



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GILMER COUNTY REPORTS FIRST RABIES CASE OF 2010

Ellijay (GA) January 7, 2010 — The Gilmer County Environmental Health Office announced today that an area skunk has tested positive for rabies, making this the first rabies case in the county for 2010.

Andrea Wheeler of Gilmer County Environmental Health reported, “On the morning of January 3rd, a resident in the Lakeland Drive-Ridgeway Church Road area off Hwy 282 went to feed his five dogs. Upon entering the kennel, he found one dog severely injured and a skunk present. The other four dogs were outside the indoor kennel in the chain link fence, but we must consider them to have been ‘exposed’ to rabies.”

Ms Wheeler said the owner of the dogs shot the skunk and it was submitted to the state lab for rabies testing on January 5. The positive test result was returned on January 6. None of the five dogs exposed to the skunk was vaccinated against rabies; therefore, the injured dog was euthanized by its owner and the four remaining dogs will be in a strict isolation quarantine for six months.

No human exposure occurred.

Health officials continue to remind residents to maintain rabies vaccinations in their pets.

“You just never know when your pets may become exposed,” stated Ms. Wheeler. “Be prepared and vaccinate your pets! If these dogs had been current on their rabies vaccinations, they simply would have needed to be revaccinated and observed at home for 45 days. We urge each pet owner to please act responsibly in this matter.”

For more information about rabies, call the Gilmer County Environmental Health Department at (706) 635-6050, or log onto the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at www.cdc.gov.

Persons who may be exposed to rabies may also call Georgia Poison Control at 1-800 - 222-1222 if other local resources cannot be reached.

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