

UNCLASSIFIED//~~FOUO~~**FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION****Electronic Communication**

Title: (U//~~FOUO~~) Chicago Against Cop City Social
Media Posts

Date: 08/31/2022

CC:

b6
b7C
b7E

From: CHICAGO

CG-I-9

Contact:

Approved By:

Drafted By:

Case ID #:

(U) ANARCHIST EXTREMIST MATTERS
ASSESSMENT;
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS;
AOT-DT ANARCHIST EXTREMISM;
TIER 6

Synopsis: (U//~~FOUO~~) Chicago Against Cop City Posted to social media information regarding the construction of the Tiger Woods Golf Course and the Obama Presidential Library.

Administrative Notes: (U//~~FOUO~~) It should be noted that some of this information describes First Amendment protected activities. The FBI recognizes that Americans have constitutionally protected rights to assemble, speak, and petition the government. The FBI safeguards these rights and only reports on First Amendment protected activities for operational planning in the interest of assuring the safety and security of the public including demonstrators and public safety personnel. The FBI will continue to communicate these events with other law enforcement partners in an effort to facilitate the mission of protecting the lives, property and rights of all people, to maintain order, and enforce the law

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<https://itsgoingdown.org/this-is-america-172/>

Fight Against 'Cop City' Continues

Welcome, to This Is America, August 18th, 2022.

On this episode we continue our discussion with a forest defender on the growing movement and fight to defend the Atlanta forest against the construction of Cop City. We discuss the recent week of action, repression, how the struggle is pulling in a wide range of people, movement infrastructure, and much more.



Chicago Against Cop City

@CHIforests · Follow



First hand reportback and interview with a participant in the recent week of action to stop cop city in Atlanta by [@Spiritofm28](#)



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Inside the Fight to Stop Cop City: How the George Floyd Uprising is Influ...

This following report back and interview, written by folks at Spirit of May 28th, looks at the growing mass struggle to defend the Atlanta forest an...

8:05 AM · Aug 15, 2022



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Reply



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Re: [REDACTED] 08/31/2022

(U) “There are 450 big trees that have NOT yet been cut down for Obama Pres. Ctr. There’s got to be a better way to coordinate transportation to & from South Shore than closing Cornell Drive (6 lanes) and Marquette Road (4 lanes). Why is OPC landlocking South Shore neighborhoods?” Posted was a map of the construction area with sections circled with the number of trees in each location.

(U//~~FOUO~~) On August 19, Chicago Against Tree City (@CHIforests) posted the following to Twitter:

(U) “Opponents of the new course say building it would require chopping down 100s of trees... Some 800 trees have already been removed for the [Obama] Presidential Center. Chicago has a bad habit of chopping down more trees than it plants. It’s time to stop.”

(U//~~FOUO~~) On August 19, Chicago Against Cop City (@CHIforests) posted the following to twitter:

(U) “Great op-Ed from @Suntimes on why the Tiger Woods Golf Course plan should be tossed in the dustbin. Read it. [Chicago.suntimes.com/2022/8/17/2331...](https://chicago.suntimes.com/2022/8/17/2331...)”

(U//~~FOUO~~) On August 20, Defend Atlanta Forest retweeted a post by Chicago Against Cop City (@CHIforests) as follows:

(U) “The massive destruction, a really staggering clear cut, of a beautiful and valuable public resource for the benefit of elitist special interests should provoke outrage and concern among residents across the city.” “chicagotribune.com Letters: Why isn’t the mayor concerned about the clear cut of trees in... We lament the editorial board’s focus only on the loss of trees along Chicago’s parkways.”

(U) Screen captures are attached in a digital 1A.

(U) Attached in a digital 1A is an article from itsgoingdown.com which claims to be an interview with an Atlanta forest defender. Chicago and the Tiger Woods Golf Course mentioned on page 3.

