

Reducing Crime and Violence on Public Lands: Case Studies in the USDA Forest Service

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Studies on types and impacts of crime have indicated that crime and violent acts do occur on public lands and have negative consequences for managers of those lands and recreation visitors. It is important, then, to evaluate how to reduce or eliminate crime and violent acts on public lands. To do this, two case studies of the successful reduction of crime and violence within the USDA Forest Service were selected for evaluation.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted. This technique facilitates the constant feedback and probing necessary to understand the perceptions of those interviewed. Within the Forest Service, interviews were conducted with Law Enforcement Officers, District Rangers, Recreation Officers, Public Affairs Officers, Resource Specialists, and Recreation Planners. Outside the agency, interviews were conducted with County Sheriff's Deputies, a resort owner, public relations employees, and community representatives. Interviews continued until saturation (confirmatory and no new information) was reached.

Common to both sites were problems such as assaults, drug abuse, and alcohol abuse. Gang activity or extremist groups created problems at the sites, and isolation or distance from assistance was a common theme. There were watershed events that led to action (a riot at one site and a murder at the other). Some of the specific actions taken at the sites to manage crime and violent acts and events were: (1) development of sites; (2) addition of physical barriers (these are categorized as prohibition and harm reduction actions); (3) control of parking and motor vehicles; (4) increased law enforcement; (5) temporary and permanent closures; and (6) traffic checkpoints.

Evaluation of the case studies resulted in the identification of key characteristics of success in law enforcement. The key characteristics were: force of personalities (attention to an area depended upon individuals, not on policies); resources (e.g., money and people); persistence (planning, consistency and visibility); collaboration (within the Forest Service, with other law enforcement agencies, with community and volunteer groups, and with recreation visitors and recreation clubs); and communication (communication plan, getting the word out to the public, reliability, and consistency).

Site-specific actions might be replicated if law enforcement officers and others are faced with the same or very similar issues described here. However, the key characteristics may be factors for managers to consider when handling crime and violent acts or events that are the same as or different from those in the case studies. These characteristics are not

“business as usual” for law enforcement; they go beyond the cooperative agreements that already exist. These extra efforts contributed to success.

KEYWORDS: Collaboration; communication; crime and violence; law enforcement; public lands

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Crime in leisure settings is increasing (Manning, et al., 2001; Pendleton, 2000; Shore, 1994). In fact, Pendleton (2000) reported that it is possible that crime and violence may become a defining part of an evolving leisure experience, and, further, that this possibility has not been fully recognized and explored.

Some studies have examined crime and violence from the point of view of visitors to public lands (Bane, 2000; Manning, et al., 2001); other studies have looked at the impacts to public lands employees (Driessen, Doyle, & Outka, 2000); while still other studies addressed how managers and law enforcement officers (LEOs) of public lands think about crime and their jobs managing against crime and violent acts on public lands (Berkowitz, 1995; Covington & Whittington, 1996).

In a study of users of the Appalachian Trail, Manning and others (2001) noted that, if security is found to be a significant problem on the trail, management action is warranted. They suggested trail managers communicate clearly and deliberately with visitors, suggest guidelines for a safe visit, and encourage visitors to report incidents. In another study addressing visitor safety, Bane (2000) noted various techniques (such as using their intuition) that visitors can use to protect themselves while in backcountry areas.

Driessen and others (2000) discussed the need for violence training for USDA Forest Service employees. In a training module for field employees, they suggested letting people know where you are going, taking and using a radio or cell phone, and keeping equipment in good repair. These techniques can be used to reduce the threat to employees posed in potentially violent encounters.

Berkowitz (1995) noted that there is, essentially, a law enforcement branch within what is largely a non-law enforcement agency. He said that rangers (LEOs) have dual people and resource protection roles. Berkowitz said that many LEOs did not join federal service to do law enforcement. They do not see themselves as “cops,” do not like conducting law enforcement, and do not want or expect the public to view them as cops. Covington and Whittington (1996) reported that visitors see LEOs as a mix of law enforcement and visitor assistance personnel. Berkowitz (1995) said that these LEO attitudes, when combined with factors endemic to federal

agencies (such as a lack of 24-hour coverage, being perpetually “on-call,” poor communication systems, and poor equipment), may place LEOs even more at risk and make them more vulnerable to serious assaults. Furthermore, Berkowitz (1995) said that LEOs do not communicate with other law enforcement agencies and can end up constantly reinventing the wheel.

