



# GEORGIA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

## LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

### 2014—2016 Strategic Goals Progress Report December 2015



*"Serving Georgia Since 1911"*

**LAW ENFORCEMENT *Off the Pavement***

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

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

### **TRUST IS OUR FOUNDATION**

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

### **FAIRNESS IS OUR DOCTRINE**

We conduct our duties without favoritism or bias.

### **PROFESSIONALISM IS OUR CREED**

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



## A Word from the Director

The Law Enforcement Division continues move forward, focusing on our core mission, Conservation Law Enforcement. This consists of hunting, fishing, boating, and environmental enforcement, as well as public safety on all DNR controlled properties. The services we provide are an integral and vital part of the Department of Natural Resources fulfilling our agency's responsibilities.



Colonel Eddie Henderson  
Director of Law Enforcement

As we continue to work through the three-year Strategic Plan, this “Progress Report” is meant to provide an assessment of our division’s progress in reaching these aggressive, yet attainable goals. It will show that since the Plan was implemented two years ago, we have completed some of the goals and others are in various stages of progress, to be energetically pursued during the final year of the Plan.

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

The progress we have made is encouraging through two-thirds of the Plan, but as a Division, we still have work to do. As the Law Enforcement Director, I consider it an honor to work with our staff and rangers and I look forward to the next year as we strive to meet these goals and finish what we started in January of 2014.

*Colonel Eddie Henderson*

# Strategic Plan

## Goals and Strategies

### Status Report

#### **Goal 1: Conservation Law Enforcement**

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

**Strategy 1.1** Encourage voluntary compliance with wildlife and boating laws through proactive and responsive law enforcement patrols on private properties, state controlled properties and waters of the state.

**STATUS: In Progress** – From January 1<sup>st</sup> through November 30<sup>th</sup> of 2015, the Division logged 16,374 Wildlife Management Area Patrols, 10,316 State Park Patrols, and 10,504 Boating Safety Patrols and spent 66,916 hours investigating 13,107 landowner calls for service.

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

**STATUS: In Progress** – Legislation was enacted creating The Boating Violator Compact, a voluntary interstate agreement providing participating states with a mechanism to participate in a reciprocal program to: (1) Promote compliance with the statutes, laws, administrative rules and regulations relating to boating safety in their respective states, and; (2) Provide for the fair and impartial treatment of boating violators within the participating states by allowing non-residents the option to pay fines or appear in court without posting a bond for minor violations. In both 2014 and 2015, the LE Division participated in Operation Drywater, a nationwide enforcement effort to reduce boating under the influence. In all, the Division logged 110, 219 boating enforcement hours and 194,058 wildlife enforcement hours. Media interviews, news releases, presentations to various civic groups, and social media have been utilized to disseminate safety and “best practices” information to the public, promoting safe recreation throughout the year.

**Strategy 1.3** Safeguard Georgia's natural and cultural resources. Develop an intelligence-led policing philosophy that includes monitoring trends in conservation law enforcement and the use of existing data.

**STATUS: In Progress** - Data from the Records Management System, including violator contacts and boating incidents locations, are being extracted and provided to the Region Supervisors to better allow them to see the need for increased or concentrated patrols. The same information is being used to construct maps in Google Earth showing this information geographically, and to create an automated report system that will generate in-depth reports for the LED leadership across the state.

**Strategy 1.4** Determine the staffing requirements to meet the conservation law enforcement and public safety needs for all DNR controlled properties and private lands.

**STATUS: Completed** - The Field Force Deployment Matrix has been completed and is being used in professional meetings with Office of Policy & Budget (OPB) and legislative partners to address staffing level needs within LED. Additionally, the second phase of the matrix is currently being completed and will assign value to areas based on activities, state controlled properties and law enforcement needs.

**Strategy 1.5** Provide emergency response during critical incidents and natural disasters.

**STATUS: In Progress** - The Division plays the lead role for DNR in its coordination with GEMA in the event of critical incidents and disasters. In 2014 and 2015 LED responded to multiple winter storms, which spanned several weeks, flooding events, and other disasters in coordination with GEMA. LED plays an integral role in HURREX, the hurricane preparedness exercise hosted annually by GEMA. The LED also updated the DNR All Hazards Manual, which guides the Department response during a disaster. Also, Rangers were involved in 269 land and 477 water based Search and Rescue missions since January of 2014. In October, LED participated in a Winter Weather Exercise with the Department of Public Safety and a ROC (Rehearsal of Concept) exercise with state and local partners. The Division also conducted a Table Top Exercise in November for agency disaster response with WRD and Parks Division.

**Strategy 1.6** Coordinate the Department's Law Enforcement efforts with all Divisions through regular communication and consultation.

**STATUS: In Progress** - LED and Parks Region Supervisors meet monthly to discuss law enforcement efforts and needs on those DNR-controlled properties. A meeting with LED and WRD Supervisors was completed in August 2015 for the same purpose and Biannual Parks Region Supervisor meetings are ongoing. Due to the collaboration with WRD and the Parks Divisions, a Region Focus list, giving direction for Region-specific enforcement priorities, is completed quarterly. Region 6 LED coordinated with the Historic Preservation Division to develop a security plan for a Revolutionary War site at the Battle of Briar Creek in Screven County on the Tuckahoe WMA.

