



C I T Y O F
RENO
Memorandum

DATE: October 7, 2026

TO: Mayor and Council

THROUGH: Jackie Bryant, City Manager 

FROM: Jenifer Alvarez, Council Liaison

DEPT: Council & Executive Operations

SUBJECT: Hawk Fire Recovery Efforts Update

This memo provides Council with a comprehensive summary and update on the regional recovery response for the Hawk Fire as well as the City of Reno's recovery efforts.

The Hawk Fire has moved from emergency response into long-term recovery, with Washoe County and the Office of Emergency Management leading regional coordination. All affected properties in Reno and unincorporated Washoe County remain in Phase I of cleanup (household hazardous waste removal), which is about 60% complete for the Hawk Fire. The City has approved disaster relief assistance for 54 households, is assessing post-fire flood and runoff risk ahead of winter and will bring a related State of Nevada agreement to Council on October 21, 2026.

Background

The Hawk Fire ignited on August 22, 2026, on Peavine Peak in the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest and burned more than 15,000 acres. Officials have confirmed it was human-caused; the specific ignition source remains under investigation. Dry vegetation, invasive cheatgrass, shifting winds, and low humidity drove its rapid spread.

Washoe County Emergency Management and Homeland Security held primary jurisdiction, supported by federal land managers because the fire burned on national forest land. The incident was managed under unified command with the U.S. Forest Service, the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District, and the Reno Fire Department. The Washoe County Sheriff's Office directed evacuations and the Reno Police Department assisted with property security and patrols.

On August 25, 2026, a Type 4 Incident Commander assumed responsibility for the remaining on-scene personnel and tactical operations as containment efforts progressed. Once the incident moved into long-term recovery, the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) assumed overall recovery coordination with local, state, and federal partners.

Regional Cleanup and Recovery Phases

Washoe County is coordinating cleanup for properties damaged or destroyed by the Hawk Fire in three phases that apply regardless of jurisdiction. All residents in the City of Reno and unincorporated Washoe County are currently in Phase I.

Phase I covers the assessment and removal of household hazardous waste such as batteries, propane tanks, paints, and pesticides. Washoe County is performing this work through HERO Environmental at no cost to property owners. It is about 60% complete for the Hawk Fire, and City of Reno properties were scheduled for the week of September 28, 2026.

Phase II covers ash, burned insulation, structural debris, and other fire-related material. Property owners are responsible for arranging and paying for this work, typically with their insurers, and it begins on each property once Phase I is complete.

Phase III prepares residents to rebuild. The Washoe County Community Services Division offers resources and individualized support with demolition, permitting, and reconstruction. Residents can call 775-328-2020 or email building@washoecounty.gov to get started.

Washoe County contracted with HERO Environmental, an EPA-qualified contractor, to clean all properties affected by the Hawk Fire. The contract totals \$347,500. The County plans to request funding from its General Fund contingency at the Board of County Commissioners in late 2026. No completion date has been set, but Phase I remains the highest priority.

Before cleanup began, Washoe 311 attempted to contact every affected resident to explain the process. The County has also shared information through news outlets and social media, including [Wildfire Phases of Recovery & What You Need to Know](#) and [Hawk Fire Recovery FAQs](#).

The County and the City are both concerned about a potentially wet winter which could create mud slide, flooding, and other risks and are moving through Phases I and II as quickly as possible.

Resident Assistance

Residents affected by the Hawk Fire can access federal disaster loans along with housing, insurance, and mental health support from regional partners.

At Governor Joe Lombardo's request, the [U.S. Small Business Administration](#) issued a disaster declaration covering counties in Nevada, California, and Oregon. Low-interest loans are available for physical damage and economic injury. Businesses may borrow up to \$2 million; homeowners and renters may qualify for loans to repair or replace real property and personal

belongings. SBA staff opened a Disaster Loan Outreach Center at the North Valleys Library (1075 N. Hills Blvd., Reno, NV 89506) on September 18, 2026 Monday through Friday from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm. Walk-ins are welcome, and appointments can be scheduled at appointment.sba.gov. Applications for physical damage are due November 10, 2026, and for economic injury June 11, 2027.

Other regional partners are also supporting residents. United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra, with Airbnb.org, is coordinating temporary housing. The Nevada Division of Insurance provides insurance guidance, and Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada offers general assistance.

The North Valleys Community Center provides in-person help with insurance claims, rebuilding permits, and school district resources. The region is using Bright Harbor, a State Office of Emergency Management resource, to track and document residents' needs. Washoe County is also establishing an Unmet Needs Task Force for needs that fall outside existing programs.

The region has publicized these resources through local news and social media, and Bright Harbor information is being shared with nearly every affected resident so that needs are identified, documented, and addressed.

City of Reno Recovery Efforts

While Washoe County and OEM coordinate the regional response, the City is assisting residents and managing recovery within city limits, as well as being the regional source for AB 540 Disaster Recovery Assistance Program funds. City staff coordinate weekly with OEM, Washoe County, state and federal agencies, and community partners.

Housing and Neighborhood Development (HAND)

HAND has approved disaster relief assistance for 54 households pursuant to AB 540, four more than at the September 29, 2026 update, and 21 applications remain pending. The program helps affected households access temporary housing and financial assistance.

Staff contacted or attempted to contact 10 households whose temporary assistance through United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra will end soon, to determine whether they need further support. Staff have also worked with local news outlets to raise awareness of the program. A State of Nevada agreement supporting this work will come before Council on October 21, 2026.

Development Services

Development Services helped Washoe County complete damage assessments of affected structures. To date, it has approved six demolition permits for 9900 N. Virginia Street, the only property on the City's damage list that has applied. The City is awaiting payment for the permits covering the property's storage buildings and carports.

Utility Services

Utility Services is evaluating post-fire runoff risk so recommendations are in place before winter. The work has two parts.

First, Washoe County has coordinated with Utility Services on potential stormwater and debris runoff from the burn areas. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is creating a debris report for distribution, anticipated to show a low level of concern. Depending on its findings, the County may install silt screens in public waterway infrastructure, and the City will evaluate whether similar measures are needed within its jurisdiction.

Second, Debris impacts are separate from ash runoff and hazardous-material concerns. Staff are reviewing the COOP Closeout Presentation and geographic information system (GIS) data from the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Geological Survey, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and other partners, along with the locations of affected homesites. The data identifies fire-affected watersheds and is being used to evaluate high-intensity burn zones, soil types, watershed characteristics, downstream infrastructure, and homesites where contaminants could be mobilized during rain.

The evaluation covers downstream channels, culverts, and storm drains. Recommendations for next steps and any proposed improvements are expected before winter. Staff are also working with the National Weather Service's Post-Fire Flooding Education and Outreach Subcommittee.

Maintenance and Operations (M&O)

M&O staff inspected the area around City properties and found no immediate concerns. M&O is reviewing the mapping and fire data with Utility Services and will continue coordinating with them on any future work.

Next Steps

City staff will continue meeting weekly with Washoe County to implement the Recovery Action Plan, monitor Bright Harbor needs data for Reno residents, and process pending HAND applications. Staff will update Council when Phase I is complete, when stormwater recommendations are finalized, and if the Army Corps debris report changes the City's approach.