

Vandalism & Depreciative Behavior in Recreation Sites

A behavioral approach to an old problem

RRT 287 – Prof. Ed Krumpal

Vandalism



- ◆ The deliberate, wanton, malicious destruction of property for the sheer pleasure of destruction or striking out against the establishment.
- ◆ Myth – Vandalism begets more vandalism so prompt repair will prevent vandalism.

2

Behavioral Norms

- ◆ Norm of Centrality – “That’s a good rule meant for other people -- but that rule doesn’t apply to me.”
- ◆ Norm of Non-Involvement – People know right from wrong, but they don’t want to get involved by correcting someone or reporting to the authorities.

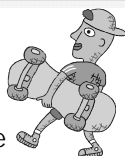


Eight Kinds of Vandalism: Over-use Vandalism

- ◆ One of the most frequent causes
- ◆ Out-dated facilities, inadequate maintenance, undersized facilities
- ◆ Increase in recreation & changes in patterns of use
- ◆ “Antique,” obsolete, difficult to repair facilities

4

Conflict Vandalism



- ◆ A fence where a gate should be
- ◆ Shrubs or grass where people naturally walk
- ◆ Locked doors & gates when people want to use an area
- ◆ “The public disregards rules that stand in their way or conflict with how they want to use something.”

5

Curiosity Vandalism

- ◆ What’s under that manhole cover?
- ◆ How are those letters fastened to the wall?
- ◆ How high will water squirt if I jam a stick in the water fountain?
- ◆ What’s in that locked cupboard?
- ◆ What happens if I turn this lever?

6

Leverage Vandalism

- ◆What happens if I pry with this stick?
- ◆Will my bat (or tennis racket or...) fit in this hole or crack?
- ◆Can I pry with this?
- ◆Leverage creates a sense of competence/effectance!



7

Irresistible Temptation Vandalism

- ◆Biking through the mud puddle
- ◆Jumping your bike over the flower bed berm
- ◆Writing with that magic marker on ...
- ◆Picking the buttons off furniture
- ◆Pulling on that snagged fabric
- ◆Pulling on loose molding



8

"No-other-way-to-do-it" Vandalism

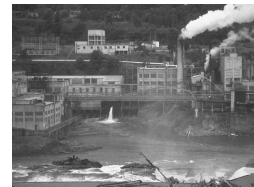
- ◆Leaning bike against shrubs when no bicycle rack is present
- ◆Sitting on the fence or equipment box when no benches are provided
- ◆Littering when no garbage cans are near
- ◆Hanging your equipment on trees or shrubs
- ◆Using the bushes to . . .



9

Ugliness Vandalism

- ◆Kids are inherently responsive to an ugly environment (negative)
- ◆Older people lack respect for an ugly or unkempt environment



10

Malicious Vandalism

- ◆Destroying something for the sheer wanton joy of destruction
- ◆Striking out against the establishment, their parents, school, other frustrations
- ◆Cure requires enforcement, apprehension, punishment & restitution



11

Classic Reactions to Vandalism

- ◆The Bastille Approach – build it big, solid, and ugly.
- ◆The "Zero" Approach – provide nothing because they'll only break it!
- ◆There is no such thing as a maintenance-free park. Maintainable, yes, but maintenance free – NO.
- ◆Parks need **Care** every day, **Improvements** every year, & **Major Rehabilitation** about every 5 to 7 years.

12

Solutions

◆ Design

- Eliminate attractive nuisances & hidden areas. Adequate lighting & bright colors.

◆ Patrol

- Competent & respected personnel
- Irregular hours
- Cooperation with agencies & local residents
- Prompt apprehension & punishment

◆ Operation & Maintenance

◆ Program

13

Solutions

◆ Operation & Maintenance

- Prompt maintenance, night shifts
- Adequate staffing
- Clean, attractive, well-maintained facilities
- Documentation

◆ Program

- Challenging & exciting
- Give ringleaders authority & responsibility
- Have vandals do repair work
- Involve local residents in care & maintenance

14