and water. Despite the challenges, rebuilding efforts are progressing. With insurance funds and help from Mountain Projects' Smoky Mountain Housing Partnership, her home was "dried in," allowing repairs to continue. Community groups and volunteers have also assisted with plumbing, electrical work, insulation, and drywall. Though many flood victims have stopped rebuilding, Cronon remains hopeful and encourages others affected by the disaster, "don't give up".

READ MORE: MOUNTAINPROJECTS.ORG

60 Years OF COMMUNITY ACTION

The MOUNTAIN PROJECTS

FLOOD STORY

FLOOD RECOVERY IMPACT

In response to the devastating impacts of the 2024 flood, Mountain Projects mobilized quickly to provide both immediate relief and long-term recovery support for individuals and families across our region. To date, more than $575,000 in flood recovery funding has been deployed to stabilize households, restore safe housing, and strengthen community resilience.

MEETING URGENT NEEDS



The largest share of contributed funding—approximately **one-third of total expenditures**—was directed toward **direct client assistance,** ensuring that families had access to safe shelter, food, and essential utilities during the most critical stages of recovery.

These funds helped:

- Prevent displacement by covering emergency housing costs
- Provide meals and basic necessities to affected households
- Maintain access to electricity, heating, and other vital services

This immediate support was essential in helping families remain safe, stable, and connected to their communities.

RESTORING HOMES AND STABILITY



A significant portion of funding—over **$250,000 combined**—was invested in **housing repair, materials, and skilled labor,** reflecting the scale of physical damage caused by the flood.

Mountain Projects coordinated:

- Procurement of building materials and supplies
- Repairs and rehabilitation of damaged homes
- Engagement of licensed contractors and skilled labor

These efforts ensured that recovery was not only rapid, but also safe, durable, and aligned with long-term housing goals.

INVESTING IN LONG-TERM RECOVERY



Beyond immediate response, Mountain Projects made targeted investments in **capital improvements and infrastructure** to support sustained recovery and resilience. These funds are helping to:

- Expanded opportunities for replacement housing through grant writing.
- Improve exterior property conditions to prevent future flooding.
- Strengthen the community's ability to withstand future crises through resiliency planning.

YOUR INVESTMENT MAKES THIS WORK POSSIBLE. EVERY DOLLAR HELPS ENSUR
FAMILIES NOT ONLY RECOVER—BUT REBUILD STRONGER, SAFER, AND MORE SE



LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS FOR GREATER IMPACT

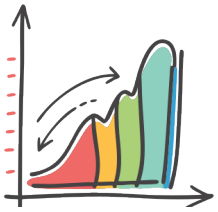
Recognizing that recovery requires a coordinated regional response, Mountain Projects also **invested $250,000 in partner organizations**, including a significant contribution to the United Way.

This collaborative approach:

- Expanded the reach of services
- Reduced duplication of efforts
- Ensured that resources were distributed efficiently across the region

RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP

Throughout the response, Mountain Projects maintained a strong commitment to **fiscal responsibility,** with only a small percentage of funds allocated to operational support such as transportation, supplies, and administrative costs necessary to deliver services effectively.



LOOKING AHEAD

While meaningful progress has been made, recovery is ongoing. Many households continue to face long-term challenges related to housing, financial stability, and infrastructure.

With continued support from donors and partners, Mountain Projects will remain focused on:

- Advancing housing recovery efforts
- Supporting vulnerable households
- Building a more resilient and prepared community

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ECURE FUTURES.



SPENDING SUMMARY

DIRECT CLIENT ASSISTANCE

Definition: Immediate help.

Estimated Total: $190,000 – $210,000

Direct, life-stabilizing support—keeping people housed, fed, and with utilities on during crisis recovery.

HOUSING STABILIZATION & RENOVATION

Definition: Repairing, rebuilding, and making homes livable

Estimated Total: $90,000 –$110,000

Supported physical recovery—repairs, materials, and essential items to restore safe housing.

CONSTRUCTION & SKILLED LABOR

Definition: Paying professionals to do rebuild and repair work.

