



## Hernando County Sheriff's Office

P.O. BOX 10070 – BROOKSVILLE, FL 34603-0070 FAX 352 796-0493 PHONE 352 754-6830

### Media Release

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**From:** Denise M. Moloney  
Community/Media Relations Manager, 352-797-3609

**Re:** Two Dogs Shot and Dumped - Criminal Investigation Underway

**Date:** June 13, 2019

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On 06-08-19, a Hernando County Sheriff's Office Animal Enforcement Officer (AEO) was dispatched to the area of Plymouth Rock Drive and Wilford Street in Ridge Manor to investigate a report of two deceased dogs being dumped in the area.

Upon arrival, the AEO observed two deceased dogs, both partially covered/contained in black plastic garbage bags. The bodies of the dogs were in the early stages of decomposition.

Upon closer inspection, the AEO observed that one of the dogs, the male, had severe injuries on his body and what appeared to be a gunshot wound to the head. The dog's body displayed signs of being in a freezer prior to being dumped. The other dog, a female, had no obvious signs of injury other than what appeared to be a gunshot wound to the head. Both dogs were described as what is commonly referred to as pit bulls.

With evidence of criminal activity having occurred (gunshot wounds), a patrol deputy was dispatched to initiate a criminal investigation.

Currently deputies do not have any suspect information or leads in this investigation. If anyone has information they believe will lead to the identity of the person(s) responsible for this crime, please contact the Hernando County Sheriff's Office at 352-754-6830. If you would like to remain anonymous, please see the Crime Stoppers information, below.

Deputies believe the dogs were used for dog fighting and dumped in Hernando County once they were deemed 'of no use to the owner'. It is believed that due to the remoteness of the location and the proximity to other counties, the person(s) responsible for this crime are possibly from outside the area. Previous investigations have revealed that people travel from as far as other states to engage in dog fighting and/or to dump dogs.

Over the last several years, other dogs have been dumped in this area. In the past, the dogs were alive with some suffering from injuries indicative of being used for dog fighting.

The investigation remains active.

If you would like to remain anonymous – Please call Hernando County Crime Stoppers at 1-866-990-TIPS (8477) or submit your tip via the internet at <http://www.hernandocountycrimestoppers.com> . You will remain anonymous and also be eligible for a reward up to \$3,000 cash!

#### **The Office of Sheriff:**

The Office of the Sheriff is established by the Florida Constitution. As a constitutional officer, the Sheriff has the exclusive authority to administer his or her agency and is responsible for preserving the peace throughout the entire county, carrying out the laws of the state, the orders of Florida courts, and the ordinances of the Board of County Commissioners. The Sheriff is the chief law enforcement and correctional officer of the county.

Sheriff Al Nienhuis was initially appointed as the Sheriff of Hernando County by the Governor in January of 2011. He was then elected by the people of Hernando County in 2012, and remains accountable to them.