

**February 4, 2020**

**Regular Meeting**

**Item # 11 b & c**

**Community Development**

**Additional Documents:**

**Colitas Farms - handouts from the  
Public**

# Colitas Farms

View on North River Lane heading toward Eastside Lane



Before



After



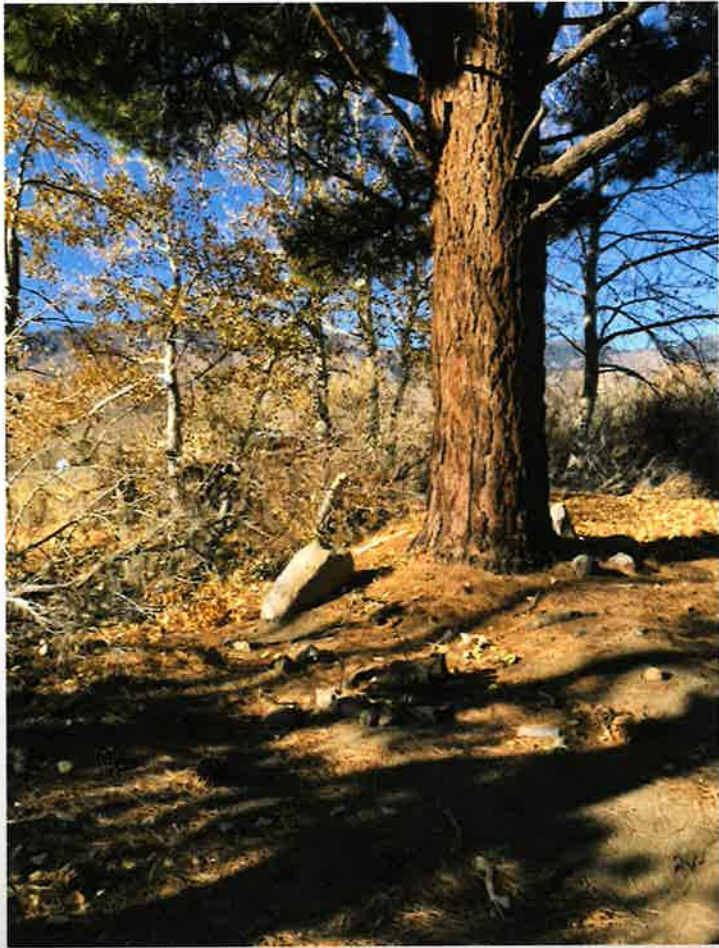
What is there now

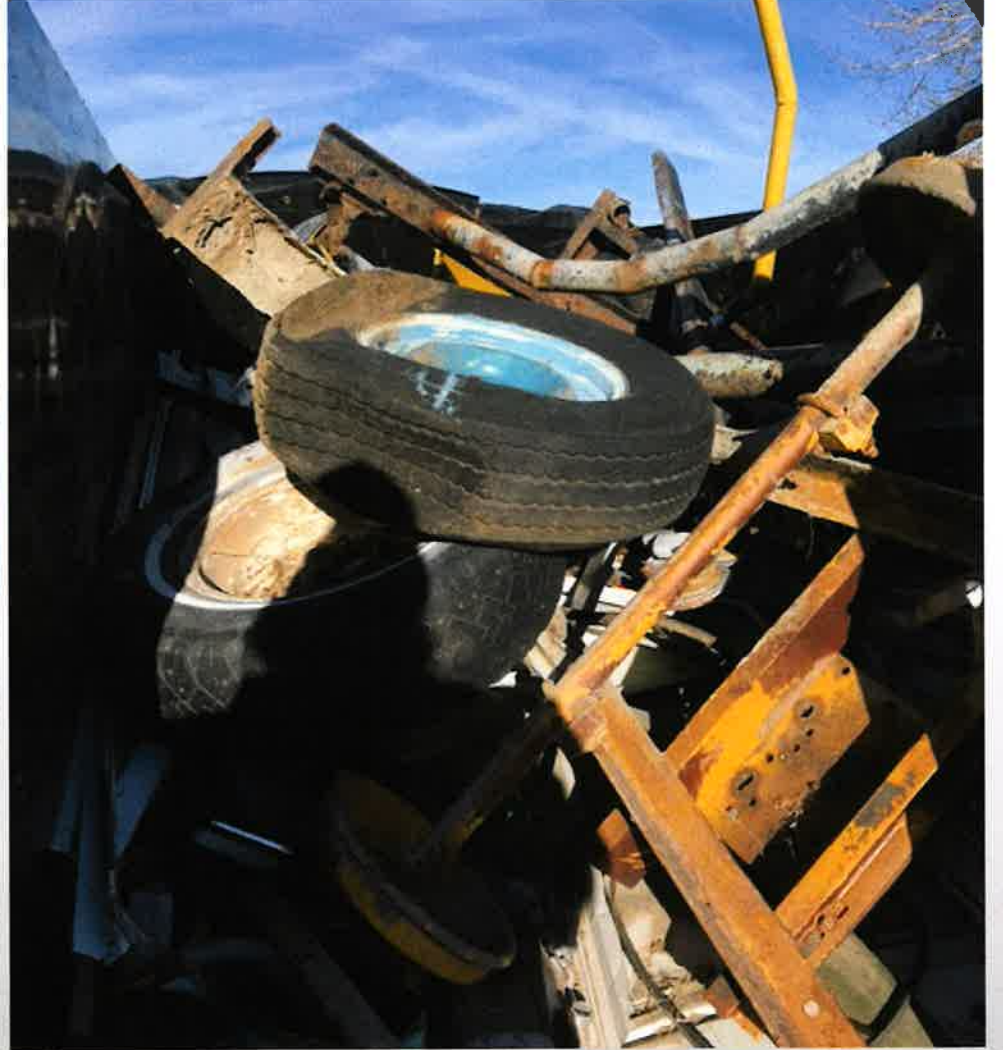




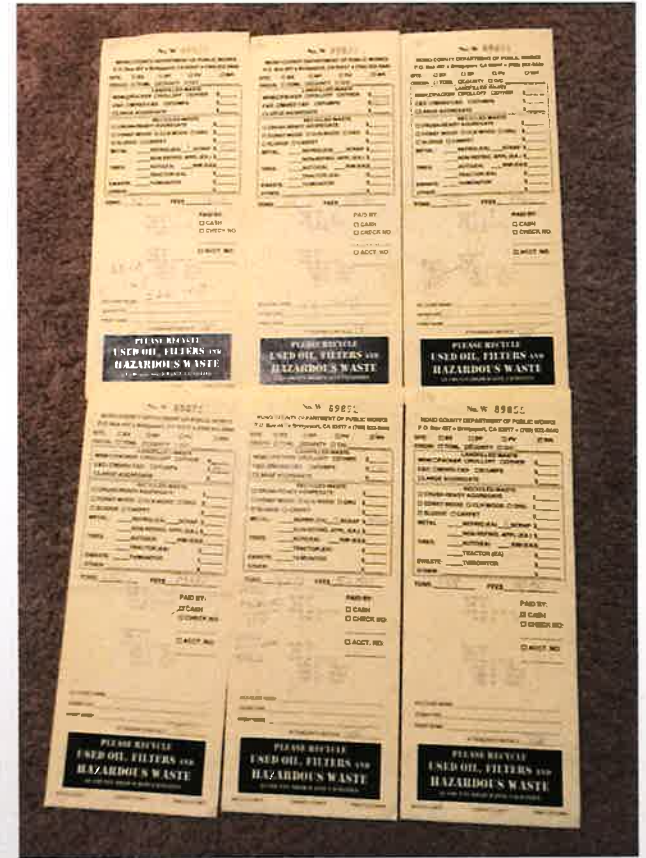












30,000 Gallon water tank for fire safety




We will clean this land up and make a little farm



This is North River Lane





This is taken from the POV of our greenhouse – we see a barn peak very similar to ours





This is taken from the POV of our greenhouse – we see a 20' tall shed





## 'States that Legalize Recreational Cannabis See an Immediate Bump in Home Values Following Legalization,' Says Real Estate Report

**Civilized.**

*Los Angeles*  
MAGAZINE

The waterless vapor-phase system releases a mist of an odor-neutralizing vapor ...working sort of like a high-tech, industrial-grade spritz of Febreze... The vapor binds specifically with the fragrance compounds found in cannabis terpenes.

Results of the model suggest that higher intensity cannabis production is positively associated with land prices.

***Proceedings of the Coast Redwood Science Symposium—2016***

**MarketWatch**

- [The] findings build on research from the Cato Institute, a libertarian think-tank, which found that single-family homes within one-tenth of a mile of a cannabis retailer increased 8.4% in value as compared with homes located slightly further away.



324 N River Lane will be cleaned, cultivated, made safe and improved





# Pot-related home invasions in Sonoma County spur call for new restrictions on cannabis cultivation

J.D. MORRIS  
THE PRESS DEMOCRAT  
March 13, 2018

Seizing on a pair of recent cannabis-related home-invasion robberies in Sonoma County, neighborhood activists Tuesday called on the Board of Supervisors to tighten restrictions on pot farming despite strong resistance from industry representatives.

Critics cited particular concerns about one operation moving forward near their homes in Penngrove, but they called for major changes to the county's overall approach to cannabis in light of the pot-related invasions by East Coast gunmen into three homes west of Petaluma before dawn Monday.

That incident came little more than a month after two Feb. 8 pot-related home invasions outside Santa Rosa left one man dead and another wounded.

Intruders found no cannabis at any of the locations in the Santa Rosa and Petaluma invasions, though there was evidence that pot cultivation and sales had taken place at one of the Santa Rosa homes, the Sheriff's Office said.

"How many more of these need to happen before the board takes some kind of measure to revamp the ordinance that we have?" asked Penngrove resident Chuck Pinnow. "How many people have to die, how many bullets have to go into homes, nurseries, living rooms before anything is done?"

Yet cannabis farmers and industry advocates who turned out to the board meeting in force warned additional burdens would only hamper a business the county has worked for years to bring out of the shadows.

Lauren Mendelsohn, a local cannabis attorney, asked supervisors to "stand firm" in their decision to allow commercial pot farming in agriculturally zoned areas and resist neighborhood activists' calls to confine cultivation to industrial areas. Mendelsohn also sought to distance law-abiding cannabis farmers who are going through the county's permitting process from the recent home invasions.

"As tragic as that is, there's no evidence that any of the houses that were recently victimized were part of this permit program," Mendelsohn said. "Licensed properties must have security measures in place that are designed to prevent that."

Beyond restricting commercial cultivation to industrial zones, cannabis critics also want supervisors to stop issuing commercial growing permits until they revise the county's pot rules. And they're seeking a cap on the number of cultivation permits the county will issue.

“Residents voted to legalize marijuana for adult use — they did not vote to have them in their neighborhoods next door to where they raise their families,” said Penngrove resident Cindy Schellenberg.

Supervisor Susan Gorin — who led Tuesday’s board meeting because Chairman James Gore is visiting disaster-affected areas in Florida and Puerto Rico this week — said she hoped to address some of the concerns during a cannabis-related discussion at the April 10 board meeting.

Gorin also read a statement from the office of Supervisor David Rabbitt, who represents Petaluma and Penngrove but was on a lobbying trip in Washington, D.C. The statement said Rabbitt was engaged “very thoughtfully and carefully” and he was “looking forward to a robust discussion on cannabis issues, especially in light of yet another home invasion.”

Supervisor Shirlee Zane described the home invasions as “terrifying” and called on the Sheriff’s Office and the District Attorney’s office to calculate how much resources they devote to fighting cannabis-related crimes, data she hoped could inform the board’s future deliberations.

“There’s a lot of good players in the cannabis industry, but there’s some awfully bad ones, too,” Zane said. “For your sake, you want the bad ones out of there.”

The county’s current cannabis rules already place a heavy burden on the industry, supporters said. Caren Woodson, compliance director for SPARC Peace in Medicine, told supervisors pot farmers must invest “a literal fortune” just to get a permit and are “guaranteed nothing” even if they receive one from the county.

“Success requires us to accept compromise, and that means accepting things that we do not all like,” Woodson said. “Most of all, success requires us to address real problems, not the perception of them. ... Righting a century of bad policy is not easy, but it’s the righteous thing to do, and I appreciate your effort.”

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## **Related Stories**

**[Old marijuana farm may have been target of Petaluma home invaders](#)**

**[For 2nd time in 5 weeks, East Coast gunmen bust into local homes looking for pot](#)**

**[Family: Santa Rosa home-invasion victim shot 10 times](#)**

## **STUDIES SHOW THAT MARIJUANA HAS HIGH LEVELS OF CONTAMINANTS INCLUDING PESTICIDES, FUNGUS, HEAVY METALS AND SOLVENTS**

Several studies show that marijuana products have high levels of chemical contamination and pesticides. This is true even in states such as Colorado and California that have had “medical” marijuana for several years. See the attached articles.

