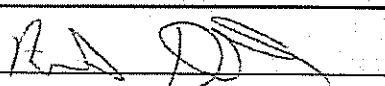



REDACTED: Inappropriate for release pursuant to NJSA 47:1A-3; Not in furtherance of transparency under OPRA case law; Expectation of Privacy pursuant to NJSA 47:1A-1

DFW-027
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**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
BUREAU OF LAW ENFORCEMENT**

OPERATION REPORT

1. Nature of Incident Bear-Human Interaction		2. Date 09/21/14	3. Time 1600 hrs	4. Classification	5. Complaint Number 45-115-14
6. Victim - Complaint - Accused Patel, Darsh [DOB [REDACTED]]				Age 22	Sex Male
7. Address [REDACTED]				8. Phone	
9. Location of Incident Apshawa Preserve, West Milford Twp., Passaic County					
10. Reported By NJFW Wildlife Control			Radio	Phone X	View Other
11. Address				12. Phone	
13. Weather					
14. Partial Witnesses:					
Patel, Vishal [DOB [REDACTED]] [REDACTED]					
Patel, Prashant [DOB [REDACTED]] [REDACTED]					
Suh, David [DOB [REDACTED]] [REDACTED]					
Lee, Zenas [DOB [REDACTED]] 2111 [REDACTED]					
<p>On Sunday, September 21, 2014, at 1900 hours, I was notified by Lt. Steven Sutton of the possibility of a bear attack on a hiker in West Milford Township, Passaic County. I spoke with Sgt. Walker of West Milford Police, who stated there was a group of five (5) hikers that were separated when they encountered a black bear at the Apshawa Preserve. The Preserve consists of 576 acres of woodlands located in the South Eastern portion of West Milford Township, Passaic County.</p> <p>Sgt. Walker stated that four (4) of the hikers were able to find each other and exited the woods on Macopin Road and called the police. West Milford Police and West Milford Search and Rescue were dispatched to the scene to try to locate the missing hiker, later identified at Darsh A. Patel [DOB [REDACTED]]. Sgt. Walker stated that they were staging on Macopin Road across from the S and S Deli. I met with Lt. Sutton and we proceeded to the staging area.</p> <p>Lt. Sutton and I arrived on scene at 2000 hours and were joined by Conservation Officer Joseph Kuechler. We were informed that a body believed to be Darsh Patel was found in the area the hiker was reported missing. The body exhibited signs of trauma consistent with a bear attack. West Milford Police encountered an aggressive black bear circling the area of which the body was found and would not leave. West Milford Police shot and killed the bear.</p> <p>We were escorted by detectives from West Milford Police Department approximately one half (1/2) mile into the Apshawa Preserve. Twenty (20) yards north of the trail, on the ridge line, a black and red sneaker believed to belong to Darsh Patel, was found. Fifteen (15) yards down into a ravine, in a grassy area, the body was located [REDACTED]</p>					
<p>The bear was located fifty (50) yards from the body. It was a large male black bear estimated to weigh between 250 and 300 pounds. The bear was killed with two (2) twelve (12) gauge shotgun slug rounds. The first round entered the bear in the shoulder area and the second round struck the lower jaw of the bear.</p>					
16. CO Robert Driscoll Signature 		17. Badge No. 159	18. Hours	19. Date 09/24/14	20. Reviewed 
		21. Badge No.	22. Completed X		

Make 3 copies: 1 Officer's copy, 1 to Trenton, 1 to Region Office

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
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CONTINUATION PAGE

1. Complaint number	21. Prosecutor's Case Number	22. Department Case Number 45-115-14
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Lt. Sutton and I proceeded to the West Milford Police Station to interview the other hikers. All the individuals were previously interviewed by West Milford Police. The interviews were recorded with both video and audio by the West Milford Police Department.

Lt. Sutton then interviewed the individuals separately at the West Milford Police Department between 23:00 hours and 23:30 hours. They all stated similar stories of their encounter with the bear. They all stated that another group of hikers warned them that a bear was in the area and was following them. They all said that the hikers seemed scared of the bear and that they continued towards the bear in spite of the other hikers' warning. They stated they were between one hundred (100) and three hundred (300) feet from the bear when they first saw it. They got closer to take pictures with their cell phones. As the bear approached the group, they turned around and started to walk away. The bear proceeded to follow them. The group became frightened and increased their speed. The bear kept pace with the group. The hikers eventually scattered and ran in different directions and became separated from each other. All the individuals stated that the bear exhibited no typical warning signs, such as bluff charges, jaw popping or ground swatting.

When the group split up, Darsh Patel was said to have been walking with his shoe off and was extremely winded. The last anyone of the group saw him; he was climbing a rock formation and yelled to the group to keep going. When the group found each other, Darsh Patel was missing and unable to be located.

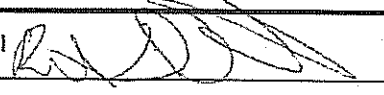
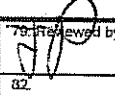
Mike Madonia and Anthony McBride of the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife's, Wildlife Control Unit, had responded to the initial call and were on scene to take possession of the bear carcass. Prior to moving the bear was photographed. The Wildlife Control Unit were to make arrangements to have the bear necropsied and the stomach content analyzed. The body of the victim was secured by the regional medical examiner and taken for autopsy.

We cleared the scene at 00:00 hours.

On September 22nd at 1030 hours I returned to the Battle Creek Paintball located at 625 Macopin Road, West Milford where I met with Chief Mark Chicketano, Deputy Chief Matthew Brown, Captain Frank Panico, and Lieutenant Steve Sutton. Also present was Mike Madonia from Wildlife Control. Together we entered the Apshawa Preserve to survey the site of the attack during daylight hours.

We arrived on the site at 1100 hours and canvassed the entire area of the attack. Deputy Chief Matthew Brown located a pair of glasses believed to have belonged to the decedent approximately 10 to 15 feet from the final location of the victim's body. The glasses were photographed in place and then placed into an evidence bag and labeled. This evidence was brought later in the day to the West Milford Police Department and transferred to Detective Elia. No other pertinent additional evidence was located from our patrol of the immediate area. We returned to our patrol vehicles at approximately 1230 hrs.

****End of Report****

75. Robert Driscoll, CO III Signature 	76. Badge No 159	77. Page 2	78. Date Report 09/24/14	79. Reviewed by 
		80.	81.	82.