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## DNR conservation officers rescue three who fell through ice on Belle Isle

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Agency: Natural Resources

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Department of Natural Resources conservation officers rescued three people early Sunday evening after they fell through thin ice on the east end of Detroit's Belle Isle.

At approximately 4:30 p.m., conservation officers were called to the scene after learning three individuals had fallen through the ice near the marble lighthouse on the east end of the island. Sgts. Ron Kimmerly and Todd Szyska, along with Conservation Officers Michael Feagan and Mike Drexler, responded to the area and split up to conduct foot and vehicle patrols in an attempt to locate the victims.

After getting out of the water, one of the women communicated via cell phone with dispatchers for approximately an hour and attempted to give their location. After searching the entire east end of the island, CO Drexler located the victims on the canal between the golf course and water plant. Sgt. Szyska coordinated with the Detroit Fire Department Ladder 6 and United States Coast Guard personnel as well as EMS MEDIC 12. The conservation officers scaled the fence and rushed to assist the other two victims, who had gotten out of the water and were sitting on the snowbank. The second woman had lost her shoes and coat in the ordeal and was starting to experience hypothermia when the officers arrived.

The officers administered first aid and wrapped the subjects in emergency blankets, jackets, hats and gloves. Sgt. Szyska responded with the Detroit Fire Department, U.S. Coast Guard, EMS and a Michigan State Police trooper and carried back boards out to the victims after the lock to the gate had been cut. The responders placed the victims on the back boards and carried them through the 2-foot-deep snow to the EMS vehicle. The victims were showing signs of hypothermia and going in and out of consciousness while being carried out. After the subjects had been placed in the ambulance, they refused to be transported to the hospital.

Earlier in the day, the two women and one man had started walking around the shoreline from the Livingstone lighthouse toward the back of the Belle Isle golf course when they fell through the ice on the canal between the golf course and the water plant.

"This was an exercise in teamwork between various agencies, which resulted in the saving of two individuals," said DNR Law Enforcement Chief Gary Hagler. "I want to commend our officers, the Detroit Fire Department, U.S. Coast Guard, EMS and the Michigan State Police trooper who all responded to the scene and worked together to rescue these individuals."

As a reminder, no ice is ever safe, and with the warming temperatures Michigan is currently experiencing, it is extremely important not to walk on rivers or near fast-flowing stream intakes. River currents can cause ice to thin quickly, especially during a spring thaw.

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