

# Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division

Field Operations

Weekly Report  
August 2 – August 8, 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.



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

### **GILMER COUNTY**

On August 8<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. James Keener and Ranger Mark Moyer patrolled Carter's Lake and issued 2 citations for skiing without PFD's, 2 citations for operating a vessel with insufficient PFD's, 1 warning for operating vessel with improper lights, and 1 warning for improper registration. Cpl. Keener and Ranger Moyer were also flagged down by boaters who reported being shot at while on the lake. They responded to the area from the water while Gilmer County Deputies responded by land. All officers searched the area where the incident had taken place and the incident is still under investigation.

On August 9<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. James Keener observed suspicious activity on a private tract of property on Hwy 136. Cpl. Keener made a traffic stop and questioned the three occupants who admitted that they had just dumped trash on the property. Citations and warnings were issued for Littering.

### **FANNIN COUNTY**

On August 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, RFC Cody Jones patrolled Blue Ridge Lake. RFC Jones issued citations and warnings for PWCs operating during hours of darkness, skiing after sunset, light violations, overloaded vessel, allowing underage person to operate w/o boater education course, and 100 foot violations.

On August 8<sup>th</sup>, RFC Cody Jones utilized a kayak to patrol the Toccoa River. RFC Jones checked 22 boats and 25 fishing license. He issued 7 citations and warnings for fishing without licenses and operating a vessel without a PFD.

### **MURRAY COUNTY**

On August 7<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. James Keener patrolled Fort Mt. State Park and issued three warnings for non-residents fishing without license. Information was also provided to the three individuals for them to obtain the required license. Cpl. Keener was later called to assist Eton PD and the Georgia State Patrol with a traffic stop. A subject was arrested for driving while his license were suspended. Officers making the arrest later found what they believed to be ginseng roots in the vehicle. The driver and passengers were questioned and the driver was subsequently charged with digging ginseng out of season and failing to immediately plant berries from harvested ginseng in addition to the driving offense.

On August 9<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. James Keener and Ranger Mark Moyer assisted the Georgia State Patrol with a road check in the Holly Creek area of Cohutta WMA. During the road check, 3 citations were issued for possessing an open container of alcohol in a vehicle, 1 citation for fishing without a license, 1 warning for fishing without a trout license, and warnings for seat belt violations. Cpl. Keener and Ranger Moyer later patrolled areas around the Conasauga River and issued a citation for fishing without license and a warning for operating a vessel without a PFD.

## WHITFIELD COUNTY

On August 4<sup>th</sup> at approximately 11:30pm, Sgt. Mike Barr received information that suspicious persons were at the Johns Mountain WMA shooting range area. The area is closed at dark. Sgt. Barr contacted Cpl. Shawn Elmore who was in the area and on patrol with RFC Cody Jones. The rangers located two vehicles and four people parked in the shooting range parking lot. The rangers checked the individuals and while talking to them, smelled the distinct odor of marijuana coming from one of the vehicles. Cpl. Elmore obtained consent to search the vehicle and found suspected marijuana and drug paraphernalia. The driver, who was from the Sugar Valley area, was arrested. A further check revealed that the man was wanted out of Gordon County with an active warrant. The man was arrested and transported to the Whitfield County jail and charged with violation of the Georgia's controlled substance act.



*Drug paraphernalia found on subjects at the Johns Mountain WMA shooting range*

## **FLOYD COUNTY**

At approximately 3:30am on the morning of August 9<sup>th</sup>, RFC Roger McConkey was patrolling Floyd County for all night fishermen and boaters in the Coosa River near Brushy Branch. RFC McConkey found several people with boating and fishing violations including several people fishing without licenses and a boat operating without a bow light at night. During that patrol, RFC McConkey checked two legal fishermen from Carrollton, Georgia who were fishing for catfish. Mr. Tyson was proud to show his blue catfish he had caught which weighed approximately 35 pounds and was 41 inches long. Mr. Tyson stated it was the largest catfish he had ever caught! Congratulations to Mr. Tyson!



*Mr. Tyson shows his 35 pound blue catfish from the Coosa River*

## DADE COUNTY

On August 8<sup>th</sup>, Sgt. Mike Barr and RFC Ben Cunningham responded to a call for assistance at the Cloudland Canyon State Park. A female had been walking along the main road when a vehicle passing her hit her with their side view mirror. The vehicle did not stop. A friend of the female who was also walking quickly sought help. The Dade County fire and rescue and a Sheriff's Office Deputy responded. The female was taken to Erlanger Hospital in Chattanooga, Tennessee and is expected to recover from injuries to her arm, shoulder, and neck. Sgt. Barr and RFC Cunningham interviewed witnesses and located a part of the side view mirror in the immediate area of the incident. The incident is under investigation. If you have any information on the driver of the "hit and run" vehicle or the vehicle involved, please contact DNR Law Enforcement Division Region I at (770) 769-9680 or contact the Dade County Sheriff's Office at (706) 657-3233.



