



Residents of the Shelter Creek Harbor area say the water made a fast surge, flooding the area within three hours.

# Flood strands families

By Dan Headrick  
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As many as 27 families have been stranded since Friday by rising water near the Holly Shelter Game Preserve about eight miles east of Burgaw. Red Cross officials said they have prepared an evacuation center at the Burgaw Methodist Church.

The Red Cross set up a temporary rescue operations center in the home of Teary and Faye Mantooth at 311 E. Bridgers St. in Burgaw. The Mantooth family helped get aid to the flood victims whose homes are without electricity or telephones, Red Cross official Mary Summers said.

Teary Mantooth said his family fed about 45 people who were driven from their homes during the weekend. Water is reported to be about four feet deep in many houses and trailers.

Red Cross officials reported that many families who are unable to return to their homes are being provided meals at Burgaw Methodist Church. Frank Beeman, a Red Cross worker called in from Tampa, Florida during last week's hurricane, said that some families are choosing to remain in their houses.

Beeman said he and Captain LeRoy Shepard of the county sheriff's department on Monday tried to evacuate a family of eight by boat, but were turned away. He said the parents, whose identity Shepard would not disclose, had a boat and went to work on Monday, leaving their children — aged six to 30 —



Staff photos by Gray Honeycutt

C.L. Freck paddles past his house near Shelter Creek.

home alone. The eldest daughter made the decision to stay, Shepard said.

Shepard said four families have been evacuated. He said more families may be brought out because waters are expected to rise.

Officials say their greatest fear at the moment is of reptiles seeking higher ground. Beeman said he has received reports of snakes crawling into peoples' homes. Beeman said he saw a three-foot alligator in the flooded area on Monday.

Pockets of rising water around the Shelter Creek area have submerged large portions of N.C. 53 between Burgaw and Maple Hill, according to Emergency Manage-

ment coordinator Jerry Randall. Traffic has been detoured onto U.S. 117 through Wallace, he said.

"This has caught everybody by surprise," Randall said. He said flooding of this magnitude is something new in the affected area. Randall said he inspected the flooded terrain on Friday and warned local residents and Red Cross officials of the potential for severe flooding, but could not predict what would happen over the weekend.

Officials are not sure what has caused the flooding. Pulpwood cutting operations in the area have cleared away some vegetation, Randall said.