A cancer patient in California may have been killed by a fungus in his “medical” marijuana. [FN1]

The Smithsonian reported that “medical” marijuana in Colorado is often laced with pesticides, heavy metals and fungus. [FN2]

The Huffington Post reports that marijuana pesticide contamination is widespread and in some cases pesticide residue levels are 1,600 times greater than the legal desirable amount. [FN3]

The Journal of Toxicological Sciences published a study that showed that over 80% of 57 “medical” marijuana concentrate samples tested positive for pesticides and or residual solvents such as butane and propane. [FN4]

A study in California showed that in 93% of samples of marijuana from 15 marijuana dispensaries there were pesticides. [FN5]

A university research study showed that there was potentially lethal bacteria and mold on “medical” marijuana obtained from 20 marijuana growers and dispensaries. [FN6]

An American Epilepsy Society (AES) study showed that children with epilepsy in Colorado who are given cannabis oils are having developmental regression, intractable vomiting and worsening seizures that can be so severe they have to put the child into a coma to get the seizures to stop. Because these products are unregulated, it is impossible to know if these dangerous adverse reactions are due to the oils or because of contaminants found in these preparations. [FN7]

In a 2017 study, 80 percent of marijuana tested from California growers and dispensaries, was tainted with mold, fungus, bacteria, pesticides, or harmful solvents. The popular concentrates and oils used in vaporizers and dabs, because they're concentrated, may contain much higher amounts of the toxins. Much of the marijuana sold in California's 1,000-plus dispensaries every year is dirty. [FN8]

In Massachusetts at one medical marijuana dispensary there was a claim of the presence of mold as well as hydrogen peroxide used to clean affected cannabis. Said one source: “When I worked in cultivation everyone was getting red rashes. ... No ventilation in the room and certainly no one forcing us to wear a mask for safety.” [FN9]

“Medical” marijuana products are smoked, inhaled through vaporizers, ingested in food and drinks. Pesticides, fungus and solvents are also being inhaled and ingested. The marijuana industry cares for profits more than they do about selling safe products.

## References

[FN1]

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/contaminated-medical-marijuana-pot-believed-to-have-killed-cancer-patient/>

[FN2]

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/modern-marijuana-more-potent-often-laced-heavy-metals-and-fungus-180954696/>

[FN3]

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/24/marijuana-pesticides-contamination\\_n\\_3328122.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/24/marijuana-pesticides-contamination_n_3328122.html)

[FN4] <https://news.lift.co/cannabis-concentrate-contaminants/>

[FN5]

<http://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/I-Team-Marijuana-Pot-Pesticide-California-414536763.html>

[FN6] <http://www.sacbee.com/news/local/health-and-medicine/article131391629.html>

[FN7] <https://calmusa.org/calmcablog/letteramericanepilepticsociety>

[FN8] [http://sfist.com/2017/08/31/80\\_percent\\_of\\_medical\\_marijuana\\_tes.php](http://sfist.com/2017/08/31/80_percent_of_medical_marijuana_tes.php)

<https://modernluxury.com/san-francisco/story/whats-the-matter-california-cannabis>

[FN9] <https://digboston.com/is-there-moldy-cannabis-in-mass/>

January 16, 2018



# Cultivating Disaster:

*The Effect of Cannabis Cultivation  
on the Environment of Calaveras County*

## Study Executive Summary

**Background:** The *Cultivating Disaster Study* was commissioned by Dennis Millis, the 4<sup>th</sup> District County Supervisor, of Calaveras County. It was completed with the help and input from public officials and relevant agencies and the public. It also includes research and analysis from leading academic institutions and media. The study was prepared with the assistance of The Communications Institute (TCI). The Institute, founded in Los Angeles in 2003, has conducted numerous national and state based studies and educational programs analyzing complex public policy issues including a focus on land use policy and the environment.

**History:** Over the past several years, Calaveras County has experienced a dramatic increase in the cultivation of Cannabis or marijuana. The previous Calaveras County Board of Supervisors approved an ordinance that would permit temporary cultivation of marijuana. This was a huge mistake in ever allowing any cultivation of the drug without adequate understanding of the impact of such activity on the county's environment, health, and public welfare and safety. It also did not consider the impact cultivation of marijuana on the steep sloping foothills on water quality. The chemicals flowed from the growing sites into the watershed. It should be noted none of the chemicals has been approved on these crops for growth and pest control.



**Key Findings:** The following are among the key points in the study:

1. **Marijuana Cultivation Has Damaged the Environment** - The study documents how marijuana cultivation has poisoned and damaged other areas over many years. It provides an in-depth analysis of the damage to The Eel River in Northern California. The river stretching 196 miles in northwestern portion of the state. The study includes numerous analysis from experts at Stanford, Yale, Scientific American, University of California and Harvard. One expert from Yale noted:

*"You have one of the world's most fragile, erosive landscapes, a landscape that is very easy to damage further. The guerilla growers are building poorly engineered, illegal roads, scraping off the forest, and then sometimes putting hastily dug trenches that are just lined with plastic, high in the landscape so they can gravity-feed the water to their marijuana plants. And those can fail, taking hillsides down into the rivers."*



The Polluted Eel River up

2. **Scope and Depth Problem Not Understood** - There are an estimated 1200 sites according to law enforcement. California Department of Fish and Wildlife noted recently speaking about Calaveras County, "We are aware of the seriousness of your problem but I don't know who is going to help to come in and clean it up". The use of the words "overloaded, understaffed, trying to get up to speed, and evolving process" are common when speaking with state agencies about the county's environmental problems associated with marijuana cultivation in the county.



Calaveras County Cannabis Sites

3. **Numerous Environmental Violations** - Local authorities have documented what has been found on seventeen specific sites with chemicals and fertilizers. The State of California has issued 157 environmental citations were issued on 30 grow sites eradicated. In all, the Calaveras County Sheriff's Office reported 97 California Department of Fish and Wildlife violations, 29 water quality violations, 24 water rights violations and five Cal Fire land conservation infractions were noted at the pot farms. This is not a complete list since all 1,200 sites have not been surveyed.

4. **Dangerous/Inappropriate Chemicals Used By Growers** - The chemicals used by growers damaging the environment, are not approved for use in cannabis cultivation and some are illegal. The following is a list of some of the chemicals found on sites in Calaveras County:

- Carbofuran (banned in the USA)
- Tripicote
- Ammonium sulfate
- Diamond Nector Humic Acids/Phosphates
- Snow Story Ultra Potassium Supplement
- Sonic Bloom with vitamin B1
- Butane
- Romeo Fertilizer
- Unknown Rodent killers
- Mighty Growth Enhancer
- PH Down Phosphoric Aid
- Ammoniacal Nitrogen
- Massive Bloom formulation
- Emerald Goddess
- Liquid Insect Killing Soap
- Bio Root
- Miscellaneous bulk fertilizer

5. **Millions to Billions in Cleanup Costs** - In the hazardous materials clean-up process post Butte Fire, the county spent an estimated \$200,000 per location to mitigate private properties and deem them safe for re-entry. Most of those costs were recovered from property insurance carriers. Using the Sheriff's estimate of 1,200 illegal grows, the mitigation costs for grow sites could approach \$240 million. Another expert working with the US Forest Service believes costs could be as much as \$2 billion to clean up all of the sites following USFS protocols. Currently only 2 of the sites have been cleaned up (butane tanks). No sites where eradication has occurred have been mitigated.



6. **Water Pollution: No Equal Regulations for Pot** - Marijuana growers are not complying with environmental requirements placed on all farmers in California. They must comply with strict requirements in the application of chemicals and fertilizers. Products used must be labeled as approved for use on the agricultural product being grown with application rates, methods, time of day, wind speed, containment, and in the case of chemicals OSHA compliant safety equipment used and blood testing of workers. There is no such requirement in marijuana cultivation.

- **Example of Inequity:** Vineyards need to complete a 71-page State Water Resources Board Form just for Water Discharge while the complete application for a marijuana farm is just 5 pages
- **Water Testing** - Independent experts have conducted random sampling of local ponds. The testing reveals that two thirds of the samples found cyanobacteria, proven to be a deadly poison to humans, fish, and animals. The result of nitrate overloading in streams and waterways, cyanobacteria is a form of algae that is used as a marker to indicate severe environmental compromise to streams, as in the case study on the Eel River.

7. **Documented Environmental Violations** – The United States Government and local and state government have identified the following problems beyond chemical pollution including:

- Diesel fuel in streams
- Water diversion
- Clear cutting-deforestation
- Sediment in stream from grading
- Diesel oil leaking into soil
- Steelhead and Coho Salmon impacted
- Golden Eagles seen at our county landfill, where marijuana is buried.
- Grading with no permits.
- **Union Democrat Published Examples:** *Human waste was funneled down the hillside through a hole carved in a manmade bathroom that contaminated a nearby creek whenever wet weather would pass through. ....Harmful chemicals seeped into the ground from what remained inside pesticide containers carelessly tossed into a pile of garbage when no longer useful.*
- **Imported Soils** – County officials have seen the importation specialty soils (soils on steroids specifically designed to grow marijuana) contained in bags by the truck loads and truck loads of soil only, delivered to sites that continue to expand operations in violation of the Urgency Ordinance

8. **Water Quality in Question** – There is limited testing being conducted by local water providers to identify if dangerous chemicals are leaching into local water supply or in waste water treatment systems.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the findings and analysis in the report, the following are recommendations to deal with the problems identified in the report. We urge elected officials on the federal, state, and local levels carefully consider the findings of the report and take immediate action to repair that environmental damage caused by Cannabis Cultivation in Calaveras County and how to return the land to its previous condition.

- **Calaveras County Ordinance** – The Calaveras County Board of Supervisors should pass an ordinance banning the cultivation of marijuana or cannabis in both the open and in-door facilities. The county should address how to monitor and control waste discharge from Proposition 64 growing. The county and agencies such as the Calaveras County Water District are currently not prepared to test or treat the dangerous chemicals that have been found in the production of the product. Most importantly, a great deal of ecological damage has already occurred because of the legal and illegal production. It is clear that the previous Board of Supervisors did a terrible disservice to the citizenry and the ecology of the region by allowing any production without any serious environmental analysis of its production on the local environment.
- **Calaveras Ecological Task Force (CETF)** – We propose the creation of a task force involving all agencies federal, state, regional and local to work together to eradicate illegal growing, clean up the environment, and deal with law enforcement/public safety issues. There is a desperate need for a coordinated response to deal with the problem. It is our hope that the response in this county would be a model for other counties or regions in the nation in coping with the ticking time bomb of ecological disaster, the contamination of our water supplies to include a declaration of emergency until such time the scope is fully understood.
- **Water Quality Analysis** – We recommend that the United States Environmental Protection Agency undertake a study of the impact of the ecological damage to the water quality in the county and propose steps that should be taken to protect the watersheds and provide a plan for the clean-up. This is critically important not only for the county but for the millions of Californians and agriculture that depends upon clean water emanating from our Sierra Nevada Watershed. State of California Water Agencies should also be requested by the County with support of State Legislators to take action consistent with US EPA and working with the California Fish and Game.
- **Law Enforcement** – We recommend that the United States Drug Enforcement Administration take action to evaluate grant money and manpower support to eradicate illegal marijuana production and insure the shutting down of legal operations includes their complete clean up. The county should continue to fund contractors to assist with eradication along with all interagency cooperation available. It is not about how much money will come from state or federal agencies, it is about the political will to develop cooperative efforts using outside manpower and equipment in assisting. This does not include environmental clean-up or remediation within the watersheds.
- **Prosecution** – We propose that the District Attorney of Calaveras County work with the United States and California Attorney Generals to prosecute those that have broken federal and state laws and county ordinances and seek full prosecution criminally and/or civilly and explore seeking funding to pay for the cleanup of the land in the county. There needs to be a true cost recovery with a Nexus study to verify what costs should be implemented across all departments.

