

Together, we
provide the
heat that fuels
hope.

2024 Annual Report

Helping our neighbors by providing free home heating firewood assistance and sharing the message of love and grace of Jesus Christ.



WNC FireWood is a ministry of our sponsoring congregations with the volunteer work enabled by our generous partners.

February 2025

Ministry Friends,

I believe the success of WNC FireWood for 2024 is highlighted in a single statement: So far this 2024–2025 heating season, we delivered

20 cords **firewood**
using 29 deliveries
to 26 Sharing House clients!

Putting that into perspective, in 2023 we delivered 3½ cords in 11 deliveries to 9 clients. Elsewhere in this report you will find additional numbers and charts highlighting aspects of this Ministry. We have indeed warmed the hearts of our neighbors and given hope so desperately needed.

But, not everything is captured in numbers. Last year's letter highlighted four concepts: accountability, caring, serving, and generosity. This year I want to focus on **blessing**.

This ministry is **blessed** by all those who support it through prayers, financial gifts, encouragements, time and talents, and so much more. It is my desire that those supporters are likewise **blessed** by knowing they are a crucial part of this ministry serving others.

I personally have felt **blessed** through our many volunteers. Besides sharing their time and talent, many have demonstrated servant leadership roles through just doing what needs doing!

This ministry is **blessed** by our sponsors — First United Methodist Church and the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd — and partners — Stewards of Amazing Grace, Bartlett Tree Experts, and Sharing House — without whom this ministry would not exist. The best I can do is say Thank You!

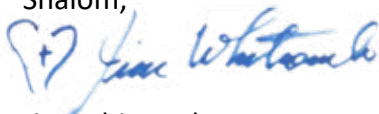
Most importantly, people in need of firewood are **blessed** through our ability to satisfy that need, at least in part. I have seen that blessing in the faces and words of the few clients I have been privileged to meet while making deliveries, and I have sensed the same in the comments from other delivery volunteers.

Thank all of you for your part in this ministry. You may view your role as minor; I do not. I know that all of the parts are necessary, and all result in **blessings**.

So, what will 2025 be like? First, this coming year we will need to pull together all the demonstrated capabilities from the past two years: production and delivery, to allow for expanding our **blessings** on others. But we are not going to stop there. We are expanding our delivery options by creating a Distribution Woodlot through the generosity of First UMC to **bless** more county residents. We have been **blessed** to purchase a dump trailer through the generosity of a grant received from First UMC Foundation to improve productivity in moving firewood.

I will close with the vision I have for this ministry: No one in Transylvania County should have to buy home heating firewood.

Shalom,



Jim Whitcomb
Woodlot Coordinator



2024 Impact

WNC FireWood is an outreach ministry of First United Methodist Church and Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd both in Brevard, North Carolina. Our nonprofit 501(c)(3) status comes from these two churches who co-sponsor our ministry.

Sponsors:

- **Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd** provides funding and oversight.
- **First United Methodist** provides volunteers, funding, bookkeeping, oversight, and land for Distribution Woodlot.



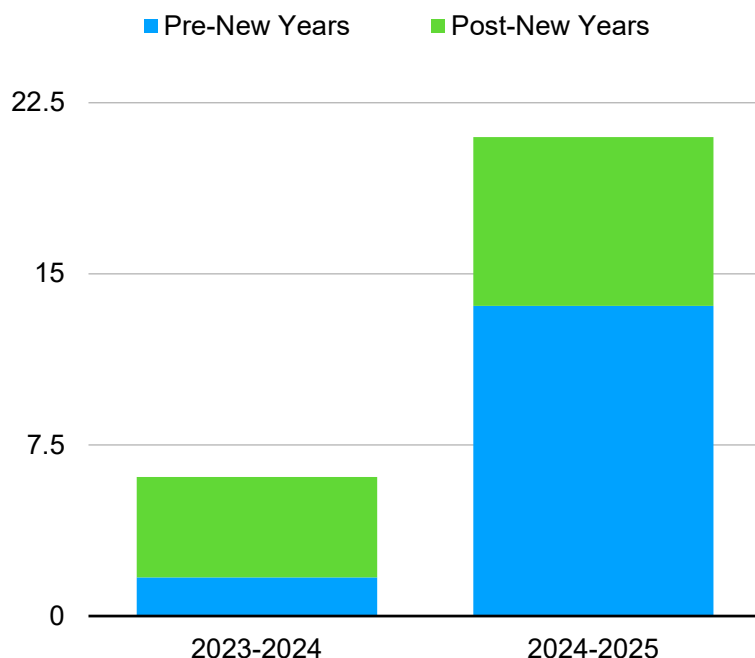
Partnerships:

