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North Carolina Veterinary Response Corps

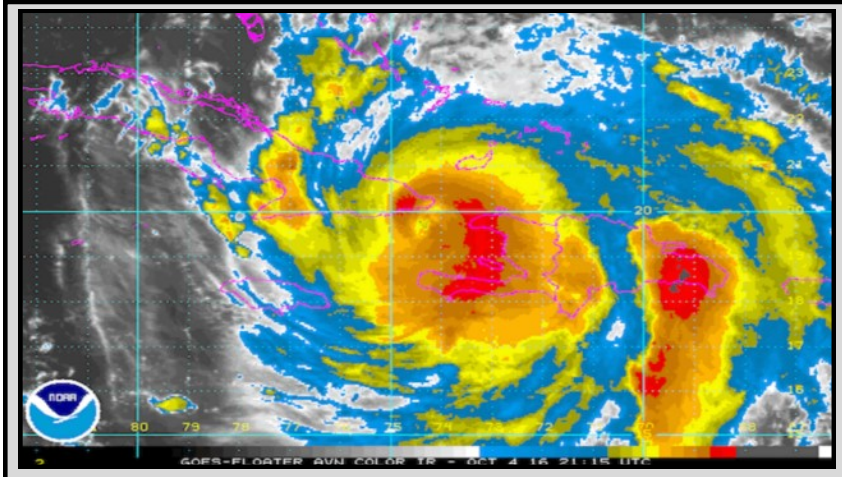
THE VRC CONNECTION

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Hurricane Matthew * Special Edition

Hurricane Matthew 2016

By Dr. Mandy Tolson, NCDA&CS



Hurricane Matthew hit North Carolina on October 8th after a long trip up the east coast. In the days before North Carolina suffered the effects of the storm many other areas suffered devastation and damage. As we watched Hurricane Matthew's progression, we prepared for the worst and hoped for the best. Though much preparation was done to prepare for Hurricane Matthew just before it arrived in North Carolina, most of the preparation truly occurred in the years before it hit. Though the effects of Hurricane Matthew were devastating for many, the efforts that many partners shared for years before the storm led to an amazing response. Agriculture and animals suffered many losses and challenges, but these were minimized by the efforts of many people and agencies working together. As supervisor for Companion Animal Group in the Agriculture Incident Management Team, I was proud to coordinate many of the resources for response that we have worked to plan and prepare for. I was honored to work with state and national partners to assist the people and pets of our state. Counties assisted counties in other parts of the state. NCVRC was deployed to assist with sheltering efforts, and national partners worked tirelessly to assist us by working side by side locals in affected counties. I wanted to make this edition of the newsletter a special edition to highlight some of the great efforts. There is no way I could highlight each person, agency, and partner the way I would like to but this can be a small glimpse into all of the hard work that was put into helping and supporting our state. I am proud to be a part of such a great team!

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NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & CONSUMER SERVICES

Emergency Programs Division

Steve Troxler, Commissioner *Sharron Stewart, Director*

PE ART
Piedmont Emergency Animal Response Team
"Plan, prepare, respond and recover, TOGETHER."

By Michelle Brock, CEM

PEART Coordinator

Emergency Management Coordinator

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Emergency Management

As proven in past disasters, animals of all types and their caretakers are some of the most vulnerable segments of our society due to a lack of prior planning on behalf of individuals and governmental agencies. Unfortunately, some individuals will place themselves in dangerous situations to rescue, protect or guard their animals, as witnessed during the Hurricane Katrina disaster of 2005, and most recently during Hurricane Matthew. Such desperate actions from those suffering through a disaster not only lead to the death of the animal, but can also lead to the death of their caretaker(s).

In 2006, the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act was amended to include the PETS Act (Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act) to ensure that local and state preparedness officials include household animals in their emergency planning and response processes. The North Carolina Department of Public Safety Division of Emergency Management has included Animal Protection (NCESF-11) in the state Emergency Operations Plan as an Emergency Support Function. The state's plan relies heavily on local planning and capabilities to provide initial response efforts, with state agencies, resources and personnel only supplementing local response efforts.

To support animal response direction and guidance from the federal and state government and protect citizens and animals within local communities, locals must include animal response operations within their own planning and response processes. In the recent past, this type of planning has been minimal and inadequate at the local and regional level in our area. Because the Northern Piedmont area of North Carolina faces multiple natural and manmade hazards that can impact the animal community, including flooding, tornadoes, tropical storms, winter weather, industrial incidents, terrorism, etc., it is important that animal response stakeholders plan for the multitude of disasters involving animals and implement response teams that are capable of carrying out such plans.

