

# City of Cincinnati



Interdepartmental  
Correspondence Sheet

Date: 11/08/06

To: Colonel Thomas H. Streicher, Jr., Police Chief  
From: Captain Daniel W. Gerard, Special Services Section Commander  
Copies to:  
Subject: Third QUARTER PARK UNIT PROBLEM SOLVING REPORT – Patrol BUREAU

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Category: Program / Project                      Case #:                      District: 5 Neighborhood: Mt. Airy

Coordinating Personnel: Sergeant Hank Ward

Description of Problem: Vice related offenses.

Phase of SARA: Response

## **SARA Documentation**

Scanning (state problem): Mt. Airy Forest is a historic destination containing more than thirty percent of the Park Board's total acreage. Citizens of Cincinnati enjoy numerous picnic areas, lodges, and fourteen miles of hiking trails. Complaints of vice related offenses including alcohol, drug use, and sexual activity have increased with the warmer weather. While some behaviors do not involve sexual activity per se, they involve sexual content that can offend inadvertent witnesses and deter the legitimate use of the park. Discarded, used condoms and other paraphernalia are unattractive and potentially hazardous. Our goal is to enhance the forest's natural and cultural resources for the enjoyment of all citizens.

Analysis: Park Board employees who maintain Mt. Airy Forest and park patrons have reported an increase in cruising and sexual activity around several lodges that include Stone Steps lodge, and areas: twenty two and twenty three. In most cases, Park Board employees flag down a uniform officer who is patrolling Mt. Airy and report the suspicious person or activity. Most problem areas offer public restrooms that are popular locations for such activity. The restrooms are accessible and afford the violator some privacy and the ability to spot potential witnesses or officers patrolling the area. Many of the shelters and trails are secluded by dense forest vegetation that allows violators cover and an ample opportunity to hide from the police.

Plain clothes officers and covert vehicles were used four times in past six weeks to confirm the increase of cruising and suspicious activity in and around the public restrooms in the areas listed above. Officers walked many paths and checked the restrooms discovering discarded paraphernalia including used condoms and hypodermic needles.

Response (define action taken): The Park Unit deployed plain clothes officers in Mt. Airy Forest on seven separate dates from July 25<sup>th</sup> through August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2006. The Plain clothes officers focused their attention to vice related offenses described in our analysis and made the following arrests in Mt. Airy Forest.

- On 7/25/06, four (4) arrests were made for Public Indecency.
- On 7/26/06, two (2) arrests were made for Public Indecency.
- On 7/27/06, two (2) arrests were made for Soliciting.
- On 7/31/06, two (2) arrests were made for Public Indecency.
- On 8/1/06, one (1) arrest was made for Public Indecency.
- On 8/8/06, four (4) arrests were made for Public Indecency.
- On 8/9/06, two (2) arrests were made for Public Indecency and three (3) arrests were made for minor misdemeanor drug violations.

The Park Police provided several training classes to Park Board employees covering personal safety and awareness issues. Park Board employees have been instrumental with reporting information on suspicious or unusual activity. Park Police representatives meet bi-monthly with Park Board managers to discuss any issue that may be of interest to law enforcement.

The Park Police and the Human Nature Department have met on several occasions to discuss the physical layout of the park. Non law enforcement issues such as planting, clearing dense foliage, or changing the layout of public restrooms have been discussed for the Park's Master Plan.

Our recent plain clothes operations and partnership with the Park Board has stabilized vice related activities in Mt. Airy Forest enabling the Park Police and the Cincinnati Park Board to focus on a long term solution.

The Park Board in partnership with the Marvin Lewis Foundation and several cooperate sponsors assembled a handicap accessible tree house in Mt. Airy Forest. The project required hundreds of volunteer man hours to transform many mature trees into an awesome tree house for families to enjoy. Lighting was improved in and around the project and several simulated video cameras were purchased and installed to deter vice related activities.

Assessment (document measurement):

### **Police Participation**

Specific Feedback:

#### **City Department Participation**

#### **Specific Feedback**

Buildings and Inspections

Community Development & Planning

The Mt. Airy Community Council has shown interest in monitoring arrests through the court system as a result of any spectacular arrest in Mt. Airy Forest.

Fire Department

Health

Metropolitan Sewer District

Parks

Park Board employees continue to relay information and provide a source of intelligence to Park officers. The Park Board worked closely with the Police Department by discussing safety issues regarding the tree house project.

Public Services

Recreation

Transportation & Engineering

Water Works