- **Stewards of Amazing Grace** – provide wonderful space on their farm in Little River for the large Production Woodlot.
- **Bartlett Tree Experts** – contribute a nearly unlimited supply of quality hardwood.
- **Sharing House** – confidentially qualify clients to have firewood delivered to their homes.

Through the hands and the hearts of volunteers, the vision of the ministry is growing and responding to the critical need for heating assistance in Transylvania County.

This endeavor was founded late 2022 and gained sponsorship by the two congregations to address the growing needs of people who are cold and struggling to heat their homes, pay their electric and health care bills, and who are challenged with food insecurities.

Number of Firewood Cords Delivered



A cord of wood is a stack of firewood equivalent to four (4) feet high, four (4) feet wide, and eight (8) feet long. In the winter of 2023-2024 we delivered an average of 1/2 cord per client to nine clients.



This winter we delivered 3/4 cord on average to 26 clients, with many before New Years receiving about one cord.

Stories of Impact

From those we serve:

"When the firewood arrived, I felt a huge weight lift off my shoulders. The volunteers didn't just drop off wood, they cared, they listened, and they reminded me that my community is here for me." - **WNC FireWood Recipient**

We normally deliver 2 or 3 truck loads of firewood to a client. Often their response when we pull one truck away and pull up the second is, "There's more?" They are so appreciative of the one load it is beyond imagining that they can receive a second or third!

I "really love the size of the wood that [WNC FireWood] brings Often [a firewood vendor's] wood is unseasoned and problematic when burning." — **WNC FireWood Recipient**

An elementary student shared with their teacher that it is cold in their home, and the only heat they have is from a wood stove in their family room. - **Friend**

From our volunteers:

"Being instrumental in providing wood for heat to Transylvania County neighbors has been a true blessing. The number of deliveries that have been made, the appreciation of the recipients, and the dedication of all of the volunteers is uplifting and humbling.



I am proud to be even a small part of a ministry that is so desperately needed in our area.

Working with WNC FireWood is more than just chopping wood. It's knowing that every log we split will bring warmth and comfort to someone in need. It's hard work, but it's also deeply rewarding." — **Simons, Volunteer**



"Volunteering my time and efforts to the WNC Wood Ministry provides me with a sense of doing something good for folks that need help staying warm. I was once told that if you cut your own wood it will warm you twice. I know that every piece of wood we touch, cut, split, stack and deliver will now provide a third warmth to someone in need. Love God and love your neighbor." - **Greg, Volunteer**



"My experience this past winter at the Woodlot was very fulfilling. I met some terrific people, discovered a critical need in our community, and felt a sense of accomplishment. There is a great commitment to teamwork within this group. We were challenged to keep up with demand and were able to do so due to timely communication. I personally felt that each client we served was in serious need. Our affiliation with Sharing House enabled that great resource to add another dimension to its service. The Woodlot is an exceptional volunteer opportunity that clearly matters." - **Steve, Volunteer**

"It is one thing to read about folks who are in need in the newspaper. It is another thing to be able actually do something about it. When we split wood at the woodlot, we are thankful to have the good health to be able to contribute to keeping someone in our county warm on a cold night. When we deliver to a client and meet and speak to that person, we can see their circumstances, which are sometimes pretty dire, and hear their words of appreciation for what we are doing. I find it very rewarding to be helping another human being with a basic need — just keeping warm or as with our last delivery, even cooking a meal on a wood cook stove. Coming from privilege, as all we who volunteer do, it is good to be able to provide some comfort to those around us that we don't normally see, but that are in need of even the basics of a load of firewood." - **Volunteer**

