

Police looking into several vandalism acts at trail

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The commencement of construction of the first leg of the hiking and biking trail from Hazleton to Weatherly comes as welcome news for many local residents.

But apparently, it isn't good news to all.

Recent acts of vandalism at the construction site – including severe damage done to heavy equipment there – have officials upset, and state police investigating.

Even as the first part of this new asset to the area's recreational facilities becomes a reality, Bob Skulsky, the partnership's executive director, said someone is making it difficult to proceed with the work.

"We've been having trouble with ATVers," Skulsky said. "They knocked down a Job Johnny, and knocked down survey stakes twice. They feel like it's their land."

The vandalism took an evil twist this week when, on successive nights, a pick-up truck got onto the trail, and did damage.

"On Wednesday night, a pick-up truck got

onto the trail, and dug it up with its tires," Skulsky said. "The contractor fixed that Thursday."

"And then Thursday night, apparently another pick-up truck got onto the trail on the Stockton side, and could not get out the other side on Route 93, because the road is blocked by heavy equipment," Skulsky continued.

"So they smashed the windows on a pay-loader, and drove around the equipment anyway to get out."

State police Trooper Gary M. Skowski said five windows were smashed on the tractor owned by Don Bower Inc. of Berwick. He said the incident happened between 5 p.m. Thursday and 6:45 a.m. Friday.

Anyone who may have seen anything unusual in the vicinity is asked to call state police at 459-3890.

"Anyone who saw a pick-up truck out there should call the state police," Skulsky said.

Steps to secure the area are being taken, and police patrols in the area will be increased.