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Posted February 16, 2007

# Sheriff's Department, Fox River Trail patrol meet on issues

## Volunteers talk about problems they've seen along pathway

By Ed Byrne  
*Gannett Wisconsin Newspapers*

When spring arrives and the snow disappears, people using the Fox River Trail will find — as usual — volunteers affiliated with the Friends of the Fox River Trail patrolling the county parkway.

The Fox River Trail Patrol volunteers are intended to serve as a courtesy presence along the trail's route from Green Bay to the Calumet County line south of Askeaton.

Trail patrol members also serve as eyes and ears for the Brown County Sheriff's Department and the Brown County Parks Department.

Members of the trail patrol met recently with Capt. Randy Schultz, who heads the patrol division of the Brown County Sheriff's Department.

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The patrol has no law enforcement powers, and a major part of its efforts are expected to be in giving information and assistance to trail users.

The volunteers will have information about the trail and the park department rules that govern its use by the public.

"I would like to see a partnership with law enforcement," trail patrol member Pam Aerts said.

Schultz said that's his vision, too.

"Partnership is an area where (law enforcement) is slow to grow," Schultz said.

John Trester, secretary of the Friends of the Fox River Trail, said his vision of the trail patrol had changed.

"We were thinking about an auxiliary (to law enforcement)," Trester said. "I would have liked to have been more of an aggressive observer."

Now he favors a more passive approach.

"What I would like from the sheriff's department is they take a serious look at our complaints," he said.

Patrol volunteer Mike Gerke said there are frequent violations of trail rules — from leash law violations to people ignoring stop signs at street crossings and people riding bicycles too fast and too aggressively.

The friends group has evidence of transients camping along the trail and beer parties in more remote sections of the trail, especially in Allouez in the area between the Wisconsin 172 bridge south to the De Pere city limits.

There also have been problems with people exposing themselves, Schultz said.

Schultz said it is a good idea for all trail users to carry cell phones, even one that is not subscribed to a cell phone company.

"All cell phones will complete calls to 911 even if they are not subscribed," he said.

Schultz said having a cell phone could be invaluable if someone biking, running or inline skating has a medical emergency or comes across an emergency or criminal activity.

— *Ed Byrne writes for the Post-Gazette of Wrightstown.*

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