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<https://itsgoingdown.org/inside-the-fight-to-stop-cop-city/>

Inside The Fight To Stop Cop City How The George Floyd Uprising Is Influencing A New Wave Of Struggle In Atlanta

This following report back and interview, written by folks at Spirit of May 28th, looks at the growing mass struggle to defend the Atlanta forest and stop construction of Cop City and beyond.

The South River Forest (also known as the Weelaunee forest, or the Atlanta forest) is a massive 3,500 acre wooded parkland in Southeast Atlanta. In the wake of the 2020 George Floyd uprising, local residents are actively defending this land from encroaching dispossession by the police and the film industry. The Atlanta Police Foundation (APF) is bulldozing the forest in order to build an 85 acre police training facility, which would be the largest in the country, and would include a mock city for training in urban policing. Next door, the film production company Shadowbox Studios (formerly Blackhall Studios) seeks to construct an airfield and a soundstage. In response to these developments, a movement known as Defend the Atlanta Forest, as well as coalitions like Stop Cop City, came together to disrupt and ultimately stop the plan to demolish the forest.

Since the first week of action in the Spring of 2021, this movement has grown into a broad, decentralized, mass struggle. Its openness allows for an independence of action which can be taken up by anyone who chooses to pursue the overarching goal of the movement: to stop the demolition of the forest. Anyone who takes the initiative towards this goal is welcome to do so, wherever they may be, and however they may choose to do so. Contractors involved in the plan have been targeted by protesters and vandals not just in Atlanta, but across the country. While for much of civil society there is a strong taboo against illegality and violence in social movements, the struggle to defend the Weelaunee forest has refused to dissociate the peaceful protester from the violent rioter. This flexibility results in a highly complex ecology of struggle, where property destruction, arson, and clashes with police happen alongside music festivals, raves, barbecues, film screenings, all of which are free.

Traveling to Atlanta and living in the Weelaunee forest for the most recent week of action, I was struck by the composition of the movement. You had working-class Atlantans who like to hang out in the forest. New age hippies and music fest kids. Indigo children from the hip hop scene. Queer and trans punks. Insurrectos and veterans of Earth First! Hipster grad students. Ex-frat bros turned anarchist militants. Parents and their kids. And lots of dogs.

"Now Leaving USA": Arrival And Overview

I ended up parking at what is still considered the parking lot for the South River Trail Intrenchment Creek Trailhead on Google maps. Cretin shit-fucker Ryan Millsap supposedly acquired this land after a controversial land-swap agreement with the Dekalb County government, which gave 40 acres of public land to his film company, Shadowbox Studios. Millsap recently had workers block the entrance to the parking lot with concrete barriers and posted "private property" and "no trespassing" signs there. This parking lot is still used by locals as the entrance to what they consider to be a public park, where they take dogs for walks, ride bikes, go on hikes, and generally escape from the city. Luckily, forest defenders took down the "private property" signs, moved the barriers so that cars could get in, and even replaced the entrance sign that Millsap had taken down with an even better one, which read "Weelaunee People's Park."

Driving along the edge of the woods, you could see that forest defenders had barricaded any openings on the perimeter with old logs, spiked branches, used tires, old furniture, and random objects. It was quite a sight. After I parked, and entered the forest, I found what they called "the living room," where meals were served each day and people tended to gather. From there, I found a spot with some privacy to set up my tent. There were about 150 people camping and living in those woods. Eventually, a friend led me and others deeper into the forest, into what they called "the other side," the Old Prison Farm part of the land, where the police have a firing range and there is a smashed up, upside down pickup truck with "Defend the Forest" spray painted on it. The walking paths are less visible out there and it is a much more fluid and wild space. This is where the most committed forest defenders live, what we might call the front line. Some of them live in treehouses up to 30 feet above the ground. There were security cameras around here before, but they've been dismantled.

