

**Law Enforcement Division
Bi-Weekly Field Report
8/10/09 – 8/23/09**

DISTRICT 1

CO Jason Niemi observed two boats with five anglers out on the Menominee River. When contacted, it was discovered that both boats were unregistered and two of the anglers did not have fishing licenses.

CO Mike McDonnell worked a complaint of “mudder” trucks tearing up the bottomland of Swanzy Lake near Gwinn. While parked near the lake, he observed two trucks with oversized tires arrive at the lake. A short time later, both trucks entered the water and drove around the entire shoreline of the lake. Contact was made and tickets issued.

Area One Conservation Officers participated in a group ORV patrol at the Huron River mouth focusing on complaints of illegal ORV activity on the Lake Superior beach and in the river itself.

COs Jason Wicklund and Grant Emery located two subjects in the Watersmeet area who had outstanding DNR warrants. One subject was released after posting the required bond and the second subject was lodged in the Gogebic County jail.

CO Jason Wicklund responded to the complaint of numerous bags of trash dumped on state land. After several interviews CO Wicklund was able to determine the trash was dumped by a landlord who was cleaning out a rental house. Enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 2

CO Kevin Postma contacted two subjects salmon fishing in the Straits area. The subjects had too many lines and no fishing licenses. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Derek Miller responded to a complaint of a subject burning illegal material. Upon contact the subject admitted that he knew the solid waste was illegal to burn, especially the tires. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Robert Crisp recovered two injured red tailed hawks in Alger County. He contacted the UP Raptor Rehab Center in Gladstone and they came to Munising to pick up the birds.

CO John Wenzel assisted Delta County Sheriff's Department deputies with two overdue boating complaints. Both situations were resolved without incident.

DISTRICT 3

CO Rich Stowe has been busy with various administrative wildlife permits, including issuing four nuisance animal control permits, renewing a rehabilitation permit, and investigating a possible violation of a permit to hold wildlife in captivity.

CO Rich Stowe received a request for assistance from Commercial Fish Specialist (CFS) Craig Milkowski to address a net in northern Lake Huron. The issue was resolved, and another angler who CFS Milkowski had been trying to locate was contacted and boarded.

CO Mike Feagan has been busy addressing marine safety issues in Cheboygan County. One ticket was issued on Mullet Lake for failure to provide life jackets. Several more were issued on the Sturgeon River for the same.

CO Mike Feagan received a complaint of an illegal burn that resulted in a small escaped fire which required suppression. A ticket was issued for failing to prevent the spread of a fire.

CO Steve Speigl ticketed several boaters while on marine patrol last week. One boater disregarded the slow, no wake law in the Clam River while the other failed to have an observer while skiing. CO Speigl also is investigating two separate illegal burning complaints.

CO Carl Vanderwall observed three anglers at the Bear River attempting to snag spawning salmon. After no fish were snagged the subjects became more insistent with their actions. CO Vanderwall later contacted and ticketed the three anglers. The next morning one of the same individuals was back at it and was ticketed a second time.

CO Carl Vanderwall was working the ORV area at Wycamp Lake when he observed a 4x4 truck climb a hill (closed trail). The operator came down the hill and received his ticket.

On a rainy Saturday, CO Andrea Erratt patrolled state land for ORVs. One individual was operating an unlicensed ORV, without a helmet, and in a closed area on state land. He was ticketed for no helmet and warned for the other violations. CO Erratt also observed a 15 year old youth spinning donuts in the middle of Magee Road. He was warned for careless operation of an ORV and agreed to rake the damaged area in the road. CO Erratt turned the juvenile over to his parents.

CO Joe Molnar wrote three anglers who had stated fishing was slow and had not kept any fish. CO Molnar observed a fish basket underneath a seat with fish in it. All three explained they had caught and kept an undersized smallmouth bass.

On another inland lake CO Joe Molnar contacted a man and woman fishing who were in possession of two undersized bass. A license check revealed both had been given tickets by CO Molnar in 2007. Two tickets were again issued.

CO Joe Molnar responded to a litter complaint on state land and located some trash. CO Molnar investigated and followed up on paperwork generated from a receipt found in the pile of litter. Checking with a local vendor, CO Molnar identified and contacted the responsible party. A confession was obtained for the litter on state land and a ticket was issued.

CO Bill Webster worked a complaint of illegal ORV use on a snowmobile trail in Alpena County. CO Webster apprehended the subject and issued a ticket. Upon running the subject through LEIN, he also had a suspended operator's license.