In a study of US Army Corps of Engineers employees, Covington and Whittington (1996) found that rangers (LEOs) felt that mobile vehicle radios (top communication category choice), Polaroid cameras (top surveillance equipment category choice), and blood pathogen protection (top personal protection equipment choice) were most important to safety during their daily operations.

Pendleton (2000) suggested that caution must be exercised when thinking about enforcement on public lands. We should not simply adopt the urban model of “crime and cops” because this ignores the paradoxical nature of leisure setting crime, the special features of the setting, and the dramatic differences between criminal justice institutions and leisure institutions (Pendleton, 2000). He suggested that such adoption may be inappropriate in leisure settings. What, then, is appropriate? What has been used? Are there particular actions or characteristics that are suitable for use on public lands when managing against crime and violence?

Two case studies were conducted to identify key characteristics of success for handling crime and violent events. The first case study profiles a site that was recovered from a persistent criminal element. The second site illustrates best practices of crime prevention, which primarily addresses excellence in communication. This case study is based on a single incident. For each case study, we describe the problem and the solution. Lastly, we present the key characteristics of success common to these case study sites.

Methods

Site Selection Process

The research design used is case study research (Crabtree & Miller, 1992; Hamel, Dufour, & Fortin, 1993; Yin, 1993). Meetings with the USDA Forest Service’s (USFS) Law Enforcement and Investigations (LEI) branch yielded two topics of success for evaluation: successful strategies for recovered sites and best practices of crime prevention/communication. The USFS LEI branch mailed a document about the law enforcement case studies to all the Special Agents in Charge (SACs) nationwide. Each SAC was asked to consider nominating a site for inclusion in the study. To qualify for inclusion, each nomination had to meet the selection criteria specific to the case study.

There were separate criteria for the selection of each case study:

Case Study 1: Successful strategies for recovered sites

- You have a recovered site (i.e., one you took back from the criminal element/crime or violent events).

- You can discuss the history of issues at the site and the process of recovery.
- You have a second site in process of recovery.
- You can discuss the planning of the recovery process for the second site.

Case Study 2: Best practices of crime prevention/communication

- You used multiple methods to keep employees informed on area crimes and/or trends.
- You used multiple methods to inform the public about area crimes and/or trends.
- You are able to provide evidence of all the methods used.
- You have crime data before and after the crime prevention activities occurred.

In addition, each site selected was expected to host two researchers for approximately one week and to assist in identifying and setting up interviews with appropriate LEI and other USFS employees, cooperating law enforcement agencies, and other partners. The sites were also responsible for making arrangements for researchers to ride along with a LEO or Patrol Captain for a first-hand view of the site. Finally, each site was asked to provide evidence of their actions and crime data.

Four sites were nominated for Case Study 1 (successful strategies for recovered sites) and one site was nominated for Case Study 2 (best practices of crime prevention). The researchers independently rated each nomination on the fit to the selection criteria and selected the best candidate site. Both researchers selected the same site for Case Study 1 (from Region 2, the Southwestern Region) and accepted the site for the second case study with reservations. Upon first review, the nomination for Case Study 2 did not clearly respond to all the selection criteria. However, after two follow-up phone calls it was determined that the site (from Region 6, the Pacific Northwest Region) did meet all the case study criteria.

Interview Process

Face-to-face interviews were conducted (Kvale, 1996; Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Seidman, 1998). This technique facilitates the constant feedback and probing necessary to understand perceptions of those interviewed. United States Forest Service LEOs, District Rangers, Recreation Officers, Public Affairs Officers, Resource Specialists, and Recreation Planners were interviewed. Outside the agency, the researchers interviewed County Sheriff's Deputies, a resort owner, public relations employees, and community representatives. Interviews continued until saturation was reached; that is, until the same information was heard from several sources and there was no new or conflicting information. The methods used are appropriate at exploratory stages of research and are often used as a way to make sense of experiences and to develop a conceptual framework where none exists (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Gunter, 1987; Henderson, 1991; Howe, 1985, 1991; Hultsman & Anderson, 1992).

