Botanical Garden seeks volunteers to repair flood damage

BY MIKAYLA KREUZBERGER
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CLEMSON — South Carolina Botanical Garden officials are seeking volunteers' help after extensive flood damage wiped away hundreds of thousands of dollars in landscaping efforts, including one of its newest centerpiece gardens.

Although most of the Botanical Garden has reopened, the Natural Heritage Garden is likely to remain closed until 2014.

"Right now, we're estimating about $200,000 in damage at least to the gardens," said Patrick McMillan, director of the S.C. Botanical Garden in Clemson.

McMillan said most of the damage is structural – all but one of the bridges in the Natural Heritage Garden, all bridges on a trail to Cherry Road, and the spillway to the dam were lost. He said Hunt Cabin will undergo minor repairs, including the construction of a new retention wall, and that a majority of the flowerbeds were damaged.

"It's going to take a long time to fix," he said.

The Natural Heritage Garden, according to a Clemson University press release, sheltered more than 1,000 varieties of native plants and was the garden's newest exhibit after taking two years to build. It opened only a few months ago.

McMillan said volunteers are needed to help replace much of the silt and top soil that washed away with the flood.

"There weren't a lot of downed trees to carry out, so we're asking for volunteers to help carry out old trail materials," he said.



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Allison Kelly, left, and Talena Stewart relocate plants to the nursery at the S.C. Botanical Garden recently.

Donations for rebuilding are also accepted.

According to the university, volunteers are being sought from 9 a.m. until noon on weekdays through July 26. They will meet each morning at 9 a.m. at the Hayden Conference Center for their assignments. Bring gloves, water, sunscreen, sturdy footwear, insect repellent and shovels. To sign up to volunteer, visit http://www.clemson.edu/public/scbg/. To learn about donation opportunities, visit http://www.clemson.edu/public/scbg/ or find "South Carolina Botanical Garden" on Facebook.

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