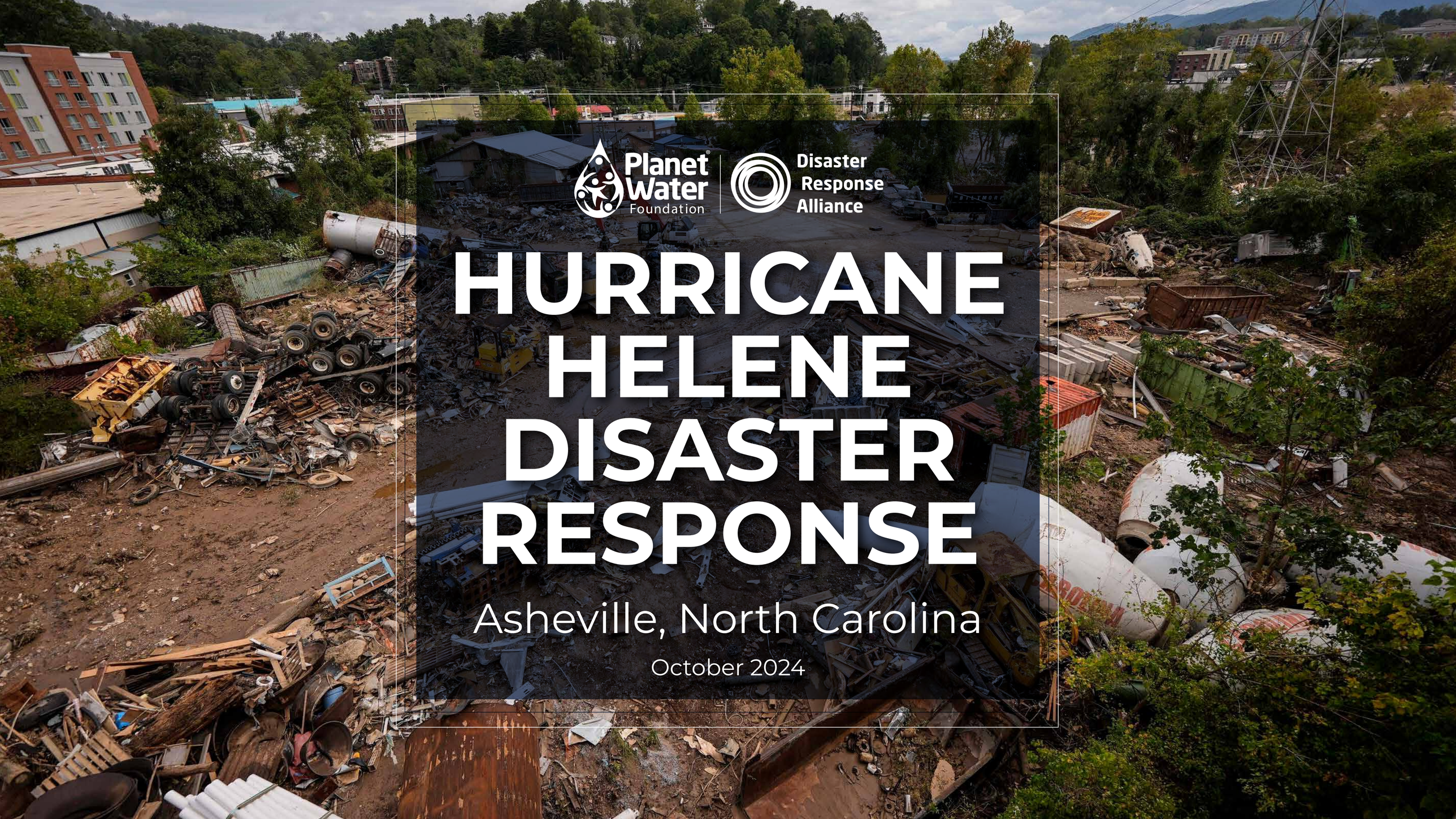


Planet Water Foundation

Disaster Response Alliance

HURRICANE HELENE DISASTER RESPONSE

Asheville, North Carolina

October 2024



The Deadly Disaster

Hurricane Helene laid waste to the southeastern United States on September 26th, pummeling the region with monstrous flooding and fierce winds. The massive storm killed scores of people, destroyed vital infrastructure, cut off power lines, and contaminated water supplies.

