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SLED AND DNR COMPLETE INVESTIGATION INTO DROWNING DEATH OF ELIJAH WEATHERSPOON

The S.C. Law Enforcement Division and S.C. Department of Natural Resources have closed the investigation into the June 25 drowning death of Elijah Weatherspoon, which took place near Sullivan's Island.

The investigation was reviewed with the Ninth Circuit Solicitor's Office who has determined that the incident was a boating accident.

"The accidental death of anyone is a tragedy; especially when it is a young person," said SLED Chief, Mark Keel. "I hope knowing the facts of what happened can help in the healing process for all those who knew and loved this young man. Our hearts go out to the Weatherspoon family for their loss."

"These situations are always very difficult, and one of our most important tasks in a Search & Rescue operation or boating fatality investigation is to bring closure to a grieving family," said Col. Chisolm Frampton, SCDNR's Deputy Director for Law Enforcement. "A complete and thorough review of the available evidence in this case was conducted and the results have been shared with Elijah's parents."

The 4-month long investigation involved interviewing nearly 40 witnesses, many of whom lived outside of South Carolina to ensure the facts and evidence of the case were obtained.

"While there were many rumors about what happened, our role is to uncover and report the facts of the case," said Keel. "I want to thank the many responding agencies who helped SLED and DNR in this investigation."

"I'd like to personally thank all of the agencies that assisted in the initial search and rescue effort and the subsequent investigation," said Frampton, "including the U.S. Coast Guard, the Mount Pleasant Police Department, the Charleston County Sheriff's Office, the Coroner's Office and SLED."

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