

April 26, 2010
Sheriff John Zaruba
DuPage County Sheriff's Department
501 North County Farm Road
Wheaton, Illinois 60187

Dear Sheriff Zaruba and employees of the Sheriff's Department:

In the past ten years plus as Voluntary Chairman of the Friends of the Great Western Trails and past President of the IL Prairie Path not-for-profit association I have had the pleasure of working with many different employees of the Sheriff's Department. During these many years working on the annual trail cleanups and many dozens of improvement or restoration projects I have passed along our concerns and thanks from time to time.

On Saturday, 4/24/10 during the annual all volunteer trails cleanup of the Great Western Trail in DuPage County we had another excellent experience working with the Sheriff's office. **This experience was excellent because it involved many different employees and major concerns that were solved with one call to your office.**

During the annual trail cleanups we have hundreds of volunteers from Villa Park to Sycamore IL but I always go to an area where we have had complaints or know that it will be more difficult to get volunteers to clean. This year I picked the section of the Great Western Trail west of Swift Rd. It has a large natural area on the south and even larger area with transformers and miscellaneous electrical equipment to the north. The East branch of the DuPage River crosses through this section of the trail.

It was at the east side of the East branch of the DuPage River and south of the GWT where we found a large and semi-permanent encampment with furniture (a 3 section sofa, table, BBQ grill, swing & portable toilet), cooking equipment and many damaged trees cut for firewood. Near this area were the remains and trash from two other older and possibly abandoned encampments. As I and another volunteer began to cleanup this area I called the DuPage County Sheriff's Department using the 911 emergency number. The dispatcher (name?) quickly understood the need but that it was not an emergency. She stated that they would send a Deputy to the site. Within a reasonable amount of time Deputy Kotovsky came out to the site along the GWT. He identified the need for additional help in clearing out this large amount of furniture and to fill in the large campfire pit, etc. He then contacted the Sheriff's office knowing that the Sheriff's Work Alternative Program -SWAP unit was out and cleaning another section of the trails in DuPage County. He arranged for this crew to come to the site with a trailer to get everything taken away. As I cleaned along the trails and picked up some additional trash the SWAP unit arrived. Deputy Kotovsky directed the crew where to go. As he walked back to the site he assured me that all the illegally placed furniture, etc would be removed.

Please note what also adds importance to getting this illegal activity stopped is because the encampments are immediately east of Ackerman park of the Glen Ellyn Park District where hundreds of children play soccer and baseball year round.

Now the employees of the Sheriff's Department may say "we were just doing our job." I want to be sure to say it "was a job well done." What also made this experience with Deputy Kotovsky and the Sheriff's Department a pleasant and effective departure from dealing with government agencies in general was that no inefficient government rank and file procedural prerequisites or bureaucratic formalities were required to solving this problem. The Deputy understood the problem, found a solution to it and assured us that it would be corrected. He also volunteered to contact the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County and Commonwealth Edison since they may some jurisdictional responsibilities for this area.

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I left the site concerned with how this encampment and the surrounding ones further south in the trees could have developed with the amount of furniture, damage to the trees, etc but knowing it was taken care of.

Thank you again to Deputy Kotovsky and all the other employees of the Sheriff's Department along with the SWAP unit participants that solved this big problem and carried all the furniture, etc away from the site.

We always encourage anyone involved with the Friends of the Great Western Trails including trail users and neighbors to contact the Sheriff's Department of DuPage County without hesitation. We want them to call 911 and ask to speak to the Sheriff's Department directly about any concerns related to the trails. The quick response, hard work and cooperation that everyone from the Sheriff's Department but forth on 4/24/10 is one example of why we do.

Sincerely

Don Kirchenberg

Voluntary Chairman

Friends of the Great Western Trails

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CC: Chairman's office DuPage County

Members of the DuPage County Board

DuPage County Div. of Transportation

Commissioners and President of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County

Glen Ellyn Park District

Daily Herald

My Suburban Life newspapers

The Sun newspapers

The Lombardian

Examiner Publications

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Chicago Tribune

Chicago Sun Times