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NEWS

Dad kills bear at White Co. campground

By Bruce Harper

White County News

Campers in White County may want to be more vigilant after a Norcross ex-Marine killed a 300-pound bear with a log near Helen on June 15.

The incident last week at Low Gap Campground may make campers more wary as they enter the forest areas of Northeast Georgia to camp, hike, hunt or fish.

Chris Everhart, a former Marine from Norcross, was camping with his three sons when a 300-pound bruin decided to pay a visit. The bear had been seen earlier in the day as other campers had chased and harassed the bruin, according to Everhart. The black bear entered the Everharts' camp and promptly sunk its teeth into a family cooler and was heading back to the woods to enjoy its meal of stolen goodies. Everhart's six-year-old son Logan had other ideas. Logan grabbed a shovel and tossed it at the big bruin. The bear dropped the cooler turned toward Logan. Chris picked up the nearest projectile, a log from his stack of firewood, and hurled it at the snarling animal. His aim was true and the blow hit the bear in the head.

"(I) threw it at it and it happened to hit the bear in the head. I thought I just knocked it out but it actually ended up killing the bear," Everhart told the Associated Press.

Investigating officer Jimmy Allen of the U.S. Forest Service issued Everhart a citation for failure to secure his camp site as required by Forest Service regulations.

The incident could have been much worse as the bear was the only one to pay the ultimate price. Such was not the case in a same weekend event in Utah as an 11-year-old boy was dragged screaming from his tent and killed by a black bear. It was the first recorded fatal attack in the state of Utah. The attack was not provoked by any nearby food as the family stated that there was no food at the campsite.

Rangers have stated that recent drought conditions may be a contributing factor to the more aggressive and more often sightings of the bears. Less natural food is available due to the extra dry conditions and the bears are roaming further seeking whatever food and nourishment they can find.

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