As of 4:00 PM

DAMAGE ASSESSMENT AND EMERGENCY STATUS REPORT # 6

Thursday, May 31, 2012

SITUATION OVERVIEW:

On May 21, a wildfire was spotted in the Seney National Wildlife Refuge, in Schoolcraft County. It is believed that this fire had started on May 20, as a result of lightning. Although this "Pine Creek Fire" has been contained within the Refuge area, it required the commitment of various personnel and resources. As the Pine Creek Fire was being dealt with, a different fire started up in neighboring Luce County on May 23, at about 4:40 p.m. This new fire was called the "Duck Lake Fire," and was also believed to be caused by lightning. The Duck Lake Fire proved to be much more dangerous, and required many additional resources to address. Strong winds and dry conditions helped to spread the fire to the north, and then to the northeast, causing about 100 structures (of all types) to be destroyed, and many more to be threatened. The area includes jack pine forest, which is particularly vulnerable to the ignition and spread of wildfires.

By the morning hours of May 25, it was estimated that the Duck Lake Fire had encompassed at least 17,000 acres of land, while the Pine Creek Fire had stopped spreading within its own area of approximately 3220 acres. At 8:00 a.m., the State Emergency Operations Center was partially activated in Lansing, to assist with monitoring, communication, and agency coordination activities to address these fires.

On May 25, the Federal Emergency Management Agency was notified about the situation, and numerous State government departments became involved in emergency response and coordination activities. Governor Snyder declared the existence of a State of Disaster within Luce and Schoolcraft Counties. Some residents in the fire-affected areas of Luce County have evacuated. Some Luce County roads have been partially closed, and the Tahquamenon Falls Park areas have also been closed down, because of problems with heavy smoke from the Duck Lake Fire. Additional firefighting resources are being provided to the area by various agencies. By the morning of May 26, the Duck Lake Fire had expanded to an area of 21,100 acres.

As of 8:00 a.m. on May 27, the Duck Lake Fire currently stood at 20,255 acres and was 48 % contained. The length of the active fire line is 40 miles. Weather conditions were favorable for the situation with the temperature dropping and some rain occurring in the morning. That allowed crews to make good progress in shrinking and slowing the fire. It is a slow process with rough terrain playing a significant factor. As of 8:00 a.m. on May 28, the Duck Lake Fire stood at 22,204 acres and was 50 % contained. Weather conditions reported by the National Weather service predicted winds from the South / southwest increasing to 15 – 20 mph gusts with temperatures between 60 and 85 degrees. This unfortunately, promoted the fire. There was a small chance of scattered thunderstorms forecast for the area. The night crew was able to keep the fire at bay while the hand crews made progress in securing additional area. All supplied air support continued to be used to fight the fire.

As of 8:00 a.m. on May 29, the Duck Lake Fire was 47 % contained and stood at 21,694 acres. Weather conditions caused a "blow out" south of Pike Lake and 17 structures were threatened but the crews were able to contain the spread of fire and save the structures. The fire containment was complicated by the thunder storm that passed over the fire area. It was reported that less than 1" of rain fell on both the Duck Lake and Seney fires which provided little relief. The storm's winds and lightning adversely affected the fire conditions and ability to fight the fire. Aircraft that were working the fire were temporarily grounded and air from the storm cell drafted down over the fire causing it to spread temporarily. The weather forecast on the 29th, and the next few days, was more favorable with cooler temperatures. Highs were expected to be in the 60's with lows in the 40s and 50s. Winds were expected to blow from the North to Northwest at 10 – 15 mph increasing to 15 -20 mph in the afternoon. On Thursday and Friday, the wind will be out of the East, Northeastly direction with no precipitation until Friday with just a chance of rain on Friday.

