

Houghton County Disaster Recovery Update

(Houghton, MI) – Following are the latest updates regarding the flood recovery efforts in Houghton County.

Teams from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Michigan State Police Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division (EMHSD) will begin arriving in Houghton County today to begin assessments of the local flood damage. Four person teams will disburse throughout the County to look at a sampling of the sites that were reported to them by the local assessment teams. They will calculate estimates of cost for repair of the sites and then compare their estimates to those submitted by the local assessment teams. It is important to note that no Federal Declaration has yet been made regarding the disaster.

The Houghton County Emergency Response Team continues to adapt its Unified Command structure and a copy of that structure is attached. The Team has noted that they are starting to move from the response and recovery phase to the reconstruction phase with their work efforts.

The DNR will begin work on the Bill Nichols Trail with an emphasis on getting the trail from Twin Lakes to Calumet open. They are concerned about the Lake Linden Trail because of the heavy damage. As previously noted, the recreational trail system throughout Houghton County has suffered severe damage and is closed to all traffic. Between Hancock and Calumet and Hancock and Lake Linden, reports have been received over the weekend of individuals violating those closure orders and even of children playing in those areas. Some of the washouts on these trails are massive with undercut banks and are extremely dangerous. It can't be emphasized strongly enough that under no circumstance should anyone be on those trails, especially children.

Donations are continuing to pour into Houghton County. Coordinators would like to note a change in the priority of items that are needed. Items that are most urgently needed now are dehumidifiers, squeegees, shop vacs and Gatorade. There is no longer a need for bottled water.

The Houghton County Road Commission reports that both contract and Road Commission crews continue to work on roads and are doing so in 12 hour shifts. Road Commission crews are working on Massie, Pilgrim and Paradise Road.

MDOT Reports that they are working on paving sections of M-26 from Ripley to Laurium and are also working to unplug blocked culverts.

The City of Houghton reports that Vivian Street is now passible and that they are working on Agate.

The National Guard is finishing up work on Coles Creek Road and is also working on Old Mill Road.

Michigan Technological University reports that equipment is being staged at Mont Ripley to begin work on the damage there and that Team Rubicon is assisting with clearing fallen trees. They further report that their Administration Building will be closed for one and a half weeks.

HOUGHTON COUNTY MICHIGAN OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MEASURES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 25, 2018 – 12:00 p.m.

The Health Department reports 6 cases of illness that are flood related. Causes reported include individuals drinking from contaminated wells and swimming at local beaches. The Health Department continues to provide free water tests for residents whose wells were inundated with flood water and has distributed 51 test kits to date. They also report that they have opened seven area beaches that were previously closed. Additional information is available at: <http://www.wupdhd.org/>

Volunteer Coordinator Jon Stone reports that 97% of homes, where the owner has called for assistance, have been mucked out and that the emphasis will move to outside work. With the new workweek starting, the numbers of volunteers are expected to drop but they are still needed. For those who need help or would like to offer their time to help others, they can call the Volunteer Registration Center at (906) 233-6621.

Torch Lake Township and the City of Houghton will resume their regular garbage pickup on Monday, June 25.

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MEDIA: For additional information, contact Public Information Officer Eric Forsberg at (708) 465-4838 or Eric@HoughtonCounty.net