Continued on page 4 and 5.

VRC COORDINATOR

Mandy Tolson, DVM
Southeastern Region Emergency Programs Veterinarian
(252) 813-0989
Mandy.Tolson@ncagr.gov

COMPLETE YOUR VRC REGISTRATION AT WWW.SERVNC.ORG

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **Please see our website for future training and activities.**
- **Check out our sheltering webinars posted on the website!**
- **www.ncagr.gov/oep/sheltering/**

REQUIREMENTS FOR VRC DEPLOYMENT

- ICS 100, 200, and 700
- Biosecurity/PPE Training
- Knowledge of NC Emergency Management
- Knowledge of Emergency Support Functions
- Attendance at VRC Meetings
- Sign a Code of Conduct

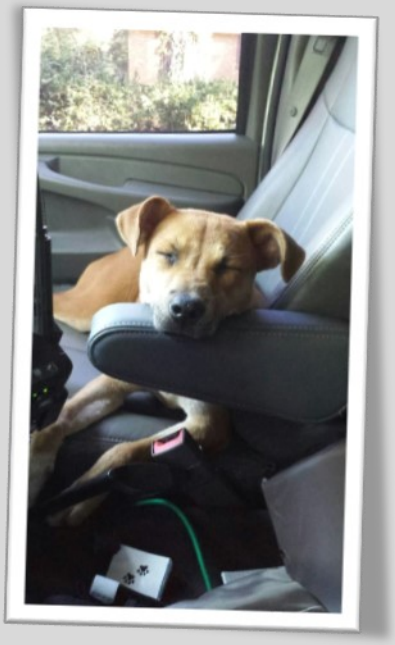
Contact: Melissa D. Knicely

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department

Animal Care & Control Division
8315 Byrum Drive Charlotte, NC 28217

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department's Animal Care & Control Division's (ACC) Emergency Response/Large Animal Rescue Team deployed to Edgecombe County on October 13, 2016. ACC had been working with the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) in preparation for possible deployment to eastern North Carolina to assist animal shelters in a number of counties that were experiencing record flooding caused by Hurricane Matthew.

ACC sent one emergency response trailer to assist with companion pets, one large horse trailer for transportation of livestock, portable corrals for containing livestock and two animal control vans to transport companion pets. The seven member team was made up of two veterinarians, four animal control officers (all trained in large animal rescue) as well as an enforcement supervisor. The veterinary team was made up of the Shelter Manager and a Kennel Supervisor who assisted the Edgecombe County animal shelter staff and volunteers in providing all animals in the shelter with vaccinations, fecal checks, de-worming and flea medication. The average number of animals in the shelter was 120. Minor medical care was also provided to a few of the animals. The field team conducted search and rescue, neighborhood canvases and care checks. The team was transported and assisted by members of the North Carolina National Guard on a military vehicle.



The team rescued 16 dogs from flood waters and performed over 200 care checks during their seven-day mission.

ACC's last deployment for hurricane response was in 2011 for Hurricane Irene, when the team was sent to Hyde County.

The ACC team had a large following on social media at **#ACCMatthewNC**

A story about a little brown dog that the team rescued captured the hearts of thousands on social media and the local news. It can be viewed Here for the original video of "Charlotte" the Little Brown Dog or Click here for the news story.

VRC MISSION: Train and prepare professionals in the animal care community to respond to disaster

NOTES: To see recent news and updates, please visit the VRC website at www.ncvrc.org. If you have questions about the VRC or would like to offer suggestions or articles for future newsletters, contact Mandy at mandy.tolson@ncagr.gov.

PEART—Continued from page 2.

To increase our readiness posture and resiliency in Central North Carolina, I created an animal response and readiness planning coalition in 2012 that is composed of 14 adjoining counties. The Piedmont Emergency Animal Response Team (PEART) is a collaborative and regional, nonprofit partnership composed of community volunteers and stakeholders that are dedicated to the well-being of all animals. Our Mission is to coordinate an effective animal response prior to, during, and after emergencies and disasters. PEART's motto is "Plan, Prepare, Respond & Recover. TOGETHER". PEART's goals are as follows:

- To safely and humanely assist animals, their caretakers, and local response agencies and organizations before, during, and after emergencies and disasters by utilizing the core principals of the National Incident Management System (NIMS)/Incident Command Structure (ICS) that was developed by FEMA, as mandated by Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5 (Management of Domestic Incidents);
- To provide appropriate and required training that supports PEART's Mission; and
- To conduct public outreach in order to recruit volunteers and to promote pet and animal preparedness within the community.

