

Department of Natural Resources

Law Enforcement Division

Field Operations

Weekly Report

July 19 – July 25, 2015

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



Region I- Calhoun (Northwest)

BARTOW COUNTY

On July 25th, RFC Bart Hendrix patrolled Allatoona Lake with Bartow County Deputy Matt Beal. While on patrol they made 1 arrest for operating vessel under the influence under 21, issued 4 citations for possession of alcohol by underage person, and issued 2 warnings for equipment and registration violations.

On the evening of July 21st, RFC Zack Hardy received a call for service from the Bartow County Sheriff's Office regarding a missing female on the Etowah River near Euharlee, Ga. The family reported the missing female as suicidal. The vehicle of the female was located at Hardin Bridge and some of the female's belongings were located on the river bank. An immediate search was conducted with no results. The following day, the Bartow County Sheriff's Office, Bartow County Search and Rescue Team, the Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division (DNR LED), DNR Aviation Unit, and the Georgia State Patrol Dive Team met at the location for additional searches. Extensive searches were not successful. Later in the day, DNR Sgt. Mike Barr requested that the water generation be slowed at the Allatoona Lake dam by the US Army Corps of Engineers. This lowered the water level in the Etowah River. DNR Sgt. Brian Keener also arranged for the DNR Aviation Unit to assist and fly over the area on July 23rd. DNR Captain Steven Turner, the pilot of the helicopter, was able to locate a body of a deceased female in the river from the helicopter and direct DNR ground units, DNR vessel operators, and the GSP dive team to the location. Bartow County Investigator Billy Henson was directing activities and is following up with an investigation into a cause of death. DNR LED Chaplain Rudy Ross assisted the family on scene throughout the entire unfortunate event.



DNR RFC Chad Cox and RFC Bart Hendrix search by vessel on the Etowah River near Hardin Bridge.



The DNR LED Aviation Unit assisted in the search for the missing female.



DNR Captain Steven Turner and the helicopter were able to direct rescue/recovery units to the area on the Etowah River by air.

CHEROKEE COUNTY

On July 25th, RFC Bart Hendrix and Bartow County Deputy Matt Beal responded to a call for assistance from Cherokee 911 near Little River Marina. The assistance call was cancelled as the officers arrived on scene. As the officers were heading back out on patrol, they noticed a boat with an expired registration. RFC Hendrix stopped the boat and talked to the operator about his registration. Turns out the vessel had just been purchased. While speaking with the operator RFC Hendrix noticed that the man had been drinking. The man was found to be operating vessel under the influence of alcohol. He was arrested and charged with operating a vessel under the influence and issued a citation for operating a vessel without a fire extinguisher.

FANNIN COUNTY

On July 24th, Cpl. James Keener and RFC Cody Jones patrolled areas around the Toccoa River and Big Creek. One citation was issued for fishing without a license and a warning was also issued for fishing without a trout license.

On July 25th, Cpl. James Keener and RFC Cody Jones patrolled the Toccoa River by kayaks and issued 6 citations and 12 warnings for fishing without license and without trout license.

MURRAY COUNTY

On July 14th, Sgt. John VanLandingham and Cpl. James Keener issued citations to two subjects for misdemeanor possession of marijuana in the Holly Creek area of Cohutta WMA.

On July 24th, Cpl. James Keener issued one citation and several warnings for fishing violations around the Carter's Re-regulatory Lake.

On July 25th, Sgt. John VanLandingham, Cpl. James Keener, and RFC Cody Jones responded to Cohutta WMA to a report of a deceased female that had been found by campers. Officers assisted the U.S. Forest Service, Gilmer County and Murray County Sheriff's Offices, and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation with scene security and interviewing potential witnesses. The case was turned over to the GBI for further investigation. Sgt. VanLandingham and Cpl. Keener also issued citations to two subjects for possessing an open container of alcohol in a vehicle in the area of the earlier complaint.

FLOYD COUNTY

On July 18th, Sgt. Mike Barr and RFC Ben Cunningham traveled to Cave Springs to join Trout Unlimited in their annual Disabled Vets Fishing Rodeo. The Cave Springs pond was stocked with trout and the vets enjoyed a day of fishing, fellowship, and lunch. A special area was set aside for those using fly casting equipment as several vets showed their skills with fly fishing for trout.