Gratitude to Caring Volunteers

Involved in 2023 and 2024

Barker Carter

Crosstown Youth

Darrell Dixon

Henry Dixon

Bill Ester

Nancy Ester

Kevin Feblerholt

Jamie Gilmore

Phil Ham

Greg Harbin

Jodi Harbin

Mike Harle

Dan Jamrog

Thor Jones

Andrew Lewis

Chris Lewis

Alan Pooser

Sarah Pooser

Jeff Randle

Karen Randle

David Roberts

Mike Rutledge

Jordan Simmons

Kyle Simmons

John Skelton

Tom Toering

Brian Walker

Steve Walker



Hank Welter

Simons Welter

Brenda Whitcomb

Jim Whitcomb

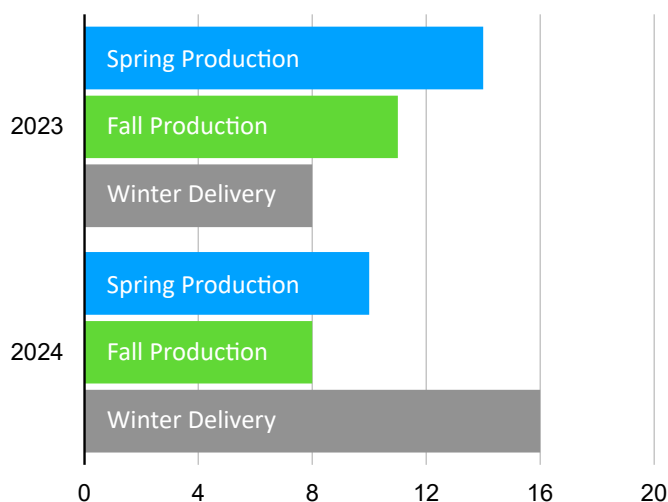
Lei Williams

Kirby Wilkes

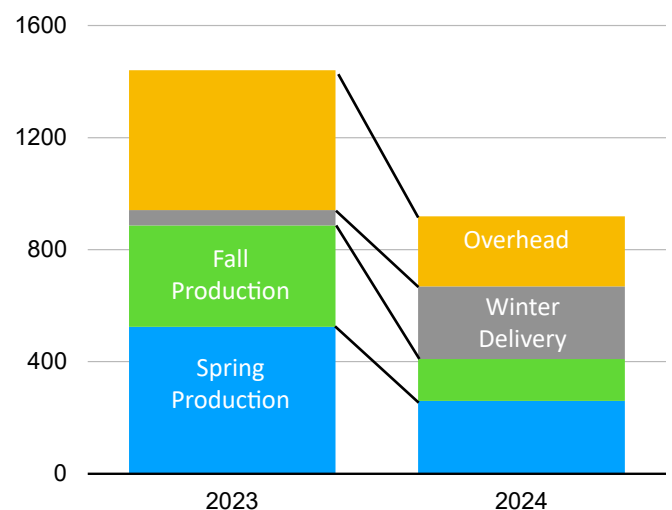
Bold = Active in 2024

More than 30 dedicated individuals have volunteered in support of the mission over the past two years. These volunteers demonstrate broad community support and enable our mission to further reach out to those in need.

Number of Volunteers



Volunteers Hours



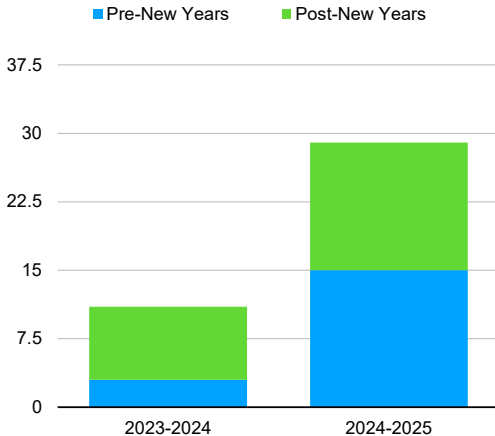
"I am one of the volunteer chainsaw operators for the WNC FireWood Ministry. I get to "kill three birds with one stone". 1) I get to spend time with other great volunteers providing a skill that I have. 2) I get to operate wonderful pieces of machinery that I liken to miniature, super-powered, handheld race cars. (It's a guy thing!) 3) All of us volunteers are helping to provide warm homes for neighbors who could use a helping hand." - Bill

