Vandalism & Depreciative Behavior in Recreation Sites
A behavioral approach to an old problem

RRT 287 – Prof. Ed Krumpe

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.

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

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.”

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?
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!

Irresistible Temptation Vandalism

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

“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 buses to …

Ugliness Vandalism

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

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

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.
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

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