



GEORGIA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

**2017- 2019 Strategic Goals
Progress Report
January 2018**



Law Enforcement Off the Pavement

VISION STATEMENT

The vision of the Law Enforcement Division is to ensure that Georgia's natural resources will be conserved for our present and future generations

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Law Enforcement Division is to conserve our natural resources and to protect the people we serve. We maintain public support through fair and vigorous law enforcement, quality education, and community involvement. We commit ourselves to our Vision and Mission by practicing our core beliefs, which are **trust, fairness, and professionalism.**

TRUST IS OUR FOUNDATION

The people we serve are entitled to the highest level of integrity in our public and private actions.

FAIRNESS IS OUR DOCTRINE

We conduct our duties without favoritism or bias.

PROFESSIONALISM IS OUR CREED

We are committed to courteous, effective, and efficient service.



A Word from the Director



As the Law Enforcement Division continues moving forward we must stay focused on our core mission, Conservation Law Enforcement. This consists of hunting, fishing, boating, environmental enforcement as well as public safety on all DNR controlled properties. The services we provide are an integral and vital part of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources fulfilling our agencies' responsibilities. Our unique capabilities provide relevant and essential services for the sportsmen and women of this state as well as all outdoor recreational users. We provide the basic quality of life for the general populace in our state.

Game Wardens were the first community oriented officers in the United States. We must continue with this tradition by practicing Problem Adoption and being active members of our communities, so that we remain relevant and can garner support for our enforcement efforts.

As we continue to work through the three-year Strategic Plan, this "Progress Report" is meant to provide an assessment of our division's progress in reaching these aggressive, yet attainable goals. It will show that since the Plan was implemented last year, all of the goals are in various stages of progress, to be energetically pursued during the final two years of the Plan.

The successes we have realized so far have come through collaboration with other DNR Divisions, the hard work of our officers, outstanding field investigations, and our great support staff. Our partnerships with other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies have helped us to support our core mission as well.

I am encouraged by the progress we have made during this first year of the Plan, but as a Division, we still have work to do. As the Law Enforcement Director, I consider it an honor to work with our staff and game wardens and I look forward to the next two years as we strive to meet these goals and finish what we started in January of 2017.

The Law Enforcement Division has a proud history of carrying out our duties in a professional, resourceful, respectful and caring manner. It is an honor to serve you as the Law Enforcement Director and lead this division as we build on our traditions and culture, expand our responsibilities and embrace the new challenges that lie ahead for law enforcement.

Colonel Eddie Henderson

Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: Conservation Law Enforcement

Protect Georgia's natural resources and people through fair and vigorous enforcement efforts and provide a safe environment on DNR controlled properties.

Strategy 1.1 - Encourage voluntary compliance with wildlife, boating and environmental laws through proactive and responsive law enforcement patrols on private properties, DNR controlled properties and waters of the state. Capture the number of Citizen Assists provided by our officers.

STATUS: In Progress - Through proactive high-visibility patrols, Game Wardens worked throughout the year to encourage voluntary compliance. Game Wardens performed 7,835 Park Patrols, 10,893 WMA Patrols, 1,433 PFA Patrols and 3,977 on-water boating patrols. During these patrols 23,002 vessels, 18,928 hunting licenses and 24,101 fishing licenses were checked. There were 1,840 citizen assists entered into the computer aided dispatch system and 7,377 cases and 7,883 warning citations were written for violations of the law encountered by Game Wardens during 2017.

Strategy 1.2 - Provide safe boating and hunting experiences through conservation law enforcement efforts to prevent incidents, fatalities, injuries and property damage.

STATUS: In Progress - There were 1,901 cases and 2,746 warnings issued for boating violations, 4,469 cases and 4,663 warnings issued for wildlife (including fish) violations. In CY 2017, Game Wardens responded to 36 Hunting Incidents, 131 Boating Incidents and 62 Drowning Incidents. There were 19,232 on-water boating patrols conducted. For the entire Division, 137,384.5 man-hours were dedicated to wildlife enforcement and 32,859 man-hours dedicated to fish enforcement in CY 2017

Strategy 1.3 - Safeguard Georgia's natural and cultural resources. Continue to further develop an intelligence-led policing philosophy that includes monitoring trends in conservation law enforcement and the use of existing data. Develop a reliable method of complaint/incident documentation and retrieval of data.