Accomplishments 2024

- Cut and split 18 cords firewood, ready for 2025-2026 distribution
- Demonstrated improved production productivity
- Dramatically improved delivery capability
- Delivered over 20 cords firewood during 2024-2025 heating season

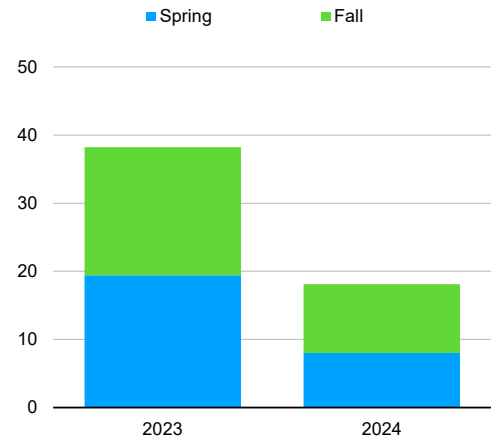
The firewood ministry is growing in several directions, e.g., increased organization of volunteers, increased productivity by switching

Clients Delivered



from stacking to piling firewood, and efforts toward making firewood more accessible to more Transylvania County residents.

Cords Firewood Processed



In 2023, our goal was to demonstrate that we could process a large quantity of firewood. We did. That left a significant inventory due in part to rather low delivery volume that winter. Thus, the goal of 2024 was to improve efficiency in production and firewood storage, which we accomplished. Likewise the goal for this past winter was to demonstrate greatly improved delivery capability, which we also did.

Goals 2025

- Process 40 cords split firewood — stretch goal of 50 cords.
- Provide at least 30 cords seasoned firewood for distribution in winter 2025-2026
- Open a Distribution Woodlot allowing Transylvania County residents to pick up firewood.
- Continue to support Sharing House through free firewood delivery to their clients.
- Purchase a 2 cord capacity dump trailer to move firewood to the Distribution Woodlot and other locations as necessary.
- Plan for additional productivity enhancing capital purchases, such as a conveyor, excavator, and larger splitter system.



You are the Fuel for Hope

Are you interested in making a difference?

Love working with your hands?

Enjoy the outdoors?

Want to make a real impact
in your community?

Then volunteer.

None of the above?

Then there are other opportunities.

Whether you're a seasoned woodcutter or just willing to
lend a hand even from your home, there's a place
for you in our ministry!

*Try us out and see if this is some-
thing you might find meaningful.*

Ways to Get Involved:

- Praying for the ministry.
- Cutting Teams – Operate chainsaws to cut logs into rounds (training available!)
- Splitting Teams – Includes log splitter operators and helpers to move wood (no experience needed!)
- Delivery Teams – Includes truck drivers and helpers to load and unload firewood (with or without a truck!)
- Driver with a truck with electric brake controller and capable of towing 10,000 pound dump trailer.
- Distribution Woodlot Attendant.
- Communications & Admin Support – Help spread the word, coordinate efforts, and keep things running smoothly.
- Maintenance and repair of equipment.
- Financial contributions for capital purchases.
- Key leadership positions, including financial, legal, administrative, and coordinating.
- You would like to be involved but can't or don't want to work outdoors. Let us know.

