



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Collaboration Results in Qualified Swift Water Rescue Team

MONROE, N.C. (April 13, 2021) – A strong collaboration between Union County Emergency Management and Monroe Fire Department has resulted in a newly-qualified swift water rescue team to respond to flooding emergencies throughout the state. The Monroe Swiftwater Rescue Team is the 11th team in the North Carolina Emergency Management Western Branch to be qualified in offensive swift water rescue operations. The Western Branch includes 33 counties and the Monroe Swiftwater Rescue Team is the only team between Charlotte and Robeson County that can be deployed anywhere in the state.

“Swift water rescue events are some of the most dangerous situations that firefighters encounter,” said Monroe Fire Department Battalion Chief Johnny Blythe. “We will be deploying to surrounding counties to assist when the need arises, but any emergency needs from Union County residents will always come first.”

The Monroe Swiftwater Rescue Team will use support resources from Union County Emergency Management when deployed to devastated areas, including temporary sleeping arrangements, restroom trailers, temperature control units, etc. Emergency Management will also assist with logistics and base camp operations.

“Planning and methodical execution of a swift water rescue requires continuous training and knowledge of the areas that flood,” said Andrew Ansley, Emergency Management Director. “When deployed to remote areas outside of your jurisdiction, you lose familiarity. Emergency Management will help with gathering the local knowledge, GIS mapping and support needed to be effective.”

To qualify as one of the state-approved search and rescue teams, team members must demonstrate basic first responder skills, then complete additional training in advanced swift water techniques. The [NC Emergency Management water rescue typing guide](#) outlines the standards for both North Carolina and Federal water rescue resources.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Union County Emergency Management
Liz Cooper
Liz.Cooper@unioncountync.gov

Monroe Fire Department
Pete Hovanec
phovanec@monroenc.org

###

