Maricopa County Sheriff’s Department Fox2 helicopter and swift water rescue teams were actively involved in five water rescues early Saturday morning, many happening simultaneously. Heavy rains associated with Winter Storm Kori hit Maricopa County in mid-afternoon Friday and intensified throughout the evening. The Northwest Valley had significant rainfall leading to flash flooding in and around washes.

Here are the details on six rescues conducted between 1AM and 8AM on Saturday, January 21, 2017, all of which occurred in Districts 1 and 4.

1. At 12:45AM District 4 Deputies responded the area of Table Mesa Road, approximately 3 miles East of I-17 in New River AZ, for a report of two (2) people stranded on top of a vehicle that was submerged in a wash. Upon arrival, Deputies found that one of the persons had somehow managed to safely get to land. The female subject was standing on top of her vehicle which was almost fully submerged in a rapidly flowing wash, trapped against some rocks. Multiple Fire Departments responded with Swift Water and Technical Rescue Teams. While Fire Departments were gathering a plan, MCSO’s helicopter arrived and decided to attempt a rescue. After dropping a life jacket to the stranded person, the helicopter was able to make a daring rescue of the subject utilizing their skid. The subject was returned to land where she was evaluated by Daisy Mountain FD and released at the scene.

2. MCSO received a 911 call that stated another vehicle tried to cross the river in the Sycamore Creek Area and became stuck. The water had reached the bottom of the vehicles door causing it to float. Subjects were on the roof of the vehicle. MCSO Lake Patrol / Search and Rescue responded to the area. While en-route, 911 received a second call stating the subjects were out of the water and were okay. Deputy Simonson continued to the scene and was unable to locate anyone in the area of the vehicle. DPS Ranger flew the area and was unable to locate anyone as well. Deputies have not been able to retrieve any vehicle information at this time. Investigation will continue.

3. Fox 2 was requested to assist District 4 and Phoenix Fire with a vehicle in the New River Wash. The truck, with 1 passenger inside, was in the wash and the water was lapping over the hood. Fox 2 landed across the river to rig for the rescue. As Fox 2 was getting ready, the truck started to move down stream due to the water rising. Fox 2 had radio talk to the man on his cell phone and gave him our instructions. We flew next
to the driver’s door and were able to hand him a PFD thru his rolled down window. As we backed away, radio told him to crawl on the roof for the extraction. Due the truck being unstable we did not put the flight tech on the roof. Once he was on the roof we were able to hover over it and get him into Fox 2. We then landed on the road and turned him over to the ground units.

4. MCSO received a 911 call of 2 elderly subjects stuck in the wash in the Bartlett / Tonto National Forest Area. The vehicle was floating in the water. Bartlett Lake Deputies and Fox 1 responded to the area along with Rural Metro and Phoenix Fire Swift Water Rescue. Both subjects were rescued and needed no additional medical attention.

5. MCSO received a 911 call about a Jeep that had become stuck in the 7 Springs area. MCSO District 4, Lake Patrol / Search and Rescue, Mountain Rescue Swift Water Rescue and Rural Metro Fire all responded to area. Fox 2 was unable to get to the scene due to weather and low cloud cover. Mountain Rescue was able to retrieve the subjects and safely removed them from the river. All 3 subjects refused transport.

MCSO reminds the public that the ground is saturated and flash flooding is active throughout Maricopa County. Do not drive into a flooded wash.

MCSO thanks partner agencies including Arizona DPS, Daisy Mountain Fire, Rural Metro Fire, Phoenix Fire, and Phoenix Police.

There is no video or still photos available from these rescues.