As of 8:00 a.m. on May 30, the Duck Lake Fire is 55 % contained and more exact GPS perimeter mapping indicates the acreage of the fire is currently 21,450. Weather conditions have stabilized, now that the rain has

passed through, allowing the fire fighting operation to make good progress. The current issue is the remaining unburned fuel (i.e. trees) in the fire area. The drier areas of the fire are "burnt out" but in the swampy areas tree roots are slowly burning underground. The crews are continuing to construct the fire line with dozing and aerial operations. The weather conditions call for milder temperatures in the low 50s. It is dry with 15 to 20 mph winds gusting to 35 mph and rain is not expected until Friday with amounts unknown.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 31, the Duck Lake Fire is 57 % contained and GPS mapped at 21,458 acres. More progress has been made in containing the fire perimeter with dozer lines completed on the east side. Over the next few days, dozer and aerial crews continue work to complete the remaining fires lines on the south side. This work will take longer because of difficult conditions. The weather forecast is favorable with light winds from the west at 10 mph and humidity at 38 % inland and 52% closer to the lake. Weather for Friday indicates there is light rain expected.

A toll free hotline has been established for the public to obtain the most recent status updates on this situation, at 1-855-440-6424.

SUMMARY OF STATE RESPONSE ACTIONS:
To date, state agencies and involved nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have taken the following significant actions to prepare for, mitigate, respond to and recover from this wildfire disaster:

MSP/EMHSD:
Personnel from MSP/EMHSD had been monitoring the wildfire response activities, both from its District Office in Marquette County and from its main offices in Lansing. Because of the escalation in the size of the Duck Lake Fire during the evening of May 24 and the early morning hours of May 25, the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) was partially activated at 8 a.m. on May 25. EMHSD determined a request for a Governor's disaster declaration was necessary and submitted this request to include the ability to evacuate and issue a fireworks and open burning ban. A request was also submitted for an Executive Order to activate the Michigan National Guard to assist with disaster response activities. The SEOC hosted briefing sessions at 8:30 a.m., 1:00 p.m., and 5:00 p.m. on May 25. The briefings sessions were held at 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on May 26 and since then the same briefing schedule has been maintained through today, May 30.

SEOC personnel notified the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) about the wildfire situation, and processed paperwork to prepare for a gubernatorial disaster declaration, as well as an application for a Fire Management Assistance Grant from FEMA. An initial application for this grant was submitted on May 25, but was denied by FEMA. (As additional damages and costs from the disaster are assessed, the SEOC will consider an appeal to this denial.)

On May 28, the EMHSD Captain stressed that the public meetings being held were an excellent opportunity to gather information from attendees regarding property damage and insurance coverage. On May 29, EMHSD continues to monitor the fire and coordinate any requested assistance. SEOC staff are gathering damage assessment information and completing the official follow-up forms for the declaration request that FEMA has denied. On May 29, the EMHSD continues to hold briefings, assist with response coordination, and assess the incoming information to determine further actions.

On May 31, the EMHSD Captain prepared to accompany the Governor on a flight over the affected fire areas and a visit to the fire scene. The afternoon 5:00 p.m. conference call was cancelled for the day due to state and local personnel being involved with the Governor's visit.

Executive Office (Governor):
Governor Richard Snyder issued a proclamation at 5:10 p.m. on May 25, declaring that a **state of disaster** exists in Luce and Schoolcraft Counties. The proclamation also authorized evacuations to occur, for persons who may be in harm's way due to actual or impending fire danger, as emergency conditions may require within the disaster area. Thirdly, the proclamation placed a ban upon outdoor burning within forest areas, and adjacent to forest areas, within 49 counties in the Upper Peninsula and the Northern Lower Peninsula. (A map of these counties appears at http://www.dnr.state.mi.us/burnpermits/). Lastly, the proclamation bans the sale and use of fireworks in the area affected by the wildfire.

At 5:20 p.m. on May 25, Governor Snyder issued Executive Order 2012-8, which activated the Michigan National Guard in order to assist with disaster response activities.

A Press Release was issued on the evening of May 25th announcing the Proclamation for the Disaster Declaration and Executive Order to activate the Michigan National Guard.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 31, representatives are in a monitoring mode. The Governor will be flying over the fire area and touring the fire scene to meet with local officials later today. He will be accompanied by Captain Sands, EMHSD Commander.

