Policing the Park: Understanding Soft Enforcement

Michael R. Pendleton
University of Washington

Evidence indicates that the long standing "low key" enforcement approach to park crime is being replaced with a hard enforcement strategy. This shift is occurring with little understanding of soft enforcement in parks and its potential for effectiveness. A year long ethnographic study of law enforcement in the Pacific Rim National Park Reserve in British Columbia, Canada shows that park enforcement is more complex than the dichotomous view found in the literature. Pattern analysis yielded a four part model of soft enforcement that is determined by the degree of symbolic expression and intervention utilized by park Wardens to enforce the law *without* taking formal legal action. Each of the four approaches: Encouraging, Bluffing, Avoiding, and Bargaining, reveal the complexity and strategic potential of soft enforcement as a means to manage the paradoxical dual mandate of parks. The need for future research is discussed.

KEYWORDS: *Administration, crime, law enforcement, parks, recreation*

Introduction

Arguably one of the most obscure police forces in North America is fielded by the park services (and departments) in Canada and the United States. Since the inception of the park system, rangers and wardens have had law enforcement powers and responsibilities. One reason for the obscurity of the police role within parks is the organizational philosophy of *soft enforcement,* often termed the "low key" approach (Charles, 1982; Carroll, 1988). Soft enforcement encourages compliance through informal methods of education, prevention and community relations. Soft enforcement facilitates an enjoyable park experience, in part, by avoiding the formal tactics most often associated with traditional police strategies (arrests, citations, stern warnings, etc.) defined here as *hard enforcement.* Quite simply parks and other land management agencies have considered soft enforcement as a productive means to manage their dual mandate to ensure public enjoyment *and* protect the natural setting (Pendleton, 1997a; Pendleton, 1996a).

Evidence is emerging, however, to suggest that there is a shift away from a soft enforcement to hard enforcement as a matter of both policy and practice in parks (Frome, 1992; Mott, 1986). The backdrop for this shift has been an apparent increase in serious crime in parks and forests (Pendleton, 1996a;

Shore, 1994: U.S. House Committee report, 1992) and threats to the elevated status of the environment as an entity now endowed with natural rights (Freemuth, 1991; Nash, 1989). Soft enforcement has been implicated as ineffective in managing environmental harm (Liften, 1993; Pendleton, 1997c) which encourages a move to hard tactics. Highly publicized crimes such as the recent unsolved murders of two women in Shenandoah National Park (Baltimore Sun, 1997) support the view that parks are "dangerous", "crime plagued" public "badlands" (Shore, 1994) that require "aggressive professional law enforcement" (Frome, 1992, p. 11; Shore, 1994). Such a shift in policy is evidenced in a law enforcement career specialty now recognized as a fast track career path for rangers wanting to "get ahead" (Frome, 1992, p. 11).

While less pronounced, a similar concern is also apparent in Canada. An increase in poaching (Horne, 1993; Gregorich, 1992) along with increased visitation rates are leading to significant traditional and environmental crime problems (Jowett, 1992; Jowett, 1993; Pendleton, 1997b). A recent knife attack on a Federal Fisheries officer along with the growing concern with crime has fueled a discussion about arming wardens and the general conclusion by park administrators that "the use of citations and arrest are things we will have to consider to address our crime problems" (Jowett, 1993; Pendleton, 1997d, p. 7). A trend toward greater use of arrest as a law enforcement tool in Canadian parks is "actually increasing" due in part to both situational circumstance and "changing dictates of the courts" (Parks Canada, 1996, p. 6). This apparent switch in park policy parallels the trend in Canada toward hard enforcement as a means to address environmental crime (Pendleton, 1997c) and as a proposed means to stop poaching (Gregorich, 1992).

Seemingly ignored in the reported policy shift are the associated problems with the changing view of park rangers and wardens as the "campers' friend" [soft enforcement] to a "cop image"[hard enforcement] (Mott, 1986, p. 8). Such problems include an increasing public angst over rangers viewed as gun equipped "caustic cops" (Shanks, 1976; Cannon, 1991). Arguably public concern over this issue is evidenced in legislative attempts to disarm land management officers in the United States as a means to curb federal enforcement power (Pendleton, 1996a). The transition has also increased ambivalence among some U.S. park managers and rangers who traditionally view themselves as public servants who "disdain aggressive and nonpublic oriented police tactics" (Charles, 1982, p. 218, Pendleton, 1996). Similarly Canadian park administrators who have a bias against "taking control of the park" and wardens who have a bias against coercion (Pendleton, 1997d, p. 45 & p. 60) are resisting the pressure toward hard enforcement.

The move away from a soft enforcement policy also seems to ignore the value of such an approach as a means to support community stability (Pendleton, 1997a) and as a means to encourage compliance and cooperation from visitors to the park. Data from existing research suggest that coopera-

tion, particularly from local residents, is facilitated through the positive image and meanings attached to park personnel that is created, in part, through soft enforcement strategies (Carroll, 1988).

