



# GEORGIA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

## LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

Mark Williams  
Commissioner

Colonel Eddie Henderson  
Director



Law Enforcement Division  
FY 2016 Annual Report

*Law Enforcement Off the Pavement*

# Headquarters



**Colonel Eddie Henderson, Director**



**Lt. Colonel Jeff Weaver,  
Assistant Director**



**L-R, Majors Thomas Barnard and  
Stephen Adams**



**L-R, Capt. Mike England,  
Lt. Wayne Hubbard, Lt. Judd Smith**



**L-R, Linda Mayo, HQ Secretary  
Sharon Whitaker, AOM  
Jen Hammonds, HR Generalist  
Shannon Witcher, AOC I  
Tammy Peters, SPU Sec.  
Jamie Hawkins, Special Permits AOC I**



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

**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.**



## **Headquarters**

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Law Enforcement Division currently has 181 peace officers with statewide authority and full arrest powers. The primary duties of these Conservation Rangers are enforcement of all laws and regulations pertaining to hunting, fishing, commercial fishing, environmental violations, and recreational boating.

The Law Enforcement Division operates with a straight-line chain of command. It consists of the Colonel, Lt. Colonel, three Majors (field operations, special operations and aviation), seven Region Supervisors (Captains), two "specialty" Captains (training, and administrative support), two pilot Captains, three Lieutenants (database management, investigations and special permits/captive wildlife and wild animals), and 162 field Conservation Rangers (Sergeants, Corporals, Ranger First Class, and Rangers).

### **DNR Re-Organization**

The Georgia DNR Law Enforcement Division celebrated its third anniversary after an internal reorganization of its operational Divisions with a vote by the Board of Natural Resources. The reorganization elevated the Law Enforcement Section to Division status, removing it as a sub-program of the Wildlife Resources Division. The reorganization plan is a five-year transition that will consolidate all law enforcement functions under the umbrella of the Law Enforcement Division, to include State Parks enforcement. The changes to the DNR structure were made to more accurately reflect the working structure of the department, streamline operations, clarify chain of command, standardize training, equipment and operational guidance for law enforcement services, and to reduce liability.

### **Pay Parity**

After several years of incremental implementation, Officers in the Department finally achieved pay parity with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation and the Georgia State Patrol. A target salary plan was created and implemented to ensure that future promotions do not allow Rangers to fall short of the original plan.

### **CAD/MDT/IT/RMS**

The transition from Dell to Panasonic Toughbooks was completed this year with all Field Rangers moved to Panasonic CF31's and Admin Staff to CF-53's. Entry into the Department's legacy citation RMS system has been discontinued and all citation data is now being entered into the current system throughout the Department. A pilot project has been started to investigate cloud storage options for body cam video and other data that would allow direct upload of files eliminating the need to files to pass through multiple hands.

### **Ranger Hotline**

The Ranger Hotline program, which provides a way for citizens to report anonymously potentially illegal wildlife and other conservation law violations, continues to be successful. If the information leads to an arrest, the tipster receives a cash reward funded by the Georgia Natural Resource Foundation, whose mission is to protect wildlife by increasing public support for wildlife law enforcement.

### **Equipment**

This past year the Law Enforcement Division (LED) has procured several updates and improvements for issued weapons. These include 167 new Daniel Defense DDM4-V5 uppers with 14.5 inch barrels for the M16 rifles. Also, included on the new upper is the Streamlight Pro-Tac Railmount II light and Magpull flip up sights.

The Division also acquired 190 new back-up handgun and holster systems for all of the officers. In the past, backup weapons were not issued, but personally owned weapons were allowed for backup after qualification. The new handgun is the Glock Model 43, 9mm, and the holster is the Telor Tactical Comfort-Air LE ankle holster (mid-size).



In addition to these upgrades, several old shotguns of various makes, models and conditions were traded for 37 new Remington 870 Police Magnum shotguns. The guns are equipped with 18 inch modified choke barrels and black synthetic stocks. This standardizes all issued shotguns to the same model.

### **GILEE**

Captain Scott Klingel participated in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange (GILEE) program to Israel. This two-week training session that is coordinated through Georgia State University focuses on sharing homeland security techniques as well as the benefits and limitations of a national police system. During the program, 19 Law Enforcement Executives from Georgia were briefed at multiple venues in the state of Israel.

### **Professional Management Program**

Five Rangers graduated from Columbus State's PMP program this year. The 400-hour program is broken down into ten 40-hour blocks with topics such as budget, human resources and strategic planning. The program is designed as an advanced school for public safety personnel to better prepare them for their roles as supervisors.

### **Command College**

Captain Bob Lynn graduated from the Command College during the year. The Command College program that is held at Columbus State University is a key part of the division's leadership and succession training.



### **Counter-Terrorism Task Force**

Rangers who represent DNR Law Enforcement on Georgia's Counter-Terrorism Task Force (CTTF), participated in a woodland tracking training exercise at Mistletoe State Park in February. CTTF is Georgia's rapid deployment protective-security force. Its mission is to detect, prevent, protect against and respond to terrorist threats and attacks targeting the State's critical infrastructure. CTTF is comprised of personnel from numerous public safety agencies across the state.

### **Ranger Memorial Run**

On May 4<sup>th</sup>, eight Rangers from the DNR Law Enforcement Division ran in the first ever Ranger Memorial Run, an 8K run through the streets of Forsyth to honor the eight DNR Rangers on the Georgia Public Safety Memorial Wall. The run was meant to raise awareness of officers and first responders killed in the line of duty, and to raise funds to support and maintain the Memorial. It ended at the Memorial, which is located at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center (GPSTC). On June 10, 1997, the Georgia Public Safety Memorial was dedicated to honor the brave men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice while protecting life and property in the proud tradition of the public safety services. There are currently 870 Georgia Public Safety personnel honored on the Memorial. The Rangers raised \$1, 270.



## Public Affairs

### Media Relations and Public Outreach

The Division conducted media news conferences and ride-alongs with Rangers again this year for the start of the boating and hunting seasons, “Operation Dry Water,” and the July 4<sup>th</sup> Holiday weekend to promote safe boating and swimming safety and to educate citizens on boating laws and how they are



applied. For the fifth consecutive year, 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 theme for the 2016 campaign was “A drunk boater becomes a drunk driver.” News releases, I & E presentations and speeches to various civic groups, and regular news media interviews and interaction were utilized throughout the year to disseminate information to the public.



Public Affairs Officer  
Mark McKinnon

### Social Media

LED manages a Facebook page that currently has nearly 40,000 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 a Twitter account that is linked to Facebook, which currently has over 900 followers, and a YouTube Channel with multiple safety-related videos. The Division’s Instagram account, which was launched in mid-July of 2015, has over 3,100 followers.



2014 Ranger of the Year Cpl. Greg Wade pins the ROY badge on the 2015 winner, Cpl. Casey Jones

### “Off the Pavement” Awards Banquet

In August 2015, the LED’s Command Staff was joined by the Georgia DNR Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, and Board Members at the Second Annual “Off the Pavement” Awards Banquet in Savannah. The event highlighted the outstanding efforts of Rangers from across the state who had received a number of awards throughout the year. At the end of the evening, Corporal Casey Jones from the northwest Georgia Region was named as the Division’s 2015 Ranger of the Year.



## 2016 Statewide Awards

### Ranger of the Year

Corporal Eddie Tompkins is one of the best when it comes to boating safety, winning this year's Boating Officer of the Year award. However, his abilities to detect, find, and



apprehend poachers during the fall are quite impressive as well. Eddie has outstanding knowledge of the area, he's a hard worker and has extensive contacts with landowners in his assigned county of Gwinnett. He logged 78 hunting-related complaints and 504 hours spent working wildlife enforcement. During these patrols Cpl. Tompkins issued 76 violator contacts and apprehended an astounding 22 persons for hunting without permission. During the past year Eddie documented 309 total violator contacts. He obtained an astronomical 51 arrest warrants (16 felony and 35 misdemeanor) during the year. While attending to his regular duties, he was also enrolled in the Professional Management

Program (PMP) at Columbus State University. He will be completing the program later this year. Community involvement, outreach, and education are priority to Cpl. Tompkins. During the year he participated in 14 boating safety and education programs and 15 general I&E programs. He worked at the Atlanta Boat Show, the GON Outdoor Blast, and also provided boating safety programs, career day, and endangered species programs in the Gwinnett County School system.

### James R. Darnell Award

Corporal John Evans is committed to Conservation Law Enforcement and serving Georgians. Cpl. Evans had a total of 267 contacts for the year. Ninety percent of these



contacts represent violations on the Region VII focus list. Last year he conducted over 200 WMA and State Park patrols, resulting in 79 violator contacts and four drug cases. This past year, he documented over 540 boating safety hours. This included 92 water patrols in which he checked 432 boats. He made six BUI arrests and logged 18 Search and Rescue missions. He was also involved in 28 JEA patrols documenting 136 JEA hours. John never shuns an opportunity to improve his abilities. He completed training to be a certified NASBLA Instructor. POST General Instructor training, and POST FTO training. He is very involved in his community and is a committee member on

the Golden Isles Longspurs, the Glynn County chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation and is also an assistant coach with the Wayne County 4-H shotgun team. He taught 15 programs to school children and the general public promoting Boating Safety and recognizing other hazards unique to the Georgia coast. Cpl. Evans presented 29 I&Es, Hunter Development programs, and seven Hunter Education classes in 2015.



## **Ranger of the Year Nominees**

Region I- RFC Cody Jones

Region II- Cpl. Eddie Tompkins

Region III- RFC Tim Butler

Region IV- RFC Keith Page

Region V- RFC Jesse Harrison

Region VI- Cpl. Tommy Daughtrey

Region VII- Cpl. John Evans

## **Supervisor of the Year**

Captain Jeff Swift is the recipient of the 2015 Supervisor of the Year Award. Capt. Swift is a 29-year veteran of the Law Enforcement Division, serving as Region Supervisor since



2007. Jeff has demonstrated the traits and qualities that make him a deserving winner of this prestigious award. He has vigorously supported the goals and values of DNR and, in their written nomination, the Rangers in his Region said that Capt. Swift always creates and maintains a positive and professional work environment. He encourages consistency and accountability throughout the Region, displaying a strong commitment to Conservation Law Enforcement and is dedicated to serving his fellow officers. His coaching, motivation and positive reinforcement help to create a successful and rewarding work

environment, benefiting every employee. Jeff continually works to maintain positive working relationships with many different community organizations within the region, as well as city and county law enforcement agencies, other DNR Divisions, and local legislators. The support of these organizations have proven instrumental pursuing the missions of the Division and the Department. Congratulations to Captain Jeff Swift, the 2015 Supervisor of the Year.

## **Investigative Ranger of the Year**

Corporal Casey Jones, who and is currently the Division's Ranger of the Year, is the 2015 Investigative Ranger of the Year, sponsored by the Safari Club – Georgia Chapter. Cpl.



Jones is a versatile, well-rounded officer and is particularly skilled in investigative work, successfully completing two very in-depth, complex, and time consuming investigations last year. In one of those cases, he received a hunting without permission complaint in October 2014. He searched the area and located a baited stand, a trail camera, and an ATV trail leading to a suspect's residence. After a thorough investigation, which included collecting evidence from social media sites, interviews of suspects and witnesses, and analyzing data and photos from a trail camera and cell phone, Cpl. Jones determined that the main suspect had

committed 43 wildlife violations over the past two years. The suspect pled guilty in a plea agreement due to Casey's rock-solid case against him. He was fined \$2,300, forfeited all wildlife seized, and lost hunting privileges for three years. For his outstanding efforts in all aspects of Conservation Law Enforcement, Casey was recently named Officer of the Year by the North American Wildlife Enforcement Officers Association. Congratulations to Corporal Casey Jones, the 2015 Investigative Officer of the Year.

## **Boating Officer of the Year**

Corporal Eddie Tompkins is the 2015 Georgia Boating Officer of the Year. Cpl. Tompkins has exhibited the Division's core mission in all of his boating enforcement duties. Working primarily on Lake Lanier, Eddie documented 7,285 boating miles, 708 boating hours and responded to 31 Water SARs. He also participated in 14 boating safety educational programs and made eight BUI arrests last year. He made 685 vessel stops logging 242 violations. Eddie also assisted the Forsyth County Sheriff's Office in creating a boat captain course for deputies patrolling the lake. As a member of the DNR Side Scan Sonar Team, Eddie is known for his ability to effectively operate the equipment. In a drowning incident at Stone Mountain Park, Eddie's dedication to bring closure to a grieving family was evident as he searched for the victim until 4:00 a.m., when poor weather halted the operation. He was back on the water at 7 a.m., soon locating the victim with sonar and directing divers for the recovery. On July 1<sup>st</sup>, after receiving information from the drug task force, Cpl. Tompkins arrested three subjects for numerous felony and misdemeanor violations related to the selling of meth on the lake. Illegal drugs, a stolen pistol, and \$4,000 in cash were seized as evidence. In another incident, Eddie observed a pontoon boat that was overloaded and as he approached, he realized the boat was about to sink. He radioed for another Ranger and they were able to save the boaters just as their vessel sank. Congratulations to Corporal Eddie Tompkins, the 2015 Georgia Boating Officer of the Year.



