

News about the
BLM's Campbell Tract
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The Campbell Tract Leaf

Smash and grabs here to stay

It's becoming an all too familiar site at Campbell Tract and other area trailheads: the pile of shattered window glass on the ground or pavement in the parking area from a recent vehicle break-in at a popular trailhead.

The bad news: this will likely remain a problem for BLM and trail users. The good news: there are several things you can do to lessen the chances that the pile of glass you see on the ground is all that's left of your window when you return to your vehicle.

The problem

Most vehicle break-ins at trailheads are smash and grab incidents, where thieves smash a window to gain entry to the vehicle and whatever enticing contents are left inside. Thieves take wallets, purses, backpacks and cell phones left behind by trail users, then head to area stores and gas stations to use credit cards while the vehicle owner is still on the trail.

BLM law enforcement ranger Mimi Thomas patrols the Campbell Tract's 12 miles of recreational trails. Thomas took the photo below in October when she documented one of several such incidents at Campbell Tract trailheads this summer. She stresses that it's not just a fair weather problem.

"Our trails are very popular," says Thomas, "and people use the trailhead parking areas year round. Thieves know that. So don't think it's safer to leave your valuables during winter, when fewer people



The remains of the driver's window of this vehicle rest in the front seat following a smash and grab incident at Smokejumper Trailhead in October.

are around. That just means a thief doesn't have to case the area as long to find the right moment to smash your window and grab whatever you left behind."

How to improve your odds

It's not enough to lock your vehicle and take your keys. It takes a thief only two seconds and a \$10 hammer to get into your vehicle, so get into the habit of traveling light when you plan to hit the trail.

- Try to leave as many items as you can at home. All you really need is your driver's license and a good pair of trail shoes.
- If you must bring personal items with you, never leave them in plain view inside your vehicle. Before you arrive at the trailhead parking area, place your wallet, purse or cell phone under the seat or in a locked glove compartment, or lock valuables in the trunk of your car.
- Leave your CDs at home. A case of music CDs could net a thief a tidy sum at area stores that purchase used CDs.
- Consider leaving newer vehicles at home and instead park your beater at the trailhead. It won't prevent a break-in, but it might persuade a thief to seek a more lucrative target.

Of course, you can do everything right and still run the risk that unsavory citizens will vandalize your vehicle just for the thrill, but Thomas says thieves rarely bother unless there's something in it for them. So the best deterrent is to make sure it's not worth their time in the first place.

For more information

If you have questions or suggestions about safe recreation on Campbell Tract trails, contact Law Enforcement Ranger Mimi Thomas or Outdoor Recreation Planner Doug Ballou at 267-1246.



SWAT training goes live

The Anchorage Police Department's SWAT unit held night vision goggle training in the spruce forests of the BLM's Campbell Tract this fall. About 30 officers in night vision goggles were in the woods one late September evening when a stolen vehicle slammed into the wooden posts at Smoke-jumper Trailhead. The APD officers promptly responded to the incident.

APD may use BLM's Campbell Tract for future training exercises. BLM welcomes an APD presence on the tract and is committed to doing our best to ensure a safe recreational experience for our visitors.

Winter trail reminder

For safety reasons, some trails on Campbell Tract become dedicated mushing trails during winter. Dog teams are fast and silent, and cannot stop quickly or yield to other users. So look for the familiar sled dog logo on signs that mark certain trails for mushing use only until spring.



Photos by Teresa McPherson



All Campbell Tract trails are multi-use during the snow-free season, but designating certain trails for specific uses in winter is the best way to maintain a trail system that offers something for everyone, while keeping safety a top priority.

Thank You!

The BLM Campbell Creek Science Center, Anchorage Parks & Recreation, and our many volunteers combined efforts on National Public Lands Day, Sept. 24, to give Campbell Tract and Far North Bicentennial Park trails a little TLC. More than 250 volunteers spent the morning brushing trails, pulling weeds, and transplanting trees.

Many volunteers stayed for the afternoon open house at the Science Center. This fun annual event featured educational games, live music, and a bald eagle release.

BLM thanks our many volunteers and partners who made this day a huge success.



Students check out the new "Get Energized!" kiosk at the Campbell Creek Science Center.

The Campbell Tract Leaf is published quarterly to provide news about the 730-acre BLM Campbell Tract, located adjacent to Far North Bicentennial Park in Anchorage, Alaska.



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