Given the significance of a transition from a soft to hard enforcement philosophy in parks it is remarkable that little research has been directed at this issue. It is particularly surprising that soft enforcement would be abandoned without greater understanding of its nature and possible effectiveness. One theme that is apparent in the limited literature on enforcement in parks and other natural settings is its seemingly dichotomous nature. In effect enforcement is viewed as a choice between the use of formal sanctions (hard enforcement) or leniency (soft enforcement) that results in no action (Carroll, 1988; Forsyth, 1994; Pendleton, 1997a). Lost in this view of park enforcement are the potential complexities of soft enforcement options that might suggest a more strategic application within the park setting. The research reported below addresses the lack of research on park law enforcement in general and specifically addresses the question: What is the nature and strategic potential of soft enforcement in the park setting?

The Study

This field study took place in the Pacific Rim National Park Reserve located on the west coast of Vancouver Island in British Columbia, Canada. Pacific Rim National Park Reserve consists of three geographically distinct park units comprising a total area of 49,962 hectares of land and ocean, of which 28,575 hectares are land and fresh water, and 21,387 hectares are marine waters. The Long Beach unit of the park is located between two villages and is accessible by car. This unit is the most developed of the three units with a blend of front country and backcountry areas. The Broken Group Islands are located in Barkley Sound and are accessible only by boat across open ocean channel. This area is a destination point for recreational boaters. The third unit is the West Coast Trail which is a rugged backcountry 77 kilometer trail that demands stamina and expertise in hiking and camping. A limited number of hiking permits are given each year to control access. The park stretches, although not continuously, from near the town of Tofino at the north to Port Renfrew in the south, a distance of 125 kilometers. This long and narrow park has the second largest marine component in the Canadian National Park system.

Pacific Rim National Park Reserve is distinguished from National Parks in Canada by its non-gazetted status. National Parks that are gazetted have the full legal authority of the Canadian National Parks Act. Pacific Rim is awaiting gazetted status and in the interim is operating under the legal authority of a "patchwork" matrix of federal and provincial laws as the basis for law enforcement. Over 700,000 people visit the park annually with the majority traveling to a front country area known as the Long Beach Unit. Heavy visitor seasons begin in March and end in October. This visitation

contributes to illegal activities that span a wide variety of provincial and federal violations.

Methodology

An ethnographic methodology was selected to accommodate the (emerging) nature of the research topic and the qualitative nature of available data (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994). During the 12 month research period the principal investigator lived, intermittently, in the park housing located in the towns adjacent to the park. While data were collected from all three units in the park the majority of the data (69% of the observations) were collected in the Long Beach Unit. The researcher utilized three sources to collect data for this study.

Field Observations. To observe the nature of park enforcement the author accompanied the park enforcement staff during their daily work routines over a years period of time. All park wardens were advised of the nature of the study and invited to participate. Standard confidentiality protocols were followed to protect the identity of the primary participants. All wardens agreed to participate in the study. Five of the wardens were full time employees and four were seasonal employees. These observations occurred in the park, offices, automobiles, boats and other locations in the surrounding community. Observations were recorded both in field notebooks and on video. A total of 263 hours of warden patrols were observed during 29 distinct observation periods. Observation periods ranged from 4 to 16 hours in length, occurred during both weekends and weekdays, and in every month of the year except January and February (weather prohibited travel to the park). Two warden supervisors were also invited to participate and were observed during the research, accounting for 15 hours of observation time.

In addition to the park wardens, numerous community members, visitors to the park, and other park employees were observed during this study. In most cases these subjects were unaware that these observations were occurring thus preserving the naturalistic character of the events under observation.

Semi-structured Interviews. In addition to direct observation each of the park employees was interviewed often during observation periods. The interviews were semi-structured open-ended interviews (Glasser and Strauss, 1980). The interviews were initiated by the same four general questions which included (1) How long have you been a warden or supervisor? (2) what is the nature of crime in the park? (3) what are your views on law enforcement in the park? (4) what are some of the pressing issues facing the park in terms of crime and enforcement? The interviews were designed to open conversation and allow for in-depth discussions often for extended periods while on patrol or in the office setting. Field notes were recorded by tape recorder and in a written log. In the case of park supervisors, interviews were scheduled and conducted in their offices.

Key community members were also interviewed during the study. Key community members were defined as recognized leaders of established groups within the local communities. These interviews were initiated by two questions: (1) what is your view of the park and its approach to law enforcement? and (2) are you aware of any crime events/problems in the park? Once again these questions lead to more in-depth discussion.

Official and Community Records. Pacific Rim National Park provided complete access to all official records related to crime and enforcement in the park. These documents included files, notes, memo's, reports, patrol logs, and professional articles held by the park. In addition subscriptions to local community newspapers were obtained to provide a news account of relevant events in and around the park.

Data Analysis

The methodological strategy that guided the collection and utilization of data was analytical induction where, in this case, research relies on qualitative rather than quantitative data. The principal investigator, upon entering the field, began to build a conceptual framework as empirical evidence was encountered (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). A symbolic interactionist perspective was utilized as an interpretive lens to begin the initial process of assigning meaning to the data. It became apparent early in the study, that soft enforcement was the dominate approach used by the participants. Together the symbolic interactionist perspective and the dominance of soft enforcement served as a "tentative conceptual framework" (Creswell,"1994, p. 94-97), sensitizing the principal investigator to the nature of the soft enforcement interaction at both the behavioral and symbolic level. Data stability or saturation occurred about 10 months into the study when the data encountered failed to alter the nature of existing data but continued to simulate and reaffirm the content of the data. Once the model of enforcement was developed all observed and reported incidents of law enforcement were reviewed and analyzed, again, in an attempt to discover any incidents that could not be assigned to the categories in the model.

