

**Brian Dubray- CTCLUSI PD**

**SLA006**

An important principle, especially in a small community, is the idea of "feeling safe." Many community members base their ideas of the Police based on that idea. It is a feeling that is unquantifiable, and is also a very difficult measure of success. In an effort to identify a community crime problem, I was able to utilize many different resources to not only identify the problem, but create a plan of action towards a solution.

In a tribal housing community, Qaxas Heights, one problem that was identified was an overgrown trail that led from off tribal property onto tribal property. Over the years, the trail had become overgrown and an area that could easily conceal non-residents, miscreants, or other persons with criminal intentions. I spoke with the tribal housing department, and we discussed a recent issue where non-tribal subjects were sleeping in the wooded area. These subjects later came to the playground area, and a male subject assaulted a female subject. Several tribal members had to physically intervene to stop the assault.

Over the years, our agency has received multiple reports of subjects coming onto tribal property through that trail at various hours of the day and night. This can severely affect the community's overall feeling of safety. As residents see subjects dressed in dark clothing coming out of the brush area, they can perceive them as potential threats to their safety.

This incident identified the trail as an area that could easily conceal multiple subjects. It also provided a covert way to enter tribal property. In speaking to the housing office, I was advised that the trail already had some lighting in place, but it was unknown if the lights were still functioning. If the trail area was cleared, and more visible, it would make the lights more effective.

I also spoke with a maintenance employee of the tribal housing department. The subject was not only an employee, but also lived in Qaxas Heights. This allowed a "two-pronged" approach to helping to come to a proper resolution. As a resident, the employee stated that he had seen subjects that he was unfamiliar with coming in and out of trail. He also reaffirmed the difficulty of seeing people in the brush area, especially at night time.

In addressing the problem, I utilized the idea and principles of Crime Prevention through Environment Design (CPTED) to create a solution. The CPTED ideals state that an improved design and environment can reduce the idea and perception of crime and increase the feeling of safety. After explaining the principles of CPTED to the housing department employees, we were able to identify the following strategies to most effectively address the problem.

- 1) Cut back the trail so that it may be possible to look down the trail from the street level. (Natural Surveillance)
- 2) Ensure the lights are functioning and potentially look at the type of lights that are utilized. (Natural Access Control)
- 3) Post a sign at the entrance to the trail identifying the tribal property to potentially deter subjects from "wandering" onto tribal property. (Territorial Reinforcement)

These strategies will allow for the most effective use of not only housing resources, but also provide the most benefit to the residents. After identifying the solutions, we evaluated the best way to implement the changes. As it is currently winter, we decided it was probably not the best time to begin the project. The housing department maintenance staff consists of only one person, so the idea of a "Community Project" day was brought up. The community project day has been done several times in the past, and it allows residents to actively participate in the cleanup of the housing area along with housing staff. I offered services from the Police Department to assist in the cleanup. This idea will not only assist in the cleanup, but it will also provide a much needed interaction between the community members and the Police Department outside of an enforcement role.

The community project day will also create community buy-in on community safety. This buy-in also creates a tangible interest in the trail, and hopefully it will encourage use of the trail. The project will also show the active role that the Police Department is having on increasing the safety within the community.

In executing the plan, the most difficult part will be the coordination of staff members along with community members to participate. The trail clearing will allow for community participation to assist in completion, and not just rely on staff to do the cleanup and clearing for the residents.

Following the meeting regarding the project, I conducted a patrol check of Qaxas Heights. I observed a family outside of their residence whom lived directly south of the trail. They were also witnesses to the disturbance at the playground. I spoke with them about the trail, and I asked about the lighting issues.

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One of the residents stated that there are lights back in the trail, but they come on and off on an inconsistent basis. The resident pointed the light out to me, which was very difficult to see because the trail was so overgrown.

I advised them of the possible cleanup of the trail, and they were very excited. They advised me of other instances of people coming on property that were unknown to them. After speaking with them, I decided that I would return the following week to do a walkthrough of the trail with them along with the housing maintenance employee to determine the most important areas of the trail to clean up.

In reviewing the "Twenty-Five Techniques of Situational Prevention," I determined that there were two techniques that will be utilized in order to successfully complete the project. The first technique is (#7)

Assist Natural Surveillance. This technique will ensure that the lighting is effective in its purpose and clear the trail so that it is visible from street level. The visibility of the trail will hopefully alert residences of potential problem's so that they may notify law enforcement.

The second technique is {#22} Post Instructions. This is an idea brought up by the residents to not only identify the property, but have some indication of "No Trespassing" as well. The goal of placing the sign is to deter people with criminal intentions from coming onto tribal property.

The effectiveness and continued success of this project is dependent upon the relationship between not only the residents, staff of the housing department, and also staff from the Police Department. This community collaboration is essential in the long-term success of the project.

The program's success will be determined by follow-up conversations with residents. It will also be determined by the number of reports by residents along with increased neighborhood involvement in

detering crime. In determining the success of the project, it will also hopefully increase conversations between not only the residents and police, but also other Tribal entities in an attempt to increase safety for both residents and staff.

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