

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Keep yourself (and your belongings) safe in the forest preserves

GENEVA, IL — The Forest Preserve District of Kane County reminds preserve users to keep safety in mind when visiting forest preserves, parks and other large public areas, in the wake of recent vehicle burglaries in Kane and surrounding counties.

Several forest preserves including Big Rock, Fitchie Creek in Elgin, Fox River Bluff West in St. Charles, Jon J. Duerr in South Elgin, and Raceway Woods in Carpentersville have all seen an increase in vehicle burglaries over the past two months.

The District's Public Safety department said approximately 20 vehicle burglaries have taken place in the Kane County forest preserves since late August. In most cases, women have left purses inside vehicles in plain view or casually hidden. After preserve users leave their vehicles and enter the preserve, the thieves have then opened unlocked doors or smashed windows to access and take valuables. In each of the cases, the victims were away from their vehicles for less than an hour. Vehicle burglaries have also taken place at park district lots. So far, preserves and parks in Kane, DuPage, Lake, McHenry and Cook Counties have been targeted.

As a result here in Kane County, Forest Preserve District police officers have increased surveillance. New safety advisory signage will be added to all forest preserve kiosks. Additional signage will be posted at the aforementioned preserves, as well.

The Forest Preserve District of Kane County is also strongly advising preserve users to follow these safety tips when visiting the forest preserves, parks and other large public areas:

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- Do not leave wallets, purses, cash or other valuables in plain sight.
- Avoid bringing valuables to a preserve, or if possible, lock them securely in your trunk *before* arriving.
- Lock your vehicle.
- Be alert to your surroundings — do not wear earbuds or headphones.
- Remain on designated trails and paths.
- Walk or run with a companion.
- Carry a cell phone to report problems or request assistance.
- In cases of emergency, call 911 immediately.

“We don’t want to discourage people from enjoying the forest preserves, but we do want to make them aware of these incidents, so that they are more careful and take preventative measures,” said Director of Public Safety Mike Gilloffo.

More information on public safety is available on our Web site at <http://www.kaneforest.com/publications/brochures/publicSafety.pdf>.

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