STATUS: In Progress - HQ pulls and sends a complete listing of all cases and warnings to each Captain for their Region for each month. This is disseminated via email by the 5th of the following month. All complaints are entered into Mobile Forms on the CTS system and are available for other game wardens to view and update relative to each complaint on a real-time basis. Data retrieval for individual complaints or trends can be and have been conducted for the field by HQ on request. Individual complaints can be pulled through mobile forms by individual offices when needed. A committee has been formed to develop specific data relevant to this strategy and once recommendations are finalized, HQ will develop a system to disseminate the data.

Strategy 1.4 - Annually review staffing matrix to determine the staffing requirements to meet the conservation law enforcement needs and public safety needs for all DNR controlled properties, private land and waters of the state.

STATUS: In Progress - Matrix was reviewed and updated with vacant positions in October. The matrix was used to help prioritize new hire placement throughout the state.

Strategy 1.5 - Provide emergency response during critical incidents and natural disasters in accordance with the DNR All Hazards Response Manual and ICS guidelines.

STATUS: In Progress - During CY 2017, 442 employees of DNR attended Critical Incident Management Training, including 152 Law Enforcement Division employees. Multiple responses were conducted during 2017 to include the West Mims Fire, Albany Tornadoes, Hurricane Irma, and multiple winter weather events.

Strategy 1.6 - Coordinate the Department's Law Enforcement efforts with all Divisions through regular communication and consultation. Hold monthly meetings between region supervisors in each region to develop focus lists and semiannual statewide meetings with WRD and PRHSD leadership.

STATUS: In Progress - LED Region Supervisors have met and communicated monthly. The Region Focus List was developed quarterly in each region by gathering input from the field Game Wardens, WRD and PRHSD. The WRD/LED/PRHSD meetings occurred in March and September.

Strategy 1.7 - Continue to update and improve communication systems for officer safety and enhance responses to calls for assistance from the public. Identify communications needs for each LED Region for radio coverage and develop a communication plan to address the needs, to include the development of digital radio coverage for each Region.

STATUS: In Progress - The department was given a general obligation bond in FY17 to upgrade statewide communications. Currently Regions I, II, IV, V and VII are operating on digital repeaters. Region III is progressing toward completion and Region VI will be scheduled for the upgrade upon the completion of the Region III project. In May of 2017, the Georgia Emergency Management Agency transferred a 40' Mobile Command and Communications vehicle to the Law Enforcement Division. The vehicle is currently having radios updated at Atlanta Communications and new A/V equipment has been purchased and will be installed upon the completion of their work. This vehicle was deployed three times during 2017 and was very beneficial during Hurricane Irma, serving as a platform for command staff and the Region VII office for a short time when the Coastal HQ was without power.

Strategy 1.8 - Collect and review all Search and Rescue (SAR) data on an annual basis to ensure a proper response to each call. Identify SAR resources within DNR and list, share and update information annually.

STATUS: In Progress - During CY 2017, LED Game Wardens responded to 151 land SAR cases involving 286 persons and 208 Water SAR Cases involving 604 persons. Land SAR cases required 1,476.5 man-hours and 17,865 vehicle miles. Water SAR cases required 4,270.5 man-hours and 43,954 vehicle miles. Three inflatable swift water boats and additional equipment was funded and purchased with GEMA grant funds. Several locations were identified with a frequency of rescue events that needed this type of resource for response. A new incident response trailer has been funded and purchased with GEMA grant funds to replace the Region VI trailer that was in poor condition.

Strategy 1.9 - Complete the implementation of the DNR LE Transition Plan.

STATUS: In Progress - The Transition Plan will conclude on July 31, 2018 when all DNR POST certified associates will have to relinquish their commissions or transfer to LED. On January 1, 2017, there were 13 WRD and 24 PHD POST certified associates. On January 1, 2018, there were 9 WRD and 15 PHD POST certified associates remaining.



Goal 2: Education, Marketing and Community Involvement

Utilize communications, marketing, and community involvement strategies to promote conservation law enforcement education, recruitment and retention of sportsmen and women, and the mission, responsibilities and unique capabilities of the Law Enforcement Division.

Strategy 2.1 - Promote safe boating and hunting by providing boater and hunter education through online and in-person classes. Develop seasonal PSAs related to hunting and boating safety for dissemination and presentation by our officers thru local media outlets.

STATUS: In Progress - Eight boating news releases and two hunting news releases were sent to statewide media. Public service announcements (PSAs) were written on tree stand safety, utilizing the “kill switch” when operating a boat and for the highly successful SPLASH Water Safety Campaign. They were disseminated to Game Wardens across the state for recording and broadcast in their local markets.