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John Peters



# Cultivating Disaster:

*The Effect of Cannabis Cultivation  
on the Environment of Calaveras County*

A Report from  
Dennis Mills  
The Office of District 4 Supervisor  
Calaveras County

Prepared with



October 2017

Embargoed to October 17, 2017

[www.silentpoison.com](http://www.silentpoison.com)

# Acknowledgements

*A special thank you to those many volunteers and officials from the public and private sector that spent countless hours of their time in assembling the research, interviewing those that are working on the front lines, and confirming the data contained in this report. This was more than just hours of your time but clearly shows your desire to protect the future of Calaveras County and the environment where you live.*

*We also want to acknowledge the important work by those in the public sector here in Calaveras County but also our friends and colleagues work in the government of the United States and the State of California. The work of the Sheriff's Office of Calaveras County is particularly noteworthy along with many county offices and notably the County Office of Code Compliance.*

*Finally, it is important to thank those in journalism who have engaged in fine news reporting to uncover the truth of the ecological damage being caused by marijuana cultivation. We also want to thank United States Congressman Tom McClintock and his office in their efforts to bring this ecological nightmare to federal authorities.*

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# Table of Contents

<b>Preface</b>	Page 7
<b>Introduction</b>	Page 9
<b>Putting Environmental Contamination of Water in Perspective</b>	Page 11
<b>Cannabis Cultivation in Calaveras County</b>	Page 13
<b>The Green Rush in Calavaras County</b>	Page 16
<b>Identified Problems</b>	Page 18
<b>US Department of Interior Analysis</b>	Page 24
<b>Summary and Recommendations</b>	Page 27
<b>Final Thoughts</b>	Page 29
<b>Bibliography</b>	Page 31
• <b>The Environmental Impacts of Marijuana in California</b>	Page 33
• <b>Scientific American: Burgeoning Marijuana Market Prompts Concerns about Crop's Environmental Impact</b>	Page 34
• <b>Science Daily: Marijuana's hidden price: Environmental impact</b>	Page 36
• <b>The High Environmental Cost of Illicit Marijuana Cultivation</b>	Page 37
• <b>High Time for Conservation: Adding the Environment to the Debate on Marijuana Liberalization</b>	Page 40
• <b>Study Shows Marijuana is Sucking the Eel River Dry</b>	Page 43
• <b>Legally Grown Pot Still Has a Toxic Pesticide Problem</b>	Page 45
• <b>Pleasure, Panacea, Poison? The little-known health effects of marijuana</b>	Page 49
• <b>Illegal Pot Farms Are Poisoning California's Forests</b>	Page 53



## Preface

Calaveras County is truly a remarkable place. Recently our county was ranked as one the top 14 places to live in the United States, ranking ahead of counties like Napa. When walking through our foothills, there is a marvelous serenity of silence as one listens to the wind blow through the tall trees. That silence is marvelous but there is a growing threat to that beauty and peace of the county. There is, what could be called, a ***Silent Poison*** creeping into our environment that is significantly and negatively impacting our wonderful area for generations.

Over the past four years, Calaveras County has experienced a dramatic increase in the cultivation of cannabis or marijuana. The Calaveras County Board of Supervisors approved an ordinance that would permit temporary legal production of marijuana. This was a huge mistake in ever allowing any cultivation of the drug without adequate understanding of the impact of the industry on the county's environment, health, and public welfare.

Most local news coverage here has been focused on the serious law enforcement/public safety problems caused particularly by irresponsible growers. However, there is increasing evidence that cannabis production in our county and other counties around the nation is having an appalling impact on the environment. The use of dangerous chemicals has had serious effect on the watersheds throughout the west. An important example is the Eel River in Northern California where a large portion of the river has been polluted and poisoned. A crisis in water quality has been created there.

We now have a ***Silent Poison*** in our foothills that is polluting our water quality and it will take years if not decades to clean up. The purpose of this paper, ***Cultivating Disaster***, is to assess the damage to the environment caused by marijuana production. This report includes in-depth analysis by scientists, government regulators, and respected news organizations.

We appreciate the assistance of The Communications Institute (TCI) in the creation of ***Cultivating Disaster***. TCI has conducted many studies and public policy educational programs for more than a decade working with major academic institutions such as The RAND Corporation, University of Southern California, University of Arizona, the US National Energy Laboratories, and many others. TCI programs have included topics such as energy, health, land use policy, and immigration and has the knowledge and ability to tackle this important subject.

It is ironic that our community, site of much of the Gold Rush, is now experiencing a new invasion of treasure seekers whose new "gold" is "pot.". This is the ***Green Rush*** as opposed to the ***Gold Rush***. This report reviews this important comparison.

***Cultivating Disaster*** assesses the problem but also provides some specific recommendations to meet the challenges caused by production of cannabis in our county. The environmental challenges and complications are huge but too many policy makers and the public itself have no understanding of the ecological time bomb now in our foothills caused by the production of a substance even the United States Government finds is a dangerous drug.

We hope this study will promote intelligent public debate and steps by all levels of government to deal with this problem.

Sincerely,

**Dennis Mills**  
**Member of the Board of Supervisors**  
**County of Calaveras**  
San Andreas, California





**Algae in pond**



**Unabated water run-off**



**Size of grow sites**



**Proximity to neighbors**



**Watershed not protected**



**No remediation after eradication**



**Vegetation destruction**



**More algae in ponds**

# Introduction

Over the past several years, news organizations have given massive coverage to the movement to legalize the sale of marijuana or cannabis in United States, The Washington Post, among many media touted the “economic benefit” of the growing and selling the drug but ignore the real cost to communities and society. The Post noted: *“Setting up marijuana nurseries and dispensaries would be the first step for the states that voted in favor of medical marijuana. These would not only create jobs but also set the ball rolling for economic activity in the pot industry in these areas.”* The Post totally missed the real story. This study reviews one of those costs ignored by too many in the media for far too long, the impact of cultivation on the environment.

Another research study estimated that at least 81,000 additional direct, indirect and induced jobs in California as a result of legalized marijuana production and sales. It also projected an increase in total labor income by at least \$3.5 billion. Various studies contend California will benefit with large amounts of revenue, taxes and jobs but the big unanswered question is **“At what cost?”**

In 1849 California experienced huge economic and population growth with the Gold Rush. This study will discuss the impact, positive and negative in the following pages. Clearly now, nearly 170 years later, our state is beginning to understand the environmental impact of what could be called the “Green Rush.” However, we are discovering while it is a race for the green of money, it is having a detrimental impact on the “green” of the environment in California today.

**Silent Poison-** In 1962 Environmentalist Rachel Carson authored the book *Silent Spring*, that focused on the ecological degradation of the environment caused by the misuse of chemicals. It is important to note that the proper use of chemicals in agriculture, industry, and in our homes, is very beneficial. It is the misuse of the chemicals that is important to understand. It is the Silent Poison emanating from marijuana cultivation that is the purpose of this report.

We have entitled this report *Cultivating Disaster* in order to bring needed attention to the quiet seeping of dangerous chemicals into our creeks, streams and rivers and eventually our homes here in Calaveras County caused by this cultivation. Now is the time to take action.

**Impact of Cannabis Cultivation** - The growth of cannabis cultivation in Calaveras County has been significant with incredible ramifications on the public’s health and safety. There has been much written and discussed on the impact on public safety but relatively insignificant attention to the environmental impact as our rivers and streams are being silently poisoned. Few media have covered the environmental impact of the growing of marijuana and the use of high potency fertilizers and toxic chemicals to produce it.

The Scientific American published an important article earlier this year on the impact of marijuana cultivation on the environment. The article noted that without an effort to cope with the negative impact on the environment, the chemicals and water required for cannabis cultivation will have a terrible impact on the environment. The article featured U.C. Berkeley ecologist Mary Power who warns, *“summer plantations could transform local rivers from cool and “salmon-sustaining” to systems full of toxic cyanobacteria. Over eons of evolution native salmon species have adapted to “deluge or drought” conditions, she says. But the double whammy of climate change and water extraction could prove to be a game-changer.”*

**Eel River** – The Eel River is major California River stretching 196 miles in northwestern California. Its environmental quality has been seriously compromised. The attached Bibliography includes articles documenting the pollution of the Eel River in northern California by chemicals used in cannabis cultivation.

The Yale University School of Forestry and Environmental Studies paper, noted earlier, points out the pollution caused by the heavy use of nitrates and other chemicals in cannabis growing. The paper declares:



*Mary Power, a biologist at the University of California, Berkeley, has studied the situation firsthand in the Eel River watershed in Mendocino County. In an interview with Yale Environment 360, Power describes how marijuana growers in that region now siphon off scarce water resources, poison wildlife, erode fragile soils, and overload waters with nutrients.*

## Chemicals and Marijuana

There are two key health and environmental impacts of marijuana production:

1. **Impact on the Environment** – Land and water is being polluted by the often illegal and over use of chemicals notably *nitrates*. This is of direct concern to Calaveras County. We do not want to permit further contamination of our county by cannabis cultivation.
2. **Agriculture Chemicals and the Pot Consumer** – Another little considered impact of chemicals in production, is their impact on the product that pot users ultimately consume. There is no required testing of cannabis, sold to the public, by Federal Agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration. The public's health is not protected.

The Huffington Post recently noted:

*Many of the chemicals applied to pot plants are intended only for lawns and other non-edibles. Medical cannabis samples collected in Los Angeles have been **found to contain pesticide residues at levels 1600 times the legal digestible amount.***

*Because the product is generally inhaled rather than eaten, any toxins it carries have an even more direct route into the lungs and blood stream. Raber noted the situation is all the more concerning for patients smoking medical cannabis, whose health problems could make them more vulnerable to the risks pesticide exposure brings — especially if they suffer from a liver disease.*

While this paper focuses on the first impact – **the environment**, we believe that policy makers should also be looking more carefully at the impact chemicals in marijuana production have on the long-term health of the consumer.

We hope that this paper *Cultivating Disaster* will bring to the attention of policy makers, the public and the media the necessity of ending the environmental destruction caused by cannabis/marijuana cultivation on the health and welfare of the people of Calaveras County but also the region and the nation.

# Putting Environmental Contamination of Water in Perspective

According to the United States Environmental Agency (EPA), the Clean Water Act is the central federal law dealing with the pollution of our streams and rivers. The EPA notes: The Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1948 was the first major U.S. law to address water pollution. Growing public awareness and concern for controlling water pollution led to sweeping amendments in 1972. As amended in 1972, the law became commonly known as the Clean Water Act (CWA). At that time the vast majority of rivers in our country were suffering from various levels of contamination.

Notably the Potomac River that flows through the nation's capitol was a brown mess full of old tires, dead animals, and other disgusting debris. It was a mess. Today, any visitor to Washington will see the huge change in the Potomac. The focus on Clean Water by Congress and President Nixon then was vital to restoring our nations rivers and streams.



The Clean Water Act included these important elements to protecting our nations water:

- Established the basic structure for regulating pollutant discharges into the waters of the United States.
- Gave EPA the authority to implement pollution control programs such as setting wastewater standards for industry.
- Maintained existing requirements to set water quality standards for all contaminants in surface waters.
- Made it unlawful for any person to discharge any pollutant from a point source into navigable waters, unless a permit was obtained under its provisions.
- Funded the construction of sewage treatment plants under the construction grants program.
- Recognized the need for planning to address the critical problems posed by nonpoint source pollution.

**Application to Cannabis Cultivation** - In the consideration of impacts created by cannabis cultivation, it is clear that there has been little application of these federal laws in the permitting or operating marijuana cultivation here or probably other areas of California and the nation.

The State Water Board's website notes that in November 2016, California voters voted in favor of Proposition 64, which permits non-medical use of cannabis for adults over the age of 21. The Water Board said the passage of this new legislation regarding cannabis use, distribution, manufacturing, cultivation and transportation brings with it new regulatory requirements.

Supposedly Cannabis cultivators are now required to obtain a state and local cultivation license and must meet all state and local environmental regulations including the Water Code, Basin Plan, and Clean Water Act. This law clearly has not been enforced. Even the state notes "*Cannabis cultivation can cause significant environmental damage, including discharges of polluted wastes to surface water and groundwater, erosion and sedimentation, and illegal diversions of surface water. The environmental provisions of MCRSA and Prop 64 are more important now than ever to limit environmental degradation associated with cannabis cultivation as the new legislation will bring existing cultivators into a regulatory framework and new cultivators will join the growing market.*"

Our research reveals that the state and federal regulations presented on the State Water Board Website have been ignored by policy makers and most growers.

**Impact of Water Pollution** – There are many examples of the negative impact of water contamination.

- **Hinckley Incident** - The Hinckley incident in southern California is example of a drinking water contamination *Disaster*. This prompted in a communitywide class action law suit as presented in the movie, in 2000, *Erin Brockovich*. It started between the year 1952 and 1956 when many people had reported falling ill—while some even died from the exposure! After drinking the water, residents showed extremely high risk for breast, lung, brain and gastrointestinal cancer, kidney and ovarian tumors, miscarriage and Hodgkin's disease. This was years after the contamination was first noted.
- **North Carolina Incident-** In May 2015, people who live near Coal Ash Pond in North Carolina were advised not to drink their water as it contains high level of toxic heavy metals. As reported, 152 out of 163 water wells were tested for ground water contamination. Sadly, the wells did not pass the state standards for groundwater. Traces of lead, vanadium and hexavalent chromium were found in the drinking water in the area resulting in health impacts on the public.

In each of these cases or other environmental disasters like the nuclear pollution of Rocky Flats near Denver or the Hanford Nuclear Reservation on the Columbia River, policy makers and the public were not aware of the contamination until years or even decades after the pollution occurred. The goal of environmental laws analysis is to reduce or eliminate the negative impact of man's activity in the environment.

**Agriculture and controls** - It appears the laws that all farmers in our state must follow, have been discarded by too many marijuana growers and particularly those growing the plant illegally. Agriculture in California follows strict requirements in the application of chemicals and fertilizers, the label is the law. Products used must be labeled as approved for use on the agricultural product being grown with application rates, methods, time of day, wind speed, containment, and in the case of chemicals OSHA compliant safety equipment used and blood testing of workers. Air and water monitoring both upstream and downstream are often required to insure there is no migration to neighboring property via air or into adjacent streams. In some cases, neighbors must be notified.