Office of Services to the Aging:

As of 8:00 a.m., May 29, a representative reported that they were monitoring 2-11 and are on standby to perform any needed assistance. They were not aware of any aging assistance being needed or requested at this time.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 31, representatives are in a monitoring mode with no new activity to report.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development:
A representative of MDARD was present in the SEOC on May 25, to coordinate as needed with other agencies for disaster response and recovery. At this time, no specific actions have been proposed for the department.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 31, representatives are in a monitoring mode with no new activity to report. MDARD requested information regarding any affected commercial businesses and they offered to send inspectors to assess damage.

Department of Community Health:
A representative has been in regular contact with the SEOC and has coordinated with the many agencies involved in the response to this disaster.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 31, representatives are in a monitoring mode with no new activity to report.

Department of Corrections:
The department has offered bedding, mattresses, pillows, towels, and similar resources for about 100 persons, if needed by the nearby American Red Cross shelter (the American Red Cross is described below). Assistance was also offered with food preparation for fire responders. The Warden from the Newberry Correctional Facility visited the American Red Cross shelter in Newberry and provided contact information to that shelter, along with these offers. Although they are coordinating directly with the Newberry ARC shelter, requests for these resources should be made through the SEOC, to ensure coordination with all other agencies and avoid any duplication of requests.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 31, representatives are ready to assist, if needed, and are in a monitoring mode with no new activity to report.

Department of Environmental Quality:
The department has been represented in the SEOC, and maintains regular contact and coordination with the many agencies involved in the response to this disaster.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 31, representatives are in a monitoring mode with no new activity to report.

Department of Human Services:
A representative was present in the SEOC on May 25, and reported good coordination with local human services directors within the affected counties. There did not yet appear to be specific human service requests made by emergency management.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 28, a representative advised the ARC to contact DHS if they needed anything through the Donations Management program.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 31, local DHS representatives are transporting donated items from drop off spots in Chippewa County to the Newberry distribution site in Newberry in Luce County.

Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs:
The department coordinated with MSP GIS staff in the SEOC, providing various information and maps of utility services in the disaster area.

On May 30, MIOSHA Documents on "Heat Stress in Wildland Firefighting" were provided in attachments to the Agency Situation report.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 31, representatives are in a monitoring mode with no new activity to report.

Department of Military and Veteran Affairs:
The Michigan National Guard was activated by Governor Snyder's Executive Order 2012-8, at 5:10 p.m. on May 25. They provided four UH-60 Blackhawk aircraft with crews, ground support, fuel support, and Bambi Buckets, to assist with Duck Lake Fire operations. An estimated 40 personnel will be supporting the aircraft and ground operations (10-12 per aircraft). These assets were provided after a request for them had been made by the MDNR (see below). Four additional Blackhawk aircraft could eventually be added to this assistance, if necessary. The Air National Guard flight operations began at 2:00 p.m. on May 27 when the ground support personnel arrived from Grand Ledge. The Blackhawk helicopters, 215 Air Attack planes and the large helicopter provided by Minnesota continued operations during the day on May 28 and through the night hours. (The planes were briefly grounded the afternoon of Memorial Day due to the thunderstorm.) The same operation will be continuing throughout the day on May 29. The fire scene has "burnt out" to the degree that the aerial fire suppression resources provided by Minnesota are no longer needed so they will be terminating their resources and assistance as of May 30.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 31, Air National Guard flight operations continue as needed. One aircraft is out of commission temporarily for maintenance.

Department of Natural Resources:
It was an MDNR plane that had initially spotted the Pine Creek Fire on May 21, and by May 24 this fire was reported to be 65% contained, and limited to the area of the Seney National Wildlife Refuge. As the Duck Lake Fire developed, the MDNR put an Incident Management Team in place in Newberry on the evening of May 24. Observations on May 25 had indicated that the Pine Creek Fire had stopped growing. The MDNR has produced and distributed numerous maps and reports among the coordinated response agencies. The department also requested that the Michigan National Guard provide various assets to assist with fire response activities.

The Tahquamenon Falls Park (Upper and Lower) was closed, because of the smoke drifting over from Luce County. More than 100 arriving campers were notified of this closure, and had their park reservations refunded as a result. The Tahquamenon Falls viewing areas are also closed off. Reservations will not be available at the Rivermouth Campground, either, until June. DNR is considering opening the park for visitors and campers in the very near future.

