Orlando Sentinel

ASK A LAWYER

Report Dogs' Aggressive Behavior Now

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Question:
We live on a lake with lots of ducks and three sandhill cranes.

My dad, who is 78, feeds them. My neighbor, who lives a quarter-mile down the road, turns his two dogs loose two or three times a day, and they often come into my yard and several times have tried to bite me.

Do I have the right to kill them on my property if they are endangering my dad or me?
R.K
Oveido

FRANK POHL
Pohl & Short, P.A.

Answer:
Based upon the fact these dogs have repeatedly come onto your property and tried to bite you, you should immediately contact the nearest animal-control authority and report these dogs as dangerous.

Under Florida law, the animal-control authority has an obligation to investigate any report that a dog is dangerous. Florida law also provides that any animal that is the subject of a dangerous-dog investigation – if not immediately impounded with the animal-control authority – must be safely confined by the owner in a securely fenced or enclosed area pending the outcome of the investigation.

If there is no animal-control authority in your area, the county sheriff shall act in its place.

In the interim, if these dogs were to attack you unprovoked on your own property, you could protect yourself in any reasonable manner.