Strategy 2.2 - Continue to utilize media relations, LED presentations, press releases and social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, etc.) to enhance communication with citizens and the division’s stakeholders. Emphasis will be on using social media to recruit and retain sportsmen and women as an educational tool. Promote social media to have 100,000 followers by the end of 2019.

STATUS: In Progress - In 2017, the Division utilized outreach tools and campaigns to educate Georgia citizens and to promote hunting and water safety. Media interviews were concentrated around specific initiatives such as the start of the boating and hunting seasons, “Operation Dry Water” - focused enforcement for boating under the influence, and the July 4th Holiday weekend to promote safe boating and swimming safety and to educate citizens on boating laws and how they are applied. Prior to boating season, in late May, LED partnered with the Governor’s Office of Highway Safety (GOHS) and the Georgia State Patrol (GSP) to encourage safety on the waterways and highways throughout the summer. The SPLASH Water Safety Campaign was revitalized in March, when the Division began a partnership with First Lady Sandra Deal and many federal, state and private partners, with the goal of reducing the number of water-related deaths in Georgia. The acronym highlights positive actions for water safety – Supervision, Prevention, Life jackets, Arms-length, Swim lessons, and Have a water safety plan. Successes of the campaign in just the first 10 months include stenciling over 200 boat ramps with a safety message; identifying locations statewide for the placement of life jacket loaner boards and; developing printed materials, videos, a web site, Facebook page, and an Information & Education program for use by schools and other organizations. At the end of 2017, the focus of SPLASH is securing donations of life jackets and materials to build install approximately 250 loaner stations at boat ramps and swimming areas across the state. Plans are to continue the SPLASH initiative indefinitely. Directed communication methods and social media were an important part of the Division’s outreach efforts in 2017. Weekly DNR LE Report was provided to the DNR Board and Weekly Operations Reports were posted to the website. Presentations and speeches to various civic and community groups, and news media interviews and interaction were often utilized to disseminate information to the public. The LED Facebook page currently has nearly 50,000 page “Likes” (people who regularly view the page). Many of LED’s Facebook posts have a “Reach” (number of people who may see the post through their friends who “Like” the page) that exceeds 50,000, and occasionally, some are above 100,000. The Division also has an Instagram account with over 4,500 followers, a Twitter account that is linked to Facebook, which currently has 1,168 followers, and a YouTube Channel with multiple safety-related videos, including a Boating Rental Video with nearly 33,000 views.

Strategy 2.3 - Develop/promote a marketing plan to emphasize the division’s mission, responsibilities, unique capabilities, operational needs and relevance. This message will be communicated to the citizens of Georgia, the General Assembly, board members, local public officials, NGOs and other divisions within the department. Develop quick reference cards, presentation material and public service announcements to promote the various/diverse duties of the division. Provide canned LED PowerPoint presentation to all local elected officials, county commissioners and General Assembly Member. Provide ride-a-longs to local elected officials and members of the General Assembly.

STATUS: In Progress - All LED PMEs require Game Wardens to visit their local schools and colleges twice a year for recruitment and division marketing. They are to provide the Department PowerPoint to stakeholders, county commissioners and other elected officials.

Strategy 2.4 - Develop/promote an intelligence led and conservation community oriented policing initiative and philosophy for our core constituents and local conservation communities.

STATUS: In Progress - HQ pulls and sends a complete listing of all cases and warnings to each Captain for their Region each month. This is disseminated via email by the 5th of the following month. All complaints are entered into Mobile Forms on the CTS system and are available for other game wardens to view and update relative to each complaint on a real-time basis. Data retrieval for individual complaints or trends can and have been conducted for the filed by HQ on request. Individual complaints can be pulled through mobile forms by individual offices when needed. A committee has been formed to develop specific data relevant to this strategy and once recommendations are finalized, HQ will develop a system to disseminate the data.

Strategy 2.5 - Equip game wardens with smart phones for the purposes of answering calls and complaints from the public. Cell phones would also be utilized for required social media submissions.

STATUS: In Progress - This strategy was unfunded in 2017. Funding in the FY2018 Amended Budget will allow for completion of this goal prior to July 1, 2018.



Goal 3: Training, Recruitment and Retention

Promote professional excellence throughout the Law Enforcement Division by providing quality service, knowledgeable associates, and a well-trained and specialized workforce. Continue to improve the Law Enforcement Division's ability to train and retain the most qualified associates in order to provide the best customer service to the citizens of the State of Georgia.

Strategy 3.1 - Identify relevant training and equipment needs to better prepare DNR Law Enforcement Officers, enhance officer safety, and reduce conservation law enforcement crimes and incidents. Focus annual training on current, relevant needs of the division and DNR controlled properties responsibilities.