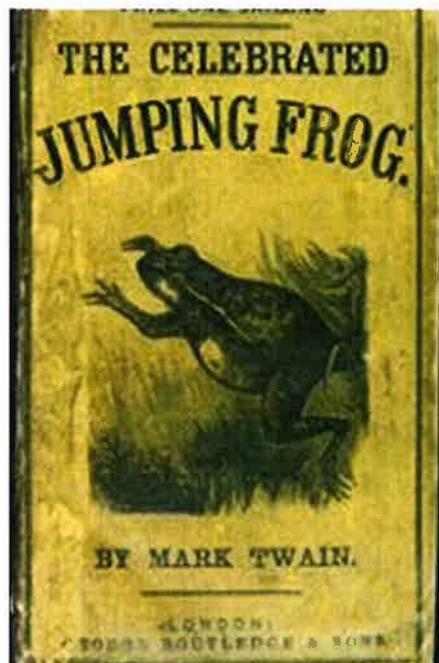
This discussion is about the lack of controls in the use of chemicals and fertilizers on marijuana in Calaveras County and other counties throughout the foothills and nation. The result is unknown levels of environmental damage left behind. Chemical fertilizers are often salty, contributing to additional environmental loading in watersheds. Fertilizers with high nitrates are of particular concern as nitrate loading contributes to cyanobacteria which kills fish and animals. Nitrates from water treatment plants and agricultural dischargers are closely monitored by the state due to the proven environmental damage high nitrate levels can do to the ecological food chain.

Marijuana growing does not fall into any level of agricultural controls for use of chemicals or fertilizers within the state currently. Logging of what combinations of chemicals are used in a specific grow is optional at this time.

**Summary** - It is clear that the imposition of commercial or even private cultivation of marijuana damages water quality, the environment, fisheries, and the public's health as shown by the Eel River disaster. It is also clear policy makers need to address this reality as they make decisions and insure current federal and state law is abided.

State and federal water agencies need to work particularly with rural counties like Calaveras in addressing the distressing impact of marijuana cultivation on the local environment. Unlike the previous examples, we know **now** that our region has big problems! We do not have to wait decades to discover them.

## Cannabis Cultivation in Calaveras County



Calaveras County has long been known for its rich history dating back to Mark Twain and his story, "*The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*." Our county has been known also for its marvelous Giant Sequoia trees, wonderful vistas, rolling hills, great wines, and whitewater rafting. However, perhaps its most important attribute is the clean abundant water provided to millions of California and contributing to the agricultural engine of the state.

Gold prospecting played a huge role in Calaveras County's history which began in late 1848 with a camp founded by Henry and George Angel. According to researchers, the brothers first arrived in California as soldiers, serving under Colonel Frémont during the Mexican War. Following the war's end, the brothers found themselves in Monterey where they heard of the fabulous finds in the gold fields. They joined the Carson-Robinson party of prospectors and set out for the mines. The company parted ways upon reaching what later became known as Angels Creek and that little miners' town eventually became known as Angels Camp. Calaveras County was the home of the Mother Lode which is the large quartz deposit filled with Gold.

Today, Calaveras County is the home of a growing wine industry, and other agricultural products like olive oil. It has become a huge year-round recreational center and is home to 45,000 people. Increasingly many Californians have moved to the country as a prime location to retire and even continue work in a variety of industries. It is also home to thousands who work in the public and private sectors in the Central Valley.

**The Green Rush and the County** - Today the county has a relatively new industry, purported by owners to provide a great potential benefit to the county; the cultivation of Marijuana. In reality the drug Marijuana has been grown in some form within Calaveras County since before the gold rush. Over the past decades, locals would find hidden out of the way spots to grow a few plants "out back" or under the trees in some remote location of which they knew only a few people were aware. There was no intention to make money growing "pot" or even to grow the most potent new forms, it was for their personal use and they quietly went about their business with little attention paid to their activity.

**Marijuana Cultivation Today** - All of this was changed in 2010. California voters considered a proposal to legalize the sale and cultivation of marijuana with Proposition 19 (also known as the Regulate, Control & Tax Cannabis Act) on the November 2, 2010 statewide ballot. It was defeated, with 53.5% of California voters voting "No" and 46.5% voting "Yes." In California, the possession or use of marijuana for recreational purposes was illegal going into the election in November 2016. The passage of Proposition 215 in 1996 legalized medical marijuana. Although the Department of Justice under President Obama did not prosecute most individuals and businesses following state and local marijuana laws, both medical and recreational marijuana were still illegal under federal law in 2016.

Voters passed Proposition 64 on November 8, 2016 to permit adults aged 21 years or older to possess and use marijuana for recreational purposes. The new law created two new taxes, one levied on cultivation and the other on retail price. The new law empowered Counties and municipalities to restrict where marijuana businesses could be located as land use decisions. Local governments were also allowed to completely ban the sale of marijuana from their jurisdictions. Moreover, local jurisdictions were allowed by the measure to "reasonably regulate" the personal growth, possession, and use of marijuana plants allowed by Prop. 64.

The debate over marijuana production in Calaveras County became critical in 2010 as the county began to change as noted by Joel Metzger of the Calaveras Enterprise in an article on Proposition 19. *“There was an air of anonymity and little in-depth analysis.”* Metzger noted *“In Calaveras, I doubt anybody growing legally is making \$500,000 a year; unless they are under the radar.”* The growing was done quietly, secretly, with as little attention paid to the activity as possible.

Despite the fact that marijuana cultivation was illegal in Calaveras County the 2015 Butte Fire, the fourteenth most destructive fire in the history of California, created a perfect opportunity for marijuana growers. The resulting lack of vegetation left marijuana growers little cover to hide their activities as it torched 110 square miles of critical watersheds which supplies the rest of the state with clean water. However, there was much open land for these illegal businesses to exploit.

After the fire, a large portion of the properties in the burn scar changed hands and the green rush was on. Growers were aware of the unique climate of Calaveras County and took advantage of the opportunity to purchase or lease any property available in hopes of cashing in on the political instability of the county.

*“Some people say Calaveras County has the best climate for growing marijuana, second only to the South American Andes”* according to Guy McCarthy, reporter for Sonora Union Democrat.



People from all over the United States and foreign countries arrived in the county to purchase or lease property for the sole purpose of making quick money. In some cases, when their fortunes turned, they abandoned the property leaving the environmental disaster behind for others the mitigate.

## Impact of Gold Rush on the Environment

This was reminiscent of the 1849 Gold rush. The Gold Rush is one of the most significant events that shaped America's history during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. In 1848 the total non-native population of California was 1,000 but in a year, it ballooned to 100,000. About 1,000 people lived in San Francisco in 1848 but the population grew 25-fold to 25,000 in just one year.

More than 750,000 pounds of gold, now valued at \$15.3 billion, was produced during those years. It is interesting to note that the estimate of the value from marijuana sales/production could be \$3 billion in 2018 to \$6.4 billion in 2020. As mentioned earlier in this report, in evaluating the benefit of the Gold Rush, the key question again needs to be asked *"At what cost?"*

Numerous experts have quantified the positive and negative impact of the Gold Rush on California. It is important to note that the product produced by gold rush was a precious mineral and not a mind-altering drug when used recreationally. The University of California Calsphere project has noted:



*"The Gold Rush, positive for California in so many ways, had a devastating effect on the state's environment. Many of these problems were directly related to gold-mining technology. The process of hydraulic mining, which became popular in the 1850s, caused irreparable environmental destruction.*

*The sediment washed away by hydraulic mining clogged riverbeds and lakes, threatening agriculture throughout the Central Valley. Conflicts over water arose between mining and farming interests. Hydraulic mining essentially came to an end in 1884 with the Sawyer Decision, legislation passed to resolve this conflict."*

The National Geographic published an important analysis on the ecological impact of the Gold Rush:

*According to Malcolm J. Rohrbough, a Gold Rush historian and the author of Days of Gold: The California Gold Rush and the American Nation, the countryside of California was torn up as the newly arrived settlers searched for gold. They used high-powered jets of water to wash away hillsides in a practice known as hydraulic mining, and burrowed thousands of mine shafts into the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains.*

*"Environmentally, the discovery of gold was a disaster," he says. "People described the California landscape as looking like it had been dug up by giant moles."*

*Eventually, the effects of mining began to harm a new industry developing in California's Central Valley during the mid-1800s. "The major impact it had was on agriculture, because the mining involved digging up the rivers and producing all this silt," Rohrbough says. "It also involved, in many cases, using mercury in the process of separating the gold out. All of this flowed downstream, and it heavily damaged the rivers as far as agricultural use is concerned."*

*Rohrbough says that throughout the 1860s and 1870s, a fierce conflict developed between the mining and agricultural industries. By the mid-1870s, the California government realized that agriculture was more lucrative than mining. They passed a series of laws that restricted the impact of mining on rivers.*

*"For example, they outlawed hydraulic mining," the historian notes. "They severely restricted dredging."*



## The “Green Rush”: Calaveras County

As with the Gold Rush, the Green Rush is creating huge and even more onerous environmental dangers because high potency fertilizers and chemicals today are much different than those available 170 years ago.

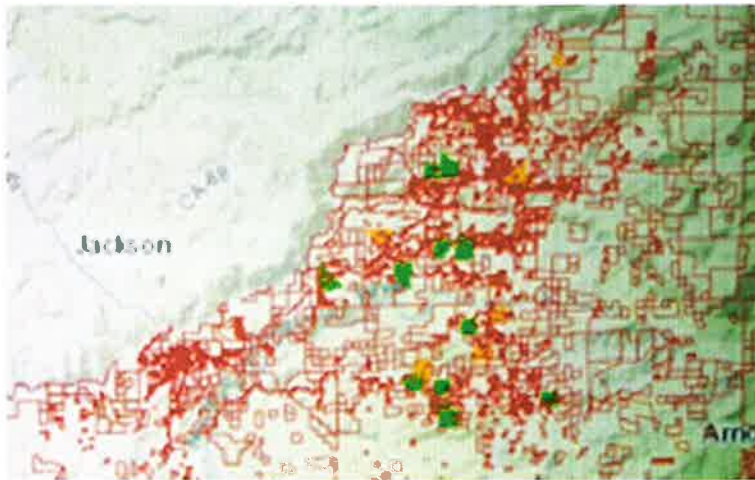
With only 184 permits issued and estimates of between 1200 to 1500 illegal grows operating in the County, the number of illegal grows coupled with the expansion of permitted grows has overwhelmed local governments ability to enforce even the most basic ordinances. Law enforcement and other agencies have destroyed tens of thousands of plants with little effect on the overall scope of the problem. This eradication by local agencies in removing plants, has left the majority of the environmental damage to the watershed behind. Removing empty containers and trash is only part of the solution. Testing the soils, monitoring the air and streams has yet to be started or understood.

Guy McCarthy of the *Union Democrat* pointed out in an article April of 2017 that there are about 1500 grows in Calaveras County.

### Number of Marijuana Grow Sites

The Urgency Ordinance adopted by the previous Calaveras County Board of Supervisors brought 737 commercial growers to admit their illicit activity to the local government. There were an additional 200 personal and caregiver grows that registered as well. The Sheriff in speaking to the Planning Commission on September 28, 2017 noted “*We know there are approximately 600 illegal grows through GIS, the problem with that is that it doesn't include anything that might be inside a building, it doesn't include anything that might be under canopy that we can't see*”.

The Sheriff also told the Planning Commission in the same meeting, “*My personal opinion there are probably 1200 illegal grows*”.



**Exhibit #1**

**Exhibit #1** is Global Information System (GIS) map of Supervisorial District 2 in Calaveras County. Each of the red areas depict potential marijuana cultivation parcels. Each of the green areas are permitted under the temporary urgency ordinance passed by the previous County Board of Supervisors. Orange represents pending action.



Exhibit #2

**Exhibit #2** illustrates the problem with the cultivation of marijuana in the foothills and is not unique to Calaveras County. This type of site is called a Tier Three Slope as noted in the State Waterboard Policy. This slope is a problem in the county because Tier Three is a common type of grow location in a county with many steep slopes. Many growers chose to level or terrace sites without grading permits or engineering. These steep slopes create soil erosion and biological degradation of creeks and streams because the chemically treated water and sediments flow directly into rivers and streams. This is a permitted grow site in Calaveras County.

## Cost of Clean Up

In the hazardous materials clean-up process post Butte Fire, the county spent an estimated \$200,000 per location to mitigate private properties and deem them safe for re-entry. Most of those costs were recovered from property insurance carriers. Using the Sheriff's estimate of 1,200 illegal grows, the mitigation costs for grow sites could approach \$240 million.

Add to this, if the cleanup estimate of \$200,000 is applied, there would be additional costs for, clean-up of permitted, verified, or validated sites which could add an additional \$147 million, pushing the total costs to almost \$400 million with the numbers currently provided.

However, other respected experts believe the costs will be much higher to clean up and mitigate these sites. Dr. Mourad Gabriel, of the Integral Ecology Research Center is working in conjunction with UC Davis and the US Forest Service to clean-up of sites on federal lands. He estimates costs to be \$1 million to \$3 million per site when OSHA safety protocols, testing, and hazard assessments are properly followed. This would result in costs of \$1.2 billion to clean up the environmental mess in just this county, let alone the rest of the counties damaged by the silt inflows into reservoirs (reducing storage capacity), nitrates and chemicals around the state.