## **The Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl Award**

Corporal Brian Hobbins is the 2016 Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl Award recipient. Cpl. Hobbins places a strong emphasis on waterfowl enforcement. He also recognizes the importance of developing public trust through involvement in his community. Brian had a very impressive waterfowl enforcement season, documenting over 200 hours of enforcement activity, with 60 hours spent dragging ponds in bait detection. He spent 24 evenings in and around flooded timber, listening for after-hours shoots. He conducted six early goose and teal patrols and also worked several evenings outside his work unit, assisting fellow Rangers. His dedication yielded a very impressive 69 waterfowl contacts. Brian is always willing to help in other work units, as his experience and expertise in waterfowl enforcement is well-known across the Region. Much of his waterfowl enforcement efforts occurred prior to waterfowl season, during deer season patrols, when he detected evidence that led to documented violations. In his community in Columbia County, Brian has invested countless hours educating civic groups, students at the local schools, and faith-based organizations on waterfowl habitats and conservation. He is an Advisory Council Member for the Wounded Warrior Retreat at Come-Away Plantation, facilitating hunts to honor and empower combat injured service members. Congratulations to Corporal Brian Hobbins, winner of 2016 Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl Award.



## **Hunter Education Instructor of the Year Award**

Ranger Eric White is the 2015 Hunter Education Instructor of the Year for his dedication to promoting Georgia's Hunter Education program. Eric's work unit serves an area of southwest Georgia that typically requires the certification of about 550 students - a challenge for a work unit with three counties without a resident Ranger. In spite of these challenges, Eric understands that a Ranger-taught class enhances the message of personal safety and natural resource protection when it is delivered by a knowledgeable officer in uniform. Eric dedicated approximately 125 hours to Hunter Education, teaching 13 classes in four of the seven counties in his work unit. He continually works to stay knowledgeable on laws and trends in hunter education so he can provide the most informative material to prospective students. Eric was actively involved in the discussions and planning of the Hunter Education program's recent enhancements and he provided first-hand knowledge of these changes to the instructors in his work unit, ensuring quality and consistency of the program. Eric also participated in 53 various Information & Education presentations promoting firearms, hunting, boating, and ATV safety to numerous groups including the Boy Scouts and local school children. Congratulations to Ranger Eric White, the 2015 Hunter Education Instructor of the Year.



## **The Torch Award**

Ranger First Class Patrick Gibbs is the recipient of the 2016 Torch Award. RFC Gibbs, who is assigned to Long County, had an outstanding year in Conservation Law Enforcement. Patrick checked 266 hunting licenses, 356 fishing licenses, 313 vessels, and 67 commercial licenses. He conducted 92 patrols on WMAs and State Parks and logged 190 hours on 45 citizen complaints. He made 50 vessel patrols to include: JEA patrols, shellfish patrols, boating safety patrols, and commercial shrimp trawler patrols, dedicating over 250 hours patrolling state waters. His hunting and fishing enforcement efforts resulted in 170 violator contacts, resulting in the confiscation of two deer, nine ducks, 120 freshwater fish, 12 saltwater fish, over 100 pounds of shrimp, and three bushels of oysters. Patrick also made 26 cases directly related to night deer hunting, five for hunting turkeys over bait, six BUI arrests, seven for commercial shrimping/oyster violations and seven more cases were made related to waterfowl enforcement. In his assigned work area, which includes 88 miles of the Altamaha River, five WMAs, one State Park, and 22 miles of the Atlantic Coast, Patrick is self-motivated, has a tireless work ethic, and is always sure to leave a positive impression with every citizen contacted. He is also committed to education and conducted 17 I&E programs, working with the local school system, CHAMPS, KFE's, Shop with a COP, and Career Day. Patrick is a CAT Team member and has been selected to be a certified FTO for the Division. Congratulations to Ranger First Class Patrick Gibbs, the 2016 Torch award winner.





## Region I- Calhoun (Northwest)



*Front row L-R: Secretary Courtney Gulledge, RFC. Zack Hardy, Sgt. Brian Keener, Cpl. Tommy Gentry, RFC. Bart Hendrix, Cpl. James Keener, Capt. Jeff Galloway BOG Joyce Holland, Back Row L-R: Cpl. Brooks Varnell and K-9 Rock, Sgt. Derek Dillard, RFC. Mark Moyer, Cpl. Byron Young, Sgt. Mike Barr, RFC. Cody Jones, Sgt. Eric Brown, RFC. Roger McConkey, Cpl. Shawn Elmore, Cpl. Lee Burns, RFC. Daniel Gray*

### **Administration**

Currently Region I is comprised of 20 Northwest Georgia Counties and the Metro Atlanta area. Within these counties we have three major impoundments, six major rivers, seven State Parks, 18 Wildlife Management Areas (249,000 acres) 173,000 acres of US Forest Service lands, 2,440 miles of trout streams, and calls for service from citizen complaints on private lands in 20 counties, covered by 22 LED Rangers.

Starting July 1, 2016 (FY-17) The LED Division accepted the sole responsibility of LE patrol and enforcement on Rocky Mt. PFA, (recreation area) owned by the Oglethorpe Power Corporation located in Floyd Co. This facility features, 35 campsites, two Fishing lakes, hiking, and archery hunting in Hunting Season, open sunrise till sunset, and is operated as a State Park by DNR Parks Division.

FY 2016 has been a busy year administratively in the Calhoun Region with several personnel changes, Sgt. Rick Dempsey retired in December 2015, with Cpl. Eric Brown promoted to replace Dempsey as Sergeant. RFC. Chad Cox promoted to replace Brown as Corporal. RFC Micheal Crawley transferred to Region IV. RFC. Bart Hendrix represented Region I as the 2015 Nominee for the Boating Officer of the Year and the Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl Award. Sgt. VanLandingham was honored by the Pickens Co. Kiwanis Club, as Law Enforcement Officer of the Year, Cpl. Tommy Gentry was honored by the Safari Club Tennessee Chapter as L.E. Officer of the Year and Cpl. Shawn Elmore was honored as L.E. Officer of the Year by the Dade Co. Kiwanis Club.

RFC. Cody Jones was selected to represent Region I Calhoun as Nominee for the 2016 DNR LED Ranger of the Year. RFC. Mark Puig was selected as Region I Nominee for the 2016 Torch Award.



In September, Sergeant Mike Barr received the highest award given to a civilian by the US Army Corps of Engineers, “The Commanders Award” for his faithful service on Allatoona Lake for 13 years. The award was presented at the Water Safety Task Force meeting, a joint public safety effort to reduce water deaths on Allatoona Lake. Mike was one of the founding members of the organization.

Cpl. Shawn Elmore was chosen as the 2016 Officer of the Year by the Trenton/Dade County Optimist/FOP law enforcement appreciation event in Trenton, Georgia.



Cpl. James Keener and Cpl. Casey Jones attended a meeting with conservation officers from North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, and Georgia. Information on high profile cases, growing problems, and enforcement techniques were discussed.

Capt. Wade Law, Sgt. Mark Carson, Sgt. Derek Dillard, Cpl. James Keener, and Cpl. Scott Carroll taught a pair of two-day ALERRT active shooter classes at an elementary school (no longer in use) in Gilmer County. Officers from DNR and other local agencies participated. Region I had two Firearm Instructors who received specialized firearm training during the past year. Cpl. James Keener attended a one week course on Advanced Firearms Training at the Roger’s Shooting School in Ellijay.

RFC. Ben Cunningham is also a firearm instructor and a member of the Counter Terrorism Task Force (CTTF) team and was chosen to attend a special week long school in Brunswick for tactical rifles taught by AimPoint personnel. Ben won “Top Gun” at the event.

### **Operational**

In addition to the December Floods and the Winter Storm detail in January, Region I officers responded to eight different suicide situations on various State Parks, WMA’s and state waterways. Officers also assisted other local, state, and federal agencies with numerous details. RFC Cody Jones assisted with the search for a murder suspect in Lumpkin County. Sgt. John VanLandingham, Cpl. James Keener, and RFC Cody Jones assisted with the apprehension of a home invasion suspect in Gilmer County who was subsequently charged with burglary and aggravated assault. Sgt. VanLandingham and Cpl. Casey Jones assisted with the apprehension of a suspect that had threatened to bomb the Gilmer County courthouse. Numerous other arrests were made of persons with active warrants. Officers also assisted with the investigations and recovery of several persons who died under suspicious circumstances on Cohutta WMA and Blue Ridge Lake.

Rangers from Region I, along with Rangers from Region II, assisted the Stone Mountain Police Department with the Demonstration/ Protest Rallies at Stone Mountain Park. Rallies were held on September 11, 2015, November 14, 2015 and April 23, 2016. Corporal Lee Burns and RFC Zack Hardy assisted Stone Mountain Police with the September 11, 2015 Rally. Corporal Lee Burns and Corporal Brooks Varnell as well as his K-9 “Rock” were present and assisted at the November 14, 2015 Rally. RFC Bart Hendrix and RFC Mark Puig assisted with the April 23, 2016 Rally.



Officers were also involved in a large illegal ginseng case in Pickens County. Cpl. James Keener assisted a Sheriff’s Deputy with the search for suspects in a home invasion and questioned a suspicious person who had emerged from the woods in the area, with the Deputy. Cpl. Keener recognized that the person had been digging ginseng without permission and that he had an active warrant. The suspect was detained. Family members were contacted and advised officers that a juvenile had accompanied him into the woods the day before. Due to very bad weather, a massive search was started for the juvenile. Cpl. Keener searched into the night and was joined by Cpl. Casey Jones and RFC Cody Jones the next day. The juvenile was found safe the second day accompanied by the suspect in the home invasion. DNR officers took the suspect into custody without incident. The Pickens County Sheriff’s Office charged the suspect with burglary, possession of marijuana, child endangerment, criminal trespass, and digging ginseng without permission. A third suspect who had fled the scene was identified and warrants were taken by Cpl. Keener. The pictures show some of the ginseng roots that were seized by the work section.



This summer on Allatoona Lake Deputies from the Bartow County Sheriff's Office and Reserve Deputies from the Cherokee County Sheriff's Office assisted DNR Rangers with their patrols on the lake. Corporal Byron Young coordinated with the Bartow County Sheriff's Office for them to allow one deputy per day on the weekends, while RFC Bart Hendrix coordinated with the Cherokee County Sheriff's Office for them to allow a Reserve Officer to assist DNR on weekends as well. The assistance from the Sheriffs' Offices allowed the DNR to run more patrol boats on the water. With only four rangers and a supervisor currently assigned to Allatoona Lake, the deputies were a great asset in order to help the rangers on their patrols and be more visible to the public.

In October 2015, Cpl. Tommy Gentry responded to a missing hunter complaint on the Zahnd Tract in Walker County. A 61-year-old hunter had gone hunting and failed to return home. Cpl. Gentry received the call the following morning and located the missing person's vehicle. He then foot patrolled and located the hunter who had fallen 18 feet out of his tree stand, was injured, and spent the night at the base of a tree. Cpl. Gentry was able to stabilize the hunter and direct a life flight helicopter into the area which took the injured hunter to Erlanger Hospital in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Cpl. Gentry was recognized for his efforts by the Tennessee Chapter of the Safari Club International (SCI) banquet in March 2016 as the SCI Georgia Officer of the Year. Cpl. Tommy Cpl. Gentry retired in August 2016 after 30 years as a game warden!



RFC. Ben Cunningham and his team worked diligently on researching a new patrol vessel for the rock based rivers in the work section and Ben traveled to Idaho in the summer of 2016 to be trained in the operation of and inspect a new type jet drive vessel known as the SJX. The special UHMW Teflon coating on the bottom of the vessel allows for it to glide over rocks and it will be an asset during river search and rescues and river patrols.



Cpl. James Keener co-hosted a three-day fishing event with the Pickens County Sportsman's Club. The event provided trout fishing opportunities to elderly groups from several nursing centers and assisted living homes, special needs groups from local schools and day programs, and a kid's fishing event on the last day. RFC Cody Jones assisted the U.S.F.S. on Rock Creek National Fish Hatchery with a kid's fishing event in Fannin County.

In February 2015, RFC Daniel Gray responded to a complaint in reference to someone shooting a Bald Eagle in the northern part of Polk County. DNR Rangers jointly partnered with the USFWS to work on the investigation. The case is still ongoing and the USFWS is offering a \$2,500 reward for information leading to the conviction of the person(s) involved in this unlawful act.







During the week of June 6<sup>th</sup> through June 10<sup>th</sup>, Sgt. Eric Brown conducted his 11<sup>th</sup> annual Carroll County Outdoor Day Camp. The camp included 26 boys and girls between the ages of 13 and 16. During the week students were certified in Hunter Education and Boat Georgia. Activities included learning to shoot .22 rifles, skeet, and trap. Other activities included shooting archery, crossbows, learning to use a GPS, wildlife identification, plant identification, a live snake show, boat operation and a fishing trip.

After sharing space with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for over 50 years, the Lake Allatoona LED boathouse was relocated across the lake to property inside Red Top Mountain State Park. This move is part of an effort to consolidate Region I operation headquarters in the area of the park in Bartow County. Relocation of the regional office in Calhoun is currently underway also. Plans are to move all of Region I operations from Calhoun in Gordon County to Red Top Mountain State Park in Bartow County.





## Region II- Gainesville (Northeast)



**Front Row L-R:** Cpl. Eddie Tompkins, Sgt. Lee Brown, Cpl. Eric Sanders, RFC. David Webb, RFC. Mitchell Crump, Sgt. Greg Colson. **Middle Row L-R:** Capt. Johnny Johnson, Cpl. Craig Fulghum, RFC. Chad Chambers, Cpl. Jason Roberson, RFC. Matt Johnson, RGR Chris Kernahan, RFC. Shane Brown, Sgt. Mike Burgamy, RGR. Beth Gilbert, RFC. Joe Hill, RFC. Kevin Goss. **Back Row L-R:** RFC. Timothy Vickery, RFC. Shane Brown, Sgt. Stan Elrod, RFC. Barry Britt, RFC. Mark Stephens, RFC. Eric Isom, RFC. Brandon Pierce, RFC. Josh Chambers, Cpl. Kevin Dyer, Cpl. Adam Loudermilk, Sgt. Steve Seitz, Cpl. Anne Britt. **Inset L-R:** Brenda Lee Tanner, Taylor Cassell

The Gainesville Region is comprised of the 19 Northeast Georgia Counties which include several metro areas around Atlanta. Within these counties we have eight major impoundments, three major rivers, 13 Wildlife Management Areas, 220 miles of trout streams, 21 State Park Properties and 288,000 acres of National Forest lands. The impoundments within Region II receive over 20 million visitors annually while the state parks and wildlife management areas receive another 2.5 million annually. The Law Enforcement Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources continues to assume all of the law enforcement responsibilities on state owned and operated property including any law enforcement calls for service on private or public property from the 19 county areas within the region. This tremendous amount of visitation and use on these proprieties creates a great deal of diverse law enforcement issues that the 29 officers of this region continually address.