Data Analysis

Interviews were audio taped, with the permission of the person being interviewed. A court stenographer transcribed the tapes using word processing software. The tapes were then destroyed.

Both word processing and a software package designed for content analysis were used to analyze the interview materials. Both programs searched the data base for keywords and phrases. Results were used, supplemented by notes taken during the interviews, to develop the key characteristics of success.

Results

Case Study 1: Recovered Site

The site was a 15-mile stretch of river corridor in a 460,000-acre Ranger District in the Southwest Region of the USFS. Gravel roads provided easy access for a nearby urban population. One side of the river is in one county and the other side is in another county. In addition to county agencies and the USFS, there is a large metropolitan water district that has some jurisdiction along the corridor. The construction of a dam, which would flood the corridor, was under study. The USFS suspended facility improvements while the study was in process. The area was isolated and radio communication was poor or nonexistent.

Historically, area managers reported that, due to minimal law enforcement presence in the area, crime ran rampant. Criminal activity ranged from natural resource damage (trash, litter, and water pollution), to car and property thefts, traffic and water related fatalities, assaults, gang fights, drug use, and homicides.

In 1980, the new Forest Supervisor initiated clean-up of the area. The process started with trash removal and the addition of trash receptacles. This was a collaborative effort with local community groups. In addition, one county sheriff reserve officer lived on-site. The reserve officer would drive to a problem area and would sometimes get backup from another Deputy, so this prompted the need for a cooperative law enforcement agreement between the USFS and the two county sheriff departments. A USFS LEO said, *"We thought maybe we should start trying to do some law enforcement."*

Until this time, the Forest Service depended largely on Forest Protection Officers (FPOs) who had 40 hours of law enforcement training and were unarmed. A USFS LEO said, *"They (FPOs) had a badge and a smile, and that was our level of law enforcement."* They also had one LEO in the district who did not go to the river. The FPO and Sheriff's Deputy would team up to *"feel more comfortable."*

In 1981, a newly-elected Sheriff for one of the counties made a commitment to the river corridor. He assigned a resident Deputy full-time (not a reserve). The new Deputy increased patrolling and ticketing. There were so many things going on that he saw problems all day, every day. It

was a slow change, but they found less trash, less crime, and a change of clientele. By the mid 1980s, they started to see families return, but for day recreation use only.

In 1992, a person was killed along the river during a violent conflict between user groups of different ethnicities. One County Sheriff was fed up. He felt that his Sheriff's Department had people there, and that they had invested "*enough blood, sweat, and tears.*" The Sheriff felt as though the USFS, the state division of wildlife, and the other county sharing the riverfront needed to do more and get more people and groups involved. While there had been a recent reduction in shootings, a USFS employee said: "*this person was shot in the worst location of the river, the notorious location of the river. And it was a violent crime...and the sheriff just said, 'I've had it.'*"

One USFS employee said:

"In my mind, we had to clean up the behavior before we could clean up the environment. Women were being raped. People were being shot and killed. It was big city crime activity, and that had to be cleaned up first before we could go after the environmental violations."

One USFS LEO said that the ultimate goal was not to stop recreation use, "*but to turn it around to what it was intended for, let the fishermen come down and fish to their heart's content, let the boaters come down and boat, let the people that want to camp come down and camp, let those that want to hike or play in the river.*"

To reclaim the area and restore an acceptable level of public safety, the USFS, the water department, the two County Sheriff's departments, and community residents worked together to formulate and implement a recovery plan. Throughout 1992 and 1993, these groups met to address the problems and possible solutions. Importantly, they made decisions cooperatively. They developed a recovery plan which included "permissive regulations," physical site changes (such as paving major roads), and plans for communication and implementation.

A USFS LEO said, "*We decided that instead of going with restrictive regulations we'd do permissive regulations-that you had to have permission to do it. If you weren't granted permission, you can't do it.*" Five new rules were enacted: (1) Park only where there is a designated parking area; (2) Camp only where there is a designated camping area; (3) Fires are allowed only in designated campgrounds in metal fire rings; (4) No shooting is allowed; and (5) Portions of the river are closed at sundown. There were uniform regulations on National Forest lands and water utility lands to minimize confusion. They said they were not afraid to change enforcement tactics along the way (tickets vs. warnings) as the situation changed. It was important to be consistent at any given time, yet flexible over the long haul.

