



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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

Media Release

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

Re: Deputies Arrest Man for Aggravated Assault

Date: April 27, 2020

On 04-25-20 just after 10:30 p.m., Hernando County Sheriff's deputies were dispatched to the area of 9440 Hernando Ridge Road in Brooksville (Woodland Waters subdivision) in regards to a possible Weapons Disturbance.

Upon arrival, deputies could hear a heated Verbal Disturbance occurring at or near the rear of the residence.

As deputies made their way toward the rear of the residence they observed a white male, later identified as Matthew Stegman, holding a shotgun in his hand and arguing with a group of people. Deputies ordered Stegman to put the weapon down, to which he complied. Deputies cleared the weapon, a 12 gauge shotgun, to find that it was not loaded.

The shotgun was placed into evidence for safekeeping.

Stegman was separated from the group, and deputies interviewed each person involved in the incident.

All persons interviewed (aside from Stegman) provided similar accounts of the incident, stating they were travelling on a dirt road down the powerlines on their four-wheelers for a night ride, when suddenly a male stepped into their path holding a shotgun. The male demanded they get off his property. Two persons in the group, fled on foot, fearing if they stayed they would be harmed.

The remaining individuals began arguing with Stegman, stating they were not on his property, but on a dirt trail at the powerlines. They stated Stegman refused to listen to them and continued to point and rack the shotgun, telling them to leave.

During an interview with one of the victims, the victim stated that she took out her phone and video recorded the incident. She provided the video to deputies.

In the video, deputies observed Stegman holding and racking the shotgun, then pointing it at the group for a brief moment.

During an interview with Stegman, Stegman told deputies that he was tired of people riding up and down the powerlines, as the noise from the ATVs and 4x4's was very disturbing to him. Stegman said he grabbed his shotgun and went outside, thinking it would deter people from riding along his property. Stegman went on to say he did rack the shotgun but did not point it at anyone or the group and that the shotgun was not loaded.

Deputies noted that Stegman's yard is fenced. The area where the group was riding and where the confrontation occurred was outside of Stegman's fenced yard.

Based on the deputy's investigation, Stegman was placed under arrest. Upon placing handcuffs on Stegman, he told deputies that he was in possession of another weapon, a Glock, in the front pocket of his shorts. Deputies removed the loaded weapon from Stegman's shorts pocket and placed it into evidence for safekeeping.

Matthew Stegman DOB/06-13-1972 was transported to the Hernando County Detention Center, where he was charged with 10 counts of Aggravated Assault with a Firearm. Stegman's bond was set at \$20,000.

The ten victims were all issued Trespass Warnings for the property of 9440 Hernando Ridge Road.

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, ran unopposed in 2016, and remains accountable to them.