

# Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division

Field Operations

**Weekly Report**  
**February 22 -28, 2015**

This report is a broad sampling of events that have taken place in the past week, but does not include all actions taken by the Law Enforcement Division.

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## **Region I- Calhoun (Northwest)**

### **PICKENS COUNTY**

On February 23<sup>rd</sup>, Sgt. Brian Keener assisted the Pickens County Chamber of Commerce with “mock” interviews of the 2015 Youth Leadership Pickens program. During the interview and dinner banquet session, local high school juniors and seniors that were selected for the leadership program chose a profession that they were interested in and attended interviews with local professionals holding those positions.



*Sergeant Keener with Pickens High School senior Mady Hoffbauer just prior to her “mock” interview for the position of Conservation Ranger.*

## **Region II- Gainesville (Northeast)**

### **HABERSHAM COUNTY**

On February 17<sup>th</sup>, Sgt. Steve Seitz, Cpl. Kevin Dyer, RFC David Webb, RFC Shane Sartor, and RFC Brandon Pierce assisted the Habersham County road department clear public roadways that were blocked by downed trees that were broken during the ice storm. The officers used chainsaws to cut the trees out of the roadways which assisted the road department clear all the public roads in the County so the citizens and emergency vehicles could get through.

On February 22<sup>nd</sup>, Major Stephen Adams, Major Thomas Barnard, Sgt. Stan Elrod, Sgt. Steve Seitz, Cpl. Josh Chambers, Cpl. Kevin Dyer, and RFC Chad Chambers responded to an incident in the County where a man who had killed his ex-wife and another male got in a shootout with the Sheriff and another deputy. The Habersham County Sheriff and deputy were injured in the shootout and the shooter was believed to be hiding in the woods. Many federal, state, county, and local law enforcement officers responded to the incident to assist the Habersham County Sheriff’s Office. The shooter was later found deceased in the area of the initial shootout and the case is still under investigation.

### **TOWNS COUNTY**

From February 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, RFC David Webb patrolled around the County and assisted the Sheriff’s Office during a snowstorm as needed. The mountainous area received approximately 7 to 8 inches of snow during this time. RFC Webb assisted two stranded motorists and assisted the deputies with a domestic disturbance call.

## **Region III- Thomson (East Central)**

### **OCONEE COUNTY**

On February 24<sup>th</sup> Sgt. Brian Carter was returning from a winter storm deployment in the metro Atlanta area when he received a call in reference to a possible wildlife poisoning case. The complainant reported that while walking his dog along a property boundary the animal was exposed to a substance that caused it to die within ten minutes of exposure. A necropsy of the dog will be performed to determine cause of death. The case is still under investigation.

### **OGLETHORPE COUNTY**

Sgt. Brian Carter responded to a request for assistance from a landowner. The subject had set a live trap next to his trashcan and had caught an animal he was unable to identify. Wildlife Technician Nick Holbrooks also responded. The animal was identified as a raccoon but one of a very unusual color. The animal was described as a blonde color phase raccoon.



### **RICHMOND COUNTY**

On February 28, Cpl. Ben Payne patrolled Richmond County checking state owned properties and complaints. While checking Spirit Creek WMA he observed that someone had torn up the roads on the area and caused major ruts along the edges. At the end of the road he came upon a vehicle parked with 3 teenagers standing around smoking. After a brief investigation it was determined that the vehicle they were in was involved in the damage to the roads. The teenager's names were taken down and the driver was checked for warrants. The investigation is ongoing.

While patrolling a complaint on Augusta Development property, Cpl. Payne observed two parked vehicles with trailers attached behind a gate. No one was allowed to be on the property and it appeared that someone was trespassing on ATVs. He followed the tracks and observed two individuals riding ATVs and made traffic stop. The individuals did not have permission to be on the property. After running their drivers licenses through GCIC it was determined that one of the suspects was wanted in Moultrie, Ga on a Bench Warrant for driving with a suspended licenses. He was arrested and turned over to Richmond County. The trespassing is still under investigation.

### **BURKE COUNTY**

RFC Matherly and RFC Billips investigated a complaint of illegal dumping in Burke County. The Rangers met with the land owner, photographed the area, and collected evidence. After meeting with the land owner the Rangers attempted to locate the person committing the violation. It was found that the debris was from a house being cleaned up by a local bank. The investigation is ongoing at this time.