The groups added physical barriers such as chain fencing and rocks; they reseeded grasses in heavily impacted areas; and they worked to control motor vehicle access. Managers rehabilitated paths and campgrounds that had "evolved" through unregulated use. Instead of formalizing these

problems areas, they worked toward the development of new areas free from a history of criminal behavior. Not all landholders moved along at the pace of the land managers. It took years to get consistent fencing, rocks, and other barriers installed along the river.

The groups also developed a communication plan for announcing the change in regulations. They used brochures, newspaper articles, a fishing club, and a trails club (some of club members were involved informally with the planning) to distribute information.

The LEOs and Sheriff's Deputies started giving warnings to violators.

They wanted to control overnight use of the area so they physically defined parking, "formalized" customary campgrounds, and ticketed violators. People had to be in a designated camping area or they would be ticketed or told to move along. *"We were issuing summonses or tickets to people, and they're leaving with a piece of paper. They know we mean business, and we're serious about this, and that was the message we were trying to send to people."* They also had a checkpoint plan and they stopped people in order to send clear messages. One USFS LEO said, *"We'd do (checkpoints) on...Memorial weekend, the biggest weekend of the year, and we'd have 15 deputies standing out on the road, the river road. That sent a loud and clear message."*

The goal was to achieve a reasonable and acceptable level of crime. They recognized that it cannot all be eliminated. They felt they were handling about 80 percent of the problems, and they needed far more resources than were available to control the remaining twenty percent.

Within a year, they found that serious crime was significantly reduced. Now they consider the area a showplace that is safe for families enjoying the entire river environment.

In describing the current situation, a USFS employee said:

"We have people staying overnight in the campgrounds. We have people floating the river. We have people driving the river for scenery. We have people, lots of people, fishing the river, and we don't have, for the most part, never-ending or huge amounts of resource destruction going on."

Case Study 2: Best Practices of Crime Prevention

The second case study examined crime prevention through communication. The problem event happened during Independence Day weekend at a lakeside resort in the Pacific Northwest Region of the USFS. The resort had been hosting a special fireworks display, primarily for families, since 1979. The site was less than an hour from a large population. The Forest Service typically provided a FPO and a LEO, and the County Sheriff had patrols in the area.

During the twenty years the resort had been providing the fireworks display, criminal activity was limited to a few small incidents — nothing like what happened in 1998. That year there was a very large turnout for the

fireworks, an EarthFirst! protest in the parking lot, and a very large crowd (many hostile to the protestors) gathered behind the resort. Altogether, it was reported there were 15,000 to 16,000 people in the area.

The Forest Service LEO said:

“I thought maybe that I could do more good by a visibility thing, you know, mingling amongst the crowd there. I recall a group of guys standing up on a picnic table drinking out of a bong-type thing... I mean, it was...getting kind of out of control there. So I made a lot of contacts up there. I tried to talk with the folks. I tried to kind of disperse some of the gatherings. And I remember some fights were breaking out. People would come up to me and say, ‘Hey, you know, something is brewing over here,’ or you know, ‘Somebody just hit somebody over here’ or something like that, and so I was trying to deal with that.”

The LEO called for assistance, but the Sheriff was busy with the protest and there was also an incident at the campground. The LEO sought out resort employees for assistance. Together they tried to handle the crowd.

The LEO described some fights that broke out behind the resort.

“We were spread awful thin. And I remember one fight broke out there right pretty close by. The people were screaming and yelling... ‘Fight.’ ‘Fight.’, and I could hear this cussing and swearing. So I went running over there, and these two guys were fighting. And I came into the middle of it. One of them took off through the crowd.”

