



# Graffiti Task Force

## 2011 Yearly Report

The Graffiti Task Force (GTF) is a collaborative action group that meets quarterly to discuss and develop solutions to graffiti-related issues. The GTF is made up of employees and community partners from many different divisions, including: City Managers Office, Community Services, Risk Management, Parks, Recreation, Landscape Maintenance District (LMD), Community Preservation, Technology Services, Public Works, Transit, and community partners (i.e., Los Angeles County, College of The Canyons, Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, California Highway Patrol (CHP) and the William S. Hart Union High School District).



### Tags Removed

\*6,333, 55% of removals were proactive (found by staff while on patrol) and 45% reported by residents.

### Calls and e-Service by areas

Canyon Country– 1,268  
 Valencia– 981  
 Newhall– 418  
 Saugus– 302  
 L.A. County– 51

### Hotspots

Crossglade  
 Camp Plenty  
 Grandview Paseo  
 Creekside  
 Scherzinger Lane  
 Canyon Park  
 Lost Canyon  
 Old Orchard Paseos

### Hot Spots (cont.)

Arch Street

### Total Tags by Type

Crews– 2,873  
 Oners– 1,827  
 Gangs– 796

A 25% decrease in gang graffiti compared to 2010!

### Removals by Paseo Patrol Volunteers

Over 400 tags removed in the Old Orchard, Valencia Glen, and Bridgeport paseos.

### Abatement Notices Issued

29 abatement notices issued between Community Preservation and Community Services, with 100% compliance from property owners.



In 2011 Graffiti Removal Staff saw an increase in:

- Vandalism on utility boxes City wide.
- Use of markers on school zones (i.e. signs, light poles, and bus stops).
- Tagging crew graffiti from ART, TB, and BE in Canyon Country.
- Gang graffiti from SSR and MMS in Canyon Country.

## Arrests



In 2011, **169 graffiti vandals were arrested**—72% juveniles. Since the inception of the award winning e-graffiti database in 2007, over 1,000 graffiti vandals have been arrested and charged with felony vandalism.

### **Busted Again!**

A prolific Santa Clarita graffiti vandal changes his tagging moniker, but is caught again! The 17 year old was sent to a six month probation camp and ordered to pay an additional \$21,000 in restitution to the City and complete additional community service hours. The first time he was caught and went to court was in 2010. At that time, he went by a different alias and was ordered to pay over \$56,000 in restitution and court fines, and perform 100 hours of community service. After sentencing, Graffiti Removal staff suspected that this was the same vandal due to the distinctive hand-writing. The tagger will be on probation for up to three years.

# WEED ABATEMENT AND BEAUTIFICATION PROJECTS

Participants from the Santa Clarita Community Court, who were ordered to perform community service as a part of their sentence, were utilized to beautify wash channels and for brush clearance along the trails. The projects resulted in:

- Completion of four brush clearance projects at the South Fork and Canyon Country Cross Country trails to eliminate potential fire hazards. South Fork Trail is 100% completed.
- Removal of over 30 dump truck loads of brush.
- Painting over 4 miles of wash channels removing unsightly "spot painting" and graffiti in the vicinity of: Bouquet Canyon, Sierra Hwy, Camp Plenty Road, and Central Park.
- 45 volunteers from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints painted over a half mile of wash channel near Jakes Way.



## SHERRIF'S COLABORATION

City staff met regularly with a Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Graffiti Detective, the COBRA Unit (Gang and Juvenile Crime), and the Community Interaction Team (CIT), which resulted in:



- Compliance checks conducted in 14 home improvement stores to insure proper storage of spray paint.
- Eight surveillance operations conducted utilizing hidden surveillance cameras and the Merlin spray paint detection device which led to "intel" for the Sheriff's Department.
- Arrests of 10 members of a prolific tagging crew resulting in the crew being shut down. This local crew was responsible for over \$70,000 in damages to Canyon Country and Newhall.

## SURVEILLANCE GOES HIGH TECH

Graffiti Removal Staff purchased eight high-tech cameras to monitor graffiti hotspots and catch graffiti vandals throughout Santa Clarita. Ten instances of illegal activity and one graffiti vandal were caught in the first month alone!



## RESTITUTION

In 2011, Graffiti Removal staff attended over 10 restitution hearings to confirm restitution on graffiti vandalism cases. Over \$240,000 dollars was awarded to the City for damages caused by 22 vandals. Staff is currently researching other cities to find additional ways to recover damages. To date over \$30,000 has been paid to the City.



31% increase in restitution awarded compared to 2010

## GETTING THE WORD OUT




- Over 700 students from Rio Vista and Helters Elementary Schools, Canyon High School, and the VIDA program participated in graffiti awareness presentations on the consequences of graffiti.



- 130 parents and staff from Sierra Vista and Placerita Junior High Schools, and the William S. Hart Union School District's - District English Learner Advisory Committee attended a graffiti awareness presentation. The presentation included an overview of signs of a tagger, consequences of graffiti vandalism, and what to do if they suspect their child is tagging.
- Graffiti removal staff is currently working with administrators and students from Valencia High School's Film class to produce a teen outreach video on the consequences of graffiti vandalism. The video will be shown during "announcement period" where the entire student body will see the video. The video will also cover how to report vandalism using the graffiti hotline and the City's "Fight Graffiti Get Rewarded" program which gives a \$500 reward for information leading to the arrest of a vandal.

## AGENCY COLLABORATION

The Graffiti Task Force collaborated with the following agencies:

- Los Angeles Department of Water and Power for graffiti removal from the Los Angeles Aqueduct. 
- Los Angeles County for prompt removal of graffiti on washes. 
- CHP officers input graffiti incidents they find on the 14 and 5 freeways and utilize the database to see if the vandals they have in custody are also vandalizing throughout Santa Clarita. This will facilitate building a stronger case against the vandals. 
- College of the Canyons Campus Security uses the e-Graffiti database and informs Graffiti Removal staff of new taggers vandalizing the campus. 