Should the county initiate similar safety protocols as the US Forest Service, the costs quickly jump to nearly \$2 billion in this county alone. These costs do not include litigation with downstream water purveyors for causing harm to their water supplies and nor does it include potential Workman's Comp claims for not following OSHA hazardous material process protocols used by workers on Federal eradication sites, to protect our employees. This does not include costs for prosecution, eradication, or removal of trash! **Again, "at what cost?"**

## Identified Problems

Local authorities have documented what has been found on seventeen specific sites with hazardous materials in June 2017. During Operation Terminus in September, 157 state environmental citations were issued on 30 grow sites eradicated. In all, the Calaveras County Sheriff's Office reported 97 California Department of Fish and Wildlife violations, 29 water quality violations, 24 water rights violations and five Cal Fire land conservation infractions were noted at the pot farms.

The following is list of some of the chemicals found on marijuana sites in Calaveras County. These include:

- Carbofuran (banned in the USA)
- Tripicote
- Ammonium sulfate
- Diamond Nector Humic Acids/Phosphates
- Snow Story Ultra Potassium Supplement
- Sonic Bloom with vitamin B1
- Butane
- Romeo Fertilizer
- Unknown Rodent killers
- Mighty Growth Enhancer
- PH Down Phosphoric Aid
- Ammoniacal Nitrogen
- Massive Bloom formulation
- Emerald Goddess
- Liquid Insect Killing Soap
- Bio Root
- Miscellaneous bulk fertilizers

**Integral Ecology Research Center Findings - Dr. Mourad Gabriel** stated there have been 123 discrete chemicals found in US Forest Service eradications. Each of them is an independent test to determine toxicity and threat levels to humans and the environment. Exhibit #3, on the right, is a list of some of the chemicals identified by Dr. Gabriel as being used illegally on public lands. Dr. Gabriel further stated there is a cross migration between guerilla grows and permitted grows as workers carry their chemicals and knowledge with them to help others.

**United States Fish and Wildlife Service - Scott Bauer**, of the Fish and Wildlife Service, in an interview on September 20, 2017, noted the significant environmental problems in cannabis sites. They include the following:

- Diesel fuel in streams
- Water diversion
- Clear cutting-deforestation
- Sediment in stream from grading
- Diesel oil leaking into soil
- Steelhead and Coho Salmon impacted
- Golden Eagles seen at our county landfill, where marijuana is buried.

Bauer had other observations:

- Self-regulation won't work
- Too many growers don't want to be regulated
- Too often find growers smoking meth and carrying guns
- In the last four years grows increased by 61%
- It will take 5 years until the damage to fish and wildlife will be understood.

CARBAMATES	Organophosphates	Pyrethrins	Rodenticides
3-Hydroxycarbofuran	Diazinon	Allethrin	Zn Phosphide
Aldicarb Sulfone	Dicrotophos	Cyfluthrin	Aluminum Phosphide
Beodcarb	Dimethoate	Cypermethrin	Bromethalin
Carbofuran	Dioxathion	Fenvalerate	Cholecalciferol
Methocarb	Disulfoton	Permethrin (trans)	Strychnine
Methomyl	EPN	Pyrethrins	Brodifacoum
Mecarbamate	Ethion	Phenothrin	Bromadiolone
Oxamyl	Ethionop	Fenpropathrin	Chlorofacinone
Propoxur	Famphur	Bifenthrin	Coumatialor
	Fenamiphos	Deltamethrin	Difethialone
	Fensulfthion		Diphacinone
	Fenitrothion		Warfarin
	Fenofos		Difenacoum
	Isofenphos		
	Malathion		
	Methamidophos		
	Methidathion		
	Methyl Parathion		
	Mevinphos		
	Mecrotophos		
	Naled		
	Parathion		
	Phorate		
	Phosalone		
	Phosmet		
	Phosphamidon		
	Proterophos		
	Propetamphos		
	Ronnel		
	Tebufoz		
	Tetrachlorvinphos		
	Triazophos		
	Acephate		
	Azinphos methyl		
	Carbophenothion		
	Chlorfenvinphos		
	Chlorpyrifos		
	Coumaphos		
	Crotoxyphos		
	Cruformate		
	DUVP		
	DEF		
	Demeton-O		
	Demeton-S		

Exhibit #3 - Chemicals Found on Public Lands

**California State Fish and Game** – Lieutenant DeWayne Little of the California Fish and Game had important perceptions as well of the current production of marijuana. His observation included:

- Many licensed growers do not abide by the rules
- Identified use of the illegal chemical Carbofuran
- Pesticides used at grows are not approved for human consumption
- The State of California has not authorized any fertilizer or pesticide for application on marijuana.

Little noted that when Carbofuran is found on a site, the following actions should be taken:

- Lock down of site
- Complete assessment of human contamination including workers and animals
- Understand decontamination procedures
- Usually Carbofuran contamination resembles heat stroke and substances may be emitted from every orifice of the human body.
- Carbofuran has been found at multiple locations within Calaveras County.

## **News Coverage on Local Marijuana Growing**

Jason Cowan with the *Union Democrat* reported on an eradication on October 26, 2016 near West Point in Calaveras County:

*“Human waste was funneled down the hillside through a hole carved in a manmade bathroom that contaminated a nearby creek whenever wet weather would pass through. Harmful chemicals seeped into the ground from what remained inside pesticide containers carelessly tossed into a pile of garbage when no longer useful. Fallen trees that were chopped down without permission left a scar in the thick brush of the rural landscape. The devastation on the environment was apparent as Calaveras County Sheriff Rick DiBasilio detailed the scene from one of the three illegal marijuana grows busted Tuesday. The marijuana had a street value of about \$6.25 million.”*

Jason Cowan further reported on August 10, 2017:

*“They squatted near the water, tossing used paper into the creek bed as if it were a toilet. Pesticide containers were left uncapped and tipped on their sides, contents seeping out and saturating the ground. Some slept in tents, shacks, hammocks and other temporary quarters, tossing everyday trash into piles and letting it stand and rot. The environmental trauma was significant, say law enforcement officials.”*

*Much of the concern came from what would happen when the fluid (chemicals) drains into the earth before the rainy weather season.*

*“It’s only dangerous in high doses when you’re drinking this stuff,” DiBasilio said. “Running in the ground, it’s a concern when it’s raining and getting into our creeks, lakes and streams.”*

*Officials seized nearly 29,000 plants, 31 tons of unprocessed marijuana, 1,898 pounds of processed marijuana and 12 opium pods. Also found were 13 firearms, many that had the serial numbers scratched off, one piece of body armor and more than \$57,000 in cash.*

## California Fish and Wildlife Response to the DEIR

In responding to the Draft Environmental Impact Report on the Calaveras Ordinance Project, Tina Bartlett, Regional Manager for California Fish and Wildlife, stated, "Current cannabis cultivation activities within Calaveras County have led to significant environmental impacts, including habitat degradation, loss and fragmentation burying of streams, diversion of surface waters, and impacts to water quality including sediment, garbage, **pesticides** and petroleum products."

### Documented Examples of Environmental Damage

The following pictures present the challenges facing our law enforcement officers, prosecutors as well as staff from the departments of environmental health and code enforcement, and neighbors in dealing with hundreds of marijuana sites.



Exhibit # 4



Exhibit #5

**Illegal grading and terracing in steep terrain** – The effects of grading on neighboring creeks and streams with sedimentation is seen in Exhibits # 4 and #5. This grading alters the natural balance of the eco-system.



Exhibit #6

#### **Imported Soils** – (Exhibit #6)

County officials have seen the importation specialty soils (soils on steroids specifically designed to grow marijuana) contained in bags by the truck loads and truck loads of soil only, delivered to sites that continue to expand operations in violation of the Urgency Ordinance.

These soils then leach contaminants into the ground as the growers admit they “flush the plants” to remove as much chemicals and toxins as possible prior to harvest.



Exhibit #7 – Pictures of Chemical Containers on a site

**Fertilizers Impact** - It has now become a question of what is the damage to the watersheds of Calaveras County due to the environmental loading of unknown tons of high potency fertilizers and unknown quantities of chemicals that have been used over the past several years. With the massive influx of growers bent on turning profits instead of caring about the environment in their “rented plot” within Calaveras County, they have exhibited absolutely no concern of the impact on the environment, public health, and agriculture and really our county’s future.



Exhibit #8

**Water Testing** - Independent experts have conducted random sampling of local ponds. The testing reveals that two thirds of the cases found cyanobacteria, proven to be a deadly poison to humans, fish, and animals. The result of nitrate overloading in streams and waterways, cyanobacteria is a form of algae that is used as a marker to indicate severe environmental compromise to streams, as in the case study on the Eel River. There have reported dead dogs near ponds along with other animals.



Exhibit #9

Water contamination is seen in Exhibits #8 and #9 from a local grow site. Exhibit #8 shows the damming of a stream to allow for the placement of chemicals and fertilizers directly in the creek or stream for direct use on plants.

Exhibit #9 shows how a spring has been contained with dirt and then chemicals dumped into the water. Algae, created by the nitrates can form cyanobacteria which is deadly poison to humans and animals.

## Calaveras Watershed Supplies Large Share of California's Water



**Calaveras Watershed Distribution** - Since Calaveras County watersheds supply 9% of all water consumed in California, this ecological disaster impacts many more people than just our local county population. Extrapolating on California's population, our county's watershed provides water to as many as 3.5 million Californians plus water for agriculture and business impacting millions more. The above graphics demonstrate how water from Sierra Nevada Mountains and Foothills flows into northern California.

## Big Problems with Clean Up

Caroline Peterson representing the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, recently told the Calaveras Fish and Game Commission *"We are aware of the seriousness of your problem but I don't know who is going to help to come in and clean it up"*. The use of the words *"overloaded, understaffed, trying to get up to speed, and evolving process"* are common when speaking with state agencies about the county's environmental problems associated with marijuana cultivation in the county.

## Other Problems and Issues

There are many other issues tangential to ecological problems caused by growing "pot" in the open. These include:



**Exhibit #10 – Hydroponic Water found during Calaveras County Raid.**

**Indoor Growing** - Indoor and hydroponic grows present a unique problem yet to be understood. Hydroponic growing is defined as the process of growing plants in sand, gravel, or liquid, with added nutrients but without soil. Proposition 64 will force counties and municipalities to accept indoor growing and the effects the activity will have on infrastructure. The water used contains a specialty mix of chemicals and fertilizers designed for high potency growth. When the water is disposed of into a municipal waste treatment systems or private on-site septic systems not designed to handle the effluent, environmental damage results.

Local Environmental Health agencies have yet to grasp the designs needed or the monitoring required to prevent long term damage on an individual grow site. This could result in polluted drinking water and higher costs to consumers to make it safe. Local water districts have limited knowledge on the potential chemicals and testing is also limited at this time.



Exhibit #11

**Well Contamination** – Chemicals as pictured in Exhibit #11, are leaching into watersheds. Currently private wells must be 75 feet away from septic leech fields and the question becomes, is that a sufficient separation for safety with the aquifer and the neighboring wells that depend on clean water for survival?

Speaking with local sanitary district operators, they universally state their waste treatment systems are not designed to clean up this type of effluent nor are they currently testing for chemicals used in marijuana operations.



Exhibit #12 – Golfer in Angels Camp

**Direct Contact with Human Beings** – Research finds that the dangerous chemicals can make direct contact with human beings. Many municipal systems spray their treated water onto local golf courses. Without testing for the 123 discrete chemicals the USFS has found on grow sites, the tainted water could make its way into direct contact with people. People would not be aware of the potential dangers or the level of risk associated with using these recreational facilities not to mention the homes adjacent to golf courses that use this water.



Exhibit #13

**Law Enforcement Problems with Marijuana Cultivation** – Another huge problem caused by marijuana cultivation is the threat to public safety caused by too many of those who have invaded areas such as Calaveras County from throughout the nation and foreign countries.

The Sheriff's Office and the California Highway Patrol have spent significant resources on the dealing with "pot growers." Exhibit #13 is from a KCRA News report on a triple homicide in Calaveras County.