Estimated Total: $155,000 – $170,000

A major investment in skilled labor to accelerate recovery and ensure quality, safe rebuilding.

CAPITAL INVESTMENTS & LONG-TERM RECOVERY

Definition: Larger, strategic investments for sustained recovery

Estimated Total: $70,000 – $100,000

These investments support long-term resilience and housing solutions beyond immediate emergency response.

PARTNER & COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS

Definition: Funds distributed to other organizations

Estimated Total: $251,000

Significant collaboration funding—leveraging partnerships to expand regional impact.

OPERATIONS & PROGRAM SUPPORT

Definition: Necessary costs to deliver services.

Estimated Total: $10,000 – $20,000

Lean operational spending to enable program delivery in the field.



Community partners work together to accommodate housing needs.



Mountain Projects mourns the passing of Rev. Carl Matthews, a dedicated leader and advocate who served as Board President from 2019–2025.

A former Head Start parent, Carl understood the power of community action and led with that perspective. He was a lifelong servant, honored with an induction into the NC Community Action Hall of Fame and the 2019 Outstanding Senior Volunteer Award.

We extend our deepest condolences to his family and all who knew and loved him. He will be greatly missed.

Contribute Today!

Scan to visit our donation page

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828-492-4103 or 828-492-4114
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828-586-2345 or 828-550-5315

From Loss to New Ground: The Lee's Story of Resilience

Roger Lee and family are pictured on the front page of this newsletter. Read their full story at mountainprojects.org.

For Roger Lee, 68, a bend in the Pigeon River along Old Clyde Road held the story of a lifetime. Raised in Haywood County, Roger's roots run deep, with generations of family tied to the land. His homeplace, long a refuge for relatives, reflected a tradition of permanence and faith—marked by a blessing he wrote inside the walls during a remodel 20 years ago.

But the river repeatedly tested that sense of security. After Hurricane Ivan destroyed his grandmother's home in 2004, Roger rebuilt on higher ground. When Tropical Storm Fred hit in 2021, they were spared. Confident they were safe, the family was unprepared for the devastation of Hurricane Helene in September 2024. As floodwaters rose faster and higher than ever before, Roger, his wife Michelle, and their family rushed to save belongings. Water poured into the home, and soon it became clear everything would be lost. Generations of memories disappeared beneath the flood.

In the aftermath, the Lees were met with extraordinary kindness. Coworkers, neighbors, and even strangers stepped in to help, offering labor, supplies, and support. More than a year later, that compassion led to a new beginning. Through Mountain Projects, community partners, and donors, Roger and Michelle moved into a new home on higher ground.

Though it cannot replace what was lost, the home offers something enduring: stability, safety, and a powerful reminder of community care.

READ MORE: MOUNTAINPROJECTS.ORG

SMHP Self-Help Program Grows, Provides Affordable Homes

Smoky Mountain Housing Partnership celebrated a milestone recently by setting the first of three more homes at its already successful Bethel Village project in Jonathan Creek. SMHP continues to show that homeownership is possible—even for families with modest incomes. Through the Self-Help Housing program, qualifying families work together to build their own homes, lowering costs and strengthening community in the process. 100% financing with no down payment is available for eligible participants.



Workers for Edwards Modular Construction of Rutherfordton place a home at Bethel Village

Your support strengthens our community!

Your gift – whatever the amount – will go straight to work, providing tangible, life-changing support to those who need it most.

TO DONATE ELECTRONICALLY:
- Visit our website, MountainProjects.org/giving & fill out the contribution form

TO DONATE BY MAIL:
- Fill out the enclosed contribution coupon
- Place coupon with credit card info OR check in return envelope, drop in mail

DONATE "ALMOST NEW" HOUSEHOLD ITEMS:
- Mountain Projects Resale Store, 2143 Asheville Rd., Waynesville
- Sylva Linings Resale Store, 1264 W. Main St., Sylva

We're grateful for your contributions!

Mountain Projects is a 501(c)3 nonprofit charitable organization. Donations are tax deductible. EIN: 56-0849092