Asheville, North Carolina, was especially hard-hit by the deadly flooding. As the streets transformed into rivers, houses floated away while roads and bridges collapsed. Among the biggest challenges resulting from the disaster was crippling damage to water systems, resulting in the complete loss of water access for about 160,000 households within and around the city. For those fortunate to still have running water, the water that sputtered out of faucets was brown or sediment-filled, which made it unsuitable for consumption.

> *"You don't truly understand what it means to be without water until you see a creek that your kids used to play in outside a neighborhood tavern being used by locals to fill buckets of water for flushing and even bathing."*
>
> Katie Linsky Shaw,
> Asheville resident.

Providing support

Within days of the scale of destruction becoming clear, Planet Water Foundation activated our relief efforts through the support of our Disaster Response Alliance partners. AquaBlock emergency water filtration systems were transported into the disaster zone from our US logistics hub and our disaster response team travelled into the region to support the deployments.



Partnerships were formed with deployment partners Americares and Wine to Water who helped in identifying suitable sites where the AquaBlock systems could be deployed to provide support to local community members, and the Planet Water team then deployed the systems over the period of October 11th to October 16th.







In total, through the Disaster Response Alliance, six AquaBlock systems were deployed throughout Asheville, in sites where existing non-potable sources of water such as creeks or wells were available or in staging areas where tanker deliveries of non-potable water were setup.

In these locations, extensive testing of the source water was conducted before the deployments, and the AquaBlocks were then installed to bring this water through a four-stage filtration process to produce safe drinking water. The filtered water was then tested by Planet Water technicians before being made available to the community for use.











The AquaBlocks were installed at the following locations throughout Asheville, where they will remain available to community members to access until a reliable municipal supply of potable water to people's homes is restored:

- Grant Center, Asheville
- Be Well (16 Smith Mill Road behind the Asheville Tool Library)
- Creekside Taphouse
- West Asheville off Davenport
- N. Louisiana Avenue in the park across from PODER Emma
- Friendship Community Center in Shiloh

The AquaBlock

The life-threatening illnesses that are rampant during emergency situations can be prevented with the help of Planet Water Foundation's AquaBlock Emergency Water Solution. This patented, advanced water filtration system has a four-stage water purification system and produces 700 liters of safe drinking water per hour with capacity to support the daily drinking needs of up to 6,000 people.





“It’s amazing to me how quickly water has been made available and how it’s been a community effort. This makes it so easy to get and is alleviating a lot of fears about where to get clean water.”

Stephanie Hellert







“ Getting water and thinking about water has been a bigger part of my day than I thought it would be, so having this in a central, community location has been great.”

Luke Sanders



“You really don’t think about how much you use water until you don’t have it.”

Demika Washington & Ryan





“Having this here means everything. I’ve definitely been worried about using all of the plastic bottles for water.”

Joe Aceto

“I haven’t had a potable water source that’s easy to access. I’ve been using a lot of bottled water and canned water. But this is a game changer - to be able to use our local water sources, purify it, and have easy access to the water. We’re using so much plastic with the single-use bottles and it’s nice to have a source where we can fill reusable totes that are more environmentally-friendly”

Katherine Wilson,
community volunteer





“This is a wonderful thing. We love being able to fill up the big tubs with water as opposed to all of the small bottles.”

Phillip and Jacqueline Blocklyn









Thank You

The AquaBlock systems are providing safe water access to up to 36,000 individuals in need. Thank you to our Disaster Response Alliance partners for supporting our relief efforts in Asheville, North Carolina.

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