

Chopper Training Exercise Leads to Rescue

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It's a case of being in the right place at the right time—and with the right equipment. Like an LUH-72 Lakota helicopter carrying members of the North Carolina Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team. That was the case last night as a New York teen fell in the Linville Gorge and needed rescue. The North Carolina Army National Guard crew was training in the area when the call came in—that the Michael Sheheta of Queens, New York fell some 40 feet from outside the safety rail into a tree below shortly before 4pm. Burke County Emergency Services received the call around 4 p.m., but there was no way to reach the teen by climbing, as he had fallen onto a narrow ledge. From there, Pilot Mike Young called it “just a normal mission,” and just what the crew had been training for. In fact, their training in the Wilson's Creek area involved snaking their hoist into small openings for just such a rescue. Young said his crew lowered two rescue technicians to where the teen was stranded. The technicians and the teen were raised to the aircraft and then taken to a landing site not far away. Young said the teen did not appear to be badly injured and walked from the aircraft. Their training continues today.