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Vandals strike Sarasota County's Red Bug Slough Preserve

Vandals hit one of Sarasota's most popular recreational areas over the weekend, spray painting obscenities on picnic tables, trash cans, an engraved interpretive sign and the lake's concrete culverts. Not even the palm trees were spared according to Sarasota County Environmental Specialist Jeff Weber.

"In all, the damage probably comes close to or exceeds \$2,000," said Weber, adding that neighbors and regular visitors to the area believe the vandals struck late Friday night after 8 p.m. or early Saturday morning. "Most of the tables and trash receptacles have been repainted, and we have been able to restore the interpretive sign. We hope we can remove the paint from the palm trunks without hurting the trees." He says the trickiest part may be cleaning the concrete culvert.

Weber has requested additional nighttime patrols of the preserve and has asked neighborhood groups to help monitor activities there.

Sarasota County Sheriff's deputies have been notified. Residents with any information about the incident are asked to contact the Sheriff's office and refer to case number 08-39939.

For more information about Red Bug Slough, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000 and ask for Natural Resources.

Media note: Attached are low resolution images showing some of the vandalism. High resolution images are available upon request.

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