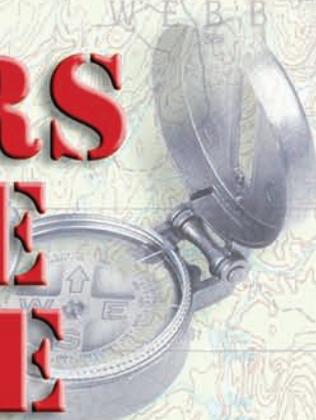




RANGERS TO THE RESCUE



Compiled by Lieutenant Chris Liebelt

Editor's Note: *These are actual accounts about DEC Forest Rangers and their work.*

Fireworks Lesson—Steuben County

Forest Ranger Anne Farrand responded to a wildland fire on Erwin State Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Ranger Farrand coordinated the fire suppression with nine fire departments and the fire was quickly extinguished using hand tools and backpack pumps. While patrolling the fire to make sure it was out, Ranger Farrand discovered remnants of fireworks at the scene.

The next day Steuben County 911 received an anonymous tip. A student at the local high school was heard talking about setting fireworks off at the Erwin WMA on the previous day.

Later that night, Ranger Farrand received a call from the local fire chief who had information from an adjacent landowner to Erwin WMA. She supplied the make and model of a car she had seen at the site, along with the name of the alleged owner, who also attended the local high school.

The next day, Ranger Farrand went to the high school and interviewed the student, who confessed to purchasing and bringing fireworks to Erwin WMA. He named eight other students who helped light the fireworks. After a discussion, and based on the students' lack of similar behavior in the past, officials summoned the students together and asked them if they would prefer to receive tickets and possible fines, or if they would like to assist with a clean-up of the parking areas on Erwin WMA. The decision was unanimous.

Shortly after, the students met Ranger Farrand at Erwin WMA and cleaned up the remnants of their fireworks, raked the ruts the fire trucks left on the state land, and cleaned up four additional parking areas on the WMA, eventually collecting an entire truckload of trash. Some of the students received additional "punishment" after arriving wearing flip-

flops, shorts, and short-sleeved shirts to pick garbage out of very brushy areas.

Ranger Farrand released the students after a job well done, and reminded them to stay out of trouble.

Graffiti on the Run—Oswego County

While on foot patrol in the Salmon River Falls Unique Area, Forest Ranger Scott Jackson observed several people in a restricted area near the base of the falls and decided to look into the situation. As Ranger Jackson descended the trail, he encountered the group climbing out. Ranger Jackson took the opportunity to educate the group about using the area properly and the need to comply with posted signs. Ranger Jackson continued patrolling and finished his descent to the falls base. Minutes later, he discovered a tremendous amount of freshly painted graffiti at the location where he first observed the group. He climbed up the trail quickly in an effort to locate the group, but by the time he arrived they had scattered. Luckily, Ranger Jackson was able to find some of them as they attempted to flee. Evidence at the scene matched evidence in possession of several group members. They were charged with penal law violations associated with painting graffiti on State Lands.

Back Country Tip

Pick Out Landmarks

If you are hunting or hiking south of a road that runs east and west, for example, then you know that by walking north, you will eventually come to the road. Keep these kinds of landmarks in mind before and during your trip, especially when light wanes at the end of the day.