The Nation as a whole has suffered from civil unrest primarily due to political and media related coverage of several highly visible police shootings. Officers in various locations throughout the country have been assaulted, injured in shootings and murdered by individuals who are upset or dissatisfied with law enforcement. This has caused an atmosphere in all law enforcement agencies throughout the nation of placing officers on high alert. Daily we have received "Officer Alerts" warning of threats against law enforcement within Georgia. Inside Georgia's DNR Law Enforcement Division we too have been brought to a higher level of consciousness of potential threats and continue to be vigilant in protecting the citizens of Georgia and conserving the states wildlife resources. Locally this issue has given cause for the Division to deploy rangers to three separate rallies held at Stone Mountain Park near Atlanta where various groups were permitted to protest. State, federal and local law enforcement responded to these events where hundreds of individuals of conflicting ideas and agendas were held to a peaceful demonstration. State Rangers have truly evolved into the most versatile peace officers

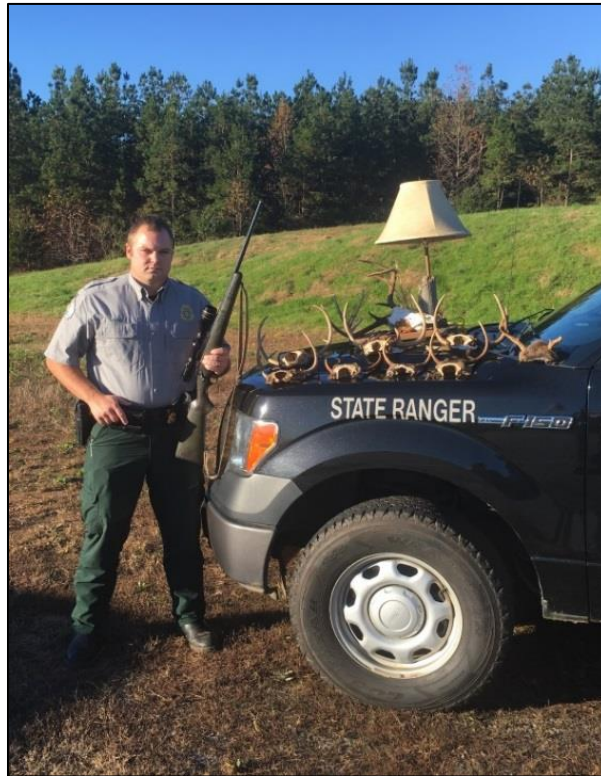


within the state and can be observed involved in most any law enforcement situation. As of this writing 68 law enforcement officers have lost their lives in the U.S. this year. As a Division we continue to train and to practice the 5 tenants of the Below 100 initiative "wear your seat belt, wear your vest, watch your speed, don't be complacent and recalling what's important now."

Deer Season was again active this year in northeast Georgia and some of the more highlighted cases are as follows:

Cpl. Jason Roberson became involved in an extensive wildlife investigation after making contact with a hunter on private property. Upon investigating Cpl. Roberson became suspicious of the hunters story. This initial contact became a remarkable case into several individuals spread over several counties not only involving game laws but also criminal violations. After several months of investigation a tremendous amount of evidence was discovered implicating several subjects in a poaching ring. After the conclusion of the case five deer were confiscated including four, eight-point and one, ten-point bucks. Various other items were also confiscated including deer stands, cell phones and memory cards. Charges filed in this case included two counts hunting deer at night, eight counts of hunting without permission, six counts of hunting over bait, two counts of hunting after obtaining the bag limit, three counts of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, 12 counts of license violations, theft by taking and theft by deception.

In November Ranger First Class Brandon Pierce received information of an individual that had killed over the limit of bucks. Pierce inspected two deer processing facilities and determined that the hunter had indeed brought several deer to the two processors. Pierce also inspected a local taxidermist and found that the hunter had also brought a deer to that facility. After going to the hunters residence Ranger Pierce observed several sets of antlers in a vehicle but the suspect was not at home. Several attempts were made to contact the suspect before he was actually located for an interview. During the interview the hunter denied the allegations but as the Ranger presented more and more evidence it became impossible to account for all of the sets of antlers that were or had been in his possession. A confession was eventually given that the poacher had killed 10 buck deer which was eight over his season limit. He had also used an illegal weapon in the commission of some of the incidents. The suspect also admitted to killing antlerless deer out of season.



Two individuals, a husband and wife who live in North Georgia, were charged in several violations related to hunting and trapping this year. Cpl. Anne Alexander received numerous complaints on an individual whom she had received complaints on over the years. One of the individuals was known to be a convicted felon. An investigation was developed and several locations were identified where illegal traps were set. Surveillance was established on these sites and incriminating evidence was established. Search warrants were served on the family's residence where more evidence was discovered in additional game violations. The two individuals were charged with several crimes including convicted felon possession of a firearm, trapping without a license, unlawful possession of bird parts, failure to release a domestic animal, trapping out of season, killing a domestic animal, and other trapping violations.





Enforcement of the waterways in Region II has been active again this year. Our BUI arrest from July 2014 until June 2015 was 71 while during the same period of 2016 there were 75 BUI arrests. Rangers continue to focus on BUI and light violations and to aggressively keep a level of high visibility on the regions impoundments. Region II reported 13 drownings and 39 boating incidents this year.



Region II LED seen the removal of a landmark that had been a part of the region since the early sixties. The boathouse at our Flowery Branch facility was replaced through a capital outlay project at a cost of \$350,000 dollars. The new facility will serve for decades and the new constructed boathouse is top of the line with four boat slips an office and a fuel station.



One of the more unusual cases that rangers were involved in this year was an investigation into the possession of snakes. Sgt. Welch from the investigative unit, along with Cpl. Roberson, responded to a residence in Gainesville. After knocking on the door of the residence the mother of the suspect greeted the officers and when asked if there were any snakes at the home she responded that “yes there is a lot of illegal stuff here.” The lady escorted officers to a back bedroom that she indicated was her son’s. There the officers found one Albino Formosa Cobra, two Egyptian Cobras, one Forest Cobra, one Monocle Cobras, one Western Diamondback Rattlesnake, one Gaboon Viper, one Mottled Rattlesnake, one caiman, one Corn Snake, one Pine Snake and two Hawk Feet. These snakes were being held in a very small bedroom in aquariums with a small bed where the son slept. Charges were filed and the snakes confiscated.

Rangers were administered the promotion test statewide this year. Their scores will be used in any promotions that they apply for within the next two years. The exam was a test of their knowledge and ability in applying the laws and regulations they use on a daily basis.



Region II experienced several personnel changes this year. RFC Anne Britt was promoted to Corporal and Ranger Beth Gilbert transferred from the Parks Division to the Law Enforcement Division, assigned to the State lands position covering Tallulah Gorge, Moccasin Creek and Blackrock Mountain State Parks. RFC Joe Hill transferred from the Lake Burton position to the Habersham County position while RFC Chad Chambers transferred to the Rabun County position after Corporal Derek Dillard was promoted to Sergeant in Region I. Ranger Matt Johnson transferred to Region II from Region IV, assigned to the State lands position covering Dawson Forest and Amicalola Falls State Park. This brings the total to 29 Rangers assigned to the Law Enforcements Division Region II area. Region II also maintains three administrative positions for the day to day operations within the office. Recently Tasha Maddox joined the Region II staff as the receptionist.

### **Region Personnel Awards**

Cpl. Eddie Tompkins received the Region II Ranger of the Year Award

Cpl. Eddie Tompkins received the Region II Boating Safety Officer of the Year Award

RFC Brandon Pierce received the Region II Investigative Ranger of the Year Award

Cpl. Jason Roberson received the SE NASBLA and National Boating Safety Officer of the Year

RFC Kevin Goss received the Region II Torch Award

Cpl. Eddie Tompkins received the John Jacobs Award presented by Hall County Kiwanis Club

Region II did not submit a nominee for the Rock Wainwright Waterfowl Award

## Region III- Thomson (East Central)



*Front Row L-R:* Cpl. Derrell Worth, Sgt. Matt Garthright, RFC Jeff Billips, Cpl. Ben Payne, Sgt. Max Boswell, AOC Elizabeth Bentley, Secretary Kelly Hadden, RFC Grant Matherly, RFC Ricky Boles, RNG Dan Schay, Sgt. John Harwell. *Back Row L-R:* Cpl. Mark Patterson, RNG Michael Madden, RFC Phillip Nelson, RFC Tim Butler, Cpl. David Allen, Cpl. Julian Wilkins, RFC Bobby Timmerman, Capt. Mark Padgett, Cpl. Ryan Swain, RFC Richard Tanner, RNG Jason Harrison, Sgt. Brian Carter, and Sgt. Doyte Chaffin.  
Not pictured: Cpl. Brian Adams and Cpl. Brian Hobbins.

*(The region photo was taken at the Historic Old Rock House in Thomson. Built in 1785, the house was home to the ancestors of former president Jimmy Carter. The Rock House is the oldest stone residence in Georgia)*

### Region Personnel Awards

RFC Tim Butler received the Region Ranger of the Year Award.

Cpl. Brian Hobbins received the Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl State Award.

Cpl. Mark Patterson received the State NWTF Officer of the Year Award.

RFC Bobby Timmerman received the Region Boating Officer of the Year Award.

Cpl. Brian Adams received the Region Investigative Officer of the Year Award.

RNG Dan Schay was the region nominee for the Torch Award.

### Conservation Law Enforcement

Region III had an outstanding year in the area of Conservation Law Enforcement. Rangers put forth great effort and celebrated many accomplishments that warrant special recognition. The enforcement efforts mentioned in the following cases below show a willingness to go above and beyond, dedication beyond measure and commitment to catch the violator's responsible.



Cpl. Brian Adams was patrolling the Ogeechee River on April 28<sup>th</sup> when he discovered some illegal fish baskets. Cpl. Adams began working the baskets the very next day along with the help of surveillance cameras. He ran cameras on the baskets from April 29<sup>th</sup> to May 17<sup>th</sup>. During this time period the camera took pictures of three different individuals working the baskets. Cpl. Adams was able to identify the three individuals and interview them. The main individual was charged with Fishing with Illegal Baskets.

In January, Cpl. Derrell Worth received an anonymous tip in reference to possible illegal trapping taking place within a registered high fence located in Hancock County. This 12 mile fenced in area contained 2100 acres. Cpl. Worth patrolled the high fence on foot and located unmarked snares along the high fence that were being used to catch wildlife as it entered the property. While on the property, Cpl. Worth observed the trappers working the snares. Cpl. David Allen set up at the entrance to the property and made a traffic stop on the suspected trappers as they left the property. The two trappers were licensed. Cpl. Worth and Cpl. Allen confiscated 29 unmarked snares. A total of 87 violations were observed. The two trappers were charged with trapping with an illegal device and failure to tag such traps.

On January 9, Sgt. Max Boswell responded to an in progress hunting without permission complaint. When Sgt. Boswell arrived he located the suspect's truck with a freshly shot deer in the back. Sgt. Boswell was able to track the two subjects to a food plot where he found them without any firearms. The subjects stated they were looking for arrowheads and showed him one they had found. When Sgt. Boswell and the two subjects returned back to their vehicle, a search of the suspect's vehicle revealed two grams of methamphetamine, scales and a smoking pipe. At this time, the two suspects were placed under arrest. Cpl. Adams and RFC Matherly were called in to help look for the suspect's firearms that Sgt. Boswell felt were hidden in the woods. After an extended search of the area a .22 caliber rifle and a 12-gauge shotgun were found hidden near the food plot. Both subjects were charged with 10 counts. One of the suspects has been to court and was sentenced to five years in prison.

Over the last year, RFC Tim Butler concentrated much of his enforcement time to working hunting without permission complaints. His drive and determination to apprehend those trespassing on private property resulted in him yielding 18 contacts for hunting without permission. These type cases have helped RFC Butler develop a rapport with the public and has shown he is someone they can depend on to help in times of need.

### **Officer Involved Shooting**

Sgt. Doyte Chaffin was finishing up a routine hunting without permission case, when he was encountered by an individual walking down Baker Place Road in Columbia County. Sgt. Chaffin's attention was drawn toward this individual. Sgt. Chaffin attempted to get the individual to move out of the roadway, at which point the individual produced a handgun and racked the slide to the rear. The individual then threatened Sgt. Chaffin with his firearm causing Sgt. Chaffin to use deadly force against the individual.

### Community Involvement

Region III takes great pride in introducing Georgia's youth to the great outdoors. Cpl. Derrell Worth hosted the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Skeet Shoot/Squirrel Hunt on Oconee WMA. Fifteen youth were introduced to safe gun handling practices and were given the chance to try their hand at skeet shooting. They then got to enjoy an afternoon of squirrel hunting behind a squirrel dog. Some of the youth had the opportunity to harvest the first squirrel ever and all got to make memories while hunting with the "Game Warden."



Cpl. Brian Adams facilitated the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Glascock County Kid's Fishing Event. This is a seven-day event that allows all children through 5<sup>th</sup> grade at the local school system to participate in a day of fishing and fun.