## United States Department of Interior Analysis

Kim Thorsen, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Law Enforcement, Security and Emergency Management for the Department of the Interior (DOI) appointed by the Obama Administration, testified to the United States Senate about the significant problems facing law enforcement:

- *According to the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA's) Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression/Eradication Program (DECSP), marijuana is the only major drug of abuse grown within the United States' borders, on DOI and our other public land partners are faced with a continued problem of marijuana cultivation on our public lands. Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) are cultivating large amounts of marijuana throughout remote areas of DOI lands wherever they can find or divert a water resource. The vast amount of cultivation takes place in the western region of the United States. However, traditional DTO campsites have been found in several states, particularly in the west, but also in the Appalachia Region in the east.*
- *DOI personnel, both law enforcement and civilian, routinely run across marijuana grow sites, suspicious persons and smugglers across DOI lands. DTOs, particularly in marijuana cultivation sites, often have encampments and are armed. The remoteness of these areas often give the upper hand to the DTOs; particularly in marijuana grow sites where they have been encamped, possibly for several months, and know the lay of the land better than law enforcement. Assaults on visitors and civilian and law enforcement personnel have been documented. Hunters, fisherman, recreational users, researchers and maintenance personnel have reported grow sites, and several times a year report being harassed or threatened by armed individuals.*

The DOI Under Secretary also noted the environmental impact of Cannabis cultivation:

*Marijuana cultivation site operators often contaminate and alter watersheds, clear-cut native vegetation, discard garbage and non-biodegradable materials at deserted sites, create wildfire hazards, and divert natural water courses. For example, cultivators often dam streams and redirect the water through plastic gravity-fed irrigation tubing to supply water to individual plants. The high demand for water often strains small streams and damages downstream vegetation that is dependent on consistent water flow. In addition, law enforcement officials are increasingly encountering dumpsites of highly toxic insecticides, chemical repellants, and poisons that are imported from Mexico, purchased by Mexican criminal groups, and transported into the country for use at their marijuana grow sites*

*These toxic chemicals enter and contaminate ground water, pollute watersheds and can kill fish and other wildlife. Moreover, while preparing land for marijuana cultivation, growers commonly clear the forest understory, which allows nonnative plants to supplant native ones, adversely affecting the ecosystem. They also terrace the land (-especially in mountainous areas) which results in rapid soil erosion. The cost of clean-up and restoration of the land can be extensive, particularly in remote wilderness locations and where cultural sites are impacted.*

*During "Operation Full Court Press", more than 26 tons of trash, 40 miles of irrigation line, 5,445 pounds of fertilizer, and 260 pounds of pesticides and rodenticides were removed from grow sites.*

*As with law enforcement, these activities take resource management staff from their regular duties. In addition, the potential for encountering DTOs when conducting routine surveys, weed control, and resource monitoring requires additional coordination and use of law enforcement support.*

## Public Health and “Pot” Consumption

The reality is that Marijuana is classified by the federal government as a Schedule I controlled substance, which puts it in the same category as heroin and LSD. Every drug consumed by the public has been through expensive research and testing. There is no such testing of marijuana to certify it as safe for use. According to the US Food and Drug Administration:

- The FDA has not approved any product containing or derived from botanical marijuana for any indication. This means that the FDA has not found any such product to be safe or effective for the treatment of any disease or condition. Study of marijuana in clinical trial settings is needed to assess the safety and effectiveness of marijuana for medical use.
- The FDA is also aware that there are potential adverse health effects with use of marijuana in pregnant or lactating women. Further, studies have shown harmful effects on developing brains of children under age 21 from any contact with marijuana.
- It is important to conduct medical research into the safety and effectiveness of marijuana products through adequate and well-controlled clinical trials.

*Atlantic Magazine* published an in-depth analysis of the impact of marijuana on our forests. The article also dealt with the impact pesticides on the product that the public ultimately consumers:

“Pesticides are showing up on both leaves and buds at trespass grows, Dr. Gabriel says, and they appear at detectable levels when the plant is smoked. If any of this harvest makes its way to a medical dispensary, it could end up in the lungs of people who are already immuno-compromised from AIDS or cancer. There hasn’t been any formal research in California yet, but studies and investigations in Colorado and Oregon have found pesticides on marijuana in legal dispensaries, including in products that were supposedly certified pesticide-free. Last year, the Emerald Cup, a major cannabis competition in Sonoma County that focuses on organic growing, started testing entries for pesticides. **About 25 percent of the concentrates and more than 5 percent of flowers were disqualified.**”

While it is not the purview of local government to test and certify safe drugs or food consumed by the public, there is an obvious concern about the ultimate impact on the consumer of untested marijuana as well as watersheds contaminated by dangerous chemicals.

## Other Regulatory Problems

There are many other problems we have identified with current enforcement of law to protect the environment and our natural resources but it is important to focus on how regulations are applied.

The previous board declared in the Urgency Ordinance, 17.95.110 (M) “These trends may be contributing to an unstudied, unregulated, and potentially significant impact on the environment.

**Comparison of Environmental Regulations Other Industries vs. Marijuana Growers** – All major industries in California are required to complete biological site assessments, cultural resource inventory, and secure waste discharge permits prior to operation. As an example of in equitable treatment of the cannabis growers is seen through an analysis of the State Water Board requirements for Vineyards vs. Cannabis Growers. The Cannabis application is just 5 pages long while just the waste discharge requirements alone for vineyards is 71 pages. These two studies are:

- **Notice of Intent (NOI) for Medicinal Cannabis Cultivation (5 pages)**
- **General Waste Discharge Requirements for Vineyards (71pages)**

# Summary and Recommendations

It is not the purpose of this white paper to discuss the pluses and minuses of marijuana consumption. There are many problems associated with the marijuana consumption as pointed out in the Harvard Shorenstien Center paper included in the Bibliography of this white paper. It is the purpose of this paper to analyze the impact of marijuana cultivation on the ecology, public health, and the safety of Calaveras County citizens but also the overall impact of the environmental destruction of the region and the state from environmental loading of unknown quantities of fertilizers and chemicals in our watersheds.

After reviewing the research or top experts from Federal, state and local government, academic experts, and in-depth media coverage, it is clear that the cultivation of marijuana is causing significant damage to the ecology and the region. The purpose of this White Paper is to provide some recommendations that should be undertaken immediately to deal with this problem.

- **Calaveras County Ordinance** – The Calaveras County Board of Supervisors in should pass an ordinance banning the cultivation of marijuana or cannabis in both the open and in-door facilities. The county should address how to monitor and control waste discharge from Proposition 64 growing. The county and agencies such as the Calaveras County Water District are currently not regularly testing for or treating the dangerous chemicals that have been found in the production of the product. Most importantly, there have been no studies to determine the scope and level of damage in the county due to marijuana cultivation. It is clear that the previous Board of Supervisors did a terrible disservice to the citizenry and the ecology of the region by allowing any production without any serious environmental analysis or environmental controls in its production on the local environment. Their interest was on canopy size and stopping the land rush.
- **Calaveras Ecological Task Force (CETF)** – We propose the creation of task force involving all agencies federal, state, regional and local to work together to eradicate illegal growing, clean up the environment, and deal with law enforcement/public safety issues. This is more than about money, it is about manpower and support. There is a desperate need for a coordinated response to deal with problem. It is our hope that the response in this county would be a model for other counties or regions in the nation in coping with the ticking time bomb of an ecological disaster, the contamination of our water supplies and include a declaration of emergency until such time the scope is fully understood.
- **Water Quality Analysis** – We recommend that the United States Environmental Protection Agency undertake a study of the impact of the ecological damage to the water quality in the county and propose steps that should be taken to protect the watersheds and provide a plan for the clean-up. This is critically important not only for the county but for the millions of Californians and agriculture that depends upon clean water emanating from the watersheds of the county. State of California Water Agencies should also be requested by the County with support of State Legislators to take action consistent with US EPA and working with the California Fish and Wildlife.
- **Law Enforcement** – We recommend that the United States Drug Enforcement Administration take action to evaluate grant money and manpower support to eradicate illegal marijuana production and insure the shutting down of cultivation includes their complete mitigation. The county should continue to fund contractors to assist with eradication along with all interagency cooperation available. The ability to eradicate 1200 grow sites based on the current eradication rate will take many years if no other new sites are created. This does not include environmental clean-up or remediation within the watersheds.
- **Prosecution** – We propose that the District Attorney of Calaveras County work with the United States and California Attorney Generals to prosecute those that have broken federal and state laws and county ordinances and seek full prosecution criminally and/or civilly and explore seek funding to pay for the cleanup of the land in the county. There needs to be a true cost recovery with a Nexus study to verify what costs should be implemented across all departments to insure other county services provided are not financially impacted.

## Final Thoughts

*“Because of the considerable environmental damage we currently have before us coupled with the unknown costs of eradication, containment and remediation that are heading for the stratosphere, Calaveras County must take appropriate action immediately to stop and reduce any further possibility of contamination – Banning cultivation throughout the County is the only sound measure that will allow the County to take more swift action on the growing of cannabis in our county as we begin to restore our watersheds, our quality of life, and the health and safety of our residents. Our County’s exposure to liability for polluted lands, rivers, streams, ponds, and lakes as well as downstream waters is potentially astronomical. We need to keep in mind under environmental law there are few excuses available in defense of our County’s potential liabilities for inadequate policy as environmental law explicitly states it is **what you knew or should have known**”.*

Dennis Mills  
Supervisor District Four  
Calaveras County

# Bibliography

There have been many scholarly, government, and news media on the impact of the use of chemicals for marijuana cultivation. We have included some of the articles that document immense problem these chemicals have on the environment. It is clear that large areas of Calaveras County have been subject to potentially similar severe contamination.

The following document were produced by leading academic research institutions and media.

1. **The Environmental impacts of marijuana in California:** Published by Stanford University Center on Food Security and the Environment
2. **Scientific American: Burgeoning Marijuana Market Prompts Concerns about Crop's Environmental Impact**
3. **Science Daily: Marijuana's hidden price: Environmental impact**  
Ithica College and University of California
4. **The High Environmental Cost Of Illicit Marijuana Cultivation**  
Published by Yale University School of Forestry and Environmental Studies  
Bio Science Magazine
5. **High Time for Conservation: Adding the Environment to the Debate on Marijuana Liberalization**  
Published by the Yale University Department of Forestry and Environmental Studies
6. **High Times: Marijuana Growing and the Environment: Excerpts**  
Published by Friends of the Eel River
7. **Study shows marijuana is sucking the Eel River dry**  
*Unregulated water use by marijuana cultivation sites leaves none for fish*  
Published by the Willits News with California Department of Fish and Wildlife data.
8. **Legally Grown Pot Still Has a Toxic Pesticide Problem: Published by Vice**
9. **Pleasure, panacea, poison? The little-known health effects of marijuana**  
Published by the Harvard Kennedy School Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Publish Policy

July 8, 2015

## The environmental impacts of marijuana in California



In a new study in the journal *BioScience*, a team of researchers including Stanford professor **Roz Naylor** links marijuana cultivation to widespread environmental damage in California and calls for greater regulation of the crop's impact on natural ecosystems.

Recent debates about marijuana legalization have focused on the potential social, health and economic impacts, with little attention paid to environmental issues. The new study, spearheaded by the **California chapter of The Nature Conservancy**, brings environmental concerns to the forefront of the policy

discussion. Between 60 and 70 percent of the marijuana consumed in the United States comes from California.

### Water and wildlife

Marijuana plants require nearly twice as much water as do grapes or tomatoes, and the last five years have brought a 50 to 100 percent increase in the amount of northern California watershed lands used for marijuana production – figures that are causing growing concern among conservationists in the midst of a severe statewide drought.

The majority of California agriculture is subject to heavy water use regulations. Farmers of most irrigated crops help their plants through the dry summer months by filling water tanks in the winter, when streams and springs are full.

By contrast, many marijuana growers draw surface water during the plant's summer growing season, when drought conditions are worst.

"Taking water directly from rivers and streams in the summer not only reduces the water available for agriculture but also threatens wildlife species, especially birds and fish, that depend on these wetland ecosystems for survival," said Naylor.

Illegal marijuana plantations in California are associated with a wide range of other environmental impacts, including pollution, poaching, and pesticides that poison wildlife. Even legal outdoor cultivation can cause deforestation and soil erosion.



## Burgeoning Marijuana Market Prompts Concerns about Crop's Environmental Impact

Outdoor cannabis cultivation in northern California has damaged forestlands and their inhabitants. Will legalization of recreational marijuana make things worse or better?

By Melati Kaye on February 2, 2017

A visit to a marijuana farm in Willow Creek, the heart of northern California's so-called Emerald Triangle feels like strolling through an orchard. At 16 feet high and eight feet around, its 99 plants are too overloaded with cannabis buds to stand on their own. Instead each plant has an aluminum cage for support.

Welcome to America's "pot basket." The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration estimates 60 percent of cannabis consumed nationwide is grown in California. According to the Department of Justice, the bulk of that comes from the three upstate counties of the Emerald Triangle: Mendocino, Humboldt and Trinity. Conditions here are said to be perfect for outdoor marijuana cultivation. But that has proved to be a very mixed blessing for the region, bringing with it a litany of environmental disturbances to local waterways and wildlife. Creek diversions threaten fish habitat and spur toxic algal blooms. Road building and clear-cuts erode soil and cloud streams. Deep within, illegal "guerilla grows" pepper forestlands with banned rodent poisons that are intended to eradicate crop pests but are also fatal to other mammals

On November 8 voters in four states—Massachusetts, Maine, California and Nevada—legalized recreational marijuana. These states join Colorado, Washington, Oregon and Alaska, along with the District of Columbia, where one can already legally buy the drug for recreational use. Will this expanded market mean more environmental damage? Or will legalization pave the way for sounder regulation?