The LEO described how they had to walk through the crowd to locate the alleged perpetrator: *“This guy was in his early 20s and was intoxicated...I could have arrested him for assault, but if I did, then I’d have to transport him, and I’d be gone from the area for three or four hours. So I went ahead and issued him a citation for assault.”*

The LEO described returning to the crowd and feeling *“absolutely overwhelmed. So I just finally went back and got my club and a mean look and wandered through the crowd, and then pretty soon things kind of...dissipated a little bit.”*

To his knowledge, the EarthFirst! group was not a part of these fights. Many of the fights were thought to be due to alcohol consumption and abuse, with many underage drinkers. The LEOs believed that most of the people in the altercations were local day-users.

Traffic control was another problem. The access roads were few and narrow. A USFS LEO said:

“So when you’ve got people leaving after fireworks, they couldn’t get an ambulance in...and that adds to the frustration and tension because they weren’t set up to handle...getting the traffic out of the area at the end of the event, too, with such a large crowd. Just a tremendous bumper-to-bumper traffic going down the river both ways. A lot of them had been drinking, so you’ve got a problem there.”

Reaction from the recreating public was different from previous years. In past years the managers received letters in the local papers about how nice a time they had. But that year the letters were different. A USFS employee said:

“The [public said] ‘I’m never going to go there again. I’m never going to subject my family to the kind of wild party atmosphere. It’s not what I expected. My family felt threatened.’ And to us, that was kind of a real hint that the bulk of folks go up there to have a good family recreation opportunity and socialize. That experience was not possible, at least in their view, because of one large - very large number of people, larger than the area can normally handle...and because of the amount of alcohol abuse and short staff in law enforcement.”

The near-riot conditions simply overwhelmed the resort staff. This was not the atmosphere that they wanted to provide. The resort’s reputation was built on family-oriented outdoor recreation. And, for Independence Day, they had hoped to create an environment where families could relax and enjoy a fireworks display. A resort employee said: *“This is a draw, a way to enhance business. But something...had gone wrong, and it’s going the opposite direction.”*

Within a month of the incident, the County Commission and the Forest Supervisor started the communication process. A USFS employee said, *“The County Commissioners got right on the event. They were hearing lots of complaints, too. And I think the combination of those two, the Forest Supervisor and the County Commissioners gabbing with each other, and they said, ‘We need to do something to fix this next year.’”* Also the County Commissioners sent a clear message to the Under-Sheriff to be sure things got changed.

The Sheriff’s Department, the resort, the Ranger District, and the Forest began to talk about the need for law enforcement and the need to be sure the community knew their plans. There were public meetings where Forest Service, Sheriff’s Department, and resort personnel talked to the public. They also attended Chamber of Commerce meetings. There were four or five meetings that were attended by Forest Service employees, the Sheriff’s Department, State Police, and the resort staff. They often had 10 to 15 people total at each meeting. There also were internal Forest Service memos and meetings to discuss crime and get ideas for managing problems. A USFS employee said:

“We have an internal newsletter that we put information into. And then it is important to meet with recreation, fire, and law enforcement a few days before the event to go over plans and be sure everybody is on the same page. We set up a communication plan to be sure that everyone knew where to be and so that non-Forest Service people would know who to call if they needed assistance.”

One USFS employee said:

“I think they first looked at the problems they had and what created the problems. So they came up with some primary things. Alcohol was a problem...it was a significant problem. The lack of personnel was a problem. The traffic was a problem. So they looked at all these things that were problems and looked at potential solutions.”

A Sheriff’s Office employee said that the plan was based on the State Police model: *“If something gets out of hand, if you hit it hard the next year, even if its overkill, you’ll discourage them. And once you get a [reputation] for a place for people to come party, it’s harder to get rid of it than if you hit them right away the first time.”*

One idea was an alcohol ban for Independence Day. Initially they considered a *“...ban on alcohol everywhere, campgrounds and everything.”* Further discussions revealed a fundamental unfairness in this policy. A USFS LEO said, *“There’s a lot of responsible people that come up that want to have a beer when they camp...or people at the resort who rented a cabin want to have a beer.”* So they focused back on the problem areas along the beach and in the parking lot.

One USFS LEO said:

“It kind of worked from the problem backwards and came up with what would work...and a lot of it is just trying to balance...the public desire to recreate and what’s fair recreation versus...what’s public safety and how much we need to encroach.”

