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For Immediate Release:

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South Carolina Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team to Conduct Helicopter Training Exercise

Pickens County residents may notice up to four military helicopters flying over Table Rock and Horse Pasture Jan. 17-18, 2018.

However, there is no reason for alarm. The low-flying Black Hawks and Lakotas are participating in a South Carolina Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team (HART) training exercise and may hover over the Table Rock and Horse Pasture areas. This is a joint exercise with SC-HART, Pickens County Emergency Management, and the S.C. National Guard.

This training exercise is to simulate real world events. It will also keep rescue personnel and helicopter crews ready in the event of an actual remote location emergency rescue. It will be completed by Thursday, Jan. 18 at 11:45 p.m.

Pickens County Emergency Services personnel from Pickens County will be acting as “victims” during this training exercise. They will be placed in several locations throughout the Pinnacle Mountain and Horse Pasture training areas.

“Emergency and first response training is valuable to the community and the personnel involved,” Pierce Womack, Pickens County Emergency Management Deputy Director said. “This joint training allows for personnel to meet face-to-face and learn each other’s capabilities before a real world event occurs.”

Based upon lessons learned from the 2016 Pinnacle Mountain Fire, an Emergency Communications team will also be training during this event. This team has deployable capabilities to establish communications and transmit data, such as email, over two-way radio frequencies.

SC-HART is a collaborative effort between the State Urban Search and Rescue Task Force (SC-TF1) under the direction of S.C. LLR, Office of the State Fire Marshal, S.C. Emergency Management Division, and the Army National Guard Aviation Unit based at McEntire.