In 1996 California legalized marijuana for medical use, providing the first legal space for pot cultivation since the federal government's blanket ban on the crop some 60 years before. As grow operations in the state flourished, California Department of Fish and Wildlife biologist Scott Bauer analyzed satellite imagery to examine the impact of cultivation on water levels in four Emerald Triangle watersheds. His [study](#), published in *PLoS ONE* in 2015, found that in three of the four watersheds, "water demand for marijuana cultivation exceeds stream flow during the low-flow [summer] periods."

The real problem is not marijuana's overall water consumption, which still falls far short of California staples like walnuts or almonds, explains environmental scientist Van Butsic of the University of California, Berkeley. Rather it is an issue of where and when pot is grown. Analyzing aerial imagery of 4,428 grow sites in 60 Humboldt county watersheds, Butsic found that one in 20 grow sites sat within 100 meters of fish habitat and one in five were located on steep land with a slope of 17 degrees or more. "The problem is that cannabis is being grown in the headwaters, and much of the watering is happening in the summer," Butsic says.

If that arrangement goes on unchecked, U.C. Berkeley ecologist Mary Power warns, summer plantations could transform local rivers from cool and "salmon-sustaining" to systems full of toxic cyanobacteria. Over eons of evolution native salmon species have adapted to "deluge or drought" conditions, she says. But the double whammy of climate change and water extraction could prove to be a game-changer.

Power spelled out the unprecedented stresses in a 2015 conference paper focused on the Eel River that flows through Mendocino and southern Humboldt. She and her team found riverbed-scouring floods in winter, followed by dry, low-flow conditions in summer, led to warm, stagnant, barely connected pools of water. That is bad news for salmon, but ideal for early summer algal blooms. The algae then rot, creating an oxygen-deficient paradise for toxic cyanobacteria, which have been implicated in the poisoning deaths of 11 dogs along the Eel River since 2002.

Dogs are not the only terrestrial creatures endangered by the grow operations. Between 2008 and 2013 Mourad Gabriel, then a doctoral candidate at the University of California, Davis, Veterinary Genetics Lab, carried out a [study](#) of the American fisher, a small carnivorous mammal that is a candidate for the endangered species list. He wanted to suss out the threats to fisher populations in northern California. So he radio-tagged fishers from Trinity County's Hoopa Valley Reservation and public lands near Yosemite National Park to track their movements.

Between 2006 and 2011, 58 of the fishers Gabriel and his team tracked turned up dead. Gabriel studied the necropsies and found that 46 of the animals had been exposed to anticoagulant rodenticides—rat poisons that block liver enzymes, which enable blood clotting. Without the enzyme the exposed mammals bled to death from flesh wounds.

The finding puzzled Gabriel at first, because rat poison is more common in agricultural and urban settings than in remote forests. But then he started visiting the remnants of guerilla grows that had been busted under the guidance of lawmen such as Omar Brown, head of the Narcotics Division at the Trinity County Sheriff's Office. "We have found [anticoagulant rodenticides] carbofuran on grows in the national forest," Brown reports. "These are neurotoxin-laced pesticides that have been banned in the U.S. since 2011. And even for allowed pesticides, we've found instances where trespass grows are using them in illegally large quantities." The poisons hit female fishers particularly hard, because the early, pest-prone phase of marijuana cultivation coincides with the fishers' nesting season, when pregnant females are actively foraging.

Gabriel, now director of the Integral Ecology Research Center based in Humboldt County, says other states may be dealing with rodenticides, water diversions and other problems from guerilla grows, too. "The climate in Colorado, Oregon and Washington is conducive for marijuana cultivation," he observes. But "there just isn't the scientific data to prove whether other states have these problems because there has not been research funding put towards answering these questions."

In California headwater ecosystems could get a reprieve if a greatly expanded legalized pot industry moves to the Central Valley, where production could take place indoors and costs would be less. In pot-growing pioneer states like Colorado or Washington much of the production has moved indoors, where temperatures can be more closely managed. But other factors may hinder that move. "Bud and pest problems are always worse indoors, which biases farmers toward a chemically intensive regime," says Marie Peterson of Downriver Consulting, a Weaverville, Calif.-based firm that helps growers fill out the paperwork for state and county permits as well as assesses water management plans for their plantations. And besides, the Central Valley already suffers from prolonged drought.

Of the eight states that legalized the cultivation of recreational marijuana, only Oregon and California allow outdoor grows. But regulating open-air pot plantations in these states remains challenging, even though legal operations for medical marijuana have been around since 1998 and 1996, respectively. In 2015 California passed the Medical Marijuana Regulation and Safety Act, which calls on the state's departments of Food and Agriculture, Pesticide Regulation, and Fish and Wildlife, along with the state's Water Board—to oversee environmental impacts of the industry. The board came up with a list of requirements for a marijuana plantation water permit, which in turn became a necessary condition for a license to grow medical pot in any of the three Emerald Triangle counties. Counties have until January 2018 to decide whether to create similar stipulations for recreational marijuana growing permits.

Butsic is optimistic about a more regulated future for the marijuana industry in California. "I think five years from now things will be more sustainable. Permitting shows growers that the state is interested in water use and their crop."

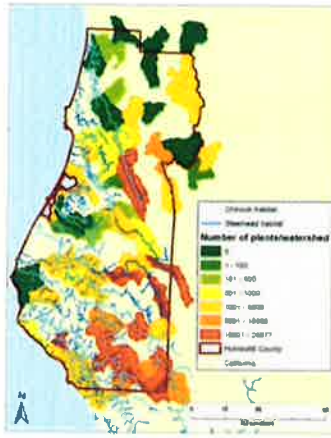


## Science Daily: Marijuana's hidden price: Environmental impact

October 19, 2016 *Source:* Ithaca College

### Summary:

A new survey of marijuana grow sites in California demonstrates the potential environmental impact of marijuana farming and provides an example of the survey and analysis needed as farming expands.



This chart from Brenner's study shows the number of plants per watershed and location of critical habitat for steelhead trout and Chinook salmon.

*Credit: Image courtesy of Ithaca College*

**"It's just a plant" is a common refrain from those who want to legalize the leaf, but a recent study of cannabis production argues that the environmental impact of marijuana farming must be considered -- especially as more states move toward further legalization this election season.**

The study was conducted by Jake Brenner, an assistant professor in the Department of Environmental Studies and Sciences at Ithaca College, and Van Busic, a specialist at the University of California Cooperative Extension. It was published earlier this year in the journal *Environmental Research Letters*.

The study also highlights the lack of published, peer-reviewed empirical research on all aspects of cannabis agriculture, which is already a multi-billion dollar industry in the United States despite still being listed as a Schedule 1 drug by the federal government.

### Location, location

The amount of land and water used for growing cannabis has not traditionally been a concern, especially when compared to other agricultural products grown in California. But where the cannabis is grown has potential ecological consequences.

Brenner and Busic examined grow sites in three northern California counties and found that their usual placement had potentially negative impacts on two threatened fish species.

That's because the sites are typically placed on remote plots of land in forested areas, many on steep slopes. Access roads need to be created and swaths of land cleared for production, regardless of whether the cannabis is grown outdoors or in a greenhouse; that increases potential for soil erosion and chemical run-off into streams in which the Chinook salmon and steelhead trout live.

The fish are also susceptible to harm from a decrease in water flow as a result of the cannabis agriculture.

"Siting grows in areas with better access to roads, gentler slopes, and ample water resources could significantly reduce threats to the environment," Brenner and Busic write. "Future cannabis policy should take into consideration the potential for mitigating environmental impacts through land-use planning."

### Know before you grow

Brenner and Busic say their study, which covers the watersheds of northern California's Humboldt County, is an example of the sort of survey and analysis that could be done — and is necessary — anywhere cannabis agriculture takes place.

And while California is taking efforts to encourage local governments to create land-use policies for cannabis agriculture, they argue that more research on marijuana farming needs to be done.

"Land-use science on cannabis agriculture lags behind research on other crops, but advances in the field will be crucial for predicting future cannabis expansion and moderating its impacts," they write.

That multi-billion marijuana production industry is only going to grow: This November, voters in Arizona, California, Maine, Massachusetts and Nevada will decide whether to allow their states to legalize and tax recreational marijuana; while voters in Arkansas, Florida, Montana and North Dakota will head to the polls to determine whether their states will allow medicinal uses of marijuana, joining the 25 other states that already do so.



## Superior Court of California Ruling Confirms the Ban on Marijuana Cultivation

**Special to *Silent Poison* - June 28, 2018**

Calaveras marijuana growers filed a *lawsuit* against Calaveras County seeking an injunction, or "stay," of the cannabis ban ordinance passed by a majority of the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors in February of 2018. On June 15th Superior Court Judge Thomas Smith issued a ruling *supporting* the ban placed by the County Board of Supervisors and denied the temporary restraining order requested of pot growers.

### **"Bait and Switch": A False Claim**

The pot growers have contended that they had a permanent right to grow their crops with the granting of permits under the *urgency* ordinance passed by the previous board in 2016. They accused Supervisors who voted to ban cultivation of pot in 2018 of engaging in "*bait and switch tactics*." The principle line, used by solicitors to gather signatures in recent recall petition drive for Supervisors Dennis Mills and Gary Tofanelli, was that voters should sign the petition because the board engaged in such "bait and switch" tactics. The court ruling exposed this argument as being *totally fraudulent*.



# Siskiyou County Sheriff's Office

**Sheriff Jon E. Lopey**  
**305 Butte Street**  
**Yreka, CA 96097**  
**(530) 841-2900 (Dispatch)**

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## News Release (excerpt)

### Sheriff Gives Annual Drug Enforcement Summary to Board of Supervisors

**January 6, 2020**

**"Counter-drug operations garner multi-million dollar seizures of illicit drugs in county"**

On Tuesday, January 7, 2020, Siskiyou County Sheriff Jon Lopey provided a 2019 annual drug enforcement update to the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors. The totals included seizures from the Siskiyou County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) Siskiyou Interagency Marijuana Investigation Team (SIMIT), seizures from the regional North State Major Investigation Team (NSMIT), and a wrap-up of 2018 totals for the Siskiyou Unified Major Investigation Team (SUMIT). SIMIT is a SCSO drug task force that primarily enforces current county ordinances and state law that related to illicit marijuana drug trafficking on private property areas of the county. NSMIT is a drug task force that is led to the California Department of Justice (CA DOJ) and its orientation is regional in nature but the team spends much of its time in Siskiyou County, enforcing drug laws, including illegal marijuana violations in public land and private land areas of the county.

SIMIT, the SCSO drug task force unit working to eradicate numerous illegal marijuana cultivation sites on a variety of private property parcels in many parts of the county, had a very busy year and nearly doubled their seizures from the previous year. During 2019, SIMIT detectives served 154 search warrants throughout the county. SIMIT seized 44,369 illegal marijuana plants and confiscated 16,759.5 pounds of processed marijuana. Nine arrests, 10 citations, and 15 firearms were seized. \$29,596.00 in drug currency was seized. During routine traffic stops, mostly near the end of the marijuana harvest season, SCSO deputies seized 63 illicit plants and 2,074.4 pounds of processed or partially-processed marijuana from vehicles during those traffic stops, in addition to the SIMIT seizures aforementioned.

NSMIT enforcement totals included the seizure of 17,230 illicit marijuana plants and the confiscation of 1,044 pounds of processed marijuana. NSMIT made eight arrests and seized three firearms. NSMIT includes a long-serving SCSO detective sergeant and other federal, state, and local agency participants...



Processed marijuana awaiting packaging for transport to other states



Seized packaged marijuana prepared for transportation and sale out-of-state

# Kirk: Opt-Out of Commercial Marijuana

By Anaiah Kirk **Tuolumne County Supervisor District 3**

Published Feb 3, 2020 10:00 am

[www.mymotherlode.com](http://www.mymotherlode.com)

At the BOS meeting on January 21, 2020, Jeff Muzio and around twenty marijuana supporters addressed the board. One of the supporters was Jaron Brandon who is running for District 5 Supervisor.

The supporters appeared to be very concerned that something was going to happen to Muzio's business if we, the BOS, did not do something to "keep it from going away." They spoke about how marijuana helped them with their medical needs.

At the State of Jefferson forum on January 22, 2020, Dameion Renault and Kathleen Haff, both candidates for District 4 supervisor, were specifically asked about their stance on Marijuana Cultivation. Renault summarized by saying, "It's not worth it." Haff did not address cultivation.

Muzio's entourage appeared to be unaware the laws they were passionately fighting for are not under attack. Haff did not answer the question about cultivation; she deferred to the safe answer, medicinal use. A week later, at the League of Women Voters forum, Haff answered the question about cultivation by stating she was for medical dispensaries only. The next evening at the forum at the Game Room in Sonora, the question was asked again about cultivation to which she responded she did not have enough information.

It is for this reason, I feel compelled to explain to those supporters as well as Brandon and Haff what the issue is.

THE ISSUE IS NOT MEDICINAL, NOT RECREATIONAL. Those are both legal in California (although it remains illegal at the Federal level). It's about commercial cultivation and allowing commercial pot shops in every neighborhood.

