

THE AFTERMATH OF FLORENCE CONTINUES TO IMPACT THOUSANDS



Casualties mount amid Florence's still-rising floodwaters

Two men walking through a flooded street / Getty Images

By Laurel Wamsley
NPR News

As floodwaters from former-Hurricane Florence's massive rains continue to flow through the Carolinas, the end of the storm's damage is nowhere in sight.

In Horry County, S.C., two women being taken for mental health care died on Tuesday night when the sheriff's office van they were being transported in met floodwaters. The deputies transporting the

two women reportedly drove around barriers and then were surprised by the flood. Authorities told media outlets that the deputies couldn't get the rear doors open, and the two patients drowned inside the van. The deputies climbed on top of the van and were rescued; they have been placed on administrative leave.

At least 37 people have died in three states because of the storm; 24 of those died in vehicles, the AP reports.

Nearly 3 feet of rain fell in

some parts of North Carolina and nearly 2 feet in areas of South Carolina. And while sunny skies have returned, the water problems are just beginning.

"Understand: There is a lot of water inland, and it is continuing to make its way downstream," county manager (in Wilmington, N.C.) Chris Coudreit said, according to the AP.

More than 160,000 people in North Carolina were without power as of 6 p.m. ET on

Wednesday, and 850 roads in the state remained closed.

Amtrak announced that it will resume passenger train service in and through North Carolina on Thursday.

While most people were able to evacuate, that wasn't the case with livestock. An estimated 3.4 million chickens and 5,500 hogs died in the flooding, according to preliminary estimates from the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The department says it is dispatch-

ing inspectors to start assessing damage and ensure food safety.

Agriculture is the biggest industry in North Carolina. The state ranks No. 1 in poultry and egg cash receipts, and second in swine. It is also the top producer of tobacco, but estimates for crop losses aren't yet available.

President Trump visited both North and South Carolina on Wednesday. He called Florence "one of the most powerful and devastating storms ever to hit our country" and promised

federal support for disaster relief.

"People don't realize how a very difficult phase is beginning today, with the beautiful sunshine," he added. "We'll have it all taken care of."

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KAVANAUGH ACCUSER PREPARED TO TESTIFY IN COURT



Brett Kavanaugh / Getty Images

By Deirdre Walsh
and Kelsey Snell
NPR News

Attorneys for Christine Blasey Ford, the woman who accused Supreme Court nominee Judge Brett Kavanaugh of sexually assaulting her at a high school party in the 1980s, have begun discussing terms of her appearance before the Senate Judiciary Committee next week.

"She wishes to testify, provided that we can agree on terms that are fair and which ensure her safety," Debra Katz, Ford's lawyer says in an email to committee aides first reported in the New York Times and confirmed by NPR.

Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, set a Friday deadline for Ford to respond to the committee in advance of a hearing he scheduled for Monday. Kavanaugh, who has

strongly denied the claims, has already agreed to appear.

But Katz says that a Monday hearing "is not possible and the committee's insistence that it occur then is arbitrary in any event."

Grassley was forced to postpone a planned committee vote on Kavanaugh's nomination scheduled for Sept. 20 after Democrats and some of his GOP colleagues demanded the committee investigate the

allegations. Ford initially sent the top Democrat on the panel, Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California, a letter requesting anonymity in July. But when word leaked out that Feinstein had some information about an allegation regarding Kavanaugh, Ford detailed the incident in an interview with the Washington Post published online Sept. 16.

Attorneys for Ford did a round of interviews after she went public and pledged that

she was prepared to testify before the committee. But Democrats and Ford's attorneys pressed Grassley to first agree to an FBI investigation of the alleged incident and to invite other witnesses to appear at any public hearing.

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