Evacuations from Luce County have been covering a widening area, as the Duck Lake Fire has spread. The west side of Chippewa County has been put on alert about the potential for an eventual evacuation there, as well.

The MDNR coordinated with Verizon Wireless through DTMB (see entry below) about the need to improve communications coverage across the disaster area. These coordination efforts were successful in improving cell phone coverage.

The MDNR established Incident Management Plans, with a stated objective on May 25 to keep the fire contained to the north of M-123 and west of County Road 500, as well as providing protection for structures in the area. The fire was expected to spread at a rate of 1.5 miles per hour, so spotting has been taking place one-half mile ahead of the fire. At that time, new fire starts were expected to result from this event.

Due to the existence of simultaneous wildfire events in Michigan, additional resources were requested from other agencies. Fire suppression aircraft were ordered, and two CL-215 water bombers, one Type 1 helicopter, and an Air Attack module traveled to the scene in Luce County. Various vehicles and crews are also due to arrive by the early afternoon on May 27. The Wisconsin DNR responded to the MDNR request by sending four fire engines, three Division Supervisors, and three tractor plows. (A helicopter, two planes, five marshmasters, four wetland fire engines, a 20 person team from Illinois, one skidder, and seven volunteer fire departments were being used to combat the Pine Creek Fire.) Minnesota also sent two aircraft fire suppression units to assist.

On May 26, at 1 p.m., MDNR held a press conference, which served about 20 attendees, including multiple radio and television stations from the area. The conference provided information and answered questions from the public and the media. This conference was held at the MDNR office in Newberry. The guidance document for the public regarding the burning ban was distributed just prior to 6:00 p.m.

The day's objectives included the following:

- Provide for public and firefighter safety.
- Provide for structure protection.
- Keep the fire North of M-123.
- Keep the fire West of Co. Road 500.
- Keep the fire inside the line on Divisions M and J (East side of the fire).

As of 8:00 a.m., May 28, the MDNR plan for air and ground attack continues today, using the National and Air National Guard resources. Currently, MDNR Law Enforcement Division (LED) Officers are busy (on all shifts) assisting on perimeter security to ensure the safety of citizens and protection of property. They also provided security of aircraft and equipment at the airport. MDNR continues to maintain asset inventory and documenting of damage.

A public meeting took place on May 27, at 2 p.m. at the McMillan Township Hall with approximately 200 people attending. The meeting was hosted by the MDNR to provide information to citizens. A short power point presentation gave people a summary of the drought conditions and cause of the fire (a lightening strike). After the presentation, the attendees were split into groups, based on their questions, and provided with additional information. Most were asking about their structures and property. Another meeting will be held in approximately 2 days. Another public meeting will be held at the McMillan Township Hall in Newberry from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m., tonight, May 30.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 29, the MDNR plan for air and ground attack continues today as well as their efforts to perform airport and perimeter security, maintain asset inventory, and document damages. MDNR reported that security is being maintained at a high level, not only because of fire threat, but because water being dumped from planes could injure people on the ground.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 30, DNR reported that more progress was made with dozer lines at the heel of the fire. Containment of the fire is currently 55% with the acreage at 21,450. Today's objectives are to 1) continue creating additional fire lines with the dozers and National Guard assistance, and 2) minimize use of Minnesota resources because there is not enough for them to do. The current concern is the remaining fuel south of Pike Lake. Ragged edges and unburned fuel will be monitored by helicopter throughout the day. The evacuation order is still in place for another day or two as the unstable trees remaining in the area are cleared by the ground crews (saw teams).

As of 8:00 a.m., May 31, DNR reported that the Duck Lake Fire is 57 % contained and GPS mapped at 21,458 acres. Progress has been made in containing the fire perimeter with dozer lines completed on the east side. Over the next days, dozer and aerial crews will continue to work to complete the remaining fire lines on the

south side. This work will take longer because of the difficult terrain and difficult operating conditions. DNR is still using dozers and 2 Blackhawks and have retained the Minnesota sky crane as well.

Today's priorities include the following:

- Continue to build the fireline in division J,D, and M,
- Continue clearing snags around Pike Lake and County Road 500.
- Prepare for tour of the area and briefing for the Governor's visit.