Trout Unlimited's Disabled Vets Fishing Rodeo in Floyd County

Region II- Gainesville (Northeast)

HABERSHAM COUNTY

On July 20th, Cpl. Derek Dillard and RFC Joe Hill investigated a complaint in reference to an abandoned vehicle on the power line right of way on Tallulah Gorge WMA. The Rangers located a truck that had been left on the power line for over a week. This area was not an area designated for vehicular travel. The Rangers ran the tag through GCIC and located the owner. After interviewing the owner of the vehicle, the Rangers found that the owner's son drove the vehicle onto the power line, got it stuck, and left it on the WMA. The driver of the truck did not have a valid driver's license, and admitted to knowing he was not supposed to drive a vehicle. The Rangers charged the driver with driving while unlicensed and driving in unauthorized areas of a WMA. The vehicle was towed from the power line right of way and returned to the owner.

RABUN COUNTY

On July 25th, RFC Anne W. Britt and Rabun County Deputy Tracy Payne arrested one adult male from Louisiana for boating under the influence. The male was also cited for five counts of child endangerment for having five children under the age of 14 on board. Other citations included allowing underage child to operate unlawful vessel, allowing child to ride in moving vessel without wearing pfd's, and operating vessel without registration.

Region III- Thomson (East Central)

COLUMBIA COUNTY

On July 19, RFC Bobby Timmerman and Ranger Michael Madden responded to a possible drowning on the Savannah River near Clarks Hill Dam. Officers found that the incident occurred in South Carolina. Officers assisted SC DNR with the scene and recovery of the victim.

On July 24, RFC Bobby Timmerman participated in Emergency Response Day at Euchee Creek Library. Approximately 75 youth attended the event.

On July 25, RFC Bobby Timmerman and RFC Phillip Nelson conducted a concentrated boat patrol with South Carolina DNR on the Savannah River near Clarks Hill Dam. Officers arrested 1 subject for boating under the influence of alcohol on the Georgia side of the Savannah River. SC DNR arrested 2 for boating under the influence. Several other subjects were cited for littering.

CLARKE/ELBERT COUNTY

On July 26th Sgt. Brian Carter and Cpl. Mark Patterson patrolled public fishing areas in Clarke County and patrolled Lake Russell by vessel. Several violations of fishing without a license were documented during these patrols.

OGLETHORPE COUNTY

On July 20th through the 22nd, RFC Phillip Nelson taught three archery programs at the Oglethorpe Recreation Department.

LAKE OCONEE

During July 24-26, Rangers David Allen, Derrell Worth, Ricky Boles, Jason Harrison, and Dan Schay patrolled Lake Ocnee for boating violations. The rangers issued documented violations for 100 ft. violations on PWC's, operating vessels w/out lights, allowing person to ride the bow of a vessel, wake zone violations, and children under the age of 13 in a moving vessel w/out PFD's.

RICHMOND COUNTY

On July 25, Cpl. Ben Payne patrolled Richmond County checking boating and fishing activity. He checked without permission complaints and boating activity at boat ramps along the Savannah River. Several boats were checked with no violations documented. He screened 3 operators and one skier for operating under the influence of alcohol. All were under the legal limit of .08. Two of the operators were asked to have someone else operate the boat do to impairment. There was no activity at the without permission complaints

JEFFERSON COUNTY

On July 25, RFC Matherly was contacted by the Jefferson County Sheriff's office to assist in locating a missing person in a wooded area off of Punk Tarver Road. After arriving on scene the subjects ATV was found over turned as short distance off the side of the road. The ATV had rolled over and was lodged in the mouth of an open well. After removing the ATV from the mouth of the well the driver was found at the bottom of the well in approximately three to four feet of water. With the help of several fire fighters from Louisville and Bartow, Jefferson County Sheriff's Office and RFC Matherly the subject was recovered from the well. The driver of the ATV was found to be fatally injured from the accident. Jefferson County has made arrangement to have the abandoned well filled in so that no other incidents will occur in this location.