CO Bill Webster responded to a complaint of vehicles stuck in Devil's Lake and located three vehicles stuck in a cranberry bog area. Tickets were issued to the three operators of the motor vehicles and their vehicles were impounded. CO Webster plans on charging restitution for the illegal activity in a wetland.

CO Kelly Ross located an old littering site and dug to the bottom of the pile to locate the identity of the responsible person. After some legwork CO Ross determined it was most likely the responsibility of an individual who is in prison. CO Ross continued the investigation and a father of the subjects agreed to remove the litter from state land.

DISTRICT 4

While checking ORVs at Silver Lake dunes, CO Mike Wells of Newaygo County stopped an ORV operator for no eye protection. The operator advised the CO that there could possibly be a "titling" problem with his ORV. CO Wells ran the vehicle identification number through LEIN and found that it was stolen out of Bay County. The ORV was impounded and the investigation continues.

CO Troy VanGelderren pulled into a launch site on a small lake in Oceana County as three subjects were pulling up to the dock in their boat. CO VanGelderren checked the anglers and found eight bass in a bucket, only one of which was over 14 inches. Enforcement action was taken.

While off duty, CO Troy VanGelderren, Oceana County, was fishing on a small lake when he heard noises in the brush on a very large embankment adjacent to the lake. CO VanGelderren investigated and found a tom turkey that was unable to fly away due to the hill and the proximity of the water. CO VanGelderren and his fishing partners captured the turkey and were able to release it unharmed on the opposite side of the lake.

CO Troy VanGelderren was dispatched to an incident where a child had been bitten by a fox. The child was walking to the neighbor's house when the fox leaped out from under

a vehicle and bit. The father of the child was able to capture the fox, and CO VanGelderren dispatched it and submitted the head for testing. Results from the disease lab indicated positive for rabies.

CO Carla Soper, Manistee County was working the Little Manistee Weir when she observed two individuals fishing in the closed section. Upon contacting the subjects, they both claimed that they did not know it was closed. CO Soper took enforcement action on the subjects and began to leave when two additional subjects approached to inform the CO that both of the anglers had been inquiring if anyone had "seen the DNR" prior to her arrival. One subject also stated these were the same two individuals he had called in a complaint to the Report-All-Poaching (RAP) hotline two days prior.

CO Steve Converse was conducting an evening patrol at the Little Manistee Weir in Manistee County when he observed two persons in the parking lot who appeared to be lookouts for two individuals who were snagging near the weir gates. CO Converse sneaked past the two in the dark and contacted the anglers. He recognized one of the subjects as a person he had given a warning to for using illegal fishing equipment two weeks prior. The subject was once again utilizing illegal gear and was determined to also be a suspect in a local theft investigation and was on parole. CO Converse arrested the subject and ticketed him and his partner for the fishing violations.

As CO Steve Converse was driving by the tubes near Stronach in Manistee County, he observed two persons fishing with illegal gear setups. He drove past, hid his vehicle nearby and returned on foot. He quietly walked up behind the two and noted that they were still fishing with the illegal gear and were attempting to snag passing fish. As he walked up, both subjects quickly used lit cigarettes to burn off their gear in an attempt to conceal their activity from the CO. CO Converse explained to the two that their gear and actions had already been documented and that they would be receiving tickets.

CO Mike Borkovich apprehended two persons he has been working on for some years. The subjects were apprehended in Leelanau County with 19 filleted salmonids. The two had filleted the fish on the boat and discarded the carcasses overboard. Tickets were issued for the violations.

CO Steve Converse was observing anglers from a concealed location along the Little Manistee River when three anglers walked up near his location. The three looked around cautiously and then one pulled out a stash of marijuana cigarettes, lit one up and passed it to his two companions. CO Converse stepped from the bushes, confiscated the illegal substances and ultimately ticketed two of the three for fishing without licenses. The marijuana case was turned over to the local drug investigation team.

COs Sam Koscinski and Jair Kollasch were just setting up for a snagging patrol at the Manistee Weir near Stronach when they were called away to assist the Michigan State Police (MSP) with persons operating sand rails in a wetland. After apprehending and ticketing the illegal operators the COs returned to the weir just in time to hide before

three persons arrived and started taking salmon illegally. One was attempting to catch salmon with a net while another snagged two fish using illegal gear. The third was attempting to snag fish using a spoon. All three were ticketed for their illegal activities. By the time the COs contacted the subjects, they had taken over 33 pounds of fish.