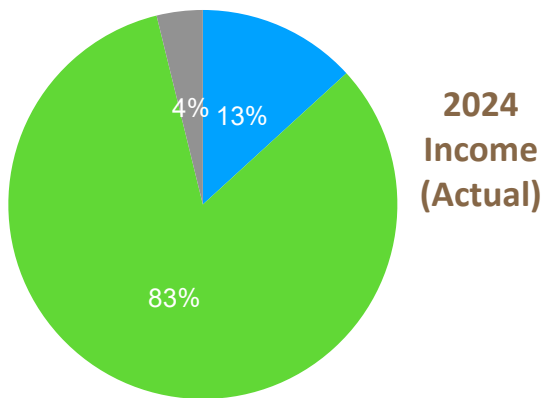
Jim Whitcomb, INFO@WNCFIREWOOD.ORG



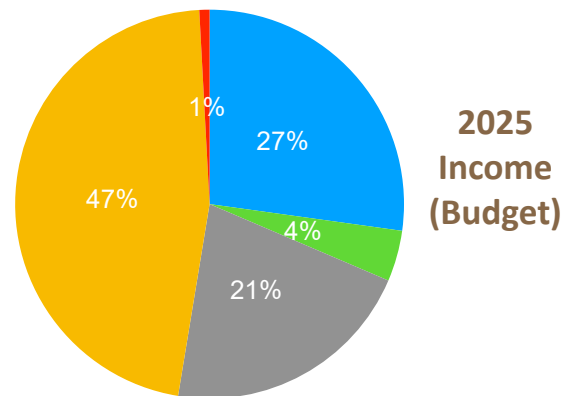
Operating Financials

	2023 Actual	2024 Budget	2024 Actual	Actual - Budget Difference	Year on Year Actual Change	2025 Budget
Starting Balances	0.00	0.00	0.00			3,212.84
Income						
Sponsors	940.13	700.00	500.00	(200.00)	(440.13)	500.00
Donors		300.00	3,140.00	2,840.00	3,140.00	2,500.00
In-Kind	660.83	100.00	114.83	14.83	(546.00)	100.00
Total	1,600.96	1,100.00	3,754.83	2,654.83	2,153.87	3,100.00
Expenses						
Fuel, Lubricants	333.52	400.00	113.07	(286.93)	(220.45)	200.00
Repairs	218.70	250.00	56.23	(193.77)	(162.47)	150.00
Production Woodlot	327.65	200.00	372.69	172.69	45.04	400.00
Other	7.96	25.00	0.00	(25.00)	(7.96)	25.00
Total	887.83	875.00	541.99	(333.01)	(345.84)	775.00
Transfer to Capital	713.13	100.00	0.00	(100.00)	(713.13)	5,250.00
Ending Balance	0.00	125.00	3,212.84	3,087.84	3,212.84	287.84

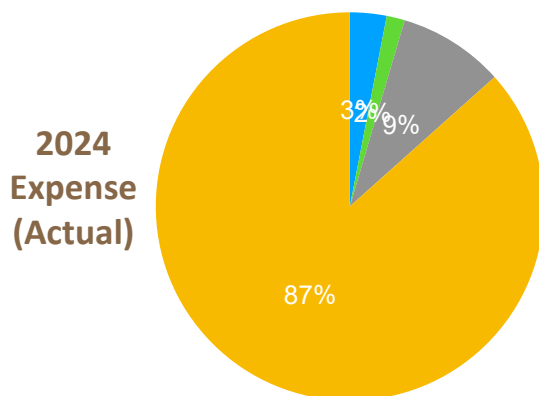
■ Sponsors ■ Donors ■ In-Kind



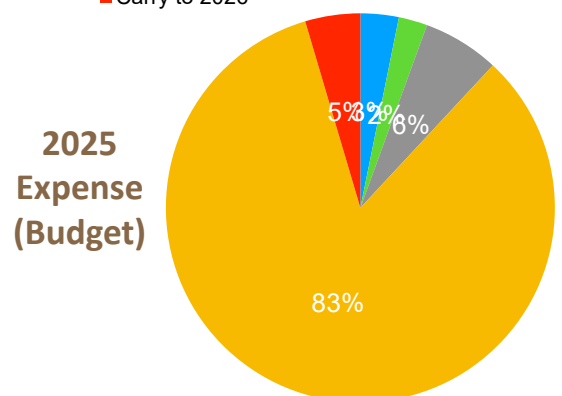
■ From 2024 ■ Sponsors ■ Donors ■ Grants ■ In-Kind



■ Fuel, Lubricants ■ Repairs ■ Production Woodlot ■ Carry to 2025



■ Fuel, Lubricants ■ Repairs ■ Production Woodlot ■ Transfer to Capital ■ Carry to 2026

