Wilson Creek Post Helene 2024
Supplemental Information for Emergency Measures

History

Wilson Creek gorge, a recognized National Wild and Scenic River system area, attracts tens of thousands of visitors each year. The 23-mile stream that flows from Grandfather Mountain is surrounded by thousands of acres of wilderness, attracting a wide range of outdoor enthusiasts: campers, climbers, kayakers, anglers, hikers, horseback riders and mountain bikers. In addition, there are multiple private landowners and homes located in the same area that are enjoyed year round.

Wilson Creek has historically flooded or had flash flooding which caused property damages and loss of life. Most times, the area is isolated due to this flooding leading to emergency responders not being able to access if called for urgent needs.

Rain off the eastern slope of Grandfather Mountain drain into this river valley. A severe storm on the higher elevations of this mountain slope can cause flash flooding in the lower stream area when there is no local rain. The elevation drop from 6,221 feet to 1,120 feet, over a 15-mile stretch can increase water levels from a normal one foot to 8-10 feet in a matter of minutes. Local family records have reported river flooding as high as 16 to 18 feet.

After multiple drownings and situations that isolated the area from emergency responders, Caldwell County began working on solutions to mitigate this problem. Working with State and Federal agencies in 2013, a mitigation project was awarded to Caldwell County for a siren system that could alert visitors and residents, within a five-mile area of each siren, to the potential that flash flooding could occur and to seek area of safety.

Request for Assistance Under Category B Emergency Measures

As a result of latent affects due to Hurricane Helene, this system was severely damaged to the point of needing urgent replacement for the safety of residents and visitors to the area. Caldwell County management is requesting that this issue covered under Category B Emergency

Measures due to the year-round visitor increases and the potential for loss of life recognized through earlier mitigation efforts.

Caldwell County's vendor for the original project and any maintenance issues is Sirens for Cities, Inc. At the request of the county an assessment by Sirens for Cities has been completed in December of 2024. This assessment reflected the near total destruction of the current siren system due to flooding that occurred and power issues causing low voltage.

On the recommendation of the vendor the County will need to replace the system due to parts availability and out-of-date software. The system will also need updating to add newer technology which will enhance visibility of the system's operational status.

Exact locations of each siren placement are listed below:

Flood siren 1	6787 Brown Mountain Beach Rd		Collettsville	NC	28611	35.90697	-81.72583
Flood siren 2	7500 Brown Mountain Beach Rd		Collettsville	NC	28611	35.94344	-81.74825
Flood Siren 3	7805 Brown Mountain Beach Rd		Collettsville	NC	28611	35.95923	-81.76155
Flood Siren 4	8412 Edgemont Rd		Collettsville	NC	28611	35.99096	-81.76059
Flood Siren 5	7996 Edgement Church Place		Collettsville	NC	28611	36.00158	-81.77378

Caldwell County will collaborate closely with the vendor to expedite this repair and replacement process in accordance with Caldwell County's policies and procedures.