The weather forecast is favorable over the next two days in regard to fire fighting operations. DNR reported there was a second meeting last night at the McMillan Township Hall in Newberry for the public to attend. DNR officials are watching the fire area closely to determine when it will be safe for evacuees to reenter their homes and shared that information with the meeting attendees. DNR informed the group that they would be provided an update and accurate timeline regarding reentry on Friday, June 1. The meeting was well received and positive overall. Finally, DNR representatives reported they were preparing for the Governor's visit today.
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The public may obtain updated information on the wildfire disaster by accessing MDNR websites and social media. These include Facebook, Twitter, and www.michigan.gov/dnr.

R.A.C.E.S.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 28, operations in LUCE County are standing down. RACES in neighboring counties are on standby and available to assist if needed.

On May 29, RACES reported in their hours spent on the fire response for EMHSD to add to the cost documentation for the event.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 31, representatives are in a monitoring mode. Additional cost documentation for the event has been submitted through E-Team.

Department of State Police:

State Police units were in the field, coordinating with MDNR, local fire units, and other responders. MSP Department resources currently assigned include three troopers and one sergeant from the Sault Ste. Marie Post working eight hour night shifts. (These personnel are relieving the Sheriff's Department and MDNR officers for the night shifts.) In addition, the MSP is also maintaining a two person night car in both Luce and Chippewa counties. These personnel have been involved in assisting with evacuations, manning traffic points, and patrolling in the fire affected area.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 29, the patrol units have been adjusted to two two-person cars, one patrolling in Luce County and one patrolling in Chippewa County and two one-person cars patrolling the perimeter of the fire area. Coordination with MDNR, local fire units, and other responders is ongoing.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 31, representatives are in a monitoring mode, the current patrols with continue as needed, and there is no new activity to report.

State Fire Marshal:

A representative has been in regular contact with the SEOC and has coordinated with the many agencies involved in the response to this disaster.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 31, representatives are in a monitoring mode with no new activity to report.

Department of Technology, Management, and Budget:

The department coordinated with Verizon Wireless (see entry below) in working to improve communications coverage in the disaster area.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 27, DTMB coordinated with Verizon to modify their systems to add additional carriers to the Verizon Wireless sites that serve the Paradise and Newberry areas. This increased power output on the cells with a 10 – 15 % increase in coverage area

As of 8:00 a.m., May 28, DTMB and Verizon continued their coordinated effort to monitor coverage throughout the weekend with Verizon making adjustments as necessary to handle the increased call volume from that area. DTMB reported that the cell coverage was performing well and was stable even with the call volume remaining heavy. Jason Nairn of DTMB suggested that the Michigan Economic Development Commission (MEDC) be contacted to assist with determining economic tourism loss data for this event.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 29, DTMB reported that, with vacationers now leaving the area, phone volume has decreased somewhat. DTMB will continue to monitor the sites and will note any changes in this status. Verizon will be notified if any assistance is needed. As of 8:00 a.m., May 31, representatives are in a monitoring mode with no new activity to report.

Department of Transportation:

MDOT deployed portable message boards to the Upper Peninsula, to help inform and divert traffic away from the fire area. Road closures were in effect for parts of County Road 500 and County Road 414, in Luce County. Travelers on M-123 were advised to use caution, because of problems with smoke from the wildfires. Persons were advised not to travel into the wildfire area and certain areas to its east, because of problems with smoke and traffic congestion. The MDOT advisory covered the area of M-123 that stretches from south of Paradise, across to the Murphy Creek area just north of Newberry. Heavy smoke from the Duck Lake Fire was reducing visibility in this area. MDOT posted changeable message signs to warn motorists of these conditions. Preparations were also made for the possibility of additional road closures, although these were not expected to be needed.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 31, representatives are in a monitoring mode with no new activity to report.

The American Red Cross (ARC):

The American Red Cross (ARC) set up a shelter at Newberry, to accommodate disaster-affected persons who may have need. The ARC has also partnered with the Newberry “Pet Pals” organization, to accommodate the needs of persons who have pets that may also need sheltering. Although no residents have yet stayed overnight at the Newberry ARC shelter, at least 250 persons have stopped at the shelter so far, for food, water, and information. The shelter provides functional needs support services and has mental health workers and disaster health services personnel available. Two additional shelters are being arranged for in the Eastern Upper Peninsula, to be placed “on stand-by” if they are needed.