PEART's collaborative efforts allow community animal response stakeholders to plan, prepare, train and exercise together, thereby mitigating animal response issues before, during and after disasters. These collaborative efforts not only address animal response issues during disasters, but also serve to prepare communities for more frequent daily incidents involving animals, such as emergencies involving farm animals, animal hoarding situations, animal transportation incidents, and puppy mills.

PEART plans and prepares for not only household animals, but all types of animals that can be impacted by emergencies and disasters. Community stakeholders that are currently involved in PEART activities and planning include multiple volunteers, as well as more than 50 partnering agencies, organizations and businesses from across the region. PEART partners include, but are not limited to: animal control agencies, humane organizations, fire & rescue departments, emergency management agencies, conservation centers, veterinarians & veterinary technicians, Public Health departments, North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, exotic animal rescue groups and independent technical rescue organizations.

Tasks Necessary to Meet Objectives:

Organization and coordination of stakeholders for planning purposes:

As the Program Coordinator, I organized PEART into an ICS (Incident Command System) format (for your convenience, I have attached an organizational chart). This structure allows PEART to easily integrate into local emergency response operations. At least twice per year, all PEART partners meet to discuss planning topics, recent response operations, regional training opportunities and animal-related preparedness events. The PEART Steering Committee (all officers and several dedicated volunteers) meets every other month to address the details of animal response planning, such as the coordination of planning exercises, developing standard operating procedures, developing training standards, etc.

Organization and coordination of stakeholders for training and response purposes:

To save the lives of animals, their caretakers, and emergency responders, PEART has developed training standards and provides training opportunities on a regular basis that are open to the public. PEART training requirements include animal behavior, animal sheltering and response operations, and animal rescue operations.

Skills and knowledge learned by participants can be used in daily emergency animal operations (ie. hoarding situations, puppy mills, vehicle accidents, etc.), as well as during disasters in which a much broader population of animals have been affected. Thus far, community meetings and trainings have been funded with in-kind donations and with minimal funding by local Emergency Management or public safety agencies.

Promotion of animal and pet preparedness to raise awareness:

Promotional campaigns, such as a dedicated Facebook page and frequent posting to a local emergency management website, www.ReadyFORSYTH.org, allow PEART to reach a much broader audience, take a whole community approach, forge new partnerships and educate citizens.

One of the most challenging aspects of coordinating an effective emergency management program is sufficient funding. Potential funding sources include in-kind donations, community grants, partnering business sponsors, public safety agencies and local/state/federal government grants. So far, we have been fortunate enough to provide training and equipment via grants and in-kind donations. Many PEART volunteers and organizations donate their time, equipment, expertise and facilities for PEART trainings, meetings and response operations.

Another challenge that PEART planners experience is the wide range of animals and the various types of emergency response techniques that must be used for the differing animals. PEART provides training opportunities for all types of animals, including reptiles, domesticated animals, livestock, big cats, wildlife, etc. These classes are instructed by local technical rescue and animal rescue gurus. Since PEART's inception in 2012, we have offered more than 30 training and/or exercise sessions and trained hundreds of individuals from across the state and country. With appropriate training, PEART volunteers can safely respond to calls for help within the animal and agricultural community.

Most recently, during Hurricane Matthew response operations, a team of four PEART volunteers deployed to Lenoir County to assist the county with setup and management of an animal sheltering operation. Other PEART members delivered much needed help to impacted areas in the Eastern part of the state.

PEART is the first regional effort in North Carolina to address the multiple needs of animals in emergency and disaster planning. Other counties across North Carolina are exploring the accomplished milestones, organizational structure and function of PEART so that similar efforts may be replicated in their respective regions. Regionalizing such efforts stimulates networking and the sharing of funding and resources.

A strong and resilient community is dependent upon the educated, skilled and trained people within the respective community. PEART gives animal advocates and volunteers a role and a voice in caring for animals before, during and after emergencies. Our region has put a process and team in place to ensure animals and their caretakers receive emergency services on a daily basis, as well as during disaster operations. Through time, training, exercises and experiences, PEART continues to evolve, ever improving the preparedness of our region as it faces future disasters.

For more information about PEART, find them online at www.ReadyFORSYTH.org , or visit their Facebook page at www.Facebook.com/PiedmontEmergencyAnimalResponseTeam .

American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) Assistance in Robeson County

Dick Green, the ASPCA's Senior Director of Disaster Response, wasn't surprised when the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services asked the ASPCA to support the Lumberton County search and rescue efforts in the wake of Hurricane Matthew.