Findings

Enforcement of Pacific Rim National Park Reserve regulations and laws was the predominate responsibility of the park wardens. These regulations range from simple camping rules, to public order laws (disorderly conduct, domestic disputes) to environmental protections laws (poaching and fishing) to first response responsibilities for major crimes (robbery, assaults, etc.). Without exception the wardens, observed in this research, primarily utilized enforcement methods that may be defined as "soft enforcement". There was both a stated preference for and observed practice of informal methods (non-recorded/no formal action) of enforcing regulations and laws within the park. For example a review of the daily log over a six month period in

the Long Beach Unit alone revealed 596 recorded enforcement entries. Of that number only 36 were formal actions. Twenty eight of these were parking tickets of which 15 were issued during a one day crackdown. During this same period there were only four arrests and four evictions from the park. It is important to note that the dominance of a soft enforcement approach reflects both a long standing occupational norm in the park service and the policy commitment to a "graduated approach to law enforcement" (Parks Canada, 1996, p. 3). Intervention training for wardens stress a continuum from "soft" to "hard" approaches consistent with increasing levels of threat. This policy is reflected in the report that "97% of warden interventions fall into the 'officer presence and verbal persuasion' categories" (Parks Canada, 1996, p. 8). In part the soft enforcement policy is viewed as a key component of the mandate to ensure visitor enjoyment by avoiding more intrusive tactics.

While all wardens observed in this study subscribed to and/or utilized soft enforcement methods, clear patterns or styles were observed. For some wardens the use of soft enforcement methods was a matter of personal style and reflected a natural approach that was a matter of routine. In effect this style represented a "blanket approach" to enforcement. Other wardens utilized soft enforcement as part of a strategy to address specific situations or to accomplish specific goals. While soft enforcement was the dominant approach in all parts of the park it was particularly dominant in the back country settings. Pattern analysis of the observation data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) collected in this research revealed four distinct styles or approaches to soft enforcement. These approaches are defined as "encouraging", "bluffing", "avoiding", and "bargaining".

Style I
Conciliatory Enforcement: "Encouraging" Compliance

The goal of this approach was to ensure that the visitor has *both* an enjoyable experience and willingly complies with the regulations/laws to protect the park. This style was centered on encouraging a positive desire in the visitor to comply.

Compliance with the laws and regulations was encouraged by a prominent display of the symbols of enforcement. Marked trucks, uniforms etc. were displayed in a passive but visible fashion often in a drive-by context through campgrounds and well traveled roads. The use of enforcement symbols was not, however, simply a by-product of routine but was often part of a larger strategy that was organized around an eight hour patrol shift. The strategic display of symbols was explained by one warden:

> The early part of the shift is like money in the bank. I use the first part of my shift to establish my presence in their minds. They can see the uniform, and truck and associate these with authority. I prefer a low key philosophy and make a point to drive through all the key areas early so they know I am here.

Two impressions were expressed through these symbols, one of implied police authority (emergency lights, uniforms, badges etc.) and presence through prominent display. In this context the warden was viewed indirectly as having enforcement potential.

To optimize conciliatory enforcement it was necessary for additional intervention built upon face to face interaction. These interactions may be as general as a stop and talk about ordinary topics, a stop and talk or help with a particular topic/issue, or a stop and talk about a specific violation or concern of the warden.

The primary objective of face to face interaction was to establish the impression of the warden as a friend, helper, problem solver and trusted professional expert. During one observation the warden stopped and picked up a little child's cloth shoe laying on the road and later did the same upon seeing the other shoe. The warden explained his actions not as litter clean-up but as an opportunity to make an impression on visitors:

> I believe in details. It is the little things that create a bridge to larger things. If the parents contact me about the lost shoes they will be blown away that I have them and can return them. The boots become the beginning of a very positive impression of the park and me.

The tone of face to face interaction was warm, friendly, and informative. It was in the informative role of the warden that the expectation for compliance with key rules or laws was communicated often indirectly, as information in the form of problem solving. During one observation the warden approached a family in a camper in a parking lot around the evening dinner hour. The enforcement interest of the warden was the "no camping in parking lots" regulation. The warden opened the interaction with a friendly "what time is dinner?" The father responded "well any time now but we could also serve breakfast in the morning". The warden inquired of the family's camping plans which prompted a frustrated response from the father about limited and overpriced camping areas. The warden, while sympathizing with the man, made a radio call to check on the price and availability of a camping spot in a "special campground" that the warden knew about. It was only after the warden had solved the man's concern that the warden informed him that camping in the lots was not allowed. The family was clearly grateful for the assistance particularly when they learned there was space and it was less money.

Insight into the nature of the interactions with visitors was essential to the conciliatory approach as explained by the warden who solved the camping problem above:

> It is important to work a situation. What the dance was really about in that last contact was to see if I would let him stay overnight in the parking lot. It is important to ease into controlling the situation by not directly addressing the issue but by effectively saying no by orchestrating his stay in another campground.