*A part of the side view mirror that struck a female pedestrian at Cloudland Canyon State Park. DNR LED is investigating the incident in cooperation with the Dade County Sheriff's Office*

## WALKER COUNTY

On August 8<sup>th</sup>, Sgt. Mike Barr and RFC Ben Cunningham were patrolling the Crockford-Pigeon Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) near Petty John's cave. At dark, the rangers were checking campers in the area for the required Georgia Outdoor Recreational Pass (GORP) that is required for camping on the WMA. While checking with Christopher Weathington and his family at a campsite, Chris' son mentioned that his Dad had caught a snake earlier just down the road. He showed the rangers a picture of the timber rattler his Dad had seen crossing the road. ***Chris is an experienced snake handler and catching a rattle snake is not a recommended practice.*** The snake was released unharmed in the same area.



*Chris Weathington has experience handling venomous snakes like this timber rattler*

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

### **HART**

On August 2<sup>nd</sup>, RFC Brandon Pierce and Cpl. Craig Fulghum patrolled the lake for any boating safety/fishing activity. A few boats were checked for proper safety equipment. As a result, one citation was issued. The violation consisted of allowing underage child to ride in moving vessel without wearing PFD.

On August 8<sup>th</sup>, RFC Brandon Pierce along with volunteers completed a ten hour hunter education class at Oak Bower Baptist Church. A total of ten students attended the course and all were certified.

### **RABUN COUNTY**

On August 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, RFC Chad Chambers and Rabun County Deputy Cody Sanders patrolled Lakes Rabun, Seed and Burton. The two officers encountered several violations and issued citations and warnings for towing skiers between sunset and sunrise, operating vessels without lights during hours of darkness, operating with insufficient PFD's, operating without registration and residents and nonresidents fishing without licenses.

## **UNION COUNTY**

On August 2<sup>nd</sup>, Cpl. Kevin Dyer and Union County Deputy Sheriff Andrew Hammonds conducted a boat safety patrol on Nottely Lake. CPL Dyer and D/S Hammonds detected multiple boating violations and issued citations and warnings for operating a vessel without registration numbers displayed, towing a skier with a Personal Water Craft without a spotter and operating a Personal Water Craft within 100' of a dock above idle speed.

On August 8<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Kevin Dyer and Union County Deputy Sheriff Andrew Hammonds conducted a boat safety patrol on Nottely Lake. CPL Dyer and D/S Hammonds detected multiple boating violations and issued citations and warnings for operating a vessel without a Personal Floatation Device, allowing a child under the age of 13 to ride in a vessel without wearing a personal floatation device, operating a vessel without registration, towing a skier with a Personal Water Craft without a spotter, operating a vessel with an expired registration, creating a wake in a no wake zone, operating a Personal Water Craft within 100' of dock above idle speed, operating a vessel with improper navigation lights during the hours of darkness and towing a skier between sunset and sunrise.

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

### **WILKES COUNTY**

On August 4<sup>th</sup> Cpl. Mark Patterson taught a Hunter Education class at the Mary Willis Library.

### **RICHMOND COUNTY**

On August 8, Cpl. Payne and RFC Matherly worked the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Gator Fest Swim Event on the Savannah River in downtown Augusta. The event consisted of a 3.4 mile and 1.2 mile swim. Two hundred and ninety-four swimmers entered the event. All swimmers completed the courses in the allotted times. There were awards for age categories.

Later in the day, Sgt. Boswell, Cpl. Payne, RFC Billips, RFC Matherly and Ranger Madden attended the Outdoor Expo at the James Brown Arena. Rangers ran the Laser Shot, handed out regulations and answered questions on rules, laws and regulations. The event attracted thousands of outdoor enthusiasts. The expo lasted all day and ended with guest speaker Duck Dynasty, Alan Robertson.

### **LINCOLN COUNTY**

On August 9<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Ryan Swain and Ranger Michael Madden apprehended three subjects who were noodling for catfish while the season was out. The subjects were located on the Rip Rap on the Hwy 47 causeway on Clarks Hill Lake. The subjects were issued written warnings and given copies of the Georgia Fishing Regulations.

