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Lewis & Clark National  
Historic Trail  
Interpretive Center

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City of Great Falls  
#2 Park Drive South  
P.O. Box 5021  
Great Falls, MT 59403  
(406)-455-8450  
<https://greatfallsmt.net>

## PRESS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: May 5, 2023

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## VANDALISM IN THE PARKS

**GREAT FALLS, Montana** – Vandalism in the parks is an ongoing issue for the Great Falls Park and Recreation Department, with the heaviest damage usually coming in the springtime. Vandalism occurs in many ways throughout the park system, e.g. damage to restrooms, playgrounds, trees, and graffiti. The budgetary impact that vandalism has on the department can be in the thousands of dollars each year, depending on the type of vandalism, staffing needed, and equipment replacement.

Recently there has been an attack on several of our young trees in the parks, with a number of them being memorial trees. Memorial trees can cost anywhere from \$500-\$800 for a donor to replace. Our forestry department has had to remove 23 young trees and repair another 20+ trees due to vandalism in recent years. If a memorial tree must be removed, the department attempts to contact the donor and inform them of the situation. In some cases, current contact information is unavailable, and staff cannot reach the affected families.

"We understand the emotional impact on the family is tremendous when a memorial tree has to be removed due to vandalism," stated Park & Recreation Director Steve Herrig. "Overall, it is crucial to address vandalism in the parks to ensure that they remain safe and beautiful public spaces for everyone to enjoy."

Preventing vandalism and protecting trees in the park is an ongoing process that requires the cooperation and support of the community. Community members are asked to report any suspicious activities or vandalism in the parks by calling the Park and Recreation Office at (406) 771-1256 during business hours. For after-hour reports, leave a message, and the issue will be addressed the following business day. For urgent after-hour concerns, contact the Great Falls Police Department at (406) 455-8599.



Vandalism to a couple of our young trees and Gibson park restroom.