They decided on an alcohol ban from noon to 6 a.m. around the south shore and the resort area, the heavy use areas. This was agreed upon by the USFS, the Sheriff, and the resort. The two resort stores instituted an open-container ban and stopped selling alcohol. They said, *“It’s worth not selling beer for 18 hours. It’s a lot better than having the problems.”* A USFS LEO explained:

“[There was an] open-container closure at the two main day-use concentration areas...they didn’t do a closure on alcohol consumption. People could still go to the bar and drink. People could have their cabin right near the day-use area, sit on their front porch, and drink a beer if they had a cabin.”

One USFS LEO said: *“It’s [the alcohol open-container closure] probably one of the best tools we’ve got to keep things under control.”* Another idea they discussed, and later implemented, was increasing law enforcement presence for the next year. The State, the County, everybody contributed resources to provide more law enforcement because the Forest Service did not have the resources to do this alone.

Once everybody had decided on the course of action, they started a media campaign, including a joint press release about the alcohol ban and the increased law enforcement presence. A USFS employee said:

“We did a press release about a week in advance and that year the local media actually did a story on the thing; they did a major news feature article about the ban on the alcohol, that no alcohol would be available at resort stores, that there was going to be increased law enforcement, and that we were going to try to get the area back to the way it used to be—a great family atmosphere, a place where people can enjoy it.”

For the next Fourth of July, there was a significant visible presence: an increase in law enforcement in terms of the number of and the capability to issue citations and that involved the Forest Service, County Sheriffs, and the State Police. They also asked the resort to have some uniformed security officers present within the resort area. In 1999, there were 45 officers on site. Some State Police officers were on bike patrols and the public responded well to that. The Sheriff’s department set up a mobile kitchen, a communication center, and a “jail” (made out of a horse trailer). Law enforcement provided 24-hour coverage; officers worked in 10-12 hour shifts and rode in pairs. Logistically it was “*a nightmare*.” But, they had maps of the area, patrol routes, and regular patrol teams. A lot of County law enforcement personnel brought their own trailers and families and set up camp on site. The Forest Service gave them campsites and the resort donated some lodge rooms for the State Police. The theory was to make a large, physical, visible presence, and then they could scale back later. One USFS LEO said, “*I mean, not to where we were in 1998, but you didn’t have to have 45 uniformed LEOs every year, but you had to get the message out that we’re prepared to deal with something much more substantially than we have been in the past.*”

The officers set up entrance checkpoints, which were essentially information stations, where they handed out printed materials, and asked people if they had alcohol. They started the checkpoints the day before the holiday and continued them through the holiday. They had a zero tolerance policy on alcohol. They even did spot checks on ice chests. They had 39 arrests (12 were jailed and 27 were cited and released), 5 DUIs (driving under the influence of alcohol/drugs), 20 minors in possession of alcohol, and 221 traffic stops. They also had 67 marine boat stops at the lake. They restricted parking and kept roads open a reasonable width for emergency vehicle traffic. They also assigned a Deputy exclusively to traffic control. They restricted parking to only one side of the entrance. They cut back on law enforcement as the weekend progressed, in part because the weather was poor, and they had smaller crowds (an estimated 8,000 people).

Resort personnel thought this high level of law enforcement presence was an over-reaction and may have hampered business, but still thought these actions were a positive change.

Key Characteristics

The main goal with the case study approach was to identify key characteristics for successfully managing crime and violence on public

lands, based on experiences from two field sites. The five key characteristics common to both sites are: force of personalities, resources, persistence, collaboration, and communication.

Force of Personalities. Attention to an area depended upon the actions of individuals, not on policies. These individuals may have been Forest Service employees, people from other agencies, or a combination of the two. By force of personalities, we mean that people saw a condition that they could no longer accept, and decided to take action and to be sure that others saw the importance of those actions. They continued to follow through even during non-work hours. These are people who went beyond their job duties. Several examples follow.