Shrouded in the positive tone of the exchange were the requisites for voluntary compliance *and* the essentials for potential hard enforcement at a

later time. These factors included sharing specific information surrounding potential violations or unapparent harms that may be produced unwittingly by the visitor or the need for direct compliance with rules that, while apparent could be handled informally. Through the exchange the warden also obtained information that identified the visitor as a specific individual linked to a specific place and time. It was this shared knowledge between the visitor and the warden that created the link to the potential for hard enforcement should it be required. Given the tone of the exchange it was considered unlikely, however that such action would be necessary. Yet it was important that the possibility remained "on stage". During an observation a warden made a point to "follow-up" with some campers that he had contacted the night before. During the initial contact he had intervened in a drinking party in the parking lot and also requested that the owner of their vehicle replace a front license plate which was missing from the vehicle. The warden approached the campers in a very friendly way again placing them at ease with an amusing remark. The warden then let them know that he noticed that they had replaced the front license plate. As the warden explained:

> It is important to provide positive feedback. It makes them feel good. But more importantly it lets them know that I am paying attention, that I know who they are and that I am expecting compliance.

The face to face exchange concerning park crime and enforcement also created an impression of the park as a unique place with special status. In effect the park as a unique place, was recognized as the essential factor in reaching the goals of the visitor. Both crime and enforcement in the park can compromise the special affiliation that the visitor has with the park in pursuit of their recreational goals. The conciliatory approach accommodated the fine balance between seeking compliance and the pursuit of visitor enjoyment.

The conciliatory style of soft enforcement encouraged visitors to comply by the friendly tone of the exchange, the information necessary to facilitate compliance, and the backstage possibility that enforcement was possible now that the warden knew the visitor. Together these factors encouraged the visitor to voluntarily, if not eagerly, follow the rules based upon orchestrated impressions of the warden, capacity for control, and the park as a special place.

Style II
Threat Enforcement: "Bluffing" for Compliance

The primary goal of this approach was protection of the park and/or visitor experience. Enjoyment by the visitors involved in the enforcement event was not a high priority. Rather an immediate and observable behavioral change by the involved visitor was expected. Compliance was based less on voluntary or willing participation and more on the promise of hard enforcement if the visitor failed to comply. The "if not then . . ." nature of this approach suggested the apparent enforcement power of the warden. In fact

because Pacific Rim National Park Reserve was not gazetted (operating under full authority of the National Parks Act) many of the threatened consequences were not possible because of limited warden authority. In effect the threats or promises of hard enforcement were often a bluff. As one warden noted:

> We are operating here on a big bluff. Most people who come here think we can force compliance because they assume we have the National Parks Act. . . the same authority as wardens in other parks. Well we don't. The locals know we don't and often they use the park and the trail as they wish.

Use of police symbols in threat enforcement was less strategic and most often instrumental. The presence of a marked patrol vehicle was punctuated by the activation of the overhead emergency lights. Uniformed wardens visibly displayed and often used their notebooks to record names or visibly displayed a citation book as they seemed to ponder their decision to "go formal or not". These symbols not only reminded people of a police presence but were utilized around a specific event or enforcement incident. Often the emergency lights served as the prelude to a high level of intervention and were open and highly visible. The contrasting images of the warden as a friend and outdoor expert with the warden as a police officer was apparent in the reactions of visitors who were stopped by the wardens. In one observation a warden activated his emergency lights and pulled over a speeding car. During the ensuing conversation the driver commented:

> I didn't know they could do anything like this (stop for a speeding violation)
> I thought they just protected the trees and animals.

Intervention in threat enforcement is targeted at specific events or behaviors and was often at a high level. Drinking on the beaches and parking lots, speeding in cars and various camping violations (unattended coolers, fires, unauthorized locations) were most frequently the target of threat enforcement. While specific in nature, these enforcement events were of a limited duration and focused upon a temporally contained act. The image of the warden in these encounters while always professional, was most closely aligned with the conventional police image. Coolers were taken, beer poured out, and camping gear was confiscated. Uniformed wardens on the beach frequently approached visitors who were openly drinking alcohol and required the offenders to stop what they were doing to discuss the alcohol violation. During this discussion the offenders were generally given the choice to dump out the alcohol, remove it from the beach, or face a $100.00 citation. As one warden explained after an observed alcohol enforcement event:

> My main objective is not to be liked here, but for a lot of people to see me stop the drinking. It has been a real problem over the last two years and this approach is the best way to turn it around. If they don't comply I will take the alcohol and write them a ticket. I'm not sure the ticket will hold up because we are not gazetted but it will solve the problem here and now.

Stopping the violation and associated harm immediately is a clear objective of threat enforcement and often has the effect of casting the visitor as a violator and the park as the victim. Correspondingly the apparent power and authority of the warden as a police officer is visibly displayed casting the warden as a cop. In one such exchange a warden contacted visitors who were camping in an unauthorized area. The following exchange was observed:

Violator: "I don't see why we have to move we are not hurting anything."

Warden: "This area is closed to camping to protect the plants and animals here."

Violator: "We are environmentalists we are responsible campers so we won't hurt the area."

Warden: "I'm sorry but you will have to leave."