Rangers from Region III worked a fatality boating incident last year on Clark's Hill Lake. The victim's family held a life jacket donation drive and collected nearly 130 life jackets. Those life jackets were donated to the department for Rangers to use as loaner life jackets while on patrol. Some have also been donated to State Parks in the area and to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



Sgt. Matt Garthright participated in the DNR/NWTF Mentored Turkey Hunt. He hosted a youth turkey hunt on his family's farm in Warren County. Sgt. Garthright got to share his passion for turkey hunting with a beginner turkey hunter. The youth hunter and his grandfather got to participate in the hunt.



Cpl. Brian Hobbins assisted with Wounded Warrior Hunts at Come-A-Way Plantation in Warren County. This is the 6<sup>th</sup> year in a row that Cpl. Hobbins has taken part in these special opportunity hunts. He had the privilege this year to help with eight hunts. Cpl. Hobbins also had a very impressive enforcement year with winning the Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl Award. He also dedicated numerous hours detecting baited areas and apprehending those individuals unlawfully hunting big game over bait. He made 32 hunting big game over bait cases, a combination of both deer and turkey.



### **New Equipment**

Cpl. Mark Patterson was issued a new patrol boat. The Region purchased a 2016 Express XP180 boat that was rigged with a Yamaha four stroke 90 horse power outboard motor. The Region has also acquired several Spartan Trail Cameras through donations. These cameras are a new tool Rangers have to help in the apprehension of wildlife violators. They have proven to be very useful helping produce 10 cases thus far to include fishing without permission and driving on closed WMA road. Many of them within 24 hours of setting the camera up. Cpl. Mark Patterson and Cpl. Brian Adams assisted with locating this tool, becoming familiar with its functionality, and are now the lead guys in the use of these cameras for the state.



### **Passing of Retired Corporal Monroe Matherly**

Retired Corporal Monroe Matherly entered into rest on May 10, 2016 at his residence. In 1980, Monroe joined the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and retired in 2003. Monroe's son, Grant Matherly, followed in his father's footsteps and is now the Ranger for Jefferson County.

### **State Owned Land Involvement**

Region III has done a great job in transitioning some of its resources to ensure coverage on state owned lands and assisting other divisions with their duties. Sgt. Brian Carter's work unit has assisted with dove field preparation, controlled burns, dove and duck banding, and the cleaning out of duck boxes. The onsite Ranger at Hamburg State Park, Cpl. David Allen responded to a suicide on the park. Rangers recently cleared roads and provided 24 hour security at Mistletoe State Park and Elijah Clark State Park after they were hit by a microburst. Many campsites sustained damage from falling trees. Sgt. Doyte Chaffin's work unit has provided a law enforcement presence on the state lands in their area during busy holiday periods. As a whole, Region III Rangers logged 1985 LE patrols on state owned lands.

## Region IV- Macon (West Central)



**Front Row L-R:** Sgt. Jim Bradfield, Sgt. Tony Fox, Sgt. Bo Kelly, Sgt. Brent Railey, Captain Chris Hodge, Sgt. Wanda Roberts, Secretary LeAnn Walker, and Administrative Assistant Kim Cato. **Middle Row L-R:** Cpl. Wil Smith, RFC Kevin Godbee, RFC Micheal Crawley, RFC Ronnie Beard, Cpl. Tony Wynne, Cpl. Mitch Oliver, RFC Russell Epps, Cpl. Robert Stillwell, and RFC Niki Spencer. **Back Row L-R:** Cpl. Bubba Stanford, RFC Keith Page, Cpl. Josh Swain, Cpl. Keith Waddell, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen, RFC David Fisher, RFC Freddie Hays, and Cpl. Travis Sweat.

**Not Pictured:** RFC Jeremy Reese

In August, DNR Rangers laid to rest Deputy Ranger Joe Sebo. Ranger Sebo passed away at age 70 from complications of a recurring cancer. Deputy Ranger Sebo had been an unpaid, volunteer Deputy Ranger with the Department for over 25 years and had instructed hunter education classes for the department for over 40 years. In his lifetime, Sebo hunted big game on several continents, taking the world slam of wild turkeys and the grand slam of North American wild sheep. He was a board member of the Georgia Association of Law Enforcement Firearms Instructors. He served his country in Vietnam as a Captain in the U.S. Army Signal Corps, where he was awarded a Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

Region IV was able to fill the office staff vacancies with the hiring of Leanne Walker as the Region's part-time secretary and Kim Cato as our Administrative Assistant 3. These positions were vacated by AA3 Stephannie Stinson and part-time secretary Jami Tripp as they both moved on to other positions. RFC Micheal Crawley transferred to Baldwin County from Region I. Chris Hodge was promoted to Captain as the Region Supervisor for Region IV in November.

During the fall of FY 16, Region IV Law Enforcement was forced to reconstruct work units throughout the Region due to the loss of a Sgt.'s position within the Region. Region IV was redesigned to go from five work units down to four. Upon completion of the reconstruction, Region IV was left with section boundaries much different than before.

Sgt. Jim Bradfield's section now includes Harris, Muscogee, Talbot, Taylor, Crawford, Peach, and Bibb counties. Cpl. Mitch Oliver, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen, RFC David Fisher, and Cpl. Josh Swain are all assigned to this section along with one vacant Ranger position.

Sgt. Brent Railey's section now includes Troup, Heard, Meriwether, Coweta, Fayette, Pike, Spaulding, Henry, and Clayton counties. Cpl. Travis Sweat, Cpl. Keith Waddell, RFC Kevin Godbee, and RFC Russell Epps are all assigned to this section along with two vacant Ranger positions.

Sgt. Bo Kelly's work section now includes Putnam, Jones, Baldwin, Wilkinson, Twiggs, Houston, Bleckley, and Pulaski counties. Cpl. Bubba Stanford, Cpl. Robert Stillwell, RFC Jeremy Reese, RFC Ronnie Beard, and RFC Micheal Crawley are all assigned to this section along with one vacant Ranger position.

Sgt. Tony Fox's work section was the only section that remained intact during the restructure of Region IV section lines. His section includes Butts, Jasper, Lamar, Monroe, and Upson counties. Cpl. Tony Wynne, Cpl. Wil Smith, RFC Keith Page, RFC Niki Spencer, and RFC Freddie Hays are assigned to this work section along with two vacant Ranger positions.

During FY16, Rangers in Sgt. Brent Railey's section worked and responded to several interesting incidents. On the evening of, Saturday April 23, Cpl. Keith Waddell and Sgt. Brent Railey were patrolling West Point Lake near the park in Franklin. They witnessed a jon boat traveling downstream strike a much smaller anchored jon boat at a high rate of speed. The owner and his 7-year-old son from the anchored boat were ejected into the water. Cpl. Waddell and Sgt. Railey were able to rescue both victims from the water almost immediately. The victims were transported to a hospital by ambulance. Charges are pending completion of the investigation.

In another boating incident, Sgt. Brent Railey and Cpl. Travis Sweat received a call about an anchored, unmanned vessel in West Point Lake in Whitewater Creek. Rangers soon realized this was most likely a boating incident and drowning. Working with USACE Rangers and Troup County Sheriff's Deputies/Dive team, Rangers were able to locate and recover the body of the victim within a few hours of receiving the call.



On Memorial Day weekend, RFC Kevin Godbee and Sgt. Brent Railey received information from the West Point Lake US Army Corps of Engineers about a gill net set near the dam. RFC Godbee, Sgt. Railey, and USACE Rangers confiscated the net and took several dozen fish caught in the net to a nearby homeless shelter.



During FY 16, several awards were received by Rangers working in Sgt. Railey's section. Cpl. Keith Waddell received the Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl award for his efforts in education and enforcement of waterfowl hunting. Cpl. Waddell received the Investigative Ranger of the Year award for Region IV as well. Cpl. Waddell worked an investigation that lasted several days which began with a complaint of hunting without permission. The suspect was located in another state and Cpl. Waddell was able to track the suspect down and was able to close the investigation and make several charges on the suspect.

RFC Russell Epps received the Region IV Torch Award, which is earned by Rangers who have been in the field less than five years and have shown their willingness to go above and beyond their normal duties while working in Conservation Law Enforcement.

In December, Northwest and Central Georgia received a large amount of rainfall which kept the Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers above normal levels for some time. Later that month, as the heavy rains continued to fall, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen and Sgt. Railey assisted the Troup County Sheriff's Office and the Troup County EMA with evacuating several homes in flooded areas.



Sgt. Bo Kelly's section covers a total of eight Counties including Lake Sinclair. Rangers in this work section stay busy with boating enforcement while working the busy lake in Region IV.

During this last year, Rangers taught classes on Hunter Education in each county and attended special events such as the Turkeyrama and Buckarama. Hunter Education volunteer instructor, Mr. Doyle Floyd, received the state Hunter Education Volunteer Instructor of the Year award for this past year. Section Rangers and volunteers taught an estimated 20 hunter education classes as well as three boater education classes during this period.

During this period, there were several significant investigations that were conducted by Rangers. One such investigation involved a single trail camera picture of two unknown poachers who were hunting without permission. After numerous tips and leads on the identities of the two individuals, Rangers were able to locate one of the suspects in the Baldwin County Jail. After several more tips, the second subject was located in the Hancock County Jail. Both individuals were interviewed and were implicated in numerous hunting/theft violations. Both individuals were found to be convicted felons in possession of firearms along with other theft and drug charges.

This work section is also responsible for patrolling Lake Sinclair. Lake Sinclair, a 15,500 acre impoundment operated by Georgia Power. During this past year, Rangers worked nine boating accidents/incidents on the Lake Sinclair, as well as one drowning. Rangers assisted numerous boaters who were either lost or were having engine problems. There are three patrol boats assigned to Lake Sinclair, all outfitted with side scan sonar, and are housed at the DNR boathouse located on the water in Milledgeville. During this past summer, Cpl. Lynn Stanford was recognized as the Region IV Boating Safety Officer of the Year.

There are 10 Wildlife Management Areas, one Public Fishing Area, one Historic Preservation Area and two federal hunting areas (Piedmont NWR, Oconee National Forest). During this period, Ranger Matt Johnson transferred to Region II–Dawson County and RFC Micheal Crawley transferred from Region I–Lake Allatoona, to Baldwin County.

Some of the significant cases that Rangers encountered during this period included two groups of people hunting deer at night, two cases of hunting under the influence of alcohol (HUI) and 14 boating under the influence (BUI) arrests. During the one day bear season in middle Georgia, section Rangers apprehended five hunters hunting bear over bear bait.

In December, Cpl. Robert Stillwell began an investigation in the unlawful killing of a black bear in Houston County. As the investigation unfolded over the next few days, a second bear was discovered in the same area and appeared to have been killed at the same time as the first bear. Rangers interviewed several people throughout the next few weeks and also reached out to the public for help through several media outlets. The case continues to go unsolved and Rangers are continuing to follow up on any new information as it becomes available.



Sgt. Bo Kelly and Cpl. Bubba Stanford, provided A.R.I.D.E. training to all DNR regions in the state during this period. This two-day class instructs officers how to detect impaired boat operation and impaired hunters, as a result of the person taking a legal/illegal drug. Rangers across the state are seeing an increase in encounters with persons who are under the influence of drugs.

RFCs Crawley and Reese apprehended two fishermen taking over-the-limit of striped/hybrid bass on the Oconee River. The two men had 42 striped/hybrid bass in their possession. The fish were donated to a needy family in Washington County.



RFC Micheal Crawley and K-9 Storm received a commendation from DNR Commissioner Mark Williams for his involvement in preventing a suicidal person from jumping from the Bethany Bridge over Lake Allatoona.





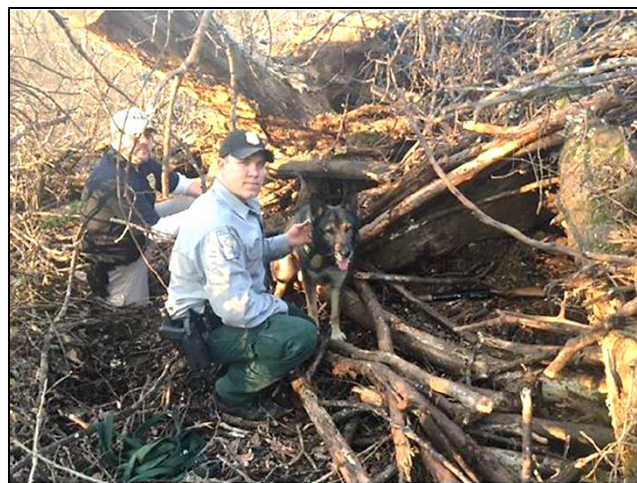


Cpl. Robert Stillwell, Cpl. Josh Swain, RFC Jeremy Reese, Sgt. Bo Kelly, Sgt. Wanda Roberts and Intern student Andrew Daniel assisted with the 19th Annual Wilkinson County Quail Hunt for Kids that was held in February. New hunters were able to take part in shooting clay pigeons, archery and hunting quail.

Sgt. Tony Fox also supervises a very diverse work section in the heart of Region IV. This section included Lake Jackson along with several miles of both the Flint River and the Ocmulgee River.

During the 2015-16 hunting season for deer, RFCs Jessica Spencer and Fred Hays conducted an investigation regarding the killing of three deer during hours of darkness in Butts County. This investigation led to charges being filed against an individual who Hays had apprehended the previous year for the same offense; in that instance, the arrestee killed a 171" trophy buck.

On the afternoon of February 11th, a man assaulted an elderly relative and ran into the woods with a gun in Lamar County. RFC Keith Page and K9 Drake responded along with Lamar County Deputies, Georgia State Troopers, and Agents from the GBI. K-9 Drake was used to track the suspect, who was eventually spotted by a citizen several miles from his residence. Officers responded and took the man into custody; the individual did not have a gun in his possession at this time. RFC Page deployed K-9 Drake and back-tracked the suspect for nearly a mile before locating the area the man had been hiding; the suspect had taken shelter in a large limb pile and covered himself with debris in order to hide from a hovering GSP helicopter. Page and Drake then located the missing firearm inside the shelter the suspect had made. The entire search for the suspect lasted approximately four hours.



