

## Forest budget needs scrutiny.

Until this problem is addressed, scofflaws will continue to thumb their noses at the city.

Chicago Sun-Times, November 14, 2003, Editorial

The Friends of the Forest Preserves are dismayed by the Stroger administration's attempt to short-circuit public comment and review of its proposed 2004 Cook County Forest Preserve District Budget.

Forest Preserve users and advocates are growing more vocal and more numerous in demanding improvements to our woods. Cook County commissioners are demanding change. Press coverage of the Forest Preserves is very significant and much appreciated. The Stroger administration has been dogged for years with forest preserve scandals, and it knows that this budget will be carefully scrutinized.

Its solution: Release the budget on Monday at 3:30 and start public hearings three hours later the same day! How can anyone review, analyze and make substantive comments on an approximately \$100 million budget document in three hours?

Together with groups like the Civic Federation, the League of Women Voters and the Better Government Association, we have complained for years that the Forest Preserves schedules public hearings at times and places that make it difficult for the public to participate. This administration should not continue to make a mockery of the democratic process.

John Sheerin  
President  
Friends of the Forest Preserves