Violator: "But why? I don't see the harm here."

Warden: "Because it is the rule and I am telling you to leave that is why. If you don't leave I will write you a citation and confiscate your camping gear. You must leave."

Not all threat enforcement left the wardens and violators at odds with one another. Often the threat of enforcement was suggested as an option that would not be exercised to give the violator a break. The goal in this type of exchange was to solicit appreciation from the violator that would lead to the positive feelings that underlie voluntary compliance. In one observation the warden was called to a specific campsite to address a person with a gun. Upon arrival the warden encountered a person in their early 20's shooting a BB gun at a target in the campsite. After securing the gun the warden told the person:

It is a possible fine of $2000 and a mandatory appearance in front of a magistrate for having a fire arm in a National Park. The National Park Act also allows me to take all of your gear. Now I'm not going to do that but you must put the gun away now. I don't want to be called back here about the gun ok?

Not only did the person willingly comply but he thanked the warden profusely and they went on to talk about other things and eventually left on very good terms. Clearly the person felt they got a break and never questioned the assertion by the warden that the National Park Act applied to this park.

Threat enforcement combined the potential of hard enforcement consequences with an expectation for immediate change in behavior. The image of the warden as the camper's friend was clearly substituted for a more traditional police image. The fact that the warden may not actually have the power to make good on the promise of hard enforcement was rarely if ever challenged in part because the opportunity to choose and the "getting a break" nature of the soft enforcement precluded noncompliance.

Style III
Non Enforcement: "Avoiding" the Expectation of Compliance

The goal of this approach was the avoidance of a potential enforcement situation. This approach was most often observed in backcountry settings (Pendleton, 1997b) although it was a regular feature in other settings as well. This approach was centered on the belief that law enforcement is not part of a warden's role. As one warden noted:

> I'm ok with the fact we don't do law enforcement. I mean I didn't sign on to be a cop, I joined to do rescues and work the back country. I don't want to do it (law enforcement).

Warden patrols in the back country were infrequent and often done out of uniform. Obvious violations were often over looked. In one case a style III warden would regularly inform other more "enforcement oriented" wardens of violations so they could take action. Such cases included failing to intervene when visitors decided to nail a "wedding in the park" sign to a tree in violation of park regulations, overlooking kids who were camping in a protected area, and refusing to follow-up personally on the theft of cedar trees within the warden's patrol unit.

The philosophy that supported this approach was that protection of both the wilderness and the visitor was a matter of logical consequences associated with life in the wilderness. The requisites associated with surviving the harshness of "nature" was an ecological process closely aligned with natural selection. The park as a natural, often wild, environment was viewed as needing little outside protection because of its dominant power, harshness and ultimate resilience. In effect the park, through its natural power, easily repairs itself from human intrusion. Conversely those humans who do not accommodate the harsh realities of nature will be removed through the natural process of discomfort or injury. The high number of rescues in the backcountry of this park regularly reaffirm the philosophy behind this approach. Visitor enjoyment, while not a primary goal, was linked to the freedoms commonly associated with being in the wilderness. Police authority was not viewed as necessary or desirable. Rather the laws of nature and their accompanying consequences were sufficient.

The low presence of police symbols was easily observed. Those wardens who utilized a nonenforcement approach would often be out of uniform or cover their uniforms with jackets. Fitting into the natural setting rather than standing apart from it was preferred. A Parks Canada formal review of the law enforcement program noted the shielding of symbols that was also observed during this research (Parks Canada, 1996). In those areas most noted for nonenforcement, uniforms were worn on a "sporadic" basis, patrol vehicles were without markings, and in one case, a canvas cover was made and placed over the emergency light bars to keep them from view. As noted in the report the absence of symbols limited the . . . "sign of authority visible to the public" (Parks Canada Law Enforcement Operational Review, 1996,

p. 13). In effect wardens who utilized this approach were distanced from the image of a police officer.

Combined with the shielding of symbols was a reluctance, if not refusal, to initiate a law enforcement encounter. The lack of intervention was observed to be both situational and a matter of routine for some wardens. During one observation a warden and the researcher hiking out of a remote area came to the trailhead where a person was encountered smoking pot. The warden simply said "hi how you doing" and kept walking. When questioned about the encounter the warden replied:

> It is the end of my shift and I don't really want to deal with it. He doesn't know I am a warden (the warden was not in uniform); besides what would it accomplish? If it had been at another time and a more public place then maybe.

In still other cases violations were ignored as an exchange for other benefits that actually served law enforcement. In one such case a warden allowed a local fisherman to park his van overnight in a restricted parking lot in exchange for information obtained from remote areas of the park where the man traveled. In another case a known offender was watched but not apprehended because he was the focus of an RCMP investigation.

Finally nonenforcement was observed as the result of an organizational directive that reflected political pressures. The most obvious was the nonenforcement of mushroom harvesting regulations on local native Indian bands. Wardens would simply ignore these obvious violations because of the sensitive question of native land claims which are currently being negotiated throughout Canada. As one warden noted:

> We just look the other way. It is hard because we know they are having an impact on the park environment. Yet it has been made clear to us not to enforce the harvesting laws until the native land claim issues are resolved.