The dialectic between legal, above-ground activity and illegal, underground activity is developed to the point that the line separating the two becomes blurred. Sometimes the forest felt like a warzone, the site of a low scale insurgency, other times it felt like the site of a music festival, or a mutual aid hub, or a place of leisure.

No one is technically supposed to be in the Weelaunee forest right now. The APF has already begun to clear-cut part of it. Ryan Millsap wanted to start cutting down trees by this point, but the forest defenders are forcing him to postpone his plans.

Unlike most activist campaigns, the struggle to defend the Atlanta forest seems to be actually going somewhere. Maybe this is because it avoids many of the common trappings of activism and its endless uniformity. Notably, there was no assembly at the camp to stall the self-development of the movement. This allowed momentum to develop and change organically, although there was still a formal structure for coordination and communication. Every day there were morning meetings in the "living room" where people discussed the logistical needs of the camp, volunteered to get shit done, announced the schedule of that day's events, and discussed any concerns.

On the way back from the "other side" I come across some old tear gas canisters near the Creek, which I am told is highly polluted and cannot be used for bathing. It was hot as hell, so I had to ask!

Interview With A Forest Defender

Q: Okay, so here we are in the Weelaunee forest of Atlanta. How are you feeling about how everything's going so far with the fourth week of action?

A: I feel really good about it. There's been a lot of people who have come from out of town for the first time and of course those who have come multiple times, and there's been an influx of people from the city and the suburbs who have never been here before, especially because of the music festival.

Q: How would you break down the political-cultural composition of everyone who's been coming out here? I know it's very complex, with many different layers...

A: Yeah, so there's the people who sleep in the woods and many of those people have been involved in land defense before, who want to experiment with new tactics, and who don't want to be constricted by non-violence. So that's one layer. But then there are also people who are getting involved in a land defense struggle for the first time, who lived in the city but have now stopped living in their homes, or

quit their jobs, or only work a few days a week so that they can be here full-time. And then, there's a larger layer that I would say I'm a part of, that's made up of people who live close by, in the city, who are doing stuff inside the forest and outside of the forest. That involves organizing public pressure campaigns, strategy building, running the social media accounts, getting interviews with small and large publications, and making sure that supply runs happen here. And then there's the autonomous political current, which can overlap with any of these layers.

See, Atlanta doesn't really have a large institutional Left, because we're in the deep south. Union membership is and has always been very low. So, the autonomist organizational left is not attached to the unions, nor the non-profits for that matter. Some of them are abolitionists, some of them are mutual aid anarchists, some of them are left-wing black nationalists, and the alphabet soup variety of authoritarian communists have not really involved themselves at all in this struggle, at least locally, from what I can tell. And then there's the civic organizations, which predate the Defend the Atlanta Forest struggle, but which are about defending the land. Like Stop the Swap coalition, Save the Old Atlanta Prison Farm, and environmental civic groups like the South River Watershed Alliance and the South River Forest Coalition. These people use legal means through the court system and conduct folk history tours through the forest. And then, there's all of the people who live outside of the city, who come in for the weeks of action and who have started to organize in their own locales around this and around other city-based land defense struggles, such as in Chicago where green space is going to be turned into the Tiger Woods golf course. And in Lincoln, Nebraska people connected it to an indigenous land defense struggle inside the city there.

Q: I wonder if more people will see what's happening here as a kind of light post to help frame what they are doing in their own cities and towns.

A: Yes, I mean, until mass scale riots are happening again, that makes sense. This seems to be the largest land defense struggle happening in the US right now. From the autonomous, anti-capitalist, anti-authoritarian side of things, this would seem to be the light post, or the horizon for what's possible when mass revolt is not happening.

Q: Right, the way I've thought about it is that this is the closest struggle happening right now that can help prepare us for the next large upsurge. Do y'all think about what's happening here in relation to future uprisings?

A: Definitely. I know that the people who come here for weeks of action, or for an indeterminate amount of time, end up meeting people from other cities and end up forming connections with each other. So, networks of partisans are being built that will be able to share lessons learned over the years in other struggles and in this struggle. The organization and the affinities developed in the forest can be reapplied in the coming uprisings.

