

Rollin' into the river



PHOTOS BY JESSICA NELMS | THE JOURNAL

Oconee County Hazmat workers stand by, braving below freezing temperatures, as a commercial diver suits up at Martins Creek Landing. The dive service was called in to retrieve a vehicle and boat trailer that had rolled into the Seneca River on Wednesday morning.

Rescuers brave frigid weather to retrieve SUV, trailer

BY BRETT MCLAUGHLIN
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SENECA — Dozens of emergency services workers had to brave bone-chilling temperatures Wednesday to retrieve a wayward SUV and boat trailer that slipped into the Seneca River at Martins Creek Landing.

Authorities were called to the access site about 8:30 a.m. and found a Lincoln Navigator and attached boat trailer submerged in the river.

Neal Henderson of Jones Avenue, Seneca, told authorities he was putting his boat in when he heard a "pop" and watched as the rig rolled into the river and out of site.

A companion of Henderson's was in the boat on the river and witnessed the SUV and trailer sliding into the river. When authorities arrived at



A commercial diver emerges from the Seneca River at Martins Creek Landing after attaching cables to a submerged Lincoln Navigator that rolled into the river Wednesday morning.

the scene, both men were waiting on the dock.

After it was determined that no one was in the vehicle, members of the

Oconee Dive Team were canceled and a commercial dive company was called to the scene. The vehicle was quickly

secured and pulled from the lake.

Hazmat spokesman Bobby Williams said that, as the vehicle was pulled out, the gas tank overflow began to leak and a significant amount of gas spilled into the river. He said booms were used to contain and remove the fuel.

Officials from the Department of Natural Resources, Friendship Fire Department and South Carolina Highway Patrol also responded to the scene, some remaining on site for several hours. Friendship Fire Chief David Wright said the cold temperatures didn't cause any particular problems but did make the recovery "inconvenient."

Emergency Services personnel said the incident resulted in no injuries.