

Three dark figures seen moving through hunting area

Sighting Details

Date: *Mid Jan. 2012*

Time of Day: *Between 2 and 3pm*

Season: *Winter*

State: *Florida*

County: *Polk*

Nearest town: *Groveland*

Nearest road/Highway: *SR 471 and SR 33*

Weather Conditions: *Clear & cool, Bright indirect sunlight under planted pines*

Terrain of location: *Planted pine forest and natural cypress swamps, a few small ponds, pine straw with low vegetation.*

Anything else odd: *They walked about 10 yards from me, in very good light, me and my wagon were very conspicuous. I was motionless but how could a person much less 3 people not see me out in this open terrain? They walked in front of another hunter with a loaded rifle. No hunter would do that.*

Other Witnesses: *No*

Local Stories: *After my incident I was told that there had been a sighting of what was believed to be an adult and a juvenile by a cyclist the previous year, I found and read your report recently and it sounds to be a couple hundred yards from my sighting.*

Submitted by witness on:

Original report:

I have been hunting Green Swamp since the late 70's. Though I tend to hunt more than one Wildlife Management Area each year the Green Swamp WMA is a go-to area for me. I have spent possibly a thousand days in the Green Swamp over the last 35 years. I am very familiar with terrain and all of the plants, insects, and wildlife in the area. I have a demanding job that makes it difficult to coordinate a hunt with friends, so for the last 30 or so years I have hunted alone. I have walked in and out of different hunt locations in the dark hundreds of times and have never seen or heard anything that alarmed me.

In about 2010 a new tract of land was added and opened to hunters in Green Swamp. The tract is about 1000 acres of planted pines that are about 15 years old, trunks about 10 inches in diameter, and clear of branches up to about 7 feet. The planted pines are about 15 feet apart and are planted in rows, each row is also about 15 feet apart. There is a heavy layer of pine straw so very little low vegetation is present. It is possible to see for hundreds of yards down each row, but visibility to each side across the rows is limited to about 50 yards. The pines are planted between natural cypress swamps, and a few small ponds. Access is limited to foot traffic only and there is only one way in and one way out. Hunting this area requires a lot of walking.

I will often take a vacation in January and hunt for the better part of the week in the Green Swamp before the season closes. After the Christmas holidays the woods are quiet with few if any hunters. During the week it is not uncommon for there to be fewer than 10 hunters in the entire 55,000-acre WMA.

In mid-January of 2012 I had taken a vacation to hunt this area. This was my second year hunting the new area. It was mid-week, there were no other vehicles parked at the entrance to this area, the weather was cool and clear. I was using a large garden cart of the type sold at Tractor Supply to haul in a heavy climbing tree stand, that would also be used to haul out a deer or hog if required. I had hunted the edge of a swamp that morning and at mid-day I decided to take down my stand and move to another location. I loaded up my cart and was pulling it along, rifle in hand, down one of the long rows of pines. I got to a location that the visibility down the row looking due west was exceptional, so I took a break, but was still actively hunting game that might cross this row. I set my backpack as a rifle rest and lay prone; my line of fire was west down the row. I am in full camo, with no face covering. My garden cart is an unnatural bright green with silver painted wheels, with tree stand on top, probably about 40 inches in height overall. It was between 2pm and 3pm, bright but indirect sunlight through the young pines.

I had been there for a few minutes and had been checking for work e-mails on my phone, when I caught motion to my left. I looked up and there were 3 big dudes in black ghillie suits no more than 10 yards away from me walking in single file quartering away crossing my line of fire. I laid there surprised but motionless and let them pass. They walked in a NNW direction for about 50 or 60 yards into a cypress swamp, before I lost sight of them. Shortly after they walked out of sight they started banging around in the swamp, loudly. The banging sounded almost metallic, a dull "donk" like hollow aluminum against a tree. I thought these idiots were very loudly and carelessly taking their tree stands down. There were possibly 20 bangs. I got frustrated that these guys had ruined my hunt and stood up, got situated and began to head west with my cart once again. As I crossed their path, I noticed a distinct game trail that they had used. I continued on and hunted that evening and the rest of the week in the area.

I had my phone/camera in my hand while I watched them walk closely by, I had no fear or reason to take a picture or a video because it never crossed my mind that I was seeing anything but foolish hunters. They were walking rapidly but quietly, they walked fully upright with human posture, normal arm swing. Narrow at the waist and broad across the back. They appeared to be 3 physically fit tall young hunters in unusual black ghillie suits. They were big but not alarmingly big. All 3 were identical size and shape. Maybe 6'4" to 6'6", 250lbs. I did not notice an odor. Because they were quartering away, I did not see or for that matter even look for any facial features.

Three big dudes in black ghillie suit with no hunter orange, no rifles, no gear walk directly in front of my loaded rifle, and me and my big ugly wagon are close, in the open, and in plain sight. I told my buddies at work about it, they suggested that it might be Fish and Game Commission trying to catch poachers. For two years something just didn't seem right about the whole incident. The more I thought about it the more unanswered questions I had.

Unanswered Questions:

- They walked about 10 yards from me, in very good light, me and my wagon were very conspicuous. I was motionless but how could a person much less 3 people not see me out in this open terrain?
- They walked in front of another hunter with a loaded rifle. No hunter would do that.
- They had no gear, no vests, no hunting weapons, they were carrying nothing. If they were not hunting, were they hunters?
- Black ghillie suit, I have a green one and a tan one, have never worn either while hunting because they snag on everything. Why would someone wear a black ghillie suit in a green environment?
- If 3 hunters decided to hunt in ghillie suit they would probably be green and would likely be different from one another, these were all exactly the same.
- ghillie suits are usually and on purpose very asymmetrical, often baggy and droopy with rows of material sewn on. These were form fitting and uniformly 3 or 4 inches in length, I would describe as looking like wet hair.
- The banging noises. About a year ago on a Saturday I was watching River Monsters, Swamp People and one of the Bigfoot shows. It dawned on me that the banging around might have been tree knocks. Until watching that show 2 years after the incident, I had never heard about tree knocks, so I had not previously made the connection, and that it when I began to wonder whether I had actually seen something other than hunters that day.

Follow up investigation by: David S

The witness contacted me through email after hearing me on a podcast show. We spoke about his encounter for well over an hour and the witness went over the encounter several times and he has never wavered from his encounter on what had happen. The witness is a very creditable person. He works in high level capacity at a very large & local company.

Since we spoke in the witness wanted to join our team in efforts to work with other individuals researching the phenomena, so now the witness is a member of our team and has been working in the field where he had his encounter and has found some interesting finds along the way, pointing to something(s) are in the location. The witness goes into this area and others searching for evidence to make sense of his encounter. The witness is an asset to our team and brings a lot of other knowledge that works well with our goals.