

Learning The Ropes

Members of the Wilkes Rescue Squad, North Wilkesboro Fire Department and a few other fire departments in Wilkes County on Saturday and Sunday completed 98 hours of training for technical rescue using ropes, under way for about six months.



The course included seven inter-related rescue topics involving ropes.

Course topics, including several emphasized this past weekend, included:

- “mechanical advantage,” which refers to using pulleys to reduce the impact of the weight of a person or object being raised or lowered;
- “raises and lowers,” which includes techniques for raising or lowering a person on a mountain slope;
- “high lines,” which includes moving a person from one elevated point to another such as across a stream. On Sunday, this was taught and practiced near North Wilkesboro’s dam on the Reddies River;
- “anchors,” which are techniques to safely anchor a rope system;
- “fixed rope system,” which includes rappelling and belaying skills;
- “rope rescue operations,” which focuses on determining which rope system is best for particular situations;
- “victim management,” which brings all of the skills of technical rescue using ropes together with management of patients during emergency circumstances.

George Durfor, a paramedic and veteran member of the Watauga County Rescue Squad, and Watauga Rescue Squad Deputy Chief Jacob Burleson were the teachers. Instruction was at the Wilkes Firefighter Training Grounds on the old county landfill property off Germantown Road in Moravian Falls and elsewhere.

The Wilkes Rescue Squad and the North Wilkesboro Fire Department initiated this latest round of emergency rescue training, with about 10 squad members, about 15 North Wilkesboro firefighters and a handful of other fire department members participating.