In effect it was politically incorrect to enforce resource harvesting laws on the natives in the park.

Style IV
Covert Enforcement: "Bargaining" for Compliance

This style has a relatively low regard for visitor enjoyment or the enjoyment of the violator. Rather the goal of this approach was to protect the park. As the term covert enforcement implies there was an emphasis on the shielding of symbols and thus little interest in visible displays associated with law enforcement. This form of enforcement was best described as undercover enforcement and purposely avoided overt display of symbols to obtain the evidence necessary for enforcement. This approach was reported in the apprehension of a commercial tourist business that conducted sight seeing air flights over the park. The minimum elevation at which a plane may pass over the park is 500 feet. This business was regularly flying clients well below the 500 foot minimum over both beaches crowded with visitors and rocks that were occupied by sea lions forcing them into the water.

To effectively apprehend the violator a warden solicited the help of a friend and the friend's child and together the three presented themselves as a family wanting to take a sightseeing flight. Once in the air the warden took videos of the flight like a typical tourist. Included in the video was footage of the plane's altimeter showing the plane at 60' along with photos of the effects on the sea lions, and the proximity to the crowded beach. A running dialogue between the warden and the pilot provided additional testimony to the violation. Once the flight was over the "family" simply went on their way.

While police symbols were not used in covert enforcement, intervention was very high. Direct contact around the specific violation resulted in a confrontation designed to solicit a contract for future compliance. The contract was based on the promise of soft enforcement if future behaviors were adjusted to reflect compliance. In this exchange it was clear that the image of the warden was aligned with the police, while the suspect was viewed as a violator and that the park was positioned as the victim. Yet prosecution was not the objective of this method. In fact formal action would actually eliminate the condition necessary for the ultimate goal of gaining protection for the park.

In the overflight case the warden contacted both the business owner and the pilot after reviewing the evidence and crafting the enforcement plan. During a scheduled meeting the evidence was presented along with a proposed "deal". If the business and pilot agreed to strict compliance with the 500' law, the park would not pursue criminal prosecution and the lifting of the pilot's license. The park would hold the tape in evidence for two years and if after that time there were no subsequent violations the evidence would be destroyed. The violators agreed and a bargain was established.

The vulnerability of the offender to future covert operations remained along with the possibility of prosecution. Yet the business was allowed to continue and in effect given a second chance, something to be appreciated in face of the consequences of hard enforcement.

The covert style was observed often to enforce a wide range of regulations and laws. Wardens would often take coolers left out in the open from camps when the camper were absent to reduce the bear confrontation problem. The coolers would be held at the fee booth until the campers returned and agreed to secure them in the future. In another case campers tents were taken while they were away when found in a prohibited area. The campers were required to hike several miles and then drive to the warden compound where they were encouraged to either leave the park or agree to comply with the regulations.

It is important to recognize the dramatic shift in the impression of both wardens and the park through covert enforcement. In this approach the impression of the warden was of a deadly serious, competent wilderness defender who was quite willing to utilize elaborate measures to accomplish the enforcement objective. Once the private playground of local residents and businesses, the park was now elevated in status to that of a protected entity.

Interpretation and Discussion of Findings

Manning (1977) in his dramaturgical analysis of traditional police, notes that the power of the police is not simply in what they do but also how they appear. It is the police operating at both the symbolic and instrumental levels that contributes to the normative order in society. In a similar way the four styles of soft enforcement observed in this study can be usefully distinguished by the use of police symbols and the nature of intervention used by the wardens. In effect these styles of enforcement are defined by the degree of symbolic expression and the level of intervention utilized by the wardens to gain compliance from the park visitor.

Soft Enforcement as Symbolic Expression

Symbolic expression refers to the visible or physical display of the distinctive symbols of park authority *and* responsibility for enforcement. Symbols were observed to include those cues that indicated official authority and/or discretionary power. The most apparent physical symbols included uniform shirts, hats, etc., insignia and other items such as duty belts containing defensive gear commonly worn by the wardens while on patrol. These symbols also included the patrol truck which is equipped with light bars, sirens, door insignia, and painted with a distinctive brown color. Other symbols included other emergency vehicles such as the life guard truck and various boats, as well as distinctive water safety gear (jackets).

The appearance of a uniform, the sight of flashing lights or the sound of a siren activates a shared social meaning associated with policing. Together the display of the symbols of enforcement indicate that sanctions for noncompliance are possible. It is the potential for sanction that leads to the ultimate goal of soft enforcement which is voluntary compliance and prevention of harm without formal action.

During this research the degree of symbolic expression associated with soft enforcement varied along a range from very high to very low. Some forms of soft enforcement were observed to optimize symbolic expression through a highly visible presence associated with daily routines (Style I Conciliatory Enforcement) or special "crackdowns" (Style II Threat Enforcement) within the park. In these cases it was not simply the presence of symbols but the volume of the symbols that contributed to a desired impression. Other forms of soft enforcement were organized to constrain or restrain expressive behavior of wardens again as a matter of warden routine (Style III Nonenforcement) or as a strategic tactic (Style IV Covert Enforcement). It was the scripted manipulation of symbols that activated the strategic potential of soft enforcement.

