



## 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  
Public Relations Manager, 352-797-3609

Re: UPDATE – VICTIM IDENTIFIED - Detectives Conducting Death Investigation in  
Dade City – 2023-29724

Date: September 18, 2023

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#### UPDATE

The preliminary investigation into the body that was discovered floating in the Withlacoochee River revealed foul play was involved in the death.

Late this afternoon, detectives learned the identity of the deceased. The identity of the deceased will not be provided, as per Marsy's Law. Next of kin notification has been made.

Having learned the identity of the victim, detectives are now following up on several leads they have uncovered.

The investigation is still very active and fluid.

Please note, this case is in no way related to the Death Investigation on Darts Street in Weeki Wachee.

#### ORIGINAL INFORMATION – 09-18-23

On 09-17-23 just before 1 p.m., Hernando County deputies and Hernando County Fire Rescue were dispatched to 33038 Ranch Road in Dade City (Hernando County), after a caller reported a body floating in the Withlacoochee River.

Upon arrival deputies met with the caller, also a resident on Ranch Road, who advised while in his back yard, he was flagged down by two individuals who were canoeing down the river.

The individuals in the canoe told the caller they spotted a body in the river. After providing this information, the pair continued down the river.

With the use of an airboat (Hernando County Fire Rescue), the individual was removed from the water and transported to the shore at 33038 Ranch Road. The individual, an adult male, was pronounced deceased.

The Florida Wildlife Commission (FWC) was enlisted to check the river in an attempt to locate the original reporting parties (in the canoe). The FWC met with negative results.

The HCSO Marine Unit also responded to the area with an airboat to conduct a search of the riverbank for any evidence related to the death.

Detectives and Forensics Specialists determined the body had been in the water for some time, as it was in the advanced stages of decomposition.

An autopsy is scheduled for 09-18-23 to determine the cause of death.

Detectives are actively working to identify the deceased individual and have been in contact with both the Pasco Sheriff's Office and the Sumter County Sheriff's Office, as the area in question is just a few feet from the Pasco County line.

The deceased individual does have various and distinct scars, marks, and/or tattoos.

If you believe you may know who this individual is, please contact the Hernando County Sheriff's Office Major Case Unit at 352-754-6830.

***Hernando County Crime Stoppers / Anonymous Tips***

***If you have information on this case, please contact Hernando County Crime Stoppers. You will remain anonymous!***

***Hernando County Crime Stoppers can be reached by phone at 1-866-990-TIPS (8477) or \*\*TIPS from a cell phone.***

***You may also submit your tip via the internet at <http://www.hernandocountycrimestoppers.com> .***

***You will remain anonymous and also be eligible for a reward up to \$5,000 cash!***