Region IV- Macon (West Central)

BALDWIN COUNTY



On July 21st, Sgt. Bo Kelly, Cpl. Lynn Stanford, and Ranger Matt Johnson responded to the Harrisburg community, along with Baldwin County Sheriff's Office where there was a reported sighting of a Gaboon Viper, which is a highly venomous snake that is native to Southern Africa. Officials are currently working with the GBI on determining the validity of the sighting. At this point, rangers have not been able to confirm nor deny the existence of the snake in the Harrisburg area. Rangers are treating the situation as a valid public safety threat at this point and there have been multiple television and other news interviews in an attempt to let residents know about the potential dangers of this snake.

On July 25th, Ranger Matt Johnson responded to a residence in Baldwin County in reference to a report that someone had killed a Turkey Vulture that was sitting on a power pole in a residential area. The Turkey Vulture is a protected species and the case is currently under investigation.

JONES COUNTY

On July 21st, Cpl. Lynn Stanford patrolled Jarrell Plantation State Historic site and the Ocmulgee River at Lake Juliette but no violations were documented.

LAKE SINCLAIR

On July 25th, Ranger Matt Johnson and RFC David Fisher were out patrolling Lake Sinclair when they got a call and responded to a drowning at a residence in the Rooty Creek area of Lake Sinclair. Unfortunately, a 3 year old boy drowned in the lake while at a family gathering. CPR was administered immediately and the boy was transported to Putnam General hospital where he was pronounced dead. It was determined that the boy was not wearing any type of a flotation device.

MERIWETHER COUNTY

On Saturday, July 25th, Cpl. Keith Waddell patrolled the Flint River in Meriwether, Pike, Upson and Talbot Counties for boating and shoal bass activity. He issued several warnings for insufficient PFD's in vessels.

SPALDING COUNTY

On Thursday, July 23rd, Cpl. Travis Sweat participated in the Farm Bureau Safety Day on the UGA Griffin Campus. Several dozen young people were educated about boating and water safety.

Region V- Albany (Southwest)

LAKE WORTH

On July 19th, RFC Jon Penuel and Cpl. Robbie Griner encountered a pontoon boat operating with improperly displayed registration. While speaking with the operator, RFC Penuel detected the odor of alcoholic beverages about the operator and observed beer bottles strown about the boat. Following an investigation, the operator of the vessel was arrested for operating a vessel under the influence, operating a vessel without a throwable device and operating a vessel with improper registration. The officers later learned this was the subject's second arrest for BUI.

On July 19th, Sgt. David Ruddell observed a pickup truck being driven erratically at the Cromartie Public Boat Landing. The driver then tossed a beer bottle from the vehicle, prompting the officer to stop the subject. Cpl. Robbie Griner arrived at the boat landing by vessel and assisted with an investigation of the subject for driving under the influence. The driver was arrested and booked into the Dougherty County Jail for driving under the influence, littering, open container and driving too fast for conditions.

COLQUITT COUNTY

On July 23rd, Ranger Eric White responded to an in-progress complaint of fishing without the landowner's permission. When Ranger White arrived, he located three subjects fishing on the property. One of the subjects was found to have multiple warrants for his arrest and was taken into custody by the officer. All three subjects were charged with fishing without permission, and with support of the landowner, the confiscated fish were donated to a less-fortunate family in the community.

Region VI- Metter (Southeast)

CLINCH COUNTY

On July 18th, during the early morning hours, Corporal Jason Shipes was traveling on Hwy 441 in southern Clinch when he observed a vehicle parked in the middle of the roadway. The vehicle started to pull off the road only to turn back into the path of traffic. Cpl. Shipes performed a traffic stop on the vehicle due to the drivers erratic driving. While speaking with the driver, Cpl. Shipes found that the driver seemed to be impaired. After conducting field sobriety, the driver was placed under arrest for driving under the influence and transported to the Clinch County Sheriff's Department. The results of a breath test indicated that his blood alcohol concentration was almost twice the legal limit of .08 grams. The driver of the vehicle was charged with driving under the influence of alcohol and booked into the Clinch County jail.