**Strategy 1.7** Update and improve communication systems for officer safety and enhance responses to calls for assistance from the public.

**STATUS: In Progress** - Upgrades were made to the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system that replaced ageing in-truck computers. All Rangers' computers were replaced with new Panasonic Units to enhance communication and tracking with the State Patrol Communications Centers, with whom LED has an MOU for dispatch services. The list of CAD related incidents was also reviewed by a committee of Rangers from around the state with the intent to reduce and streamline how many and what type of incidents were created in

the system. The committee was able to reduce the list from over 50 to 20 incident types. LED has installed digital repeaters in Regions 1, 2, 5, and 7 to replace 20+ year old analog equipment and has also purchased dual band portable radios through a Port Security Grant for Region 7. Radios in all LED aircraft are being replaced with dual band digital capable radios. LED has designated two Rangers as radio technicians in the Northern and Southern Regions of the state to ensure that radio programming stays current. These two Rangers communicate regularly with GSP, GBI and other state and local agencies to make sure interoperability is maintained. The Turn in Poachers program was renamed the Ranger Hotline program to expand the public's access to the program. The program was also placed under the management of the Natural Resources Foundation so that the Division could have more input and more easily work to expand the program in the future. Also, changes were made in the routing of in-progress calls to the 24-hour Ranger Hotline monitored by GEMA. All in-progress law enforcement calls are now routed to the GSP Communications Center, where a Ranger is dispatched directly to the call.

**Strategy 1.8** Utilize our unique capabilities, equipment and expertise to provide search, rescue, and recovery operations.

**STATUS: In Progress** - Through GEMA grants, the Division has been able to enhance its ability to respond to search, rescue and recovery incidents on the waters around the state with the purchase of Side and Sector Scan Sonar equipment, ROV submarine and a pontoon boat to serve as a platform. Since 2014, this equipment has been deployed 50 times statewide and been requested for out-of-state assistance on occasion. The Divisions eight K-9s and handlers responded to approximately 75 calls ranging from missing elderly persons to recovering murder weapons during this period. The Aviation Unit has now trained 8 aerial observers to assist in longline helicopter rescues and 22 separate Search and Rescue Longline training sessions including 4 DNR Region events, 4 State Parks and 7 for local fire and rescue teams. Statewide training was held to familiarize all Rangers with assisting with these often very technical airlift rescues. Also during this time frame, LED has been involved in 269 land and 477 water search and rescue missions.

**Strategy 1.9** Research the prospect of a statutory requirement for DNR LED to be the report repository of drownings that occur on or in waters of the state.

**STATUS: Not Started** - No legislation was pursued toward this goal in the 2015 Legislative Session.

## **Goal 2: Education, Outreach and Community Involvement**

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

**Strategy 2.1** Promote safe boating and hunting by providing boater and hunter education through online and in-person classes.

**STATUS: In Progress** – LED continually markets and provides ample opportunities for individuals to obtain hunting and boating education through online and in-person classes, promoting safety and encouraging compliance with state law. LED Rangers travelled 122,434 miles to teach 1,253 Hunter Education classes, resulting in the certification of 15,311 students. They taught 136 boating education programs and certified 2,267 boaters. Through marketing and media relations efforts, another 7,294 boaters were certified through online courses. Mandatory boater education went into effect on July 1, 2014, requiring anyone born on or after January 1, 1998 that wishes to operate any motorized vessel on the waters of the state must complete a boat education course approved by the department prior to such operation. Legislation was also enacted creating The Boating Violator Compact, a voluntary interstate agreement that provides participating states with a mechanism to participate in a reciprocal program to: (1) Promote compliance with the statutes, laws, administrative rules and regulations relating to boating safety in their respective states, and (2) Provide for the fair and impartial treatment of boating violators within the participating states by allowing non-residents the option to pay fines or appear in court without posting a bond for minor violations.

**Strategy 2.2** Utilize media relations, LED presentations, press releases and social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.) to enhance communication with citizens and the division's stakeholders. Emphasis will be on using social media to recruit and retain sportsmen and women and as an educational tool.

**STATUS: In Progress** – The Division conducts regular media news conferences and ride-alongs with Rangers 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. 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 2015 campaign was called the "Summer of Safety." LED Rangers provide Incident Notification Guidance to the LED Command Staff and the Public Affairs Officer to keep Staff updated and informed on current and ongoing incidents, Search & Rescue missions and officer safety issues. LED Rangers also deliver DNR LED Division PowerPoint

presentations to local stakeholder groups, civic clubs, County Commissioners and also provide a Weekly DNR LE Report to the DNR Board. News releases, I & E presentations and speeches to various civic groups, and regular news media interviews and interaction are often utilized to disseminate information to the public. LED manages a Facebook page that currently has over 31,400 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 40,000, and occasionally, some are above 100,000. The Division also has a Twitter account that is linked to Facebook, which currently has nearly 700 followers, a YouTube Channel with multiple safety-related videos, and a Boating Rental Video that has had over 10,000 views. In mid-July of 2015, LED added to the social media outreach with Instagram, which now has over 1,000 followers.