## **Region IV- Macon (West Central)**

### **MERIWETHER COUNTY**

On Saturday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, Sgt. Brent Railey received a call about suspicious items found on Joe Kurz WMA by squirrel hunters. Sgt. Railey responded to the scene and was taken to the location, which was several hundred yards down a foot trail. He found a pair of blue jeans that appeared to be torn or ripped off of someone, a white T shirt that appeared to have been cut off of someone, a pair of shoes, a pair of men's underwear, a towel and an empty bottle of alcohol as well as a pair of scissors. There was also evidence that the person had tried to start a small fire at the location. All of the clothing was wet from the rain and sleet the night before. RFC Keith Page and K9 Drake responded to the scene and were unable to locate any more evidence. Cpl. Keith Waddell also responded and the four of them searched the immediate area for anything out of the ordinary. On Sunday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, Sgt. Railey, Cpl. Travis Sweat and Deputy Ranger Joe Sebo returned to the area and searched a larger area looking for anything out of the ordinary but they found nothing.

### **PUTNAM COUNTY**

On the afternoon of February 28<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Lynn Stanford and a DNR LED Intern patrolled numerous areas along Lake Sinclair and Cedar Creek WMA. Over 20 fishermen were checked and several verbal and written warnings were given for fishing license violations. Later that evening, Cpl. Stanford patrolled along a remote dirt road where he had received several complaints and located a suspicious vehicle. After further investigation, field sobriety was conducted on the driver and he was determined to be sober however the driver was issued an open container citation and released.

## **Region V- Albany (Southwest)**

No activity to report.

## **Region VI- Metter (Southeast)**

### **CANDLER**

On February 23, 2015, Corporal Eddie Akins responded to an urgent call of a missing person in Candler County. Cpl. Akins met with the spouse of the missing person, obtaining needed information for the search. Sgt. Dasher attempted to get a helicopter to assist in the search but the weather would not permit the use of one. Cpl. Kevin Joyce was contacted to bring the DNR canine unit to assist in the tracking of the missing person. Other DNR officers arrived on the scene to assist with the search. Personnel from Candler S.O., Metter Fire & Rescue, Officers from GSP, numerous DNR officers and other volunteers all searched for the missing person. The missing person was located at approximately 3:00am on the morning of February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

On February 27, 2015, Corporal Eddie Akins was given information about where a deer was being held without a permit. Investigation of the complaint resulted in the deer being found. A violation for holding a game animal without a permit was documented.

On February 25, Sergeant James McLaughlin and Corporal Dan Stiles were deployed to Atlanta to assist with a potential winter storm. The officers patrolled Interstate and other major roadways in and around metro Atlanta. The officers notified GEMA of road conditions, assisted motorists, and assisted local and state law enforcement agencies with traffic patrols.

### **LAURENS**

On February 22, Corporal Dan Stiles responded to a complaint of a possible out of season dove shoot. Corporal Stiles located the source of the gunshots. The complainant was mistaken as to the source of the gunshots. No violation of law was encountered.

## **DODGE COUNTY**

On February 27, Ranger First Class Allen Mills conducted state land patrols on Dodge County Public Fishing Area and Little Ocmulgee State Park. Three vessels and seven anglers were checked for license and regulation compliance. Verbal guidance was given for two minor violations.

## **BEN HILL COUNTY**

On Feb 22, Corporal John A Stokes patrolled creeks for fishing without permission; one violation was documented for fishing without a license off Old River road on Otter creek.

## **WHEELER COUNTY**

On February 23, through February 27, Ranger First Class Rodney Horne attended the Georgia Department of Public Safety Training Center in Forsyth and successfully completed a 40 hour course on Basic Photography and Digital Imaging class that consisted of lecture, 5 blocks of physical photography practical exercises, and a final written examination.

## **Region VII- Brunswick (Coastal)**

### **BRYAN COUNTY**

On Feb. 22, RFC Kiel Toney and Cpl. Jay Morgan responded to a call about an overturned boat on the Ogeechee River near Strathy Hall. Upon arrival, the rangers found a 30-foot boat washed up against the riverbank lying on its side. The boat was registered in New Jersey and the rangers could not make contact with the registered owner. Since there was the small presence of an oily sheen on the water, the U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Office in Savannah was contacted. Two MSO personnel arrived on the scene and determined that the threat of a fuel leak was present. The Coast Guard arranged for a private contractor to remove the fuel and vessel the next day, and planned on contacting the owner



**Overturned vessel - Ogeechee River**

On Feb. 28<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Bill Bryson traveled to Savannah to assist the Chatham County rangers with a DNR display/information table that was set up at the Savannah Boat Show.

On the evening of Feb. 28<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Jay Morgan patrolled the Richmond Hill WMA checking for raccoon hunters and persons possibly illegally hunting hogs with dogs. One raccoon hunter was checked and no violations were found. The ranger later patrolled the Fort McAllister State Park and campground.

## WAYNE COUNTY

On February 21, Rangers in Wayne County assisted the Wayne County Tourism Board with the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Hog Jam Tournament. Over 300 hogs were taken. The rangers also assisted 18 Wounded Warriors hunt for hogs.