Rangers expended much “shoe-leather” in the days leading up to Georgia’s spring turkey season, identifying a number of locations baited in violation of law. During the season’s first week RFCs Keith Page, Hays, and Spencer issued 15 citations for the offense of hunting turkeys over bait. Additionally, three subjects were cited for hunting with an unplugged shotgun and one illegally taken turkey was confiscated.

As one of the Region’s K-9 handlers, RFC Page assisted a number of federal, state, and local authorities with K-9 assistance requests, logging 64 hours of such support this past year. These calls primarily involved searches for persons who absconded from justice, although several involved locating evidence and weapons. In Upson County, Page and his dog “Drake” were responsible for recovering two handguns, duct tape, and suspects’ clothing in a case of an armed home invasion. During the firearms season for deer, Page and his K-9 assisted an elderly hunter in locating his rifle that had been misplaced in a thickly vegetated clear-cut, after the hunter had experienced a medical emergency; two days of searching were required to locate the firearm which was ultimately returned to a grateful owner.

During this fiscal year, work unit Rangers conducted 22 Search and Rescue operations. Most of these activities were routine in nature – for example, assisting overdue kayakers reach their destination. Several were more serious, however. In Upson County, in the early morning hours of Christmas Day, Cpl. Wil Smith responded to a call in which an elderly subject had become trapped inside his residence by floodwaters of the Flint River. The subject’s son had attempted to reach his father by boat but had himself become stranded by the current. Smith successfully extracted both people from the swift waters. In February, again in Upson County, Smith and RFC Page responded to a swollen Flint River in order to rescue a family of five who had been separated from their canoes and became stranded on the river’s bank. All persons were brought to safety without incident.

Sgt. Jim Bradfield supervises the south western part of Region IV which includes, Lake Harding, Goat Rock, Lake Oliver, and Lake Tobesofkee. This section is also responsible for several miles of the Flint and Chattahoochee Rivers.

Sgt. Bradfield’s work section had some assistance this summer from an intern from the Macon area. This intern primarily worked on boating patrols and assisted with information and educational programs and is currently in the hiring process with LED. The work section also participated in the FFA Statewide Convention in Macon where over 5,000 students attended this event. LED officers and our intern operated the fishing simulator and ran the archery shooting area for interested participants.

Rangers in this work section documented 25 patrols dedicated to shoal bass enforcement. These patrols were conducted on the Flint River at Big Lazer WMA in Talbot County and were conducted to protect this critical resource in an actively fished area. Rangers in the section additionally conducted 341 State land patrols and 62 boating patrols consisting of 225 water patrol hours throughout the waterways in work section this year.

Sgt. Bradfield will be completing Command College at Columbus State University at the end of summer 2016. Sgt. Bradfield is also Region IV's Below 100 instructor and in addition to presenting this program to the Region on a continuing basis, he has presented this valuable program to several local agencies within the work section.

Cpl. Josh Swain, RFC David Fisher, and Sgt. Jim Bradfield all participated in the NWTf Heritage Hunts this spring, each taking a youth hunter on a turkey hunt.

Cpl. Mitch Oliver, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen, Cpl. Josh Swain, and Sgt. Jim Bradfield all responded to assist Harris County earlier this summer with an officer involved shooting on interstate 185. The LED officers provided assistance by getting written statements from witnesses, directing traffic around the incident scene, and providing K-9 assistance in searching for evidence.

As a CIRT investigator, Cpl. Oliver was requested to assist the GBI and Long County with a shooting investigation that occurred in wooded area and appeared to be a hunting incident. As a result of these and other efforts, the incident was determined to be a murder and a suspect has been arrested.

Cpl. Oliver assisted Uptown Columbus this spring by starring in and narrating a short water safety video which promoted water safety for the whitewater course area in downtown Columbus. This video will reach countless viewers in the Columbus area with a valuable water safety message.

Cpl. Oliver additionally had an eventful enforcement year that included resolving complaints of an illegally killed alligator in Harris County, completing several lengthy hunting investigations, also in Harris County, apprehending several duck hunters in Talbot County in a baited swamp, and resolving a turkey hunting-without-permission investigation.

In one significant investigation, Cpl. Oliver apprehended a suspect hunting deer at night on a small tract of land surrounded by houses. According to complainants, this suspect had been hunting on previous nights at the location, shooting directly towards houses in the area. This dangerous and illegal situation was resolved through Cpl. Oliver's vigilant efforts. A second hunting deer at night investigation resulted from a text conversation received by a complainant about the illegal hunting. Cpl. Oliver launched an investigation, eventually resolving the matter with a suspect confessing to the incident after being confronted with the evidence against him.





While patrolling for duck hunting activity this winter Cpl. Oliver came across some deer hunters who acted in a suspicious manner. Through Cpl. Oliver's observant nature and investigative skills he was able to discover that the hunters had killed two hen turkeys just before his arrival. One hunter was charged with hunting turkey out of season and hunting with an illegal weapon for killing the turkeys with a rifle. Other deer hunting violations were documented as well during this encounter.

In July this year, Cpl. Oliver also received a complaint of persons spear fishing in Harris County in the upper portion of Lake Harding. Through his efforts Cpl. Oliver apprehended several persons spearing game fish in the area. Some of these suspects apprehended this year had been caught by Cpl. Oliver and other LED officers in August 2014 in the same area spearing game fish.

Cpl. Josh Swain managed the work sections intern schedule and hours and assisted the Investigative unit with several investigations including three alligator investigations. Cpl. Swain also assists the Region with numerous computer and MDT related issues including, creating a PowerPoint for the Trauma Kit training, getting DNR's SOPs on our on-line policy manual, assisting a Ranger in another region with creating a wildlife web page, and fulfilling numerous request from the Region office for computer and MDT assistance. Cpl. Swain also maintains a website of his own, Taylor County Wildlife Watch, dedicated to providing information to hunters, anglers, and outdoor enthusiast in Taylor County. This website reaches many stakeholders with valuable information and provides them with the opportunity to share pictures and other information with others.

Cpl. Bolen also worked a hunting turkey over bait complaint in Talbot County where he had discovered some bait on a property adjacent to the Almo WMA tract. After spending several days watching a hunting blind at the bait, Cpl. Bolen was able to catch the hunter hunting in the blind. This was significant because Cpl. Bolen had caught this same hunter hunting turkey over bait just a few years before in the same general area.

Cpl. Bolen is one of three K-9 officers in Region IV and utilizes his K-9, Ruger, often. He utilizes Ruger continuously on DNR LED related issues, as well as assisting the GBI and Harris County in tracking a fleeing suspect, and in searching for evidence at the scene of an officer involved shooting in Harris County.

Cpl. Bolen had an eventful enforcement year and was involved in two separate investigations of taking over the limit of bucks. One of these investigations originated from a complaint from a Facebook post made by the suspect. At the conclusion of the investigation, a suspect admitted to and was charged with taking over the limit of bucks. The second investigation involved a suspect caught by a landowner hunting without permission who had also killed a buck. The suspect and the landowner got into a relatively minor physical altercation on the property before the suspect fled the area on foot. The landowner was able to get a photograph of the suspect on his phone before he fled and Cpl. Bolen was able to determine who the suspect was from this photograph. This hunting without permission investigation quickly turned into an over the limit of bucks investigation because of Cpl. Bolen's investigative skills. The suspect, when confronted with the evidence against him, admitted to the violations and was eventually arrested on several warrants for the violations.



RFC David Fisher was involved in working three drownings this year - one on the Ocmulgee River in Bibb County, one in Harris County on the Chattahoochee River, and one on the Flint River in Crawford County.

Additionally RFC Fisher worked a baited duck swamp, apprehending two hunters hunting ducks over bait. RFC Fisher had discovered this duck swamp to be baited the previous year and was not able to catch anyone hunting the area at the time. Through his dedicated efforts, RFC Fisher verified the swamp was baited again this year and dedicated the time necessary to apprehend the hunters responsible. The hunters admitted to putting the bait in the swamp both this year and the previous year when RFC Fisher advised them of what he had discovered.

RFC Fisher conducted an investigation in Crawford County this year involving an illegally killed undersized buck. As a result of RFC Fisher's efforts the investigation resulted in the seizure of two undersized bucks which were illegally killed by a suspect.

RFC Fisher was able to obtain a grant from Walmart this year and used these funds to purchase two LED bar spotlights which were mounted on two work section river boats. These lights have been used at night to illuminate an area when working drownings and other various details. These grant purchases save Region funds to be used in other areas and are a valuable addition to the Region budget.

## Region V- Albany (Southwest)



**Front Row L-R:** Sgt. David Ruddell, Sgt. Al Greer, Cpl. Scott Carroll, RFC Quinn Fogle, Cpl. Steve Robinson, RGR Jay Lewis. **Middle Row L-R:** Sgt. Ellis Wynn, Secretary Shannon Boyd, Cpl. Randy Davis (retired), Cpl. Greg Wade, Cpl. Robbie Griner, Cpl. Bob Holley, Capt. Jeff Swift, AOC Cindy Hynote. **Back Row L-R:** Cpl. Tony Cox, Ranger Steve Thomas, RFC Jon Penuel, Sgt. Rick Sellars, Cpl. Clint Martin, Sgt. Jim Atchley.

The Region V Law Enforcement Division is comprised of 29 counties in the southwest portion of the state with the headquarters located in Albany. Within the region there are four large reservoirs, two major rivers, three smaller rivers, thirteen wildlife management areas, and seven state parks.

Currently, the region has 19 POST certified Rangers, with 17 primarily assigned field responsibilities and Captain Jeff Swift and Sergeant Ellis Wynn assigned administrative responsibilities. The Region also has two non-sworn administrative staff, Cindy Hynote the Administrative Assistant III, and Shannon Boyd the hourly secretary.



The 29 counties are divided into four work units, each supervised by a sergeant, and consist of:

- Sergeant Al Greer and his staff, Corporal Clint Martin, Corporal Bob Holley, Ranger Jesse Harrison and Ranger Jay Lewis. Sergeant Greer's work unit covers Marion, Macon, Schley, Dooly, Sumter, Crisp, Lee and Turner counties. Key points of interest are Georgia Veterans State Park, Lake Blackshear, Flint River WMA, Montezuma Bluffs Natural Area, Cordele Fish Hatchery and Fall Line WMA.



**L-R, Ranger Jay Lewis, Corporal Clint Martin, Corporal Bob Holley and Creek, Sergeant Al Greer, Ranger Jesse Harrison**

- Sergeant David Ruddell and his staff, Corporal Robbie Griner, Corporal Greg Wade, RFC Jon Penuel and Ranger Eric White. Sergeant Ruddell's work unit covers Dougherty, Worth, Tift, Colquitt, Thomas and Brooks counties. Key points of interest are Lake Worth, Doerun Picture Plant Bog Natural Area, River Creek WMA, Chickasawhatchee WMA, DOT Mitigation sites and Albany Nursery WMA.



***L-R: Ranger 1st Class Jon Penuel, Corporal Greg Wade, Sergeant David Ruddell, and Corporal Robbie Griner. Inset: Ranger Eric White***



- Sergeant Rick Sellars and his staff, Corporal Tony Cox and Ranger Steve Thomas. Sergeant Sellars' work unit covers Grady, Decatur, Seminole, Miller, Early, Mitchell, and Baker counties. Key points of interest include Lake Seminole, Seminole State Park, Kolomoki Mounds State Park, Chickasawhatchee WMA, Silver Lake WMA, Lake Seminole WMA and Elmodel WMA.



**L-R: Corporal Tony Cox, Sergeant Rick Sellars and Ranger Steve Thomas**



- Sergeant Jim Atchley and his staff, Corporal Scott Carroll, Corporal Steve Robinson and Ranger Quinn Fogle. Sergeant Atchley's work unit covers Chattahoochee, Stewart, Webster, Quitman, Randolph, Terrell, Clay and Calhoun counties. Key points of interest include Chickasawhatchee WMA, Lake W.F. George, Providence Canyon State Park, Florence Marina State Park and Hannahatchee Creek WMA, Lake George WMA and Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge.



**L-R: Corporal Steve Robinson, Sergeant Jim Atchley, RFC Quinn Fogle, Corporal Scott Carroll**

The Region V staff received numerous awards and honors for their work throughout the year:

- Captain Jeff Swift was selected as the Law Enforcement Division's Supervisor of the Year.

- Corporal Greg Wade was recognized as the top conservation law enforcement officer in North America this past year when he was selected by the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) as their 2015 Conservation Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. Greg was presented the award at AFWA's 105<sup>th</sup> annual meeting in Tucson, Arizona.



- Corporal Bob Holley received the Law Enforcement Division's James Darnell Award for his outstanding enforcement efforts and contributions and was also recognized by several local civic organizations for his accomplishments.

**Corporal Holley at the Southwest Georgia Sportsman Club in 2016.**



- Ranger Eric White was selected as the Law Enforcement Division's Ranger Hunter Education Instructor of the year for his exemplary contributions to the Hunter Education Program. Eric was also recognized by the Georgia Hunter Education Association as their Instructor of the Year and presented with that award at their annual GHEA Conference.

- Ranger Eric White was also selected as the Region V Waterfowl Officer of the Year
- Ranger Jesse Harrison was selected as the Region V Ranger of the Year.