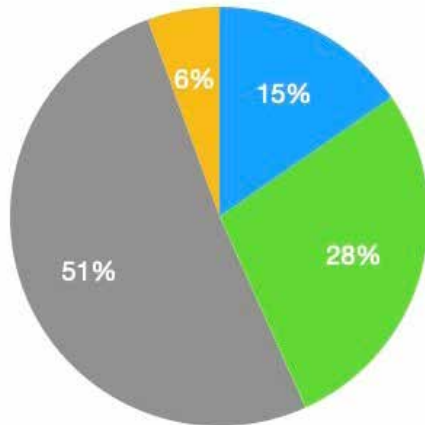


Capital Financials

	2023 Actual	2024 Budget	2024 Actual	Actual - Budget Difference	Year on Year Actual Change	2025 Budget
Starting Balance	0.00	0.00	0.00			0.00
Income						
Transfer from Operating	713.13	100.00	0.00	(100.00)	(713.13)	5,250.00
Grants						5,500.00
Total	713.13	100.00	0.00	(100.00)	(713.13)	10,750.00
Expenses						
Used Log Splitter	400.00					
Tools/Small Equip.	313.13					
Stihl MS 500i						1,650.00
Distribution Woodlot						3,000.00
Hawke Dump Trailer						5,500.00
Total	713.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	(713.13)	10,150.00
Ending Balances	0.00	100.00	0.00	(100.00)	0.00	600.00

2025 Capital (Budget)

● Stihl 500i Chainsaw
 ● Distribution Woodlot
● Hawke 12 foot Dump Trailer
 ● Available



Volunteers

"I enjoy the camaraderie of the group in providing a heat source to people in need." -
Tom, Volunteer

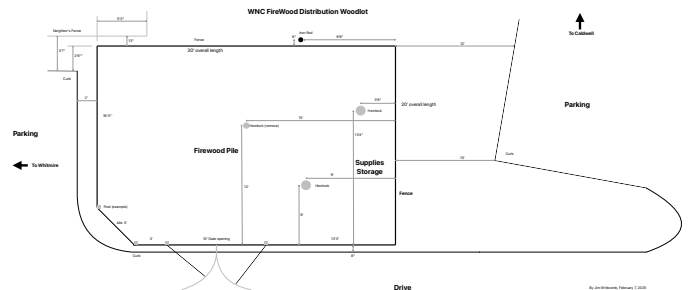
"If you are ever looking for a truly thumbs up experience to get involved with and here is why. You are truly reaching out and helping those in our community. If you enjoy having a sense of accomplishment, working with others towards a common goal, working outside, problem solving and all in a positive friendly environment, well my friends, WNC FireWood ministry is for you." - **Jeff, Volunteer**

Growing the Vision

Capital Needs Wish List

Capital needs are handled outside the operating budget. Funding is sought for each specific item and purchased only when we have full funding. Funding can be a mix of individual, grants, and institutional gifts. These items all are of a benefit to our volunteers so critical to the ministry. (images may not be the exact item, but represent the concept)

A client accessible **distribution woodlot** off of Caldwell and Whitmire Streets. (\$3,000)
Contact us for more information on this rendering



Conveyors, 12 to 32 foot length: improves productivity after splitting firewood and in loading trailer or trucks. (\$6,300 - \$15,500)

Excavator with a claw attachment for moving the heavy logs around the woodlot and loading vehicles. (\$35,000 - \$50,000)



Splitter improves productivity through hydraulic lifting of rounds to be split and producing multiple firewood pieces on each stroke. (\$17,500 - \$20,000)

Shelter for main woodlot for storing wood out of the sun and rain, and for volunteers to work more effectively. (\$20,000 - \$30,000)



Stihl MS 500i professional chainsaw adds to our log cutting productivity; it will complement our existing Stihl MS 500i and older saws. (\$1,650)

Wood processor, the ultimate in productivity by accepting logs, cutting to length, and splitting into firewood. (\$51,000 and up)



Delivery truck with a dump bed used for delivering to clients and woodlot distribution center. (\$30,000 and up)

Quantifying the value of volunteer time

Each year, Independent Sector gathers data and conducts research on volunteerism in the non-profit sector. The results of that research provide nonprofits a way to calculate the value of volunteer time. As of April 2024, their estimated national value of each volunteer hour is currently \$33.49, a 5.3% increase from 2022. Thus, over the past two years, WNC FireWood volunteers have graciously given 2,360 hours, a value of \$79,036. We are blessed and grateful.

Investing in the Mission

Dear Friends,

I really dislike fundraising, I think most of you can identify with me. I dislike doing it and I dislike receiving it. However, I also realize the necessity of it. And it boils down to one thing — I can only do so much. I can only spend so many hours and during those hours I can only accomplish so much given the work environment.