DISTRICT 5

CO Chuck McPherson received a complaint of subjects taking firewood from state land and selling it. After several days of checking the area, CO McPherson located the subjects at 6:00 a.m. taking standing timber without a permit. The subjects admitted to selling the firewood and enforcement action was taken.

CO William Cherry located several ORV operators riding on a closed area of state land. When asked for ID, the subjects stated they did not have their ID and gave their names and dates of birth. CO Cherry ran a check to verify their information and search for any outstanding warrants. A check on one of the subjects indicated he had been sent to prison three days earlier. When presented with that information, the subject told the office he had lied and given his brother's name. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Matt Liestenfeltz responded to a litter complaint and found three pick-up loads of trash on state land. CO Liestenfeltz located some mail in the trash that had an address on it for a nearby residence. His investigation resulted in one subject admitting to dumping the trash on state land.

COs Joel Lundberg and Steve Lockwood received information that a subject with whom they are familiar and had arrested on poaching charges in the past had warrants out for his arrest. Other police agencies had been attempting to locate the individual, with no success. COs Lundberg and Lockwood passed the subject on the road and stopped him. Upon arresting the subject on the warrants, they located an unlawfully concealed handgun in the car. The subject was lodged in the county jail.

CO Joel Lundberg assisted the county sheriff's office at the scene of an accident. The driver of a truck had left the bar, and shortly afterwards ran his truck off the road into a wooded area. The subject was still trying to drive his truck out of the woods when officers arrived. Fortunately, the trees kept him from getting back onto the road. The subject was arrested for drunk driving and lodged in the county jail.

Sgt. Glenn Gutierrez and CO Brian Olsen conducted a kayak patrol on the Rifle River in Ogemaw and Arenac Counties in response to complaints of rowdy behavior by canoers and tubers and harassment of river users. Many contacts were made along with three arrests for disorderly behavior on state land.

On his day off, CO Steve Lockwood responded to a complaint of two boys who had been canoeing the river and were three hours overdue. Officer Lockwood utilized his kayak in searching for the boys who finally reached their destination just ahead of him.

COs Steve Lockwood and Joel Lundberg assisted the MSP with an ORV accident. A subject operating a four wheel ORV on a roadway at a high rate of speed ran a stop sign and broadsided a car. Both vehicles were totaled. The driver of the ORV suffered minor injuries and alcohol is believed to have been a factor.

DISTRICT 6

CO Chad Foerster was patrolling two tracks behind the gates in the Gratiot/Saginaw State Game Area (SGA), which is closed to motorized vehicles, when he came across a couple riding a moped. The operator stated that he knew the gates were closed and locked, but there were truck tracks going around the gate so he thought it was okay. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Chad Foerster was patrolling the Saginaw River when he observed a large catamaran type sail vessel under motor power without state registration stickers. The CO contacted the operator and found the vessel to be federally documented. The owner stated he did not need to register his vessel due to its documentation. The CO advised the owner of the law requiring the vessel to be registered in the state of principle use and took enforcement action for the violation.

CO Ken Lowell was on marine patrol on Big Whitefish Lake when he witnessed a man catch what looked like a short bass. After a quick look around the man put the bass in the boat and pulled his anchor. The CO pulled up just as the man was leaving the area. When asked if he kept any fish the man stated he had a few small bluegills and a couple perch. The CO then asked him to produce his stringer, which he did. The short bass was not on the stringer. A search of the boat produced the short bass that was hidden in a compartment of the boat. The bass was only 11 inches long. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Nick Atkin was on ORV patrol when he received a complaint of ORVs tearing up the road and state land. After searching the area the CO located two ORVs operating in the area of the complaint. During the investigation that followed the subjects were found to be littering, operating in a closed area, operating without helmets, and operating while intoxicated. Enforcement action was taken and the two operators were lodged in the county jail for operating while impaired.

COs Holly Pennoni and Nick Atkin were on ORV patrol when they received a complaint of an ORV and multiple vehicles tearing up the road and state land. The COs investigated the area of the complaint and located minors operating while intoxicated, minors in possession of alcohol, and one subject possessing open intoxicants in a motor vehicle. Enforcement action was taken.

Several weeks ago, CO Vicki Goss issued a boater a ticket for reckless operation. The boater pled guilty and had his boating operation privilege suspended for one year in addition to \$500 in fines.