**Ranger Eric White receiving the award from GHEA President, Wayne Davis (R) and WRD Hunter Development Program Manager, Walter Lane (L).**

Region V experienced several personnel changes this year:

- Ranger Eric White transferred to Colquitt County; Corporal Robbie Griner transferred to Dougherty County; Corporal Greg Wade transferred to Worth County; Ranger Steve Thomas was promoted to Ranger First Class and transferred to Grady County; and Ranger Quinn Fogle was promoted to Ranger First Class.
- Corporal Jim Atchley was promoted to Sergeant and filled the vacancy that was created by the retirement of Sergeant Butch Potter. Jim is now the field supervisor for Clay, Randolph, Terrell, Webster, Quitman, and Chattahoochee Counties.
- Corporal Randy Davis was on medical leave most of the year due to injuries sustained during a late night search and rescue operation on the Flint River. He recently retired after 22 years of service to the State and will be missed.
- RFC Tony Cox was promoted to Corporal and filled the vacancy left by Jim Atchley's promotion.
- The Lee County Ranger, RFC Randy James, left the agency to pursue a career in the private boating industry. Ranger Jay Lewis assumed the responsibilities for Lee County.
- Corporals Robbie Griner and Greg Wade suffered injuries this past year that required lengthy periods of recuperation. In October, Corporal Griner suffered a potentially, career-ending back injury while conducting search and rescue efforts for a missing girl in Baker County, and has been unable to return to duty. Corporal Wade suffered a foot injury while conducting PT training that required him to be on leave for three months.
- Captain Jeff Swift underwent knee replacement and was also on extended medical leave.

Region V received six new Ford F-150s and one new patrol boat:

A McKee boat assigned to Lake Blackshear was replaced with an Edgewater 220 IS.



**Ranger Jay Lewis with the 2016 Edgewater 220IS boat.**





**2016 Ford F-150**

Rangers continue to conduct investigations into illegal activities, working diligently to address landowner concerns and violations on state operated properties.

Corporal Tony Cox has been involved in several significant investigations throughout the Region. He assisted the Decatur County Sheriff's Office with a search warrant on a marijuana grow house where he discovered multiple wildlife violations, including the taking/possession of protected species (Alligator Snapping Turtles), and several other hunting violations. During an interview with Corporal Cox, the subject admitted to multiple violations but stated that most of the wildlife in question was taken in Florida. In addition to pursuing the suspect for the Georgia violations, Corporal Cox involved Florida FWCC with the case and they cited the subject for the Florida violations.



**AOC Cindy Hynote and Secretary Shannon Boyd with Alligator Snapping Turtle parts seized by Corporal Tony Cox during an investigation.**

Corporal Cox is currently working on an extensive investigation with RFC Jon Penuel related to multiple statewide alligator hunting violations that were discovered at the conclusion of the last alligator season. The two officers began an extensive and complex investigation focused on violations related to the state's Alligator hunting program. Initially begun to look into the expected violations of licenses infractions and unreported kills, the investigation has revealed a pattern of abuses of DNR's quota system by applicants, inherent issues with the quota system, and potential conspiracy among subjects across the state.

Corporal Clint Martin responded to a complaint in reference to two subjects who were carrying firearms and possibly hunting without permission. Corporal Martin checked the area for any evidence related to criminal activity and located several spent shell casings on the edge of the roadway. Corporal Martin made contact with the subjects and began interviewing them. One of the subjects admitted to shooting at a buck the previous evening from the road. The two subjects were charged with numerous violations.

Sumter, Dooly, Macon, Schley and Crisp counties continue to produce excellent dove hunting opportunities. The Rangers in Sergeant Greer's section checked a multitude of dove shoots in these areas. RFC Harrison issued citations on two baited dove fields and Corporal Holley cited one other group for hunting over bait.

RFC Jesse Harrison received a complaint from a landowner in reference to hunting deer without permission. RFC Harrison was able to apprehend the subject and charged him with multiple violations including possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. Harrison then seized a firearm and a ten-point mounted deer rack as evidence.



**Jesse Harrison with the seized buck.**

The region K-9, “Creek”, was diagnosed with Thymoma cancer in March of 2016. After multiple visits to the University of Georgia Veterinary Hospital, surgery was performed to remove a large tumor located in his chest. Creek has made a full recovery and was back on duty in July. Despite being out of service for a large portion of the year, Creek was able to assist Corporal Holley and other Rangers in making 18 cases, tracking and locating 13 hunters who were engaged in illegal hunting activity.

Cpl. Holley and Creek responded to a complaint of shots being fired from a vehicle. The witness had obtained a vehicle tag number and after a brief investigation, they recovered a 20 gauge shotgun wad in tall grass as evidence. An interview of the driver was conducted and the subject admitted to shooting at hogs from his vehicle and the roadway. The subject was cited for numerous violations.

Corporal Steve Robinson was involved with planning work details and conducting foot and ATV patrols to address illegal and unsafe activities within Providence Canyon State Park. Cpl. Robinson documented over seventy five violations within the park this year and worked closely with park staff to improve signage, fencing and trails to increase visitor safety.

Corporal Robbie Griner, Corporal Scott Carroll, Ranger Quinn Fogle and Sergeant Ellis Wynn were conducting a patrol in Baker County during dove season when they located two groups of hunters shooting doves illegally on a WMA.



***L-R: Cpl. Robbie Griner, Cpl. Scott Carroll, Ranger Quinn Fogle with confiscated doves.***



Officers in Sergeant Atchley's work unit were involved in a CWD Case that stemmed from information gathered by RFC Fogle. A subject was found to have taken a deer from a known CWD state and transported the carcass into Georgia. He was found trying to pass the deer off as one he had killed on a hunting lease in Randolph County Georgia. During the investigation the Rangers discovered he was a convicted felon and was hunting with a firearm during the archery portion of the deer hunting season. A surveillance detail was then organized and the subject was apprehended actively hunting with a firearm. The investigation resulted in the subject being charged for possession of a firearm by a convicted felon and importing prohibited Cervid parts from a known CWD state.

Sergeant Atchley's work unit was also responsible for apprehending five convicted felons in possession of firearms.

Corporal Carroll and RFC Fogle investigated and charged an individual for taking over the limit of antlered deer in Randolph County where the suspect had taken five antlered bucks.

Corporal Robinson and RFC Fogle conducted an investigation on a known convicted felon who had taken a large antlered buck with a firearm. They apprehended the subject and obtained a confession as he was attempting to drop off the deer at a taxidermy shop.



***L-R: Corporal Steve Robinson, RFC Quinn Fogle, Corporal Scott Carroll with confiscated firearms.***

Corporal Carroll also apprehended a subject HUI and in possession of marijuana during the spring turkey hunting season.

RFC Fogle apprehended a subject illegally fishing gill nets (his first netting case) in the Chattahoochee River.



**RFC Quinn Fogle with illegal gill nets.**

Rangers in Sergeant Ruddell's work unit worked many long, cold nights to apprehend poachers targeting trophy deer. The Rangers received numerous complaints of night hunting activity and arrested fourteen individuals associated with the illegal activity.



**Sgt. Ruddell using NVG's to conduct surveillance during a night deer hunting patrol.**

Kayakers and wake boat numbers continue to increase and along with them come unique enforcement concerns. Rangers have fielded complaints of damage to property, littering and trespassing related to these specialized watercraft.



**Corporal Scott Carroll, Corporal Steve Robinson and Sergeant Jim Atchley on a boating patrol on Lake W.F. George.**

Aggressive BUI patrols and media coverage, along with the Governor's Office of Highway Safety campaign designed to educate the public on the dangers of impaired driving, appear to have had an impact on boaters in the region. Rangers have also noticed an increase in the number of designated operators on boats they encounter which is a very welcome sight.

Rangers continue to see increasing numbers of hunters as the popularity of waterfowl hunting grows. Redheads and scaup were found in substantial numbers but canvasback and ringneck numbers were low compared to past seasons. The increasing acreage of invasive aquatic vegetation on area lakes has definitely benefited waterfowl. Rangers also saw an increase in complaints related to waterfowl hunting as more hunters took to the lakes and rivers. Also noted and addressed was an increase in the number of thefts reported at boat landings as thieves targeted vehicles belonging to waterfowl hunters.



**Successful Lake Seminole duck hunters with limit of Canvasbacks.**





**Ranger Eric White utilizing the Poke Boat and a bait scoop to search a cypress pond for duck bait.**

Ranger Eric White was recognized as the Region V Waterfowl Officer of the Year. His patrols took him to every county of his work unit and beyond for special details. During the course of the season, Eric checked one hundred and forty waterfowl hunters and documented fifty various waterfowl violations. His significant activity included locating seven groups of hunters hunting over bait and four after-hours roost shoots.

Corporal Greg Wade had several significant cases, apprehending twenty hunters hunting over bait and ten others for roost shooting violations.

Corporal Robbie Griner cited a group of six hunters shooting geese over bait. In addition to the numerous violations, Cpl. Griner seized twenty-one geese along with ducks from the group.

RFC Jon Penuel located and cited three people illegally hunting ducks during a managed youth hunt on River Creek WMA. The subjects had parked their vehicles under a nearby highway bridge and crept into WMA on foot along the Ochlocknee River.

### **Search and Rescue Operations:**

During this past year, Rangers in Rick Sellars' work unit responded to several search and rescue incidents throughout the work section. These include two drownings, nine boat incidents, one hunting incident, several missing persons, and one airplane crash. The airplane incident occurred when a plane disappeared from radar while travelling from central Florida to Cairo, Georgia. Rangers from Sergeant Sellars' and Sergeant Ruddell's



work units assisted local agencies in several counties of Southwest Georgia in a search that lasted most of the day. A deputy found what was left of the twin-engine aircraft in thick woods and Rangers assisted with securing the scene and removing the remains of the pilot and passenger with their ATV's.

**Aerial view of the plane crash site (Decatur Co).**

Cpl. Bob Holley, RFC Jesse Harrison, and Cpl. Clint Martin responded to a report of a lost hunter on Flint River WMA. Using a patrol boat to reach the hunter, the Rangers were guided to the hunter's location by a GSP aviation unit.

Ranger Jay Lewis was called to assist Lee County Sheriff's Office with the search for an elderly female with dementia. The search lasted two days until the victim was found deceased in a nearby pond.

Ranger Lewis and Ranger Eric White were called to assist Lee County Sheriff's Office on another occasion with a search for a subject whom had been fishing from a dock on the Kinchafoonee Creek and disappeared. After four days of searching the victim was found deceased in the creek.



Ranger Lewis assisted the Americus Police Department with a search for a subject that had fled on foot from a traffic stop. The subject was last seen entering a wooded area adjacent to the Muckalee Creek. The subject was found deceased three weeks later.

All three deaths were ruled accidental drowning.

**Ranger Jay Lewis and Sergeant Al Greer dragging for a drowning victim.**

On Memorial Day weekend, Ranger's responded within minutes to a vessel that exploded and was engulfed by fire on Lake Blackshear. The vessel's operator had just refueled the inboard vessel and failed to properly vent the fumes. When the operator attempted to start the engine, the fumes that were contained in the compartments exploded. The Rangers extinguished the fire and the four occupants were checked by EMS and released with no injuries.

Rangers responded to requests from Baker County officials to assist with the search for a young mentally handicapped child. After several days, the child was eventually located alive and safe in a junkyard in the search area.



Sergeant Jim Atchley and Corporal Tony Cox responded to multiple requests for Sonar-ROV deployment. Sergeant Atchley left the team in June and Cpl. Cox assumed lead Sonar-ROV duties for the Region. Ranger Eric White has been assigned to the team to replace Sergeant Atchley.

**Sgt. Jim Atchley setting up the ROV for an evidence search in 2016.**

Rangers were busy attending training throughout the year.

Cpl. Clint Martin and Sgt. Ellis Wynn attended Mass Fatality Body Recovery Training.



**Corporal Clint Martin at Mass Fatality  
Air-Crash Training 2016.**

+

Sgt. Atchley and his work unit provided a day of boat EVOC training for the region staff on Lake W.F. George.



**Captain Swift, AOC Cindy Hynote and Ranger Eric White during Boat EVOC  
Training 2016.**

The region participated in tourniquet training, PT Readiness, CPR, CIT, CTTF, BUI/SFST, Boat EVOC and firearms training.





**Captain Jeff Swift firing the newly configured M-16 rifle.**

Cpl. Clint Martin has been attending training as a member of the Critical Incident Reconstruction Team.

Cpl. Tony Cox assumed the duties of the lead Side Scan Sonar/ROV Operator for the Region. This equipment is used statewide to assist with underwater search and recovery operations. Tony is currently training Ranger Eric White to assist with these duties. Tony also attended several training classes this year including Investigations, Certified Field Training Officer, and a Wilderness First Responder Medical course.

Cpl. Scott Carroll is currently enrolled in PMP Classes at Columbus State University and was involved in training as a Firearms, ALERRT, and ATV Instructor.

Cpl. Steve Robinson and Cpl. Clint Martin, Region V CIRT Investigators, continue to enhance their skill set by attending advanced training related to serious hunting and boating incidents.

Cpl. Steve Robinson was selected to serve as a Field Training Officer and attended a FTO Training Class.

RFC Quinn Fogle was assigned to the Counter Terrorism Task Force.

Sgt. Jim Atchley continues to attend training related to his duties with the Peer Support Team.

## Region VI- Metter (Southeast)



*Front Row L-R: Cpl. Kevin Joyce, Cpl. Tommy Daughtrey, Cpl. Dan Stiles, Cpl. Mike Wilcox, Cpl. John Stokes, Cpl. Shaymus McNeely, Cpl. Jason Shipes. Middle Row L-R: Sgt. Jon Barnard, Sgt. Morty Wood, Admin Support Melinda Monroe, Capt. Scott Klingel, Admin Assistant Sharon Sims, Sgt. Chris Moore, Sgt. Patrick Dupree. Back Row L-R: RFC Bobby Sanders, RFC Allen Mills, RFC Jason Miller, Rgr. Randell Meeks, RFC Rodney Horne, RFC Jordan Crawford, RFC Clint Jarriel, RFC Sam Williams, RFC Daniel North, Rgr. Judd Sears. Not Pictured: Sgt. James McLaughlin, Cpl. Chase Altman, Cpl. Mark Pool, Cpl. Tim Hutto*

The Region VI Law Enforcement office is located in Metter and services 32 of Georgia's south-central counties, covering 24% of the state's land mass. The office is staffed by Region Supervisor Captain Scott Klingel, Administrative Sergeant Chris Moore, Administrative Assistant 3 Sharon Sims, and Administrative Support 1 Melinda Monroe. There are 33 POST certified positions in the Region.