The West Michigan ARC office in Muskegon has stated that they have personnel and radio equipment on stand-by, ready to contribute to the disaster response efforts if it is needed.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 27, the ARC was staffing one shelter at the Newberry Youth Center and will continue as needed. Additionally, they have placed staff on alert and have material resources in place to open additional shelters and feeding operations if there becomes a need to do so. An Emergency Communications Response Vehicle (ECRV) arrived from Chicago as of May 28 and is providing internet connectivity and VOIP phones for the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Operation Headquarters in Newberry to enhance the Red Cross’s services. The ECRV is currently out providing water and food as needed.

As of 5:00 p.m., May 27, the ARC has moved its main shelter operation to the American Legion Hall in Newberry with the Newberry Youth Center providing first aid and mental health services as well as food and water to locals impacted by the storm. There has been no overnight persons at the shelter but many people needing meals. This operation remains active throughout May 28. On May 28, it was reported that the Newberry Youth Center location had been converted to a donations management site that is being operated by community volunteers. They will distribute items donated by the community to those impacted by the fire. As of 8:00 a.m., May 29, ARC representatives are manning the American Legion Hall site and performing ongoing services to the community with no new activity to report.

An ARC representative attended the second community meeting regarding the Duck Lake fire in the evening of May 30, at the McMillan Township Hall in Newberry. They provided information on available services and responded to citizens' needs.
As of 8:00 a.m., May 31, representatives are in a monitoring mode with no additional activity to report.

The LMAS District Health Department:
The LMAS District Health Department (LMAS stands for Luce, Mackinac, Alger, and Schoolcraft Counties) released a public service announcement called "Wildfire Smoke and Your Health." A shorter version of this announcement was issued to area radio and television stations. The announcement described how wildfire smoke can cause coughing, a scratchy throat, irritated sinuses, shortness of breath, chest pain, headaches, stinging eyes, runny noses, asthma problems, fatigue, and other symptoms. Persons with heart or lung disease are particularly susceptible to these effects, as are older adults and children. Persons in general are advised to limit their exposure to this smoke as much as possible.

Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES):
The RACES coordinator for the Upper Peninsula helped use this network to bolster communications throughout the affected area, in coordination with the American Red Cross and its shelter at Newberry. Luce County ARES/RACES activated and has coordinated with the ARC. Communications support from the Northern Lower Peninsula has also been confirmed as available, although it probably won't be needed.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 27, a cache of 800 MHz radios for DNR had been delivered by the EC from Mackinac County. As of 8:00 a.m., May 28, the Charlevoix Cheboygan Emmet (CCE) ARES/RACES Group is on standby and ready to deploy with their communications trailer if needed. As of 8:00 a.m., May 31, representatives are in a monitoring mode with no new activity to report.

Verizon Wireless:
The Verizon Wireless phone company agreed to help expand cell phone communications capabilities in the area, by adding an additional channel to the Paradise transmission tower and to their Newberry site, and boosting power to the Newberry and Paradise facilities. There had initially been problems with cell phone coverage in the disaster area, and these actions have resulted in a coverage increase of about 10 to 15 percent. The wireless traffic had nearly doubled across those improved sites within the space of only about a day.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 27, Verizon has modified systems to add additional carriers to the Verizon Wireless sites that serve the Paradise and Newberry areas. This increased power output on the cells with a 10 – 15 % increase in coverage area. They will continue to monitor throughout the weekend and make adjustments as necessary to handle the increased call volume from that area.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 28 Verizon cell service was holding up well despite continued heave call volume.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 29, call volume had decreased as vacationers left the area. Verizon is on standby if any further service is needed.