Q: Yes. And also, to what extent do you think the George Floyd uprising contributed to this struggle in Atlanta and gave it its political contours?

A: One of the first things that happened publicly to kick off the Defend the Atlanta Forest struggle in the mid to late spring of 2021 was a public barbecue that like 200 people attended. The next day there was a communique that stated that people had gone to a nearby site – 40 acres of clear-cut forest that they want to call Michelle Obama Park – people had gone there at night and set construction vehicles on fire.

And no one who was involved in what was at that point a small movement condemned it. And no one has. Since then, there's probably been 30 arsons (I've lost track) and countless other acts of sabotage. What's striking is that none of this has been condemned by the wider movement, and I don't think that would have been the case before the George Floyd uprising.

Without the burning of the Third Precinct and the hundreds of instances of property destruction and arson across the continent in 2020, these tactics would have been condemned. Someone in the movement would have been like, "That's not okay!" I think the last time that arson was heavily featured in environmental struggles was in the mid-2000s before the Green Scare, and also in Standing Rock, but those instances were contentious. Today, it is not.

Right.

A: The normalization of those tactics during the George Floyd uprising allows what's happening now to be possible.

Q: Even from more moderate activists, there's no problem with the more rowdy, illegal tactics?

A: There's no problem at all.

Wow.

A: The civic organizations haven't denounced it at all. The autonomist left organizations haven't denounced it. Perhaps the do-it-yourself style of the tactics has created a situation where the non-profit industrial complex and the authoritarian socialists do not want to involve themselves in this struggle. Maybe that's why it hasn't been a problem, because those people are just not involved. We want as many groups and people as possible to be involved in order to create the chaotic flux, but those sorts of groups don't get involved in chaotic flux. If that's what keeps them at bay, then good.

Q: Totally. Okay, so there's been no narrative about "outside agitators" within the movement?

A: Only from the police, and their mouth-piece, the Atlanta Journal Constitution, which is supposed to be Georgia's paper of record, but it's owned by Cox media, which is one of the funders of the Atlanta Police Foundation. They and the local news stations have pushed outside agitator narratives. And one of the members of the civic organization Save the Old Atlanta Prison Farm got on the news and was asked directly, "What do you think of people coming here from out of town?" And he was like, "That's great! We need as many people as possible and it's amazing that they care so much about the forest that they would come here."

Q: Given the way things have gone down this week, are you worried about repression this weekend, especially with this big music festival? I mean, there was already one music festival on Saturday with Raury, and some cops came by and didn't do shit.

A: Yeah, a small group of about twenty people were able to get them to leave.

Q: Right, so how are you feeling about the potential for repression now?

A: There has been a pattern. Cops tend to come into the Old Prison Farm side to do scouting on Tuesdays and that's when people go up in their tree houses. After the last week of action, they did a raid on a Tuesday, with over a hundred police officers. And that's when two Molotov cocktails got thrown at them, allegedly. So we are anticipating some repressive operation next week, immediately following the week of action, because when we don't have the numbers anymore, they try to come straight at us. So yeah, we anticipate that. Last time, the police were able to move in and destroy all but one treehouse. But it's been two months since then, and now there's even more treehouses than there used to be. So, part of it is just knowing that the structures of land defense don't have to be permanent.

Right.

A: What I'm most worried about, for the short and medium term, is keeping Intrinchment Creek Park a public park and keeping the parking lot open and accessible to the public. This is crucial because a big part of the fight is about having a space where the general public can come in and out of here at any time. This gives the forest defenders a buffer against police repression. Or else we would have to shift to a more traditional type of land defense situation where it's just you and the cops (and the workers).

Q: Do you think the Atlanta Police Department (APD) has a strategy for counter-insurgency, that is, for co-optation and working with protesters? Do they ever try to deescalate the situation through a "community-centered" approach?

