



NEWS RELEASE

STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

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DNR Conservation Officers Evacuate People and Pets During Midland County Flood

LANSING, MICH. Nearly 24 hours before the Edenville Dam in Midland County collapsed Tuesday, conservation officers from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources began evacuating people in homes and businesses positioned downriver of the dam. With historic flood levels expected, the officers remain on scene and are providing emergency response as needed.

Shortly before dark Tuesday, the dam collapsed, creating life-threatening, flash flood conditions that forced a mandatory evacuation for the city of Midland, including residents, businesses, medical facilities and Dow Chemical's headquarters – all in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We will continue working with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to assist with patrol vessels anywhere we can,” said Lt. Jeremy Payne, the DNR’s district law supervisor in Bay City.

The initial dam breach caused the failure of a second area dam – the Sanford Dam. As a result, the Tittabawassee River is overflowing its 24-foot flood stage and is expected to crest around 38 feet today. At 7 a.m. Wednesday, the National Weather Service said the flood stage was over 34 feet and rising.

More than 20 conservation officers from throughout the region responded with 10 DNR patrol vessels and search and rescue equipment to help continue the evacuation of flood victims.

“Conservation officers are specially trained and strategically placed in communities throughout the state with the equipment they need to respond to natural disasters and emergency situations such as this,” said Chief Gary Hagler, DNR Law Enforcement Division. “This is a difficult time for our state and the people in the Midland community affected by the flooding, and we are here to help.”

Michigan conservation officers are fully commissioned state peace officers who provide natural resources protection, ensure recreational safety and protect residents by providing general law enforcement duties and lifesaving operations in the communities they serve.

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Accompanying photos are available below (in GovDelivery) for download. Caption information follows:

Patrol truck: A DNR conservation officer prepares to launch a patrol vessel Wednesday morning to assist a stranded driver whose vehicle was stuck in a flooded intersection.

View from vessel: Conservation officers on patrol vessels continue to search for stranded people and animals Wednesday morning in Midland County.