

RECOVERY

From Page 1

Anderson informed the commissioners that Stacy Honkomp, Douglas County assessor, has been working with residents and assessing the damage to see about getting help by way of property tax relief.

Honkomp said if there are people out there who have damage, they should make sure to contact her office if they haven't already. Once she gets all the data compiled, it will be sent to the state to figure out the property tax relief.

She will be sending out notifications for abatement for people to obtain tax relief.

"It's going to be a couple step process," Honkomp said. "We have a good assessment of the damage because we got out as soon as it was possibly safe to do so."

Anderson said it is going to be a long process as they work with the multiple agencies and gather all the details.

She noted that on Wednesday, June 8, from 2 to 7 p.m., several agencies, including the American Red Cross, were available for residents of both storms to reach out to. They were at the Forada City Hall to help and to answer questions.

"Please reach out and ask questions," said Anderson. "This is going to be a long process, but we're doing our very best to get all the information out and are working with all the necessary agencies."

She also noted that a Facebook group has been started for the residents of Forada and surround-

ing areas to stay connected and get information about what is happening. The group is called Forada Maple Lake Tornado Recovery.

Lake clean-up efforts



Rush

Douglas County Land and Resource Management Director Dave Rush provided information on the county's plan to remove debris from Maple Lake. He shared a document with the commissioners, but said it is still a working document and changes will be made as things progress and change.

He said that the storm and tornado that ripped through the Forada and Maple Lake area scattered debris from structures and property into the lake for approximately one mile and as far as 500-feet out into the lake. Debris was scattered over approximately 50 acres of the lake. Most of the debris is located within 75 feet of the shoreline and is piled up against the shoreline or lakeshore equipment that remains in the lake.

Some of the material is also floating on top of the lake, while some has come to rest at the bottom.

The challenge, Rush said, is that a lot of the debris is unidentifiable, meaning, who does it belong to?

"Last week, several of us sat down and talked about how this is going to be addressed," he said. "This is a public issue, not a private homeowner issue. Homeowners don't have the ability, tools or resources to address this."

Rush said the Minnesota Department of

Natural Resources has been contacted and stated, "They have been extremely helpful and receptive. They have offered resources and they would like to help address this at the local level."

The Douglas County Sheriff's Office sent up its drone to survey the area and footage revealed that some of the larger pieces of debris are located several hundred feet into the lake.

Rush said that much of the debris consists of construction materials such as wood, sheet-rock, roofing, metal siding and insulation. Other materials include doors, windows, water toys, gas cans, deck sections, lawn furnishings, dock decking, boat parts and various household items. Larger items identified included large trees, house or shed walls or roofs, boats, boat-lifts and docks. Much of the wood debris contains visible screws or nails, and there is sharp metal and glass on the bottom in the near-shore area, said Rush.

"There's a sizable amount of material in the lake," he added, noting that there is no way to fully remove or recover all the debris from the lake, especially the smaller things like glass or nails along the shoreline, but that they will try their best to recover and remove what they can.

The north access of Maple Lake will probably be closed and used as a debris staging area, when recovery and removal efforts start next week.

Rush provided a very rough cost estimate to the commissioners for the debris clean-up. The estimated \$51,000 includes two barges for two days and another barge for a third day if

necessary, along with 15 20-yard roll off dumpsters for construction and demolition materials, seven 20-yard roll off dumpsters for mixed material waste and three 20-yard metal recycling dumpsters.

"This might be a very low estimate, but it is something we can start with now," Rush told the commissioners.

For now, the commissioners appropriated up to \$100,000 for the Forada/Maple Lake Tornado Emergency Response with all payments needing to be

approved by the board chair or the emergency management director.

Temporary water controls

At the request of Rush, Douglas County commissioners approved a temporary special controls amendment to the water surface use ordinance for Maple Lake.

Due to the debris and materials deposited into the lake, operating watercraft at speeds greater than the slow no-wake speed would be hazardous to watercraft operators and passen-

gers, said Rush. The temporary special control states that no person may operate a watercraft at any time exceeding slow no-wake speeds within the area adjacent to the northeast shoreline of the lake as marked by the Douglas County Sheriff. These controls will be in place for 30 days from June 8 or until rescinded by the board.

If people violate this rule, they can be penalized with a petty misdemeanor.

Email reporter Celeste Edenloff at cedenloff@echopress.com.

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