Soft Enforcement as Intervention

The fact that enforcement occurs at all assumes some form of intervention to "force" compliance with the law or regulation. Intervention, in some

form, was assumed as a feature of enforcement. While a defining character-
istic of soft enforcement was the absence of formal or official action, the
presence of various forms of intervention from none to a great deal were
consistently observed as a key element. Intervention refers to the degree to
which wardens directly interacted with or confronted visitors or offenders
with the depreciating nature of their behavior and the expectation of com-
pliance.

A key feature of intervention was establishing an awareness and under-
standing of the harms that threaten the park which include both traditional
criminal acts and those offenses that are particular to the park as a unique
setting (Pendleton, 1997b). Soft enforcement was heavily dependent on dis-
semination of information particularly about those offenses that are not self
evidently wrong such as some environmental violations. For example, the
leaving of food coolers out in campgrounds where they could be accessed
by bears was commonly observed to prompt a range of interventions by war-
dens. In order for people to comply they must know, and for them to know
they must be informed more or less directly.

A second feature of intervention is the relative presence (more or less)
of a promise of formal sanction if compliance is not forthcoming. While soft
enforcement did not include formal actions with penalties attached, it often
served as a prelude to the possibility of sanction and thus operated as a form
of encouragement for compliance. Often what distinguishes intervention was
the degree of perceived choice that the offender has in deciding to comply
or not. Intervention, while not including formal or official sanction, might
also include a verbal admonishment in lieu of more tangible penalties. This
form of intervention can be most direct and intrusive with an "in your face"
quality such as that found in Style II Threat Enforcement. In contrast, inter-
vention may be subtle and viewed as pleasant conversation, or education that
enhances the park experience which is found in Style I Conciliatory Enforce-
ment.

Finally intervention also refers to the degree to which the warden pen-
etrates the physical and social space of the visitor. Intervention may be slight
as in simply driving past the visitor in a marked patrol vehicle or stopping
to talk, or as direct as having an "enforcement" discussion or taking some
type of action (Style II Threat Enforcement and Style IV Covert Enforce-
ment). It is the degree of physical contact or intervention taken by the war-
den that has the most direct impact on the social-natural experience of the
visitor.

When placed together, *symbolic expression* and *intervention* combine to
form a four part park model of soft enforcement. As Figure 1 below indi-
cates, four styles or types of soft enforcement were observed during this study.
Each type of soft enforcement varies from low to high on the dimensions of
symbolic expression and intervention. The key factors are not mutually ex-
clusive, rather it is the interaction between these two key factors that deter-
mines the nature of soft enforcement. The blend of symbolic expression with
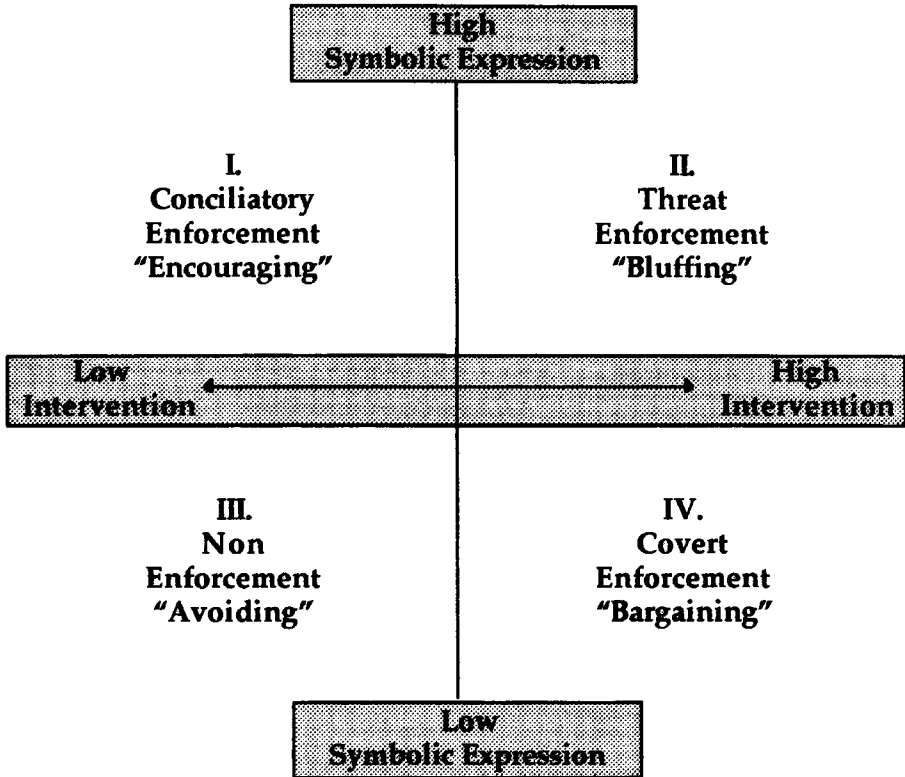intervention creates distinct impressions of the warden, the park, and the

Figure 1. Model of Soft Enforcement

expectation of compliance. In effect soft enforcement becomes a highly specialized form of *impression management* designed to address the paradoxical mandate of the park.