## **LAKE OCONEE**

On August 8, while patrolling Lake Oconee, Cpl. Derrell Worth, RFC Richard Tanner, and Rangers Dan Schay and Jason Harrison caught 2 individuals talking game and non-game fish by illegal methods. The violators had caught a total of 67 fish by means of cast net and gill net. The officers confiscated the fish and the nets and charged the individuals accordingly. The fish were donated to a needy family so they would not go to waste.

Officers patrolling Lake Oconee during the weekend cited vessels for failure to obey regulatory marker, and operating vessel with insufficient PFDs.

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

### **BALDWIN COUNTY**

On Thursday, July 8<sup>th</sup>, Ranger Matt Johnson investigated an unlawful dumping case in northern Baldwin County. Ranger Johnson was able to use a receipt that was found in a pile of trash that someone had dumped next to a hunting club gate to track down the person who had dumped the trash the week before. One subject was charged with littering.

### **HARRIS COUNTY**

On August 2<sup>nd</sup>, Cpl. Mitch Oliver was at the Goat Rock boat ramp checking fishermen as they took off the water and launched. A truck occupied by 2 individuals entered the parking lot pulling a bass boat. Cpl. Oliver noticed that the registration on the vessel was expired and decided to speak with the 2 men before they launched the boat. During the conversation and subsequent check of the vessel's safety equipment, Cpl. Oliver became suspicious that the men may have some illegal drugs in their possession. After an investigation, the men were arrested and charged with violation of Georgia's controlled substance act (Felony) and possession of drug related objects. Located on the 2 men and in the truck were methamphetamine and 5 glass smoking pipes.

### **LAKE SINCLAIR**

On Saturday, August 8<sup>th</sup>, Ranger Matt Johnson and Sgt. Bo Kelly were patrolling Lake Sinclair for boating violations when they observed a vessel that was towing a tube 20 minutes after sunset. During the stop, Ranger Johnson noticed that the operator appeared to be impaired. The operator agreed to perform field sobriety exercises and was found to be under the influence. The operator was arrested and charged with boating under the influence, child endangerment (BUI), and was given a written warning for towing after sunset.

### **TALBOT COUNTY**

On August 8<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen and Cpl. Mitch Oliver checked fishing/boating activity on Big Lazer PFA. Four individuals were found fishing without the required WMA license. Rangers issued written warnings to the individuals for the violation and information was provided on how to obtain the WMA license.



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

### **DECATUR COUNTY**

On August 2<sup>nd</sup>, Cpl. Jim Atchley, RFC Tony Cox, and Ranger Steve Thomas responded to an airboat incident with injuries on the Spring Creek portion of Lake Seminole. The operator and passenger were ejected and sustained minor injuries after losing control due to a mechanical failure. While investigating this incident, the Rangers were dispatched to another incident on the Flint River near Bainbridge, after a wake boarder fell and sustained a neck injury. No violations were detected in either of these incidents.

### **SEMINOLE COUNTY**

On August 8<sup>th</sup>, RFC Tony Cox responded to a boating incident on Lake Seminole near Seminole State Park. This incident occurred when a barefoot skier fell and injured several ribs. The subject was treated and released at a local hospital. No violations were detected in this incident.

### **CRISP COUNTY**

On August 8<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Bob Holley and Ranger Jesse Harrison were patrolling Lake Blackshear when they observed a vessel being operated with improper lights. A vessel stop was conducted and during the stop the vessel's operator was determined to be under the influence of alcohol. The operator was placed under arrest and transported to the Crisp County Jail where he was charged with operating a vessel under the influence and operating a vessel with improper lights.

### **LAKE WORTH**

On August 8<sup>th</sup>, Corporal Robbie Griner and Ranger Eric White were patrolling the Kinchafoonee Creek portion of Lake Worth when they encountered a boater violating a no-wake zone. The officers stopped the boat to address the violation with the operator, and while doing so, determined the operator to be under the influence of alcohol. The subject was placed under arrest for BUI and violating the "no wake" area. The operator was also charged for child endangerment due to the presence of his 18-month old child on board the boat during this incident.