CO Scott Brown received a complaint of an ORV trespass on the beach on Saginaw Bay. CO Brown located the ORV by following the tracks in the sand back to a residence where the homeowner admitted to riding his ORV illegally on the beach.

CO Scott Brown received a complaint of a subject who annually places his waterfowl blind on Saginaw Bay too early. CO Brown contacted the waterfowl hunter in advance and informed him of the legal date to erect his waterfowl blind on public waters.

While patrolling the Rush Lake SGA, CO Robert Hobkirk contacted three ORVs operating on the state land. It was discovered that the lead ORV operator had just turned 18 years of age and was the only adult in the group. In all, there were 11 violations between the three illegal ORVs. Enforcement action was taken.

COs Holly Pennoni and Nick Atkin received a complaint of trucks and ORVs riding recklessly on state land causing damage to the forest roads. The COs located the operators and discovered that alcohol was also involved. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Seth Rhodea received a complaint of a missing personal watercraft (PWC) operator on Lake Huron. CO Rhodea assisted in the search, along with the US Coast Guard and sheriff's marine patrol officers. The missing boater was located safe and uninjured.

CO Jason Smith assisted the Thumb Narcotics Unit (TNU) with locating suspected marijuana plants in Tuscola County. The operation resulted in the seizure of over 1200 marijuana plants and uncovered an unlicensed deer pen that was located by officers in the helicopter. Further investigation into the unlicensed pen is continuing.

CO Jason Smith checked a boat in the Quanicassee River at about 2:30 a.m. The boat had holes in the decking and exposed wires sticking out everywhere. Marine violations included no fire extinguisher, flares expired in 1996, and no navigation lights. The three anglers had only caught two walleyes combined and enforcement action was taken on the marine violations. The vessel owner was also ordered to bring the boat back to the launch due to the unsafe condition of the boat.

DISTRICT 7

While working in Warren Dunes State Park, CO Mike McGee observed a subject who was in possession of alcohol in violation of the park rules. During contact CO McGee found that the subject also had two outstanding warrants for his arrest with a bond amount totaling \$10,900. The subject was arrested on the warrants.

CO Greg Patten worked in cooperation with North Muskegon Police Department, Muskegon County Fire Agencies and the U.S. Coast Guard with a training exercise on the Muskegon River with a simulated oil/gas spill. Thousands of gallons of dyed water were used to simulate the spill. The training exercise was part of homeland security preparations.

DISTRICT 8

While on patrol, CO Rich Nickols observed a large plume of black smoke and contacted the property owner who was burning numerous items in a pit. Some of the items being illegally burned included a mattress, fluorescent light bulbs, a television set and numerous chairs. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Daniel Prince contacted an out of state resident who was fishing without a license and did not have any personal flotation devices in his boat. The subject told CO Prince that he didn't think he needed a fishing license as he was from another state. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Daniel Prince contacted a boat operator who was towing two tubers without an observer on board the boat. The operator stated he knew he needed an observer and his wife, acting as his observer, was on shore in the park bathroom. CO Prince explained that the observer needed to be on the boat. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Peter Purdy observed a PWC operator violate the slow, no wake rule within 100' of a dock. The operator also violated the counterclockwise rule, didn't possess a boater safety certificate, didn't have a fire extinguisher on board, nor was there a lanyard attached to watercraft. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Daniel Bigger arrived at court for a trial on a marine violation. The defendant told the judge that he was surprised to see a CO at court on a state mandated furlough day. The defendant pled guilty as charged.

CO Kyle Bader contacted an individual who had taken an eight point buck on a farmer's crop damage permit. The permit specifically stated antlerless deer only. Enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 9

CO Brandon Kieft responded to a complaint of a wolverine that was hit by a vehicle and killed along M-59 in central Oakland County. After arriving on the scene, CO Kieft was able to conclude that the caller had misidentified a badger as a wolverine.

CO Kris Kiel attended a court hearing for tickets that were issued to a subject for running an unlicensed charter boat and for fail to provide the proper number of PFDs. The subject pled guilty to both and paid \$228 for the PFD violation and \$515 for the charter violation.

While leaving court, COs Todd Szyska and Kris Kiel heard gunshots coming from a nearby field. When they investigated, they found a young man getting off of an ORV with a shotgun and saw him fire shots into a corn field. The COs approached and questioned the subject, who stated he was shooting at black birds. COs Szyska and Kiel checked the area and found several non-game birds. The subject was issued a

ticket for take non-game birds and given verbal warnings for no small game license and transport a loaded uncased firearm on a motor vehicle.