- A Forest Service LEO decided to put up overly-large script signs, taking away the “*I didn’t see the sign*” excuse. The LEO worked outside of his law enforcement position to get projects done. He typically worked at these non-law enforcement jobs on days off. He found out who won the construction contracts, when the work would be done, who was responsible for administering the contracts, on down the line to who would move each rock. He went to the site every day with the rock trucks and the front-end loader saying, “*pick up this rock and put it right here. I was that committed to making this work. I made it a personal commitment for me. And I have pushed other people along.*”
- As previously described, the newly elected Sheriff assigned a full-time resident deputy to replace the reserve officer who had been in place. This Sheriff saw the need to invest in the site.
- One Sheriff insisted on more help at a site. He assigned more deputies and requested more involvement from other agencies. Their commitment involved providing patrols over and above that paid for by the Forest Service: “*[The County Sheriff] has been an integral factor in making the change.*”
- Forest Service personnel were also integral to change. The new Forest Supervisor said, “*This is unacceptable. We can’t live like this. We’ve got to do something.*”

Resources. Resources were often expressed as time, money and people. Several comments fit into this category; often these were a combination of these components. There were also comments about resources related to direct visitor management and resource handling. A commonly-held opinion was that a lack of facilities development seemed to be related to criminal activity, and the solution was to develop in order to control. For example, they physically defined day-use and parking areas. Several examples of resources comments follow.

- “Everybody committed to have people up there...the state, the county, everybody dipped into their own pocket to do this...” (USFS LEO).
- “And it all comes down to money, because people cost money. It’s a lot of pre-planning, a lot of brainstorming” (USFS employee).
- At one site, the USFS LEOs asked themselves, “What would happen if we gave both counties a little more money in our cooperative law enforcement agreements...so we started to add more money...so that we could get more deputies up and down the river corridor.”

Persistence. Many people mentioned that the change process is slow and there is a need to stick with it. They emphasized that it is important to realize how long it takes to make changes. They also said it takes a lot of planning and a need to continually stay engaged in the planning process. The LEOs also suggested the need to be consistent and visible.

- A USFS LEO said, “We knew it would take years to get to what you want. There were setbacks along the way. We knew it would be an uphill climb. But we also knew that when we got there it would be worth it.”
- “We started planning 7 months in advance...” (USFS LEO).
- “I mean we planned and planned and planned and planned” (Sheriff’s Office employee).
- “Forest Service regulated camping and parking and were committed to the enforcement of regulations” (in other words, they stayed on top of enforcement; Sheriff’s Office employee).

Collaboration. Collaboration and partnering may be within the Forest Service, with other law enforcement agencies, with community and volunteer groups, and with recreation visitors and recreation clubs.

At one site, LEOs made cooperation within the agency a priority. They included not only law enforcement personnel, but also recreation personnel and fish and wildlife biologists in their meetings and shared decision-making.

Other law enforcement agencies were important to the process at both sites. Often, they worked together to figure out who could best cover which issues. In meetings of law enforcement cooperators, each agency decided what it could do to solve the problem—for example law enforcement of the Forest Service monitored camping, parking, and regulations. “We played off each other... there were times it was easier for the LEO to write a federal violation or me to do a state violation” (Sheriff’s Office employee).

They enlisted the support of non-Forest Service law enforcement agencies. Some sites included the business community and other partners, such as volunteer groups and recreation groups. The key is to involve everyone in the process and in the decision-making. It is important to think long-term and persuade your partners to do the same, “or at least not stand in your way” (USFS LEO). They also noted that your partners may not have the same level of commitment that you do.

Resource managers had more people they could call on when help was needed. It may take time to gather this support, but it is important. Equally important is to consider including people from many different groups. “*The whole trick for anything that happens like that is to start early, and I mean really early, and get as many different types of people involved in it as you can for ideas*” (USFS employee).

Collaborative decisions were thought by those interviewed to be the most successful ones, particularly if many people were included throughout the process. They said it is important to reach out to all potential partners early in the process and keep meeting together and planning together, thus allowing everyone to contribute any idea they have and jointly select a plan of action and avoiding unilateral decision-making by the agency. Collaboration was thought by the LEOs to be the most helpful lesson that they could give others facing a similar situation. Further, it is the collaboration among and within all levels of the agencies that is important.

Communication. Communication varied depending on the issue being addressed. However, some key components were to make a communication plan, be reliable, and be consistent.

At one site the USFS made a communication plan for announcing the changing regulations. This included getting the word out through various means including one-way communication (such as brochures, newspaper articles) and face-to-face interactions (such as at fishing club and trails club meetings). Some of these groups were involved informally with the planning. They also used public notices and larger-than-standard signs.

