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[ Media Contact: Aaron Reed, 512-389-8046, aaron.reed@tpwd.state.tx.us ] [AR]

Dec. 18, 2008

Search for Missing Boater Now in Day 6

Update: Follow-up news release issued Dec. 18, 2008.

CORSICANA, Texas -- Texas game wardens and volunteers continue to search Richland Chambers Lake today for the victim of a boating accident that occurred Saturday morning.

Game wardens already in the area for the opening day of duck season early Saturday responded to the boating accident report within 30 minutes and have been searching for the missing victim nearly continuously since then.

According to passengers, the boat was returning from a restaurant to a private residence on the lake when it struck a submerged object near the U.S. Highway 287 bridge and capsized. Two passengers swam to shore while the other eight stayed with the boat. As the boat drifted toward shore, more than a mile away, the operator apparently slipped into the water.

Missing is Charles Andrew (Chase) Bergfeld, 23, of Conroe. Bergfeld is a student at Texas A&M University.

Game wardens were joined early in the search by members of the Corsicana Volunteer Fire Department, the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office Dive Team and the Lewisville Fire Department Dive Team.

Currently, volunteers from Texas EquuSearch and **United States -- Homeland Emergency Response Organization (US-HERO)** are assisting in the search.

Game Warden Capt. Gary Dugan today said that searchers are employing side-scan sonar technology and dogs trained to detect human remains as they painstakingly comb through the waters of a large cove where Bergfeld is thought to have been lost.

"We have two boats with sonar going all the time, and at least two additional boats to carry the dogs and volunteers," Dugan said. "Today we're getting some more powerful sonar technology from Alternative Positioning Solutions out of Louisiana." Dugan said water in the search area averages about 25 feet deep with a fairly clean bottom, but that weather conditions have frustrated searchers from the beginning. "The weather has been such a factor for us, whether it's wind or rain or fog," Dugan said. "We know this is very difficult for Chase's family and friends, and

we're doing everything we can to find him."

As of Nov. 30, there had been 253 boating accidents in Texas for the year, resulting in 52 fatalities and 158 injuries. Alcohol is believed to have been a factor in 15 of the fatalities.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is responsible for enforcing boating safety laws statewide and for performing boating accident investigations on all state waters. Search and recovery operations typically are conducted in daylight hours to ensure the safety of the searchers.

The investigation into the accident is ongoing. TPWD will update news media as soon as the victim is recovered.

**Follow Up Story**

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[ Media Contact: Aaron Reed, 512-389-8046, aaron.reed@tpwd.state.tx.us ] [AR]

Dec. 18, 2008  
Richland Chambers Boating Accident Victim Found

CORSICANA, Texas -- Texas game wardens and volunteers recovered the body of Charles Andrew (Chase) Bergfeld from the waters of Richland Chambers Lake today at approximately 2:15 p.m.

Bergfeld was missing after a boating accident near the U.S. Highway 287 bridge early Saturday morning.

Bergfeld's body was located by game wardens and volunteer searchers Dennis and Tammy Watters, using side-scan sonar. He was pronounced dead at the scene by a Navarro County justice of the peace.

"Our hearts go out to everyone touched by this tragedy," said Game Warden Capt. Gary Dugan, who has been leading the search effort for the past six days. "We're going to investigate this accident fully to see what we can learn and perhaps help prevent future tragedies of this nature."

As of Nov. 30, there had been 253 boating accidents in Texas for the year, resulting in 52 fatalities and 158 injuries.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is responsible for enforcing boating safety laws statewide and for performing boating accident investigations on all state waters.

The investigation into the accident is ongoing.

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