

Counterfeit...continued from Page 1A

was from the City of Keene in Texas. It was made out to the business for \$1,550."

The check was allegedly for the sale of a table that never changed hands, and Osborne and Lynn took the money out of the account the same day as the deposit, according to Lt. Osborn.

Unfortunately for the original owners, who shared the account with Osborne and Lynn, the account went negative after the bank discovered the check was counterfeit and reversed the bad deposit, according to Lt. Osborn.

"The victims had to come up with money out of their own personal accounts to put into that account to get it back in the black," said Lt. Osborn. "And then they suspended the account to keep

these two out of it."

Continued Osborn: "The owners of the business came in and filed a report. I looked into it and called the City of Keene Police Department, and they have had fraudulent checks duplicated on their city accounts."

"They have the postal inspectors involved in it, due to the fact that they'd been mailed out Priority for the Postal Service. Also, the Texas Rangers are involved in this investigation, and it's probably going to turn into a federal case."

Per state law, the crime of identity fraud is committed when a person willingly and fraudulently, and without authorization or consent, "creates, uses, or possesses with intent to fraudulently use any counterfeit or fictitious

identifying information concerning a real person with intent to use such counterfeit or fictitious identification information for the purpose of committing or facilitating the commission of a crime or fraud on another person."

Bank account numbers are considered identifying information under state law, and the account information located on the fake check was real and belonged to the City of Keene, Texas, according to Lt. Osborn.

"When you steal and take money that doesn't belong to you, we enforce the law," said Lt. Osborn. "I would advise these victims and others, when you're making business dealings with anybody, you need to do it with an attorney and not do it on your own."

Nottely River...continued from Page 1A

Experiment Station, erosion has become a major concern with the stream that feeds into Nottely River.

Last year, the Community Council worked along the banks of the river to battle erosion, and now, councilmembers have asked the HRWC to help them continue this revitalization effort.

"There was a bank stabilization project that was done here last year," said Tony Ward, HRWC Restoration Coordinator. "The GMREC put rocks on the bank to stabilize the streams to stop erosion, and the GMREC enlisted our help to organize and set up a plan to re-vegetate the stream bank after the project was done."

"So, I wrote a plan and set up reaches along the stream according to the way the land is being used, and what is there in terms of utilities, buildings and that sort of thing. I took all of that into consideration and designed a plan to vegetate the whole stream bank, all the way from the road to Nottely River."

Only native vegetation is being planted along the banks. In planting these trees and shrubs, the HRWC and GMREC hope to encourage a more diversified ecosystem for the stream, which will in turn improve the health of the stream and the wildlife it sustains.

"We're planting native trees and shrubs," said Ward. "We're planting around 20 to 25 different species that have all been selected based on some benefit they will have to the stream."

"Either they're fast growers or they have wildlife feeding or nesting benefits. We're doing it all to get roots in the stream banks and shade on the water because the stream will stay cooler."

"If the water stays cooler, then the stream will be more diverse and the environment will be more diverse, and that's all good. These are all important parts of keeping good water quality, and that's why we're investing our time and effort here."

While the HRWC and the GMREC are concerned



Photo/Lily Avery

The HRWC appreciates its volunteers and is always looking for more.

about erosion and the stream's vegetation, it should be noted that the health of the Nottely River is well and not something that either organization is worried about at this time.

In fact, according to Ward, the Nottely River is on par with other streams and tributaries in the area, and is a prime example of a waterway within a rural but populated area.

"It's mostly the normal impacts that a stream in a rural area has from agriculture and development and vegetation removal, and all of the common problems that a stream has," said Ward. "But overall, the health of the Nottely River is well."

The Nottely River flows into Lake Nottely, and from there it flows into the Hiwassee River.

Anyone interested in volunteering to work with the HRWC and GMREC on this project is welcome to do so.

No prior knowledge is required, and volunteers can show up at the site without registration.

Last Wednesday was the first of four workdays at the Experiment Station to complete the projects.

The remaining three workdays will be Wednesday, Feb. 7, Wednesday, Feb. 14, and Saturday, Feb. 17.

Each workday begins at 1 p.m. and lasts until 4 p.m.

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