**Strategy 2.3** Hire a Public Affairs Specialist/Officer who will develop and lead implementation of an LED marketing plan. The marketing plan will emphasize the division’s vision, mission, responsibilities, unique capabilities, operational needs and relevance. This message will be communicated to the citizens of Georgia, the General Assembly, board members, local public officials, NGOs and other divisions within the department.

**STATUS: Completed** – Mark McKinnon was hired in June of 2014 to fill the new Public Affairs Officer (PAO) position within the LED. His responsibilities include branding and marketing, media relations, and social media management for the Division. Regarding the branding effort, Ranger Hotline and LED pop-up banners, along with a feather banner with the LED branding logo were acquired. The various banners are utilized at Information and Education programs and media events. Proactive press releases for promotions, awards and public notifications of Law Enforcement Division activities, including holiday weekend enforcement operations and special events are regularly sent to media outlets statewide. The PAO is on-call for any event that requires media attention across the state and inquiries are addressed in a timely manner. He also works with other partner agencies like GSP, GOHS and others to address media and the public regarding joint operations.

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

**STATUS: In Progress** – Reports and data are regularly retrieved from the RMS system and Google Earth maps are utilized to show the frequency of violations in various areas of the state. Monthly, a list of citations is sent to every Region Captain. At this time reports are being developed to automate this process. Every week, Rangers from around the state send in submissions of their weekly activities for the “Field Ops” that are uploaded to the LED website. Every quarter, the LED Region Supervisor seeks input for the “Region Focus List” from the Region Sergeants, the Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) Game Management and Fisheries Region Supervisors and the Region Managers from the Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites Division (PRHS) concerning issues or problems that may need attention for

the upcoming quarter. A committee has been formed to study the needs of the LED and “The Matrix” is utilized to show where additional staff is needed to cover all of the responsibilities of the LED. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to boating safety patrols on lakes and rivers, patrolling state owned and controlled lands (state parks and WMAs), disaster assistance, search and rescue operations and providing assistance to local, state and federal agencies.



### **Goal 3: Training, Recruitment and Retention**

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

**Strategy 3.1** Identify relevant training and equipment needs to better prepare DNR law enforcement officers, enhance officer safety and reduce conservation crimes and incidents. Focus annual training on current, relevant needs of the division.

**STATUS: In Progress** – The Division conducted an aggressive training schedule this past year that included Advanced Report Writing, Advanced ATV Training, and ALERRT training. Firearms training was increased to enhance proficiency through time reduction drills, reaction drills, and failure drills. Chainsaw training was also provided to Rangers statewide. Training is selected based on trends in law enforcement. Also, new Daniel Defense rifle uppers were deployed to the field.

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

**STATUS: In Progress** – Research is continuing to determine the possible implementation of Tasers. The Division is also researching tactical/medical training possibilities, and modifications to the CAD system. A new body camera, VieVu, has also been evaluated and approved for use.

**Strategy 3.3** Refine and improve our current Field Training Program for the officers who are responsible for training new employees.

**STATUS: Completed** – FTO Instructors were trained in April 2014 and FTO Instructors trained the Region FTOs in August 2015. The Field Training Officer Program combines on-the-job instruction with objective evaluation and documentation.

**Strategy 3.4** Identify and mentor potential recruits for employment opportunities in Conservation Law Enforcement. Promote interest in LED careers by communicating/marketing job requirements and successes.

**STATUS: In Progress** – Ongoing efforts to meet this strategy include the utilization of Social Media ("A Day in the Life" and "A Day on the Boat" on Facebook), Career Days, I&Es, the Internship Program, Ranger Ride-a-longs, and community outreach by Rangers statewide.

**Strategy 3.5** Monitor hiring standards and compensation packages for LE officers in other state agencies, in order to attract and retain the most qualified employees.

**STATUS: In Progress** – Division staff, through informal and impromptu contacts with various Academy Directors and through inter-agency assistance, monitor competitive compensation packages and best recruiting practices and hiring standards. The Command Staff worked diligently to complete the Job Classification and Career Path Project (JCCP) process to ensure that the Division’s P.O.S.T. officer’s keep pay parity with other state LE agencies.

**Strategy 3.6** Continue succession training to develop and prepare the future leaders of the Law Enforcement Division.

**STATUS: In Progress** – Continuing efforts through PMP, Command College, Georgia LEEDS, and the FBI National Academy provide specialized training to prepare future Division leaders. Officers also attend courses at GPSTC in order to obtain their P.O.S.T. Advanced Certification. Such courses include, but are not limited to, Advanced Report Writing, Advanced Search Warrants and Affidavits, and Interviews and Interrogations.



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