### **Personnel**

The Region had two retirements this year, Corporal Eddie Akins retired March 1, 2016 after 33 years of service. Corporal Akins was assigned to Bulloch County. Sergeant Don Dasher retired July 1, 2016 after 32 years of service. Sergeant Dasher was assigned to Jenkins County.

Ranger Jordan Crawford in Effingham County and Ranger Daniel North in Echols County were both promoted to Ranger First Class. Ranger Randell Meeks transferred to the LED from PRHS. He is assigned to Candler/Emmanuel Counties. RFC Bobby Sanders transferred to the LED from the WRD. He is assigned to Toombs County. RFC Jason Miller transferred to Region VI LED from Region VII LED. He is assigned to Bulloch County. Corporal Tim Hutto internally transferred from Atkinson/Lanier Counties to Coffee County.



### **Region Awards**

Great effort should always be recognized and celebrated, and Region VI has several officers that warrant special attention. The Ranger of the Year for Region VI is Corporal Tommy Daughtrey. Our Boating Safety Officer of the Year is Corporal Shamus McNeely. The Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl Award winner for Region VI is RFC Rodney Horne. The National Wild Turkey Federation Officer of the Year is RFC Clint Jarriel. RFC Allen Mills was selected as the Region VI Hunter Education Instructor of the Year. RFC Daniel North was selected as the Region VI Investigative Ranger of the Year and as the Region VI Torch Award winner.

### **Investigations**

Corporal Jason Shipes began a multi-state deer poaching in May 2016. This case involved search warrants for several Facebook accounts and resulted in multiple charges against five individuals with nineteen deer racks seized.





Sgt. Dupree's work unit provided assistance with a Kansas deer poaching case in cooperation with FWC. They seized three illegally-killed Kansas trophy deer racks in Georgia.



On October 15<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Shaymus McNeely wrapped up a month long investigation of illegal artifact digging on Tuckahoe WMA. Evidence collected at the dig site by Cpl. McNeely and a tip from a State Trooper led to a suspect in Sylvania. The suspect was charged with unlawful excavation of artifacts on state property.



On September 6, 2015, RFC Rodney Horne was conducting a surveillance detail on a private boat landing on the Oconee River in Wheeler County. RFC Horne observed two males, an adult and a juvenile, approach the landing with two large dip nets with long handles in the vessel and no expiration decal on the side of the vessel. After a brief investigation of the vessel and an interview with the adult in the vessel, a fish shocker, two dip nets, and 25 catfish were seized from the poacher for violating Georgia's law against shocking fish. The poacher was charged with shocking fish.





### **Night Hunters**

Night hunting for deer is still an issue in the Region and we continued with our efforts to catch these poachers. During the past year, we caught 32 groups of night hunters and charged 75 persons for hunting deer at night. These efforts resulted in 212 charges being made including hunting deer at night with the aid of a light, obstruction, fleeing and eluding, DUI, felony possession of methamphetamine, hunting from a road, hunting without permission, hunting from a motor vehicle, possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, and other drug possession charges.



**Evidence from a night deer poacher arrest in Coffee County.**



**Seized evidence from a night deer poaching arrest in Berrien County.**



### **Other Activities and Highlights**

Region VI Officers investigated and reported nine drownings, 10 hunting incidents, and nine boating incidents throughout the fiscal year.



**Atkinson County Tree Stand Hunting Incident**

In August 2015 Corporals Shamus McNeely, Tommy Daughtrey, Dan Stiles, Kevin Joyce, and Jason Shipes attended the 40 hour F.T.O. course at GPSTC. Several Region VI Rangers attended the IHEA Hunting Incident Academy in September 2015 at GPSTC. Region officers assisted Region VII with the annual Beach Frat party on St. Simons Island with public safety efforts in October 2015. In January 2016 Corporals John Stokes, Kevin Joyce, Shamus McNeely, RFC Rodney Horne, and Ranger Randell Meeks deployed to the metro Atlanta area as winter storm Jonas moved through the area. They assisted local agencies across north and central Georgia with traffic issues and other public safety activities.

Officers in Sgt. Dupree's work unit coordinated the purchase of turkey decoy with funds donated by the local NWTF chapter.



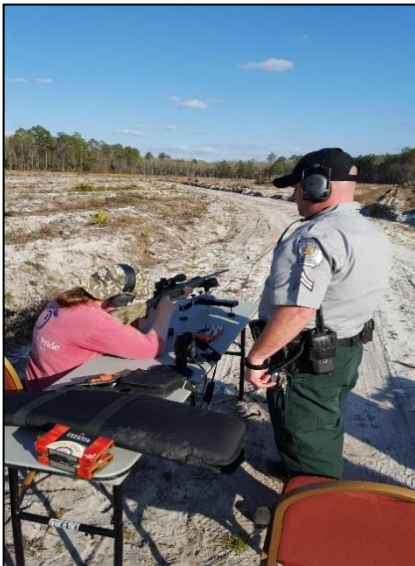
The Region participated in an extensive Bear Hunting Enforcement Detail in 2015 in counties surrounding the Okefenokee Swamp. Officers from across the state conducted a three-day patrol for bear hunting violations in four counties with more than 150 hunters encountered.



Region VI Rangers participated in the annual JAKES Day / Outdoor Adventure Day held at Paradise PFA. Instruction was given on the safe handling of firearms and the youth were allowed to shoot skeet at the shotgun range.



Superior Pine Company Youth Deer Hunt in Clinch County in October 2015. Sgt. Dupree's work unit officers assisted by purchasing hunting licenses and guiding youth hunters from the Georgia Sheriff's Youth Home.



Becoming an Outdoors Woman Hog Hunt in Clinch County in March 2016. Women from around the state participated in a weekend event that included rifle and shotgun familiarization and a two-day hog hunt near Fargo, GA. Officers from Sgt. Dupree's work unit provided gun handling training and served as hunting guides.

NWTF Youth Turkey Hunting School and Hunt in March 2016. Sergeant Patrick Dupree, RFC Daniel North, and Sergeant Morty Wood instructed the youth in hunting safety, turkey hunting methods, and served as hunt guides.





## Region VII- Brunswick (Coastal)



**Front Row L-R:** Sgt. Chris Ridley, Sgt. Damon Winters, RFC Jason Miller, Sgt. Cindy Miller, RFC David Brady, Secretary Rhonda Knight, BOG Janette Senior. **Middle Row:** Cpl. Kate Hargrove, RFC Jay Bright, RFC Tim Morris, RFC Mark Day, Sgt. Mark Carson, RFC Kiel Toney, Cpl. Buster Cooper. **Back Row L-R:** RFC Colte Shaske, Sgt. Phillip Scott, RFC Jack Thain, Cpl. Jay Morgan, Cpl. Bill Bryson, Captain Bob Lynn, Cpl. Craig Smith, Cpl. Bobby White. *Not pictured:* License clerk Kay Readdick, RNG Doug Chambers, RFC Patrick Gibbs, Cpl. Randy Aspinwall, RFC John Evans.

Region VII is comprised of nine counties (all six coastal counties plus Wayne, Long, and Brantley counties). One of Region VII LE's main focus points is on the commercial fishing industry and offshore federal fisheries. This year was another symbolic year for rangers in Region VII. Our efforts ranged from our "normal" hunting and fishing violations, to assisting other agencies with crowd control, to numerous illegal commercial fishing violations.

2015-2016 was a busy year for boating incidents with fatalities. The Region worked 15 boat incidents resulting in 12 injuries and eight fatalities. These eight fatalities were within a six week period.

On September 2, 2015, RFC John Evans received a complaint about artifacts being stolen from Cannon Point on St. Simons Island. A camera was placed in the area to monitor the traffic in the area. The investigation continued until late December when a subject was arrested at the scene taking artifacts. So far the investigation has recovered 170 artifacts and the subject has 15 charges pending.



On September 6, 2015, Sgt. Damon Winters and Ranger Jay Bright responded to a complaint about fisherman keeping a sea turtle at the Sapelo Ferry Dock. After arriving at the dock the Rangers checked three fishermen fishing from the dock. One of the fishermen was found to be in possession of a live sea turtle in a cooler. The turtle was seized and turned over to rehabilitators on Jekyll Island. The fisherman was cited for Taking Protected Species.

On October 3, 2015, Rangers from Region VI and Region VII participated in the 21st Annual Coast Fest event sponsored by the Coastal Resources Division. Rangers assisted with directing traffic. There were over 8,800 people that attended Coast Fest. Later that evening, Region VII Rangers and Georgia State Patrol conducted a Wildlife Checkpoint on the Paulk's Pasture Wildlife Management Area Check in Firearms Rifle Hunt. Over 60 vehicles and 80 hunters were contacted.



On October 30, 2015, 26 Rangers from Regions VI (Metter) and Region VII (Brunswick) assisted the Glynn County Police Department and Glynn County Sheriff's Office with the annual Georgia-Florida Beach Bash on St. Simons Island. Rangers aided in controlling the crowd of 4,000 and provided water security and safety patrol off of East Beach at the Coast Guard Station.





On February 5, 2016, Rangers from Chatham County and two undercover Rangers worked an illegal oyster investigation. Undercover Rangers purchased five bushels of oysters (sold in dog food bags for disguise) and four quarts of shucked oysters. The investigation was videoed and recorded. Rangers got a search warrant for the residence of the suspect. The warrant was executed and numerous items were seized as well as the journal where the suspect wrote down each transaction. At the completion of the investigation, the suspect was charged with multiple violations.



From June 5–11, 2016, RFC John Evans, RFC Colte Shaske, Cpl. Kate Hargrove, RFC David Brady, RFC Jay Bright, RFC Patrick Gibbs, RFC Kiel Toney, Sgt. Mark Carson, Captain Ed Watkins, and Captain Bob Lynn, conducted two separate searches for three missing boaters in Glynn and Camden Counties. For a total of seven days DNR Rangers, Glynn County EMA and the Camden County Sheriff's Office searched through inclement weather conditions (Tropical Storm Colin); abnormally high and low tides and finally caught a break after the storm passed to continue the search. Air support was provided by DNR Law Enforcement Aviation, GSP Aviation and US Coast Guard Aviation. The three victims were recovered on three different days all in different locations. Because of the response and cooperation from the different agencies, closure was brought to the families of the victims.

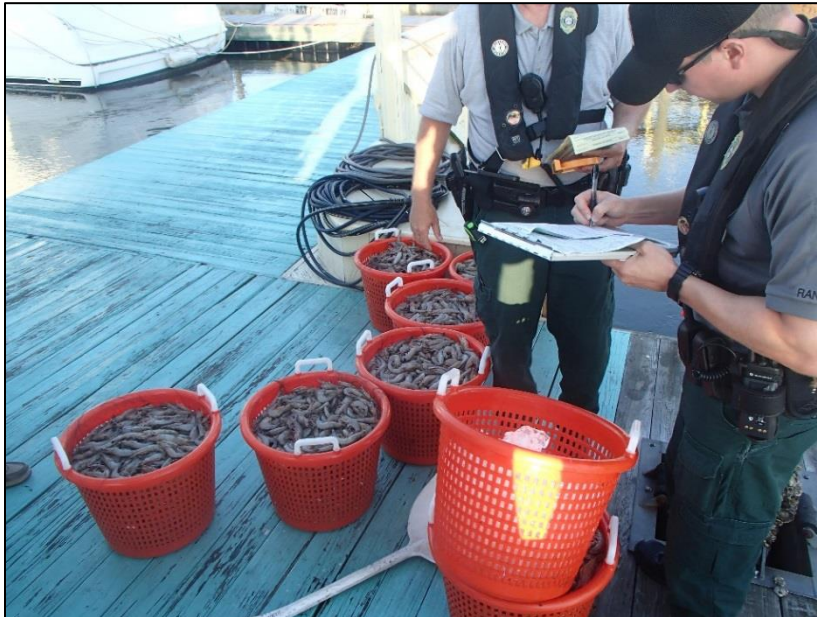
During this year, Region VII again had excellent officers performing above and beyond expectations. RFC Patrick Gibbs was the Region Ranger of the Year and the Waterfowl Officer of the Year, RFC John Evans was the Region Boating Officer of the Year, RFC Jason Miller was the Region National Wild Turkey Federation Officer, and Cpl. Randy Aspinwall was the Region Investigator of the Year.



This past year, Region VII saw its share of transfers, promotions, retirements, and resignations. In July, Captain Doug Lewis retired after 34 years of service. Captain Bob Lynn transferred from Region IV into Captain Lewis' position to become the Region Supervisor for Region VII. Sgt. Chris Hodge was promoted to Captain in Region IV. Cpl. Chris Ridley was promoted to Sergeant of the Glynn, Brantley, and Camden work section. RFC Jason Miller transferred from Bryan/Liberty counties in Region VII to Bulloch County in Region VI. Cpl. Craig Smith left the agency to take a position as an instructor at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center.

Region VII is the only Region capable of providing a unique opportunity to assist the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) by participating in a Joint Enforcement Agreement (JEA). Officers enforce Federal Fishing laws and regulations for NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement from three miles to 200 miles offshore of Georgia's Coast.

During this time period, Region VII Rangers boarded 49 Shrimp trawlers contacting 146 people regarding Turtle Excluder Devices and net dimensions. We documented four state violations and two Federal violations regarding TED enforcement. Four Trawlers were caught trawling in Georgia waters while the shrimping season was closed.