Conclusion

The four types of soft enforcement observed during this study demonstrate a complexity that extends beyond a simple choice between formal and informal action. Soft enforcement as it was observed in this study, may be viewed as a means to manage the paradoxical mandate to both use and protect parks. It is in the complexity of the soft enforcement model that the strategic potential is revealed.

Soft enforcement may be utilized both as a proactive approach that anticipates and orchestrates responses and as a reactive method that responds to situational circumstances. Soft enforcement recognizes the complexity of social control that is not dependent on formal coercive action (Felson, 1995). While compliance is not always voluntary it does involve in-

centives. In this regard soft enforcement distinguishes between the chronic offender and the uninformed visitor. Soft enforcement recognizes the very different socio-natural settings found in parks and their corresponding enforcement needs (Pendleton, 1997b). For example nonenforcement or conciliatory enforcement may be most effective in a backcountry setting where few visitors, the reliance on the natural environment to mitigate harm, and the threat to warden safety are defining characteristics. In contrast all forms of soft enforcement including more intrusive methods may be required in frontcountry settings where visitors and local residents converge to present a full array of enforcement situations. Finally soft enforcement recognizes and avoids the costs and liabilities that come with formal action. Employee and visitor safety, the vast and remote nature of many parks, and the demand of time and the availability of seasonal employees for the formal processes of prosecution are but a few of the costs associated with hard enforcement.

In spite of the costs and contrary to the findings in earlier studies (Carroll, 1988) hard enforcement seems to have a place in the park setting. Without the occasional and strategic application of hard enforcement, soft approaches become *counterfeit rituals* to those who frequent the park. The sense of immunity from sanctions among local residents was frequently encountered during this research as illustrated in this quote from a local woman who noted:

It is well known that the park Wardens have no real authority.

They cannot enforce the law and only give warnings particularly to those that live here.

One of the dangers of a total reliance on soft enforcement is gaining a reputation for inaction or worse complicity. Other data (Pendleton, 1997a) suggest that nonenforcement leads to acts of accommodation that might be viewed as facilitating crime thus compromising the image of the responsible agency. When data from this study is considered with existing data (Carroll, 1998) it suggests a blend of approaches may be more effective than a singular blanket approach.

It is also important to recognize the strategic value of soft enforcement as an impression management tool. Kennedy (1988, p. 249) has noted that "awareness of the pervasive function of symbolism in natural resource management may be more important today than ever". Strategic use of the symbolic expression found in soft enforcement exists as a powerful tool to shape the shared meaning of parks, rangers/wardens, and the required personal responsibility to ensure compliance necessary for both enjoyment and protection. It is important to recognize however, that these impressions can be strategically managed to reach strategic ends. Manning (1977, p. 34) in his analysis of the dramaturgical nature of the police speaks of both presentational strategies and operational strategies. To accomplish both he notes: "The production of appearances requires dramatic discipline or the capacity to synchronize action to achieve ends. Symbolically represented repertoires increases the likelihood of coordinated team impressions," p. 34. The model that was generated from the data in this study affirms Manning's assertions

and extends Manning's view to include nontraditional police strategies found in parks which are more than simply symbolic impressions. More importantly this model shows how the symbolic *and* behavioral features of policing combine and interact to preclude formal enforcement. In this respect the model is more than a "dramaturgical perspective" p. 35 as utilized by Manning but also an applied tool for strategic use within the park setting.

During this research it was clear that wardens enjoy respect and acceptance of the visitors in the park. While it was clear that visitation in this park has been increasing steadily over the last ten years, the role of enforcement on visitor visitation remains unknown. It was clear throughout the study that visitors seem to universally welcome Style I Conciliatory enforcement. Yet the problems associated with uncontrolled alcohol consumption on the beach which led to a Style II Threat Enforcement approach, was clearly troubling to those visitors who wanted a more family oriented atmosphere. Consequently it should not be assumed that the visible presence of uniformed rangers and wardens who use a high intervention approach automatically compromise visitor enjoyment. In fact data from a survey of hikers in a backcountry area of Pacific Rim National Park Reserve cited the lack of an on the ground presence of patrolling wardens as the leading source of dissatisfaction with their outdoor experience (Rollins, 1994). For those who need the security of a warden's presence Style II Nonenforcement can have negative effects on visitors. Yet data on visitor satisfaction as it is related to park crime and enforcement is limited.

Finally it is important to note that caution may be warranted when attempting to apply this model in park settings in other social and political contexts. Specifically the model is based on data derived from the Canadian Park experience which may differ from United States parks. In spite of the geographical nearness Canada and the United States differ significantly in their social and political cultures. Inspite of the important differences, however, there is substantial body of literature documenting the similarities between United States and Canadian parks. In general there appears to be a lag between the United States experience and the Canadian experience where park policy is first adopted by the United States and then subsequently adopted by Canada after a period of observation and evaluation (Freemuth and Witt, 1992, p. 21; Balmer, 1992, p. 5). The order of the pattern, however, may be shifting as the U.S. park system is currently re-evaluating its commitment to hard enforcement in favor of a softer approach (Sauer, 1998).

Future research should focus both on the applicability of soft enforcement in other park settings and the impact of the various soft enforcement approaches on both visitor compliance and enjoyment. It is data of this nature that should determine enforcement policy rather than simple urban derived assumptions about crime and police.

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