

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **NPC Releases ParkScan Annual Report: Vandalism #1 Park Problem in San Francisco**

**San Francisco, CA, March 21, 2008.** – The Neighborhood Parks Council (NPC) released the 2007 ParkScan Annual report today and for the second year, vandalism is the most reported problem in San Francisco's parks. With the city facing a \$350 million budget shortfall next year, the data contained within the 2007 ParkScan Annual Report help pinpoint key trends and preventable problems that are costing City residents thousands of dollars.

ParkScan.org is a website and software tool developed by the Neighborhood Parks Council in 2004 to provide a fast link from the community to the Recreation and Park Department and other city agencies that manage public open space. Any city resident can report conditions that need attention or deserve praise using their home, office, or publicly available computer. More than 1600 city residents reported conditions in parks in 2007.

More than half (51%) of all observations on ParkScan.org last year were linked to vandalism such as graffiti, damaged property, litter, or dumping. "Huge resources are required to remedy the misuse of our parks by just a few people" said Meredith Thomas, NPC Program Manager. The Recreation and Parks Department reports that offenders are not just miscreants with spray paint but also average residents who thoughtlessly leave piles of litter after a picnic.

"We cannot afford abuse of our parks at any time," says Isabel Wade, Executive Director of NPC, "but especially with the city's budget crisis, we all need to step up to the plate this year to keep our parks clean and green."

NPC is calling upon community members to help address the vandalism statistics by utilizing ParkScan.org to report park problems when they see them, and by encouraging their neighbors to care for their neighborhood parks and open spaces. "If you see vandalism, report it. ParkScan.org is a reporting mechanism, use it. The success of the park system is heavily reliant on self-policing by park users, which means that users are obeying the park code," says Rose Dennis, Director of Public Affairs and Communications for RPD. Other steps people can take to affect change are to work with their district representative at the Mayors Office of Neighborhood

Services and their Supervisor. NPC urges neighborhood associations to place park use on their agendas and invite elected officials, their local beat patrol officers, Rec and Park and NPC to join them at their meetings in order to craft a specific plan for their parks.

According to Wade, "The biggest success stories in our neighborhood parks in terms of changing unwanted behavior come out of community collaboration with city agencies, increased use of parks to reinforce positive behavior, and volunteer efforts to help the Recreation and Parks Department maintain the parks." NPC works with over 100 'friends of' groups to improve parks throughout the city.

NPC hopes to launch a citywide public awareness campaign to reduce the level of vandalism and littering in San Francisco's parks. "We are encouraging the private sector to lend talent to this effort with a brilliant advertising campaign to discourage misuse of our beloved parks," says Wade.

The 2007 ParkScan Annual Report may be viewed and downloaded at [www.parkscan.org](http://www.parkscan.org) and more information on the work of NPC is available at [www.sfnpc.org](http://www.sfnpc.org)

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