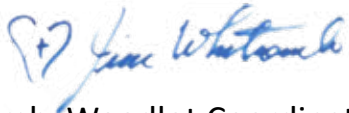
So, how can I improve to get more accomplished to meet a need that far exceeds my capability to meet?

There are two ways, additive and multiplicative. Additive improvements come about through **adding more volunteers** — and thus our recruitment for **additional work teams** — and improving our productivity. These are continuing efforts. But there are limits to how many of you want to, or are able to, dedicate the time and energy to help.

That is where multiplicative improvements come in. One stroke of the wood splitter produces on average one piece of firewood. What if that stroke could produce 8 pieces of firewood? Then our productivity would increase by a factor of 8! **So you are thinking, “Let’s do it!”**

I agree, but that higher productivity splitter costs up to \$20,000. And that is why we need your help. While we may be able to get a grant or other large donation to help with the purchase, it is very unlikely that one source will fund the entire purchase. From the list on the previous page, you can realize that this splitter is only one of the improvements to help us meet our local needs. **And that is why we need your help.**

Your small donation WILL make a difference. Please consider helping as best as YOU can.



Jim Whitcomb, Woodlot Coordinator

PS Our sponsors cover the basic operating costs; however, our capacity to impact more lives is directly correlated to securing the capital equipment. Unless you direct your gift to something different, we will designate gifts to capital needs.

Give warmth. Give hope. Give today.

Donations may be made through our sponsoring congregations

Brevard First United Methodist

[HTTPS://BREVARDFUMC.ORG/GIVE-NOW/](https://brevardfumc.org/give-now/)

select WNC FireWood

325 N. Broad St., Brevard, NC 28712

828-883-9025

Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd

[HTTPS://WWW.LUTHERANCHURCHBREVARDNC.COM/GIVE](https://www.lutheranchurchbrevardnc.com/give)

select WNC FireWood

22 Fisher Rd, Brevard, NC, 28712

828-883-3680

Please consider supporting the broader mission and programs of these two partner congregations.

Insight

- In Transylvania County the average cost of a cord of firewood is \$338. (Range \$275 to \$400), and,
 - **Approximately 1 and 1/2 cords of firewood are needed to heat a 1,000 sq. ft. home for the winter, and,**
 - There are approximately 700 sticks of firewood in a cord; which would be 48 cents a piece.
 - All this helps us see a bigger picture of the impact we all have on our neighbors who need a little help, and the burdensome cost related to individuals with limited resources, whose primary heat is firewood. Seventy percent (70%) of those receiving heating assistance are elderly.
- **A “Face” Cord** (1/3 of a cord), 233 pieces of firewood would cost around **\$110.**
- A **“Half” Cord** (1/2 of a cord), 350 pieces of firewood would cost around **\$170.**
- A **“Full” Cord** (1.0), 700 pieces of firewood would cost around **\$340.**
- A **“Cord and a Half”** (1.5) 1,050 pieces of firewood would cost around **\$500.**

No gift is too small and we deeply appreciate your investment in this ministry.



“Sharing House and the people we serve are deeply grateful for the unwavering support of the WNC Firewood Ministry! This year, they have fulfilled over half of the emergency firewood requests, ensuring that families in need have access to life-sustaining warmth. The woodlot team has gone above and beyond by filling Sharing House bins and personally delivering firewood to local homes. There is no greater gift than helping others stay warm with such big hearts and generous hands.” - **Shelly Webb, Executive Director, Sharing House**

And, “Sharing House has served 27 neighbors with firewood, not from the WNC FireWood. These are paid deliveries which your program has drastically reduced from previous years. Especially being a cold winter!”

WNC FireWood is organized as a ministry of multiple congregations (currently just two) and uses a networked management approach of independent teams all working towards a common goal of providing free firewood to our neighbors.

The teams include a team of Coordinators each responsible for one broad area to provide overall direction for the ministry, under which work teams are used to, for example, cut, split, and deliver firewood.



An electronic version of this report is available at:
WNCFIREWOOD.ORG/2024-ANNUAL-REPORT

For additional information on our ministry visit our website
WNCFIREWOOD.ORG or contact us at
INFO@WNCFIREWOOD.ORG