

## Dunkirk man forms rescue group, takes on Florence

Posted by [Alan Van Wormer](#) On 09/21/2018

**All photos, video courtesy of Jesse Schwenk/Honey Badger Rescue/Rescue 3**

**LEXINGTON PARK, MD** - Hurricane Florence's nightmarish visit to the Carolinas made for a gray but otherwise pleasant weekend in Maryland. As many locals watched news coverage of the major storm from the comfort of their homes, a small rescue team from Maryland experienced its destruction firsthand.

"Honey Badger Rescue Group" also known as "Rescue 3" reportedly saved hundreds of North Carolina residents, working non-stop during the most dangerous moments of the storm.

Unlike professional or volunteer-organization based rescue efforts, Honey Badger Rescue came into existence just days before landfall starting with a Dunkirk man's post on Facebook.

On Sept. 9, Jesse Schwenk, owner and operator of Honey Badger Hauling, a towing and transportation service, announced plans to travel to North Carolina to provide aid during the storm. In the post, he asked for donations of money, boats, kayaks, survival equipment and volunteers to join him.

**(L-R) Tony McCollett, Mike Guy, Mitchell Ruslander, Darius Garner, Jesse Schwenk, Chuckie Gott**

The idea quickly gained traction and days later, Honey Badger Rescue Group had formed. The group made of volunteers from Maryland and North Carolina: Jesse Schwenk, Tony McCollett, Mike Guy, Mitchell Ruslander, Darius Garner and Chuckie Gott began preparing for their trip.

On Sept. 13, the crew with supplies and boats in tow set out for New Bern, NC. They would arrive hours before Florence made landfall.

Using the dispatch app, "Zello" they were able communicate with First Responders and receive calls. According to Schwenk, their night became very busy, fast. "We were the only search and rescue out at night." says Schwenk recalling when they rescued and reunited a police officer with his family. Rescue 3 spent night and following day responding to calls, escorting residents to shelters and clearing roadways.

"It was like something from horror movie" Schwenk says describing the damage caused by the storm. "There were trees in road, floods up to the houses, power lines in the road...we saw a road collapse...it was like nothing I've ever seen before."

Despite the immense risk and work, Schwenk says the gratitude he felt from the people he rescued made it worth the effort. He says he is currently planning to return to North Carolina to help in the recovery effort. As for responding to future disasters, Schwenk says he and the Honey Badger Rescue will be more prepared and will be able to help even more people.

Rescue 3 escorts a group through flooded streets

If you would like more information on how you can help Honey Badger Rescue provide relief to the victims of Hurricane Florence, visit their [Facebook Fundraiser](#).

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