

Media Release

January 27, 2012

Note: A photo is attached. Suggested caption material is as follows: "Jack Weimer of the Sweetwater County Dive Team offering safety tips at the Flaming Gorge Burbot Bash safety briefing at Buckboard on January 25. A near tragedy was averted that night when two all-terrain vehicles operated by a party of ice fishermen went through the ice on Flaming Gorge. No one was reported injured in the mishap."

Vehicles on the ice not recommended

(Rock Springs, Wyo. - January 27, 2012) Taking vehicles out on the ice can be dangerous, as a party of ice fishermen participating in this year's Flaming Gorge Burbot Bash learned on the first night of the event.

Sheriff Rich Haskell said his office was notified at about 10:15 PM on January 25th that four men fishing in the Lost Dog area of the Gorge had lost a four-wheeler and a "Rhino," a four-wheel drive off-road vehicle commonly called a "side-by-side," through the ice at the lake.

The four reported that they managed to get off the lake, had dry clothing, and did not require medical attention. They also reported that a good deal of equipment went to the bottom of the lake with the two vehicles.

Haskell reminded the public that ice fishing safety

tips prepared by the Sheriff's Office have been circulated through the media since December, and are available at the Sheriff's Office website at www.sweet.wy.us/scso.

-First and foremost, bear in mind the tried-and-true adage that there is no such thing as safe ice. Ice conditions can fluctuate drastically over short times and distances; water levels in lakes, and especially in reservoirs like Flaming Gorge, can change - freezing and thawing weather patterns come and go, and submerged springs in certain areas can make a big difference. Always exercise caution and never become complacent.

-Check ice thickness before venturing out and check thickness every 100 to 150 feet. (A cordless drill with a 5/8-inch, 5-inch long wood augur bit makes this an easy proposition.) Clear ice 4 inches thick or more is generally considered safe for an angler on foot, and though guidelines exist for appropriate ice thickness for snow machines, four-wheelers, and larger vehicles, the Sweetwater County Sheriff's Office does not recommend taking motorized vehicles of any kind out onto the ice, regardless of thickness.

-Never ice fish alone.

-Wearing a PDF, (Personal Flotation Device) is highly recommended. A little more bulk won't matter much, and a PDF might save your life if the ice gives way.

-Remember that fishing from shore ice when the lake is not frozen over from bank to bank can be particularly hazardous.

Haskell said 200 sets of self-rescue ice picks were built with materials donated by local businesses by the agency's Inmate Community Service Program, many of which were distributed free of charge at the Burbot Basin safety briefing at Buckboard on January 25. "We

still have quite a few of the pick sets, and they will be available as long as they last." Those interested should contact the Sheriff's Office.