A: I have a few thoughts on this. One, they only ever give comments in news articles and try to control the media narrative through the Atlanta Journal Constitution and through the local T.V. stations. Whereas our side has been featured in the Guardian, in Vice, in the New Yorker, and in other national and international news outlets. And the APD and the APF never comment. So they've ceded the non-local media to the movement. They don't even try. In terms of de-escalation, I don't think they're trying to do that. To a certain extent APD does make attempts at community policing, or used to a lot more, but since 2020 that's really changed. Like, until the police precinct was burned in Minneapolis, and the riots spread to Atlanta the next day, the police had not used teargas against protesters in Atlanta since the late sixties. But the mask came off the first day of the uprising in Atlanta. And after Rashard Brooks was murdered and the two cops who murdered him were fired and charged (they've since been rehired) there was a Blue Flue, a police sick out strike, and since then over two hundred cops have quit. APD is supposed to have 1,600 cops and they only have 1,200 right now. So they are a demoralized police force, they have that "no one loves us" mentality. Police usually fear people, but now they're also just mad at people because they think that no one appreciates or respects them.

Right.

A: With Ryan Millsap from Shadowbox Studios putting up the barricades and private property signs at the Intrinchment Creek parking lot – and those were removed by forest defenders within a few days – I think with those tactics they're trying to isolate the movement, like materially and structurally. But I don't think they have a strategy for stopping the movement from gaining more cultural headway in the city, in the suburbs, and around the country.

After the last week of action they tried to start work, for two weeks they tried to put in silt fences to prevent the erosion that comes from flooding, which is exacerbated by cutting down trees. Out of two weeks of trying to do that, they accomplished less than two days of work, just from there being several

dozens of people telling them to leave. They claim they want to start work in two to six weeks. I'm interested to see if they will be able to do that. Cuz there's only so many police that APD and Dekalb County PD can send here when they also have to police society in general. At the most, they've only been able to muster around a hundred cops at a time when they try to come into the forest, but they can't keep them there permanently.

And if the public pressure campaign can get the construction companies to back out, then that just delays their process even more. We've already caused delays by getting Reeves Young to drop his contract, we delayed the silt fencing from being installed, we delayed the project itself from being passed by city council for three months. We've caused a lot of delays to this project. This project has been talked about somewhat publicly since 2017 and our understanding is that they wanted to start it by late last year, and that clearly hasn't happened yet. So they are more than half a year behind their original goal.

Q: Having been here for the first week of action, and seeing how it's grown and taken off, it's very inspiring. Any last words for people who aren't here?

A: Come to Atlanta to defend the forest. If you can't come, host an info night, the presentation we use will be made public, go to stopreevesyoung.com and see if there are companies that are trying to destroy this place in your city, and if they are, put some pressure on them to stop.

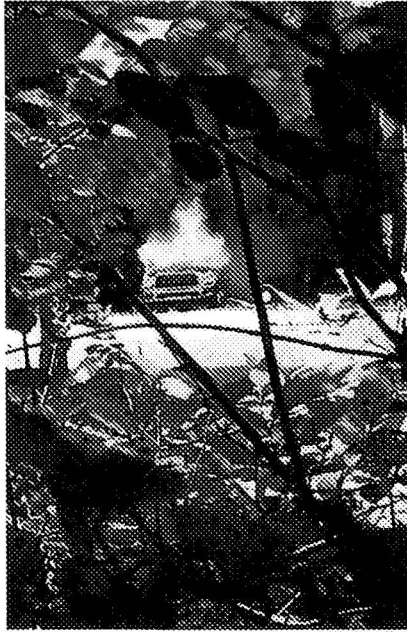
Word.

A: And fuck 12.

Epilogue

I wake up in the morning to distant gunshots from the nearby police firing range. A daily occurrence. There were also gun shots a couple nights before, but those were from a security guard who got scared and shot into the air after some people threw rocks at his van as he tried to replace a security camera in the forest.