At one site the USFS had a lot of conversations with groups like the Chamber of Commerce and others by word-of-mouth and said, “*Oh, by the way, Fourth of July is going to be different this year and from here on out.*”

It was important to be reliable with people and with your communications, and this may take time. “*I had the communication down with everyone. And I’ve been a relic here-I’ve been here forever, so everyone knew me, and we had good levels of communication*” (USFS LEO).

It was also important to be consistent. Consistency was important regardless of the messenger. Land management and other agencies delivered messages on site which were repeated by the business partner with an advertisement announcing, “*Enhanced law enforcement*” and “*safe, family atmosphere.*”

Discussion

Two sites were visited for this study. Similar crime and violence issues were found at both sites. Common to the sites were problems such as assaults and drug and alcohol abuse. Also problematic was the distance from assistance. Other problems identified within at least one site were resource damage, gang activity, thefts, and homicide.

In both case studies, there were watershed events that led to action. The actions taken varied by site, though there were overlaps. Some of the actions taken were “soft enforcement” (low-key approach, such as issuing

warnings), while others were “hard enforcement” (arrests, citations, etc.) (Pendleton, 1998). Glover (2003) identified three potential policy alternatives for handling deviant behavior: tolerance, prohibition and harm reduction. The managers in these case studies used prohibition, and harm reduction techniques (educational processes).

Some of the specific actions taken to manage for crime and violent acts were development of sites and the addition of barriers. Controls of parking and motor vehicles were enacted. Other actions included adding law enforcement, having closures as needed (and for as long as necessary), and establishing checkpoints.

At these sites, crime was more likely to occur where there was no development, or where development had been allowed to deteriorate. There was less crime after development had occurred. It is important to consider the appropriate level of development while also considering the resources necessary to do this. It may be less expensive in the long run to have developed sites that may require less active law enforcement.

Respondent comments were categorized into key characteristics of success: force of personalities, resources, persistence, collaboration, and communication. Some of these key characteristics match the key characteristics of successful tourism partnerships, especially those related to personal characteristics (right mix of people, strong leadership, propensity for risk-taking, and community spirit) and interpersonal characteristics (communication, trust, shared vision, and mutual adjustment) (Selin & Chavez, 1993).

In addition to the key characteristics of success are two other valuable lessons. First, many ideas were discussed before any decisions were reached. In some cases, they had ideas for changes on site that were discarded and then later resurrected and implemented (such as closure at night and designated areas for camping). And, in some cases, ideas were adopted and later were revised in process (such as sending some law enforcement personnel home earlier than planned). The message is to be sure that all ideas are considered not just once but over again, and not to hesitate to change the plans should circumstances warrant more flexibility. Second, many of the relationships between agencies or with the public were forged prior to the efforts to mitigate these specific problems. It may be that having these relationships already in place is a necessary component for success.

Seeing families recreating in an area was considered a measure of success. Several people interviewed reported that families returned to areas where it was more developed. They saw families during daylight hours and, eventually, saw families return on overnight trips.

Site-specific actions might be replicated if law enforcement officers and others are faced with the same or very similar issues to those described here. However, the key characteristics may be factors for managers to consider when handling crime and violent acts or events that are the same as or different from those in the case studies. For example, if faced with persistent criminal elements, managers might consider which person(s) in their

agency is best able to address the problem (force of personalities); what resources might be needed (resources); how much effort it will take over time (persistence); who are the other agencies/publics important to involve in resolving the problem (collaboration); and how to best inform agency members and publics about their intentions (communication). Managers will also want to consider the lessons learned by the case study participants. They might consider all ideas offered through a brainstorming process, and later re-evaluate the decision-making process, perhaps incorporating an idea that was rejected earlier. Also, they should consider forging relationships with other agencies and publics before problems arise. These characteristics are not “business as usual” for law enforcement; they go beyond the cooperative agreements that already exist. These extra efforts contributed to success.

Additional research on such key characteristics is needed. This could include additional case studies or an empirical study of law enforcement and knowledgeable others within the USFS and other natural resource management agencies. The end goal should be the reduction of crime and violence on public lands.

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