

Youth charged in air gun shot at Reclamation site, sparks fires, threats to close 6th line

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CALEDONIA – A 13-year-old Caledonia youth is facing charges of possession of a weapon dangerous to the public peace and careless use of a firearm after shots from an air gun were fired at the Six Nations Reclamation site on the outskirts of Caledonia Sunday.

The shots sparked a night of fires being set at the Reclamation site Monday, arguments with Caledonia people and threats from site supporters to shut down Sixth Line Road.

The series of incidents began Sunday when Ontario Provincial Police said they were called at about 7:05 p.m. when shots were fired along the 6th line near Argyle Street.

On June 10, 2007, at about 7:05pm police responding to a call regarding shots fired located a suspect vehicle, a red Pontiac Montana, traveling southbound on Highway #54 and stopped it without incident.

Three males inside the van allege that they were on their way to buy cigarettes when one of them had fired a BB air rifle at a railroad sign near the Douglas Creek Estates, Caledonia.

The driver, an 18 year old from Caledonia along with his 13-year-old brother and a 12-year-old friend also from Caledonia, were arrested and taken into police custody. The BB air rifle was seized for investigation purposes.

As a result, the 18 year old and 12 year old males were released unconditionally and the 13 year old was charged with possession of a weapon dangerous to public peace and careless use of a firearm. He was released on a promise to appear and is scheduled to appear in Cayuga court on a later date.

(The name will not be released, as doing so will identify the young males.)

The incident sparked a night of fires at the Reclamation Site Monday.

Sources told Turtle Island News fires were set behind a home on Argyle Street and along the side near Argyle Street with angry site youth arguing with OPP whom they accused of not charging those involved.

Several Six Nations people showed up at the site and a verbal altercation with Caledonia residents ensued for sever hours.

No one was charged.

Janie Jamieson, spokeswoman for the site said the shooting incident upsets her because of the presence of many children, toddlers, and even infants, including a one-month old and a nine-week-old.

"All they were doing was having a meal and they had to be subjected to that," said Jamieson. "It's just really frustrating to know situations like this keep happening. It's the second time someone has shot at Silverpines (the camp nearest the railway)."

Two weeks ago, she said, site supporters at both Silverpines and the Hwy. 6 and Sixth Line Rd. camp were the target of what she suspects were shots by another pellet gun.

Jamieson criticizes the OPP handling of the situation, saying they couldn't be found in their usual posts when people at the site tried to inform them of the shooting.

She's also dismayed that the driver of the vehicle is not being charged in addition to the 13-year-old youth who actually shot the weapon.

"It's just ridiculous," she said, wondering why the driver wasn't charged with being an accessory to the incident, or for speeding.

Jamieson says according to a person at the site who spoke to the OPP immediately following the incident, police said the youth was speeding because he was "scared."

"They're just justifying it," she said, adding she also believed the police were justifying the youths' claim they shot at a sign and not at the people.

"I can't believe they find that acceptable."

Jamieson said she doesn't know if the shots were actually aimed at the sign or the people at Silverpines because she was on a different area of the site at the time of the shooting.

As a result of the shooting, she said the people have held numerous meetings to discuss how to protect themselves in the future.

"Our safety is our number one priority. Putting a nine-week-old in jeopardy is unacceptable."

Some of those suggestions included putting checkpoints on Sixth Line Rd. for anyone entering or leaving the reserve through that corridor, or, closing down the road altogether. No decisions have been made.

"Those are only suggestions right now. I can't stress enough they're only suggestions."