A week of living in the woods was starting to take its toll on a city boy like me. My leg was covered in rashes from poison ivy, the sliced bread I brought to snack on had gotten moldy, and I was tired of sweating all the time. I had gotten an interview I felt good about, so I decided to call it quits.



After I hit the road, I heard that Ryan Millsap and his dickhead neighbor Anthony Wayne James came with an excavator to destroy a gazebo in the parking lot (while people were still inside of it). They came with a few cops to back them up, managed to dent the roof and smash part of the sidewalk, but people laid down in front of the excavator, and drove their attackers back with rocks, cans of sparkling water, and other projectiles, forcing them to leave the parking lot and abandon the truck that was used to carry the excavator. The truck was then thoroughly smashed, while a barricade was erected to prevent the enemy from reentering the parking lot. After his initial retreat, Anthony Wayne James reappeared, threatened to shoot all the forest defenders, and repeatedly motioned as if he had a gun. Undeterred, forest defenders held the barricades and drove this goon to the end of the block, along with the police and the cowardly Ryan Millsap, who sat in his car the whole time. The truck in the parking lot was then set on fire.

"Fuck around and find out, Ryan."

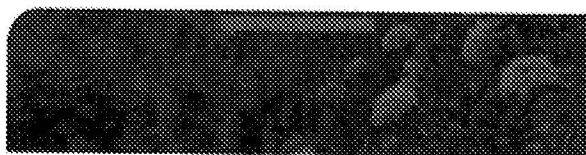
From what I hear, even after all that, with the burned out truck smoldering in the parking lot, hundreds of people still came for the music festival that evening, the last night of the week of action.



Chicago Against Cop City
@CHIforests

...

The proposed Tiger Woods Golf Course would destroy the South Shore Nature Sanctuary, one of the few natural areas on the South Side, replacing it with an overpriced and restricted golf green.



Hedge at Montrose Park was being bulldozed for a golf course!

What is happening?

The planned Tiger Woods Golf Course would destroy the South Shore Nature Sanctuary.

PGA-quality lawns. We swim in this water, and drink this water!

- **STEALING NATURAL AREA FROM SOUTH SIDE** – The project would take a mature 6-acre natural area that is free and open to the public and turn it into a golf green for a small few to enjoy
- **HABITAT LOSS** – Even a few acres can make a huge difference to indigenous bird

- **TREE LOSS** – 2800 heritage trees would be cut down by the project. Tree loss due to the Obama library and recent storms has been substantial. The South Side has already lost literally thousands of trees. We cannot afford to lose any more.
- **TREE INEQUITY** – Mature trees are
- **STOP** the destruction of the beautiful and well-established South Shore Nature Sanctuary
- **USE** the money from this planned project to **improve existing facilities** in Jackson Park and South Shore, rather than pushing something on the South Side

11:50 PM · Jul 18, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

71 Retweets 13 Quote Tweets 164 Likes

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Chicago Against Cop City @CHIforests · Aug 19

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"Opponents of the new course say building it would require chopping down 100s of trees... Some 800 trees already have been removed for the [Obama] Presidential Center. Chicago has a bad habit of chopping down more trees than it plants. It's time to stop."

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chicago.suntimes.com/2022/8/17/2331...



