Amateurs in Action

Recounts of ham radio operators who have used their effort and skills to help others in a time of need

The perfect Texas storm



On late Thursday 03 July 2025 remnants of Tropical Storm Barry from the Gulf became embedded within a broader, mid-level storm trough containing east Pacific remnant moisture, and stalled over Central Texas, resulting in heavy rains. The unrelenting torrential precipitation continued into the next day and began to overwhelm the Guadalupe River in Kerr County (about 40 miles northwest of San Antonio) near several children's summer camps, and soon exceeded flash flood stage, having risen more than 26 feet in 45 minutes.

Shortly after 1:00 pm on July 3rd the Texas Division of Emergency Management mobilized emergency response resources to the affected area, but by mid-day Friday July 4th both cell systems and their primary communication systems had become damaged in the flooding or suffered poor connectivity due to the terrain. The local ARES group activated emergency communication for the affected area on July 4th, and provided numerous health and welfare messages. *A lot of this is tied to circuit overload preventing folks from making direct contact with family members in the area*, said Kevin McCoy KF5FUZ.

Texas ARES members such as Cal Warnecke WB2EQD and Glen Rowan K3MGR also helped the Red Cross with radio communication and sheltering during the reunification effort. Other hams assisted Search and Rescue with communication. *This is a very fluid situation. It changes by the hour*, said ARRL Emergency Coordinator Terry Jones K5LGV.



Cal and Glen preparing the Red Cross shelter at the Calvary Temple Church in Kerrville

Another group from the Hill Country Amateur Radio Club joined the relay and rescue effort, including Joe Craft KI5IQE and Rob Schutte W6FVO. They set up a command post and made assignments for staffing both radio communication and rescue help.

You can read more on ARRL and Radio World News and the RV Radio Network.