

REDACTED: EXPECTATION OF PRIVACY

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From: ██████████
To: ██████████@WestMilford.org
Cc:
Subject: Statement
Attachments:

Sent: Wed 10/1/2014 12:13 PM

Detective Sargent,

My day got out from under me yesterday and I didn't get to writing this statement for you. I talked with ██████████ and we put together a statement. I hope that this provides the right information needed for this investigation. Please let me know if there is anything else we can help with.

██████████
 ██████████

My name is ██████████ and I was hiking in the Apshawa Preserve with my boyfriend ██████████ when we encountered a black bear. We had chosen this location because we wanted to take a longer hike that day. We got onto the internet and I looked up the best hikes in NJ and this was one of the best with a very detailed map. We parked the car at the main entrance put water and snacks in our backpack and headed in. We wanted to do the entire loop of the preserve so we started on the blue to the white and into the closed in area following the red trail and wanted to check out a small yellow trail that went around a small body of water. There looked to be some good views so we started walking down a trail that was barely marked. We came upon a fallen tree and noticed that the trail forked. We originally went to the left away from the waters edge but noticed it was not the way we wanted to go we didn't see any markers so we checked our GPS and knew that we were not on the trail we wanted. Also this area looked like it hadn't been hiked on in months and we could hear cars driving by in the distance. We turned around and continued to try and follow a path that led by the water. We were walking for a short time when we noticed that the trail was gone. So we split and I stayed closer to the water and he walked up in the other direction. He hollers for me to come up where he was and it was then that we noticed a deer. We stood there for a moment or two and decided to go back near the water because we had heard a car go by and knew the path couldn't be up there. It was then that I started to walk directly towards the water when I looked to my left and noticed the bear. I looked it right in the eye said to ██████████ that there was a bear and I turned around and quickly walked away. Yelling to him that I wasn't joking and that I saw a bear. He took a second to look and saw the bear and then also turned and walked away. We were walking back and stopped for a minute to calm down and thats when ██████████ said that it was right on the path behind us so we continued to walk away from the bear. That is when we got back to the fallen tree and saw 5 young men climbing over it. As soon as I saw them I told them that we had just seen a bear and that it wasn't that far behind us. ██████████ also mentioned that the bear was about 50 to 100 yards behind us. They were intrigued, as most people would be, and wanted to see the bear. We warned them that it was following us and not to go towards it. We parted ways and continued our hike back to the red trail. I wanted to get out of there and continue on our hike of the rest of the preserve. We did hear some yelling and the sound of an ATV but it didn't sound like something was wrong. We spent the next couple of hours hiking and exploring the rest of the preserve. There were a few other groups of people on the trail that day too. When we got back to the trail head there was a police officer in his SUV on his phone and asked us if we had seen a kid walking around with one shoe. We said we had not, but mentioned we saw a bear and the officer either didn't hear us or notice what we had said and drove off. We headed home a little shaken up, talking about seeing the bear and happy to know that we did the right thing and got out of there. It wasn't until the next morning, I was on a bus back to ██████████ that I wanted to post on Facebook my wonderful hiking weekend. I wanted to get the spelling of the preserve correctly and thats when I came across articles that one of those 5 hikers had died, apparently from a bear attack. It was sad to hear that because we warned them that the bear was close by and that they shouldn't go that way.