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

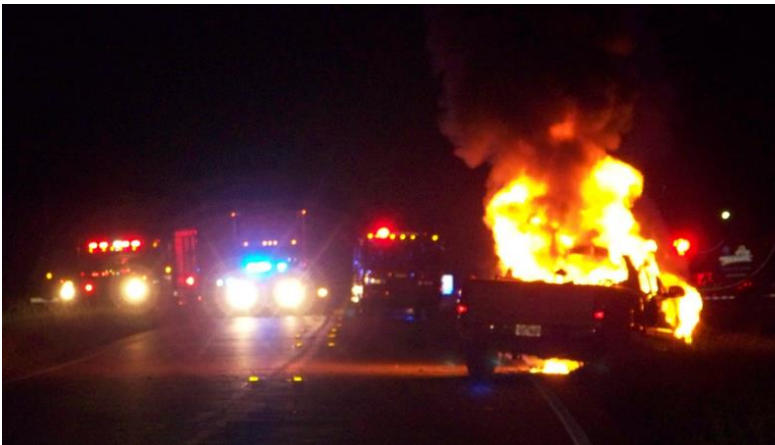
### **EFFINGHAM COUNTY**

On August 8<sup>th</sup>, Ranger Jordan Crawford and Corporal Eddie Akins patrolled the Savannah River in Effingham County looking for fishing and boating activity. During the patrol a total of 16 boats were checked with one violation documented for fishing without a license and one violation for operating a vessel without a throwable device.

On August 8<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Eddie Akins set up and checked incoming boaters and fishermen at Steel Bridge in Effingham County. His efforts resulted in seven boats and four fishermen being checked. Two violations were documented for operating a vessel without personal flotation devices.

### **CHARLTON COUNTY**

On August 8<sup>th</sup>, Ranger Sam Williams overheard the Charlton County S.O. dispatcher sending units to a vehicle fire on Highway 121 near Folkston. Ranger Williams realized he was approximately a mile from the location of the fire and responded to provide assistance. When the officer arrived on scene, the vehicle was already fully engulfed in flames and the occupants were standing nearby unharmed. Ranger Williams assisted local agencies by redirecting traffic onto county roads nearby until the highway could be reopened.



*Vehicle fire in Charlton County*

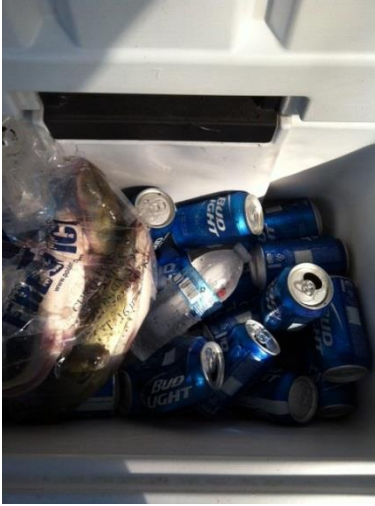
### **ECHOLS COUNTY**

On August 8<sup>th</sup>, Sgt. Patrick Dupree was patrolling hunting leases near Tarver when he encountered a group of hounds-men training their dogs. One of the hunters did not possess a hunting license. Sgt. Dupree issued the man a warning for the violation.

### **WARE COUNTY**

On August 4<sup>th</sup>, Corporal Jason Shipes was patrolling the Satilla River for boating and fishing activity at Hwy 84 landing. While in the area, Cpl. Shipes noticed several individuals camping under the highway bridge. As he approached the camping area, Cpl. Shipes noticed that one of the subjects seemed to be in some type of medical distress. Cpl. Shipes attempted to assist however it was clear that he was unable to communicate with the officer. Contact was made with Ware's emergency operations center and an ambulance was requested. Cpl. Shipes continued to monitor the subject's condition while waiting on the responding EMT's. During this time the subject started to have a seizure and Cpl. Shipes cleared the immediate area so that the individual did not injure himself. When EMS arrived on scene, Cpl. Shipes assisted them with placing the person onto a stretcher and utilized his patrol vehicle to transport the victim from under the bridge to the waiting ambulance. Cpl. Shipes checked on the condition of the victim a few days later and learned that he was still in the intensive care unit.

## **BERRIEN COUNTY**



On August 2<sup>nd</sup>, Cpl. Tommy Daughtrey was on patrol at Paradise PFA, when he observed three subjects sitting on a bench beside one of the area lakes. As Cpl. Daughtrey approached the individuals, he noticed one of them start to pour a beer out onto the ground. All three subjects had consumed a large amount of alcohol. The subject fishing was found to be “wanted” out of Cook County on a felony warrant. A Berrien County Deputy soon arrived on the scene to transport the subjects to the Berrien County Jail. The “wanted” subject was charged with fishing w/o a license and consuming alcohol on a PFA. The other two subjects could not speak English and did not have any identification. They were turned over to Berrien County where they were charged with public drunkenness.

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

No significant activity to report.