Hours provided during this agreement period, July 1, 2015–June 30, 2016 include the following:

Large Vessel: 355 vessel hours (3 officers per vessel)

Mid-Range Vessel: 323 vessel hours (2 officers per vessel)

Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary: 66 vessel hours (3 officers per vessel)

Dockside Inspection: 292 man hours

Atlantic Right Whale Protection: 50 vessel hours

Aircraft Support hours- 74 flight hours

Public Outreach: 104 man hours

## **Investigative Unit**

The Investigative Unit (IU) is comprised of two full-time investigators. The IU is responsible for undercover investigations, Special Permit Unit (SPU) inspections and violations, the administration of the Critical Incident Reconstruction Team (CIRT) and the Marine Theft Unit (MTU). The IU depends heavily on assistance from uniformed Rangers. Statewide, 14 Rangers perform a collateral duty called "Regional Investigator". Regional Investigators assist the IU with various duties.

### **Undercover Investigations**

The Region Investigators are full-time Conservation Rangers who have received training in undercover operations and equipment. They perform this collateral duty in addition to their everyday Conservation Ranger duties. The primary function of the Investigative Unit is to provide uniform Rangers with investigative support. The Investigative Unit is responsible for plain-clothes and long-term investigations.

Last year, the Investigative Unit conducted and managed over 250 investigations and calls for assistance from the field. These investigations were comprised of intelligence gathering, buy/bust, and both short and long-term investigations. The focus of many of these investigations included the sale or possession of wildlife and wild animals. These violations are difficult to address without the aid of undercover officers.

### **Critical Incident Reconstruction Team (CIRT)**

Georgia has 16 CIRT investigators assigned throughout the state. CIRT investigates all fatality and serious injury boating and hunting incidents. Each investigator receives specialized training on investigating and presenting these cases. Last year, CIRT investigated 17 boating and four hunting incidents. These incidents resulted in 20 fatalities.

### **Marine Theft Unit (MTU)**

The primary function of the MTU is to assist law enforcement officers in the field. The MTU conducts computer database and offline searches, locates hidden hull identification numbers, and assists with locating and recovering stolen vessels. The MTU also serves as the point of contact for customers as well as court systems related to the abandoned vessel process. Last year, the MTU received 71 abandoned vessel requests from the public and fielded numerous phone calls related to the abandoned vessel process.

## **Special Permits Unit**

The Law Enforcement Division of our agency administers the Special Permits Unit. This unit is responsible for permitting captive wildlife and wild animals in addition to some specialty-take permits such as Scientific Collection Permits. The Unit was involved in the drafting of legislation and regulations to create a new permit that will allow the use of native wildlife in the film production industry. The Unit also coordinated inspections on all permitted wild animal facilities throughout the state.

## K-9 Unit

The Division continues to use K-9s to enhance patrol efforts by Conservation Rangers and provide assistance to other agencies for man tracking and article searches. Training this year included a refresher on Tactical Tracking for Felons/Dangerous Suspects. Currently the Division has eight K-9/Handler teams deployed statewide.



L-R: Cpl. Books Varnell and K-9 Rock, RFC Micheal Crawley and K-9 Storm, Cpl. Tim Hutto and K-9 Titan, Cpl. Bob Holley and K-9 Creek, RFC Keith Page and K-9 Drake, RFC Eric Isom and K-9 Colt, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen and K-9 Ruger, Cpl. Kevin Joyce and K-9 Briar.





## Training Unit



### Firearms

In the spring, Rangers completed Firearms Requalification with handgun, shotgun, and rifle within each Region. Use of Deadly Force training, Glock 43 familiarization, Telor ankle holster concealed carry, and low light tactical rifle training were covered topics.

### BUI/ALS/ARIDE (Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement)

This year's annual BUI (Boating under the Influence/Standardized Field Sobriety Testing) refresher course included a 16-hour block of instruction of Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement (ARIDE). This course is designed to enhance the law enforcement officers' ability to recognize subjects operating vehicles and vessels under the influence. Officers are trained to recognize psychophysical and clinical indicators of impairment that are consistent with a subject who is under the influence of drugs alone, or in combination with alcohol, and to take appropriate action. A strong emphasis is placed on the proper administration of the NHTSA SFST battery and interpretation of the results.

### Crisis Intervention or Critical Incident Training

Four Rangers continue to participate in the Crisis Intervention or Critical Incident training and are part of the Peer Support Team. The Peer Support Team (PST) consists of personnel who are specially trained as skilled listeners. The objective of the PST is to provide support for law enforcement personnel, and their immediate family, who have experienced a critical incident or traumatic event. A Critical Incident is defined as any incident, action, or event, which has the potential for producing significant emotional trauma that may adversely affect the psychological well-being of law enforcement personnel.

### Tactical Combat Casualty Care

Through a grant from the Georgia Trauma Commission, all Law Enforcement personnel were issued trauma kits and received tactical combat casualty care training. This program is designed for law enforcement officers from the initial point and time of injury until the scene can be secured and the officer transferred to a higher level of care.



Capt. Wade Law



AOC Mandy James



PT Sec. Nancy Patten

### **Georgia State Patrol Driver Simulator Training**

The Georgia State Patrol's Driving Simulator is a mobile piece of equipment that is housed in a large trailer that is transported from the Training Center in Forsyth, Ga. to various Patrol Posts throughout the state. Driving instructors from the GSP training staff transport the simulator to the troopers in the field. This helps to save time and money as troopers do not have to take the time and expense of driving to the Training Center in Forsyth. The mission of the Georgia State Patrol training staff is to reduce patrol car crashes by using simulated scenarios that focus on collision avoidance, proper use of due regard and sound defensive driving techniques. The training is designed to make you think, plan and react, also to teach and reinforce the practice of collision avoidance. All DNR LED personnel will attend this training as GSP moved the simulator around the state. The training began in February in Albany and continues throughout the state.

## Aviation Unit



L-R, Larry Rogers, Capt. Ed Watkins, Maj. Doc Watson, Capt. Steven Turner, John Peberdy

The Aviation Unit had a monumental year. The Governor's Office provided bond money to replace a 35-year-old Bell Jet Ranger with the new Bell 407 GX. The sale of the Jet Ranger allowed the purchase of a fixed wing Quest Kodiak 100 aircraft. These aircraft will greatly enhance the Aviation Units ability to support state agencies and all the DNR Divisions.





This year the Unit flew 819 mishap-free flight hours initiating the Unit's recognition and acceptance of the Helicopter Association International (HAI) 2016 Aviation Safety Award. Multi Agency fire suppression training was conducted with the Georgia Forestry Commission in November, which prepared the Unit for the wildfire season. Major Watson and Captain Turner dropped 52,500 gallons of water in support of the GFC fighting three separate fires in Walker and Whitfield Counties.

The Aviation Unit flew 226 hours supporting the Division's Rangers across the state. The year began during the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend with Major Watson and Captain Turner flying day and night boating patrols on Lake Lanier and Lake Sinclair with Aerial Observer Crump flying Lake Lanier and Sgt. Kelly flying Lake Sinclair.

The Aerial Observer program has proven to be very successful. The additional trained aerial crewmembers in northern Georgia have expedited the response time for search and rescue (SAR) requests in some cases. The aerial observers have also proven their value during searches for missing persons and drowning victims.



The Aviation Unit supported the Law Enforcement Division Rangers throughout the hunting season from early fall through early spring. Rangers were flown on county surveys looking for baited food plots, duck ponds and illegal shrimping along the Georgia coast. Flight support was also provided for Operation Dry Water, night deer poaching/spotlighting patrols, and searches for missing person and drowning victims across the state. The Wildlife Resource Division (WRD) was provided aviation support during surveys of bald eagles, kestrel, sandhill cranes and waterfowl. Captain Ed Watkins flew these same flights along the Georgia coast in addition to surveys for sea turtles, dolphins and the tagging of manatee. In addition to the WRD surveys the Aviation Unit flew 37 hours during nine prescribed burns on the State WMA's during the late winter months of January through March, 2017.



## Honor Guard



*Front L-R:* Cpl. Josh Chamber, Cpl. Travis Sweat, RFC David Brady, Cpl. Ben Payne, Cpl. Derek Dillard, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen, Cpl. Scott Carroll. *Back L-R:* RFC Clint Jarriel, Cpl. Bob Holley, RFC Cody Jones, RFC Micheal Crawley, Cpl. Brooks Varnell, Cpl. Robbie Griner, Cpl. Chase Altman.

### Honor Guard Details

September 17, 2015 – Funeral Detail in Royston for Retired Ranger Ted Hall. Honor Guard Members Sgt. Derek Dillard and RFC Michael Crawley were in attendance.

February 16, 2016 – Presentation of Colors for the Opening Ceremony at the 2016 PLEA (Parks Law Enforcement Association) Conference in Savannah. Honor Guard Members RFC Clint Jarriel and RFC Chase Altman were in attendance.

March 13, 2016 – Funeral Detail in Thomson for Retired Corporal Monroe Matherly’s Visitation Services. Honor Guard Member Cpl. Ben Payne was in attendance.

March 14, 2016 – Funeral Detail in Thomson for Retired Corporal Monroe Matherly. Cpl. Ben Payne and RFC Michael Crawley were in attendance.

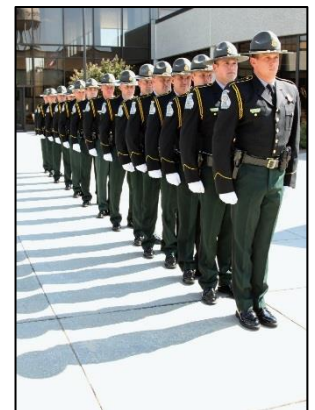
March 15, 2016 – Funeral Detail in Cumming for Retired Ranger Russell Honea’s Visitation Services. Cpl. Travis Sweat and RFC Cody Jones were in attendance.

June 22, 2016 – Funeral Detail in Grey for Retired Lt. Col. Bob Sires Visitation and Funeral Services. Cpl. Jeremy Bolen and RFC Clint Jarriel were in attendance.

August 10, 2016 – Funeral Detail in Statesboro for George L. Smith State Park’s Manager Matt Muhmel’s Visitation Services. Cpl. Ben Payne and RFC Clint Jarriel were in attendance.

August 11, 2016 – Funeral Detail in Statesboro for George L. Smith State Park’s Manager Matt Muhmel’s Funeral Services. Cpl. Ben Payne and RFC Clint Jarriel were in attendance.

August 18, 2016 – Funeral Detail in Eastman for Eastman Police Officer Timothy Smith who was killed in the line of duty at the Dodge County High School. Cpl. Ben Payne and Cpl. Brooks Varnell were in attendance.





## Chaplains



**Front Row L-R:** Rev. Mark Crandlemire, Rev. John Haney, Rev. Brandon Brooks, Rev. Tac Coley, Rev. Randy Lamb, Rev. Rudy Ross. **Back Row L-R:** rev. Joel Vinson, Rev. Greg Loskoski, Rev. Charles Houston, Jr., Rev. Chip Strickland, Rev. Daryl Brown

DNR Law Enforcement's Chaplain Corp is a valuable asset to the Division and the citizens of Georgia. The 11 members, scattered across the state, provide assistance to the Regions with death notifications and offer comfort and counseling for victims of boating and hunting incidents, drownings, and missing person Search and Rescue operations. This highly-qualified volunteer group meets and trains annually and is equipped to support all Georgia DNR Divisions.





## Promotions

Sgt. James Atchley  
 Sgt. Derek Dillard  
 CPT Chris Hodge  
 Cpl. Tony Cox  
 RFC 2 Cody Jones  
 RFC 2 Brandon Pierce  
 RFC 2 Nikki Spencer  
 Cpl. Anne Britt  
 Ranger 2 Chris Kernahan  
 Ranger 2 Jay Lewis  
 RFC 2 Mark Puig  
 RFC 2 Matthew Johnson  
 RFC 2 Shane Brown  
 RFC 2 Quinn Fogle  
 RFC 2 Steve Thomas  
 RFC 2 Daniel North  
 RFC 2 Jordan Crawford  
 RFC 2 Colte Shaske  
 RFC 2 Patrick Gibbs  
 RFC 2 Johnny Bright  
 RFC 1 Jesse Harrison  
 Ranger 2 Tim Morris  
 Ranger 2 Jason Harrison  
 Sgt. Chris Ridley  
 Ranger 2 Judd Sears  
 Sgt. Eric Brown  
 Ranger 2 Mark Moyer  
 Cpl. Chad Cox  
 Ranger 2 Dan Schay

## Transfers

### PARKS

Ranger Randell Meeks  
 Ranger Beth Gilbert  
 Ranger Doug Chambers

### WRD

RFC Mark Day  
 RFC Bobby Sanders

## Retirements

Sgt. Tim Kendrick  
 Captain Doug Lewis  
 Cpl. Randy Davis  
 Sgt. Ricky Dempsey  
 Cpl. Eddie Akins

<b>Activity Summary</b>		<b>FY2015</b>
Hunter Ed Programs		428
I&E Programs		1430
Boating Safety Programs		342
Hunter Development		321
<b>Total Programs</b>		<b>3172</b>
Water SAR Cases		334
Water SAR Hours		4013
Vessels Assisted		377
Water Persons Asst.		872
Land SAR Cases		166
Land SAR Hours		1559
Land Persons Asst.		440
Hunting Incidents		41
Boating Incidents		135
Drownings		70
Hunting License Checks		22,701
Fishing License Checks		28,556
Comm. License Checks		500
Total License Checks		51,757
Boat Checks		27,062
Boating Contacts		4622
Hunting Contacts		5491
Fishing Contacts		2556
Trapping Contacts		41
Environmental Contacts		416
Other Contacts		2734
<b>Total Contacts</b>		<b>15,860</b>