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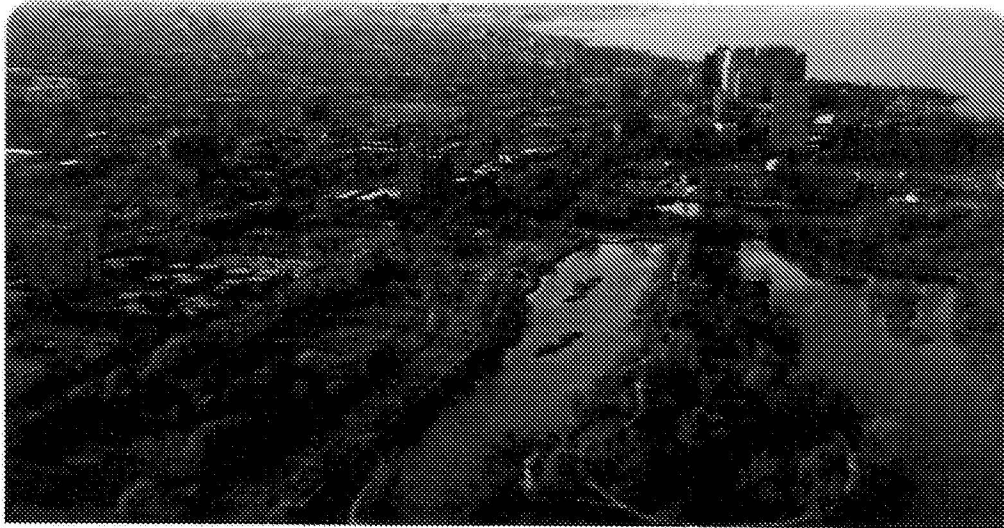
Defend the Atlanta Forest Retweeted



Chicago Against Cop City @CHIforests · Aug 20

...

"This massive destruction, a really staggering clear cut, of a beautiful and valuable public resource for the benefit of elitist special interests should provoke outrage and concern among residents across the city."



chicagotribune.com

Letters: Why isn't the mayor concerned about the clear cut of trees in ...
We lament the editorial board's focus only on the loss of trees along
Chicago's parkways.



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Re: [REDACTED] 08/31/2022

impartially.

(U//~~FOUO~~) SOCIAL MEDIA: The information contained herein has been determined by the FBI to be pertinent to and within the scope of an authorized law enforcement activity and should be considered in the context of the assessment or predicated investigation to which the information relates. Particular attention should be given to the authorized purpose for collecting and recording this information pursuant to the Attorney General's Guidelines for Domestic FBI Operations and the Domestic Investigations and Operations Guide. That purpose may be set forth in the file's opening electronic communication or other related documents.

Enclosure(s) : Enclosed are the following items:

1. (U) CACC Screen Captures
2. (U) itsgoingdown article

Details:

(U//~~LES~~) A group in Atlanta, Georgia Defend the Atlanta Forests (DTAF) is a very violent group that used IIDs, IEDs, arson, personal injury devices, and sabotage to construction equipment to stop construction on public park land in Atlanta. Chicago has very similar construction projects and DTAF members came to Chicago to provide training to like-minded individuals. A spinoff group of DTAF was formed in Chicago called Chicago Against Cop City.

(U//~~FOUO~~) On 7/18/2022 at 1150pm, Chicago Against Cop City (@CHIforests) posted the following to Twitter:

(U) "The proposed Tiger Woods Golf Course would destroy the South Shore Nature Sanctuary, one of the few natural areas on the South Side, replacing it with an overpriced and restricted golf green. What is happening? The planned Tiger Woods Golf Course would destroy the South Shore Nature Sanctuary. PGA-quality lawns. We swim in this water and drink the water! STEALING NATURAL AREA FROM SOUTH SIDE – The project would take a mature 6-acre natural area that is free and open to the public and turn it into a golf green for a small few to enjoy. HABITAT Loss – Even a few acres can ... TREE LOSS – 2800 heritage trees would be cut down by the project. Tree loss due to the Obama Library and recent storms has been substantial. The South Side has already lost literally thousands of trees. We cannot afford to lose any more. TREE INEQUITY – Mature trees are STOP the destruction of the beautiful and well-established South Shore Nature Sanctuary USE the money from this project to improve existing Jackson Park and South Shore, rather than pushing something on the south side"

(U//~~FOUO~~) On August 19, Chicago Against Tree City retweeted Save Jackson Park (@Speaking4Trees) post.

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