WARE COUNTY

On July 25th, Corporal Jason Shipes and Ranger Daniel North were patrolling Laura S. Walker State Park when several campers approached and informed officers that a large limb was hanging from a pine tree within the camping. The visitors were worried that the limb would break off and possibly strike children playing in the area or other park visitors. Officers immediately notified the park manager and responded to the area. Once there Cpl. Shipes and Ranger North roped off the area with "caution tape" and waited for park employees to respond.

EFFINGHAM COUNTY

On July 22nd, Ranger Jordan Crawford and Sergeant Don Dasher patrolled the Ogeechee River in Northern Effingham County looking for fishing and boating activity. No violations were observed.

On July 23rd, Ranger Jordan Crawford assisted the Effingham County Sheriff's Office with the investigation of a stolen boat. The investigation is still on going.

On July 24th Corporal Shaymus McNeely, Corporal Mike Wilcox, and Ranger Randell Meeks responded to a boat incident on the Savannah River. The incident occurred when a boater traveling from Burke County to Savannah crashed his boat into the bank. Three of the boats four occupants were seriously injured and transported to a local hospital. The incident is still being investigated.

BULLOCH COUNTY

On Saturday July 25th, CPL. Eddie Akins checked the public landings on the Ogeechee River in Bulloch County for fishing and boating activity. A total of five boaters and four fishermen were checked. A violation for operating a vessel without life jackets was documented.

TELFair COUNTY

On July 25th, Corporal Dan Stiles and Ranger First Class Allen Mills conducted a patrol at Little Ocmulgee State Park. One vessel was inspected for safety equipment compliance and three anglers were checked for license and creel compliance. No violations were detected.

Region VII- Brunswick (Coastal)

CHATHAM COUNTY

On July 19, Ranger Tim Morris, Corporal Kate Hargrove, and Corporal Buster Cooper patrolled near shore and inshore waters of Chatham County. They boarded one shrimp boat. The shrimp boat was in compliance with all laws and regulations.

July 20, Ranger Tim Morris and Corporal Buster Cooper patrolled fishing piers, near shore, and inshore waters of Chatham County. The following violations were documented: Fishing without a license, fishing without a license on person, and towing a skier without a mirror/observer.

On July 21, Cpl. Kate Hargrove and RFC Jason Miller assisted Hunter Army Rangers with a water jump. Cpl. Hargrove and RFC Miller retrieved parachutes and individuals as they jumped out of helicopters.

On July 21, Sgt. Cindy Miller presented several I&E programs to the 4-H club on Tybee Is. Sgt. Miller talked about what conservation ranger's duties are.

On July 23, Sgt. Cindy Miller worked a crabbing complaint of someone stealing crabs. Sgt. Miller ended up citing the complainant for commercial crabbing without a commercial crabbing license. Someone with more than six recreational crab traps is considered commercial crabbing and this individual had eight.



Sgt. Miller with illegal crabber's traps

On July 25, Ranger Tim Morris and Corporal Buster Cooper patrolled near shore and inshore waters of Chatham County. They worked several idle speed zone complaints. They documented several violations for failure to obey regulatory markers.

GLYNN COUNTY

On July 18th, SGT Chris Hodge, CPL Chris Ridley, RFC David Brady, RFC John Evans and RGR Colte Shaske performed a JEA Patrol off of Jekyll and St. Simons Islands. Multiple shrimp boats were boarded for compliance and no violations were noted on this day.



Shrimp boat checked during JEA patrol

CAMDEN COUNTY

On July 23rd, Cpl. Craig Smith was called out to a possible suicide-drowning on the St. Mary's River. Upon arrival the scene was still being processed and investigators were tracking down leads since no one saw the subject go into the water. The following day Cpl. Smith, Cpl. Chris Ridley, and Ranger Colte Shaske started side scanning the area while Captain Steven Turner from the aviation unit flew the river from I-95 to Browntown. About 1500 hours Cpl. Smith and Cpl. Ridley found the subject floating up river about 1 mile. The subject was then turned over to the Camden County Sheriff's Office.