"The ASPCA spent about nine months in Lumberton last year for a large animal cruelty case, caring for 40 horses at the county fairgrounds, which were now completely underwater," says Dick, who also fielded requests from officials in Georgia and South Carolina.

So ASPCA responders made their way to North Carolina, where the Lumber River had flooded, and made their way through flood waters in a 14-foot Jon boat.

"Everywhere we went, people asked us to rescue their animals," Dick recalls. "The more animals we rescued, the more requests we received, which led to a number of happy reunions."

Laura Smith and her daughter, Lacinda, 23, of Lumberton, were one of those happy endings. They were reunited with their Beagle mix, Ava, on October 24.

Ava has lived with Laura and Lacinda since April, when they rescued her off the streets. When flooding from Hurricane Matthew was imminent, Laura and Lacinda walked to a nearby fast food restaurant, where a bus took them to a local shelter for people fleeing the storm.

Sadly, they were forced to leave Ava behind in their rental house, but left her plenty of food and water. After their first night in the shelter, relatives took in Laura and Lacinda until they could return home. During this time, Laura called authorities twice a day to ask them to check on Ava, who was soon rescued by ASPCA responders and taken to the Robeson County Animal Shelter.

Once Laura and Lacinda returned home, and their water and electricity was running again, they visited the shelter to retrieve Ava.

Ava

"I walked down the aisles looking for her, and suddenly, there she was, in her pink collar, looking at me like, 'Where have you been?'" Laura recalled. "I broke down a little bit when we got home, I was so happy to see her. We are very blessed."

Randy and Mary Faircloth also feel blessed, having recovered just this past weekend their five dogs at the Robeson County shelter, where animals initially rescued by the ASPCA have since been transported. And Janice Powell was reunited with her dachshund, Shawn, whom she had not seen since she evacuated her home.

NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF RESCUE AND SHELTERING COALITION

Partnership and Response After Hurricane Matthew

Another amazing national partner that NCDA&CS Emergency Programs is proud to work with is the National Alliance of Rescue and Sheltering Coalition (NARSC). Many organizations work to form NARSC and work all over the country to assist with disaster response and recovery. Founding NARSC members include American Humane Association (AHA), American Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), Best Friends Animal Society, Code 3 Associates, International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), National Animal Control Association, and Red Rover. The American Veterinary Medical Association is an associate member. Affiliate members include the National Association for State Animal and Agriculture Emergency Programs (NASAAEP), American Veterinary Medical Founda- (AMVF), Petfinder, and Petsmart Charities.

After Matthew, the Agriculture Incident Management Team responded to multiple requests to assist with animal rescuing and sheltering. Many of these NARSC agencies assisted with these efforts. ASPCA assisted in Robeson County. They performed many water rescues, reunited pets with their owners and provided assistance with sheltering. Pender county hosted Code 3 Associates, Best Friends Animal Society, Red Rover and IFAW to assist with water rescues and sheltering. These resources are undoubtedly some of the best in the country. We feel very thankful that they worked so hard to assist our citizens

The Thirteenth One Medicine Symposium

Dates: December 7-8, 2016

Location: Sheraton Imperial Hotel and Convention Center, Durham, North Carolina

Website: www.onemedicinenc.org

CE: Application for continuing education credits will be submitted

Continuing Education Credits available for a variety of professionals.

http://www.onemedicinenc.org/continuing-education/ .

Target Audience: A conference for human and animal health professionals, public health professionals, environmental health specialists, agriculture professionals, wildlife professionals, and federal, military, state and local emergency management and disaster responders.

Program: The 2016 One Medicine Symposium will feature a broad range of topics related to emerging diseases and other health challenges in humans, animals, and the environment focusing on providing up to date information on recent and ongoing issues and critical partnerships for preparedness and response activities. Participants will have the opportunity to attend talks related to their own discipline as well as outside their area of expertise to encourage knowledge sharing and collaboration across disciplines. Attendees are encouraged to discuss how they have approached or might approach emerging disease-related challenges in their own professions and communities.

The One Medicine Symposium is hosted by the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and NC Department of Health and Human Services in cooperation with NC State University College of Veterinary Medicine, UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health, USDA APHIS Veterinary Services, and NCSU Office of Professional Development. This national conference provides professionals from a variety of backgrounds with current information and take-home tools to improve awareness and understanding of the topics from a one-medicine perspective, promote collaboration across professional disciplines, and enhance preparedness for natural or man-made disasters, infectious disease outbreaks, and other challenges affecting human and animal health.