DAMAGE AND IMPACT SUMMARIES FOR LOCAL JURISDICTIONS:

Chippewa County:
The Chippewa County Emergency Management Office has been coordinating with other agencies, and helping to share important information with the public. General citizens have been advised about local road closures and advised to stay out of the area because of the fires, smoke, and problems with traffic congestion. The Tahquamenon Falls Park (in both Chippewa and Luce Counties) has been closed. The Tahquamenon Falls viewing areas are also closed off. Reservations will not be available at the Rivermouth Campground, either, until June. Heavy smoke has been reported in the Village of Paradise, drifting across from the Luce County wildfires. This smoke had also generated some rumors about an additional fire at Raco, but this report was

determined merely to stem from a misinterpretation of the drifting smoke from Luce County. As of about 5 p.m. on May 26, the fire was still reported to be about 2 or 3 miles distant from the Chippewa County line.

Evacuations from Luce County have been covering a widening area, as the Duck Lake Fire has spread. The west side of Chippewa County has been put on alert about the potential for an eventual evacuation there, as well.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 30, representatives advised that Tahquamenon Falls State Park will reopen this date.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 31, county level DHS representatives arranged to receive donated items at locations in Chippewa County and transport them to the Newberry Youth Center location that has been converted to a donations management site and is being operated by community volunteers. County representatives are in a monitoring mode, and available to assist if called upon.

Luce County:

The Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) has been monitoring the situation, and coordination has already taken place among various fire and police agencies. Residents were evacuated from the Pine Lake area, where the Duck Lake Fire had spread and created a very dangerous situation. County Road 500 has been partially closed (where it leads directly into the fire area), and County Road 414 has also been partially closed (where it meets County Road 410). Evacuations from Luce County have been covering a widening area, as the Duck Lake Fire has spread. More than 70 structures are threatened by the fires, and about 100 structures (of different types) have been lost so far.

On May 26, at 1 p.m., MDNR held a press conference, which served about 20 attendees, including multiple radio and television stations from the area. The conference provided information and answered questions from the public and the media. This conference was held at the MDNR office in Newberry.

On May 27, after 3:00 p.m., some citizens were allowed to briefly view their homes and property where safety permitted. Also on May 27, at 2 p.m., the MDNR hosted a public meeting at the McMillan Township Hall to provide information to approximately 200 citizens affected by the event.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 28, the Luce Emergency Manager reported that damage assessment is 80 % completed with the number of structures and their assessed values being compiled. The current assessment numbers follow: A total of 100 properties affected with 31 owners experiencing loss, the properties included 34 cabins, 22 garages, 20 outer buildings, 17 campers, 1 retail establishment, and 1 motel. There is expected to be additional 10 – 15 landowners with loss, still to be assessed. An estimated $1.5 million of logging equipment was destroyed. The EM is also going to gather information regarding lost income within the Tahquamenon Falls area and the persons out of work as a result of fire damage. The EM had earlier reported that road closures were minimal at this time with control of access to the fire area being the main activity.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 29, the County EM reported that the majority of citizens that wanted to view their damaged homes or that needed to retrieve needed medication from their homes within the fire area had been assisted to do so. The EM and County staff continue to perform damage assessment.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 30, damage assessment counts currently stand at 115 structures lost. The structure count consists of 41 homes, 22 garages, 27 outbuildings, and 25 campers. The EM and County remain in the monitoring status available to respond to any new needs of the citizens and fire fighters.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 31, the County representative reported that community volunteers are taking in donated items from Chippewa County local DHS representatives at the Newberry Youth Center location that has been converted to a donations management site. These items are being distributed to local citizens that have been impacted by the fire. Damage assessment is almost completed with 143 structures identified. The count of facility type damaged to date is as follows: 46 residences, 23 garages, 35 out buildings, 36 campers, 1 store and 1 motel. Terry Stark, the County EM related that the citizens of Luce County have expressed appreciation

for all the assistance being provided to them. County representatives are in a monitoring mode, and available to assist if called upon.

Schoolcraft County:
The Pine Creek Fire continues to burn, and has affected about 3220 acres in the Seney National Wildlife Refuge area, but is confined to that area and has stopped expanding. The fire has not affected Highway 28, or any built structures, and is being contained by firefighters.

As of 8:00 a.m., May 31, representatives are in a monitoring mode with no new activity to report.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:
Joe Jarvis of the U.S.A.C.E. reported that their Soo Area Office had been coordinating with county emergency management offices in the area, and have offered to assist with resources, if needed.