

Antelope Poaching Near Buffalo

On May 10, Buffalo Game Warden Jim Seeman received a report of a dead antelope that appeared to have been shot south of Buffalo on the Bull Creek state lands. Warden Seeman arrived at the location and found a buck antelope that had been shot in the back of the neck. The only evidence from the field necropsy besides fragments of bone was a small orange ballistic tip hidden among the trauma. Warden Seeman estimated that the animal most likely was shot from the Klondike Road the prior evening. Luckily, it had rained the previous afternoon and the violator's vehicle was the only one to leave fresh tracks. The tracks left the road and stopped approximately 175 yards perpendicular to the poached antelope. Using a metal detector, Warden Seeman was able to recover a .17 caliber HMR shell casing. Photographs of the tire impressions were taken and after visits to both the local sporting goods store and tire store, Warden Seeman knew he was looking for a passenger car, a .17 caliber rifle and Hornady brand bullets. Warden Seeman also received information from a local hiker who was in the area the day of the necropsy and found McDonald's bag with a receipt time dated 5/9/17 6:25 p.m. along the county road only a half mile from the antelope. With that information and an anonymous tip, Warden Seeman realized he was probably dealing with high school aged boys. On May 12, after two days of following leads and spending considerable time in the Buffalo High School parking lot looking at vehicle tires, Warden Seeman found a Honda Odyssey with tires matching the prints from the crime scene. In the back of the car was a .17 caliber HMR rifle. That evening, Warden Seeman was able to get an admission by a 17-year old boy who was out with a friend and his younger 11 year old brother shooting. The rifle had mysteriously disappeared on the afternoon of May 12, but was recovered after one of the boys falsely led Seeman to a friend that had a different .17 caliber HMR rifle portrayed as the one used in the poaching. One boy was charged with wanton destruction of big game and another with accessory to wanton destruction of big game. Both boys were found guilty and ordered to pay \$750 restitution and had their hunting privileges suspended for one year.