STATUS: In Progress - Annual In-Service Training for 2017 included: De-escalation, Fostering Positive Community Relations, Critical Incident Management, Archaeological Site, Firearms Re-Qualification, Use of Force, NASBLA Seated Battery, and Patrol Rifle. Two of these courses, De-escalation and Fostering Positive Community Relations were mandated by the Governor's Office for all Georgia POST certified officers. These courses offered our Game Wardens insight into interactions with the ever-changing populations we serve. We continue to work across divisional boundaries by cross-training with others in the department. Two examples of this are Critical Incident Management and Archaeological Site training. Critical Incident Management is a Commissioner's Office initiative that all DNR employees likely to be assigned a disaster or weather event will attend. In 2017, 151 LED Game Wardens attended this course. Archaeological Site training provided Game Wardens with an overview of the Historic Preservation Division and the violations of archaeological laws they may encounter on both private and public lands. The NASBLA Seated Battery course was delivered to all Game Wardens. This method of field sobriety test administration is now our standard. In our continued efforts to upgrade and provide better equipment, all Game Wardens were issued a complete Daniel Defense patrol rifle and trained extensively on its use. The training included exposure to new moving and shooting techniques, malfunction drills, transition drills and malfunction drills.

Strategy 3.2 - Research new technology that will enhance the division's ability to provide public safety and safe guard Georgia's natural and cultural resources.

STATUS: In Progress - In 2017, LED purchased 10 electronic engine cutoff lanyards and installed them on large patrol vessels for testing in evaluation. The comments received back from the field indicate that this is a needed and useful safety device. New patrol vessels will be equipped with this system when possible. Forty Spartan Cameras were purchased with Ginseng restitution funds. These have been deployed in all Regions with excellent results.

Strategy 3.3 - Continue with Field Training Program for officers who are responsible for training new employees, with each work section having two FTOs that meet policy requirements.

STATUS: In Progress - In 2017, the Division expanded our Field Training Officer cadre by adding an additional 22 trainers, bringing the total to 54. These FTOs attended an in-house, 40-hour course designed to develop them as trainers. Successful FTOs produce viable, long-term employees through the continued training and evaluation of new Game Wardens. On January 1, 2018, 13 of the 14 graduates of the 31st Game Warden Academy successfully completed the 6-month field training program.

Strategy 3.4 - Develop and implement a recruitment program within the DNR Law Enforcement Division with a minimum of one recruitment officer per region who focuses on minority applicants. Explore programs that reach out to the surrounding states for recruitment programs.

STATUS: In Progress - A meeting with the Department recruiter was held with LED HQ staff in November to find ways to streamline the Game Warden Application process and allow more recruitment for potential candidates. Permission was given for LED employees to contact colleges and trade schools to recruit applicants. Additionally, the website and all hiring materials have been updated with current photographs and standards.

Strategy 3.5 - Review hiring standards and remain competitive with compensation packages compared to LE officers in local and other state agencies in order to attract and retain the most qualified employees.

STATUS: In Progress - A comprehensive hiring standards review has been completed. As a result, two changes were made to our ILLEGAL DRUG USE standard; the use of any prescription drug prescribed to another will be evaluated by the LED Director was added. Additionally, the following will disqualify persons from employment in sworn positions with the DNR, LED: use or illegal possession of any Schedule I Drugs defined and enumerated in O.C.G.A. 16-13-24 and 16-13-25 (includes heroin, LSD, PCP, most hallucinogens) was removed and, the standard for BODY ART, TATTOOS, BRANDS, IMAGES, and EXPRESSIONS was modified to include tattoos that may become visible and now reads "Body art, tattoos, brands or images that are visible or may become visible while on duty or in uniform are prohibited."

Strategy 3.6 - Continue succession training to develop and prepare the future leaders of the Law Enforcement Division. Provide access to PMP or Command College for every Corporal and Sergeant in LED in accordance with LE Policy A-3.

STATUS: In Progress - In 2017, there were six PMP graduates and two Command College graduates. Currently there are 12 Corporals enrolled in PMP and five Sergeants enrolled in Command College. To be eligible for PMP, applicants must have earned less than a Bachelor's Degree. The PMP program now consists of 10 modules as six were added to the previous four. To be eligible for Command College, applicants must have earned a Bachelor's Degree. Once completed, students will have achieved their Master's Degree.

Strategy 3.7 - Increase retention and recruitment efforts by reevaluating the current work schedule.

STATUS: In Progress - The RAC proposed the reduction of the number of mandatory work weekends. The proposal went from seven weekends to three weekends.

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