Following up on a litter complaint in the Lapeer SGA, CO Al Schwiderson contacted a subject whose name appeared on multiple papers found in the litter. The subject stated he had a maintenance man who takes care of his garbage for him. When that subject was interviewed he stated he paid another subject, who he did not know, to get rid of the garbage. After another conversation with both subjects, the maintenance man admitted to dumping the trash in the game area. Enforcement action was taken. CO Schwiderson also continues to investigate another illegal dumping complaint in the game area.

CO Ken Kovach assisted in the search and recovery of a drowning victim in Lake Nepessing. The victim was swimming with family on Sunday afternoon when he complained he was getting tired and went under water and did not resurface. Dive teams from Lapeer, Sanilac, and Oakland Counties, along with deputies, local authorities, and volunteers searched nearly around the clock for the victim. CO Kovach heard about the search on the local news and came off his long weekend to assist. The victim was located Tuesday afternoon.

CO Ken Kovach responded to a complaint of "shots fired" from the RAP hotline. The complainant stated that she was hearing several gunshots near her house which was in the Lapeer SGA. CO Kovach located two subjects who were target shooting.

COs Ben Lasher, Linda Scheidler, and Jon Sklba, along with Sgt. Tom Wanless, assisted with the annual Port Huron to Marysville Float Down. Other law enforcement and search and rescue agencies were the U.S. Coast Guard, Border Patrol and Customs, St. Clair County Sheriff's Department and search and rescue, Port Huron police and fire, Marysville police and fire, along with Canadian authorities and local ambulance and hospitals. Over 4500 participants floated down the St. Clair River in various types of inner-tubes, rafts, and other swim toys. Several participants came to the event unprepared without life jackets, paddles, and other equipment to keep them safe and help them navigate the river. Over 2000 of the participants floated into Canadian waters and needed to be rescued. Sgt. Wanless, along with two Coast Guard officials rescued a nine-month pregnant woman on a raft with no life jacket and a three year old child who were nearly to the Canadian shore. Due to the unsafe conditions, the Coast Guard had to close the river to all commercial freighter traffic. Several participants experienced hypothermia and had to be pulled from the water and transported to shore. CO Ben Lasher rescued a man who had three juvenile girls with him. All were showing signs of hypothermia with one of the young girls not responding to CO Lasher at first. Over two dozen participants needed medical assistance due to various injuries or being heavily intoxicated. An hour after the event was scheduled to end, the event was terminated and all remaining participants were removed from the water and transported to shore. The local media called the event a "huge success".

COs Ben Lasher, Jon Sklba, Linda Scheidler, John Borkovich, Al Schwiderson and Mark Papineau, along with Sgt. Tom Wanless, conducted a marine OUIL patrol on the St. Clair River. Some of the COs were diverted to Muscamoot Bay for a large fight. COs Ben Lasher and Jon Sklba were the first officers on scene. They located the parties involved, separated them and gathered evidence. One subject was transported to jail on assault charges. It appears alcohol was a factor. Shortly after clearing the fight incident, COs Lasher and Sklba stopped a subject operating a PWC at a high rate of speed while weaving in and out of several anchored vessels. The COs conducted field sobriety evaluations on the subject and subsequently arrested the operator for OUIL. Sgt. Tom Wanless transported the subject, who refused a breath test. A search warrant was obtained for a blood draw and the subject was lodged. COs also issued tickets to minors in possession.

CO Danny Walzak responded to a complaint of angler harassment along the Lake Erie shoreline. The complainant stated that he was just minding his own business and trying to catch a fish when his neighbor started to yell at him for fishing. The neighbor alleged that the complainant was casting his lure dangerously close to his grandchildren swimming in the water (and was in the area first) and he was trying to get the angler to fish further down the shore. After interviews were conducted, it was determined that it was the result of a four to five year old neighbor dispute and there was no real evidence of harassment.

While patrolling Lake St. Clair, CO Kris Kiel observed a vessel with one occupant trolling for fish. Upon contacting the angler, the CO counted four trolling lines in the water. CO Kiel also contacted two subjects in a rental boat who were fishing. Neither subject had a valid license. One had not purchased a license since 2002, and the other, who last purchased a license in 2007, said he did not realize he had to purchase license each year. Enforcement action was taken in both incidences.