

# Gun range shot down at Greene Valley preserve

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A police gun-shooting range won't end up next to Greene Valley Forest Preserve near Naperville and **Woodridge** thanks to public outcry.

Where the range will eventually be located and what will happen to plans to put an accompanying sheriff's parking lot for 250 seized vehicles near the preserve remain in question.

DuPage County sheriff's police decided to drop plans to put an outdoor rifle and pistol practice range for DuPage law enforcement officials next to the preserve after receiving calls and e-mails of protest, said sheriff's spokeswoman Carol Roegner.

A decision on the parking lot has not been made yet, she added.

Sheriff's officials made it clear from the start that they would look elsewhere if nearby residents and forest preserve commissioners opposed the range.

County board members and sheriff's office officials picked the site because, out of all the county-owned land, it seemed the most secluded and buffered by trees and a 30-foot dip in the topography. The range would have sat on vacant space next to the county wastewater treatment plant south of 75th Street and between Route 53 and the DuPage River, surrounded on three sides by Greene Valley Forest Preserve.

But public outcry started almost immediately. **Woodridge** officials said they would fight the range in court and voted to annex the land to allow for greater control in the future. Forest preserve commissioners questioned whether it was fair to force residents who had endured a landfill for two decades to now listen to gunfire.

"The noise and disturbance to the birds and wildlife are real concerns," said Ruth Najacht a Wheaton resident and member of PRESERVE, a residents group opposing gun ranges in or near any forest preserves.

An alternative site for the range has yet to be determined. But a new outdoor range will be needed as early as next spring, because the DuPage Airport Authority has plans to develop the current range in West Chicago off Fabyan Parkway as part of its high-tech park.