The conversation needs to stop being perverted with the Medicinal and Recreational conversation. That is a smoke screen to get large-scale cultivation and pot shops on every corner of our community. Medical and recreational marijuana is here under California law. However, cultivation is NOT granted by Prop 64; it is optional. Counties and cities have the choice to opt-in or opt-out. Over two thirds of California municipalities ban commercial marijuana activity – they have decided to opt-out.

The premise of Muzio and Brandon's argument is cultivation will bring in more tax revenue.

On the contrary, Marijuana Cultivation will hurt the county budget.

For every \$1 generated in taxes, more than \$10 in costs to society go unfunded. "Such a conclusion is also consistent with well-established information about alcohol and tobacco, two legal drugs whose costs to society are at least 10 times the tax revenue their sale generates for the state." (1, 2, 3) There is so little information available about the long-term effects of marijuana that even these estimates may be low.

At the BOS meeting on January 21st, Jaron Brandon gave a speech supporting Jeff Muzio's business plan. He talked about how hard our recent budget cuts were and he thinks the solution is to open up more pot shops and cannabis cultivation in Tuolumne County. All we need do is look at the mess across the river in Calaveras County. They literally have no idea how much tax revenue they will receive or what the hard costs will be to manage the situation, let alone the long-term costs to society. Good thing Tuolumne County has stayed out of the marijuana cultivation mess; perhaps we would have had to make more cuts to cover the Cannabis Industry had we not.

As a Supervisor, I am a policy maker. I owe it to our community to know all the facts before making decisions, especially decisions that impact public safety. Let's not rush into this mess. Let's be patient, use our resources wisely and keep Tuolumne County a family-friendly place to live.

<https://learnaboutsam.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/SAM-CT-Report-Costs-Marijuana2123.pdf>

<https://www.cdc.gov/features/costsofdrinking/index.html>

[https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/economics/econ\\_facts/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/economics/econ_facts/index.htm)

**SISKIYOU COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
RESOLUTION  
COUNTY 'STATE OF EMERGENCY' – PROLIFERATION OF ILLEGAL  
CANNABIS CULTIVATION**

WHEREAS, the Siskiyou County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) and its partner agencies have experienced the unprecedented proliferation of illicit cannabis cultivation sites throughout the county, both on public and private lands, which, on private property number at least 1500 to 2,000, overwhelming SCSO and partner agency resources; and

WHEREAS, during 2019 a SCSO team (Siskiyou Interagency Marijuana Investigation Team – SIMIT) has served 154 search warrants on private property illicit marijuana cultivation sites, seizing 44,369 illicit cannabis plants, 16,759.5 pounds of processed product, 15 firearms, and, during 2018, 21,426 illicit plants, 14,406 pounds of processed marijuana, and six (6) THC extraction ("Honey Oil") labs at numerous county locations were seized, which illustrates an alarming upward trend in proliferation; and

WHEREAS, during 2019, the North State Major Investigation Team (NSMIT), a regional California DOJ-led team with SCSO membership, seized 17,230 illegal plants, 1,044 pounds of processed marijuana, made eight (8) arrests, and during 2018, on Gazelle-Callahan Road, seized 5,071 illicit plants, and stopped an illegal operation that included 15 active greenhouses in the area; and,

WHEREAS, counter-drug operations on private and public property have identified nearly universal non-compliance with the county's ban on outdoor cultivation of cannabis and have uncovered hundreds of pervasive fire hazards, insecticides, pesticides, rodenticides, fertilizers, trash, and unsanitary conditions which severely impact health, safety and quality of life for countless county residents and led to 3 carbon monoxide deaths in 2018 and at least one similar death during 2019; and

WHEREAS, Siskiyou County is already overwhelmed with methamphetamine, heroin, prescription drugs, cocaine, and other illicit drugs, and a rising suicide and drug overdose rate, multiplying the impact the illicit cannabis drug trade exacts against our adults and children and the illegal customers in other states; and

WHEREAS, 1,500 to 2,000+ illicit cannabis cultivation sites in private property areas have established encampments where hundreds of people are living in unpermitted and illegally constructed dwellings without permitted sewage disposal systems or potable water supplies. Additionally, solid waste is not properly removed from the site and is either illegally burned on-site, accumulated on-site causing a vector attraction, buried on-site or left to blow into neighboring properties, all constitute maintenance of a public nuisance in violation of existing codes; and

WHEREAS, during 2019, SIMIT and NSMIT seizures of illegal marijuana plants and processed products totaled 61,599 plants, 17,763.5 pounds of processed product, and included the confiscation of 18 firearms, with total East Coast retail values ranging from \$369,594,000.00 to \$554,391,000.00 for the average 3-pound yield per plant for marijuana and values ranging from \$35,527,000.00 to \$53,290,500.00 for the processed marijuana, thus illustrating the fact Siskiyou County has become a major drug trafficking organization hub for the state and national; and,

WHEREAS, During 2019, on-highway seizures of illicit marijuana by SCSO totaled 63 illegal marijuana plants, 2,074.4 pounds of processed or partly-processed product ranging from \$4.2M to \$6.2M value; and

WHEREAS, the County Fire Warden has documented multiple fires starts that have been initiated in these encampments and at least two fires, in recent years, that have escaped and threatened life and property; and

WHEREAS, the emergency responders are not able to locate 911 callers living in encampments to render emergency services further risking the life and safety of occupants; and

WHEREAS, public land cannabis grow sites (mostly USFS), operated mostly by drug trafficking organizations in 2016 resulted in the seizure of 101,255 illicit plants, 2,850 pounds of processed product, and sadly led to the detection of dangerous conditions and illicit chemicals like "Carbofuran," a condition that still exists today, presenting a severe threat to citizens and the environment; and

WHEREAS, an estimated 3,000,000 gallons of water is being expended daily by illicit cannabis producers, depleting precious groundwater and surface water resources and these losses jeopardize the lawful agricultural, recreational, private and environmental use of water for thousands of residents; and

WHEREAS, site grading in excess of one acre, illegal timber conversion, illegal water diversions or unauthorized use of surface water without proper permits/authorization is occurring on a significant number of properties. The volume of properties and number of violations exceeds the capacity of local resources to effectively enforce provision to prevent further environmental damage and impacts to watercourses and fish populations; and

WHEREAS, during 2019, Siskiyou County has experienced an unprecedented level of violence associated with the marijuana industry, including a murder that occurred on February 7, 2019 (Hunter Sims), a double homicide that occurred on March 20, 2019 (Ms. Mor Hang, 81, and Ms. Rosey Vang, 49), and an attempted murder at a marijuana cultivation site, the murder of a man running a marijuana business (link not known), and, during a recent search warrant operation Sacramento County authorities arrested a murder suspect wanted in their jurisdiction for a marijuana-related homicide; and,

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors declares a "Local State of Emergency" due to the catastrophic impact illicit cannabis cultivation sites have had on public health, safety, and quality of life issues in the county. SCSO, local and regional resources have been exhausted and the "State of Emergency" can only be mitigated with additional assistance from federal, state, and/or regional resources due to the organized crime, interstate characteristics, nature, magnitude, and multi-billion dollar funding mechanisms that supports cannabis crime networks in the county.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors, pursuant to Government Code Section 8260(c) shall continue to review the need for continuing the local emergency at least once every 30 days until its termination is proclaimed by the Board of Supervisors; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors hereby Proclaims and Orders that during the existence of this local emergency, the powers, functions and duties of the Director of Emergency Services and the emergency organizations of this county shall be those prescribed by state law, ordinances, and resolutions of this county approved by the Board of Supervisors, and by the Siskiyou Operational Emergency Area Operations Plan, as approved by the Board of Supervisors; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this declaration shall be forwarded to the Secretary of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CAL OES) with a request that the Secretary of the CAL OES confirm a concurrence; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this declaration shall be forwarded to the Governor of California with a request that he proclaim the County of Siskiyou to be in a state of emergency and allow California Disaster Assistance Act funds and/or appropriate public safety-related resources be released to assist in recovery from this on-going disaster.

Passed and adopted this 10th day of December, 2019:

Ayes:  
Noes:  
Abstain:  
Absent:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Brandon Criss, Chair  
Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:

Laura Bynum, County Clerk \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor John Peters

Just a note to add a little weight against the issue of the pot and processing plant on North River Lane.

We are hoping so much for an exclusion of our area like the one in Bridgeport

To reiterate some of the reasons I feel so strongly against this issue are that it's located by the post boxes at the beginning of North River Ln. so people will be coming to get their mail. Most especially the school bus collects & drops off children there to walk to and from the bus.

There are elderly people on the lane who are ill and cannot breathe the fumes. If there are no fumes and stench, why plant the lavender??

Just to explain our situation, we are part of Walker and they are part of us. The air we breathe is the same we cannot control the winds.

What about our fishermen? Will they want to fish or stay in our motels and eat in our restaurants?

Probably not!

Thank you John for your time.

Sincerely,

Pat Shanahan







1990 754

# The cannabis industry — legal and illegal — is booming in California. The resulting feuds are tearing the Anza Valley apart

DESPITE EARLY OPTIMISM ABOUT LEGALIZED CANNABIS IN CALIFORNIA,  
UNLICENSED GROWS ARE CAUSING A STIR IN UNINCORPORATED RIVERSIDE COUNTY.

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***Sam Metz** (([staff/smetz/sam-metz](#)), Palm Springs Desert Sun*

*Published 9:22 a.m. PT Oct. 18, 2019 | Updated 6:08 p.m. PT Oct. 18, 2019*

PHOTOS BY JAY CALDERON, PALM SPRINGS  
DESERT SUN | PUBLISHED OCT. 18, 2019

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ANZA – Like the pungent aroma of the fall's cannabis harvest, feuds over how to confront the explosion of unlicensed marijuana grows are permeating the remote Southern California agricultural enclave of Anza Valley.

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Disagreements in this close-knit community have devolved into what one grower calls a "Hatfield-and-McCoy (<https://www.history.com/shows/hatfields-and-mccoys/articles/the-hatfield-mccoy-feud>) reality," where residents call law enforcement on their neighbors, inciting a culture war of sorts, spawning fights over policing, rural life, water and even immigration.

Located in an unincorporated part of Riverside County, 40 miles south of Palm Desert, Anza Valley's cannabis growers are protesting the county's permitting system. They contend it excludes small growers and hinders businesses that could buoy this economically depressed region where median income is about \$19,000.

"I would have to say that, if our area of unincorporated Riverside County was given the correct chance to have regulated inclusivity, for small cottage cannabis farms, that it would bring us a chance to come out of poverty," High Country Growers Association Board member Jazmyn McCammon said. "This pathway would lead to less crime, with regulation, as well as opportunities for local employment."

But some longtime residents like Gary Worobec disagree and say the number of illegal grows has spiked to out-of-control proportions.

"When rumor got out that California was going to legalize marijuana in 2016, that's when the roof caved in," Worobec said while driving his blue pick-up truck through Anza Valley, surveying cannabis and hemp grows on a sunny weekday in early October.

## #marijuanamondays

In this 256-square-mile region, where police response times have historically been longer than 45 minutes, law enforcement has recently expanded its presence and initiated an epic crackdown on hundreds of unlicensed grows.

The raids began on June 5, when more than 700 Riverside County sheriff's deputies, Army National Guard members and FBI agents fanned out to serve warrants to more than 100 property owners suspected of growing cannabis without the proper county permits. ([https://www.desertsun.com/story/news/crime\\_courts/2019/06/07/authorities-seized-70-tons-pot-worth-190-million-near-anza/1387667001/](https://www.desertsun.com/story/news/crime_courts/2019/06/07/authorities-seized-70-tons-pot-worth-190-million-near-anza/1387667001/)) Eight growers were arrested on suspicion of illegal marijuana cultivation. Sheriff Chad Bianco estimated the street value of plants confiscated to be \$189 million.

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Since then, a debate has raged among residents who rely on the plant for their livelihoods and residents who say marijuana is responsible for a laundry list of negatives including: the pervasive odor and a perceived dangerous crime spike that threatens their quality of life.

Four months after the Riverside County Sheriff's Marijuana Eradication Unit staged what was then the largest cannabis raid in Southern California targeting unlicensed cannabis grows throughout Anza, the unit continues to raid unlicensed grows in the county's unincorporated areas, including in Anza, Aguanga and Sage. ([https://www.desertsun.com/story/news/crime\\_courts/2019/10/08/anza-marijuana-raids-lead-20-tons-pot-seized-and-four-arrests/3908294002/](https://www.desertsun.com/story/news/crime_courts/2019/10/08/anza-marijuana-raids-lead-20-tons-pot-seized-and-four-arrests/3908294002/))

Proponents of Prop. 64, which 57% of voters supported, (<https://www.desertsun.com/story/news/politics/elections/2016/11/08/california-votes-legalize-recreational-marijuana/93206744/>) promised it would shrink the illicit market and reduce the burden placed on law enforcement agencies tasked with pursuing low-level drug offenders. But California's \$8.7 billion illicit cannabis market is still almost three times larger than the legal market, according to state estimates (<https://cannabis.ca.gov/2019/01/08/california-cannabis-advisory-committee-publishes-2018-annual-report/>) and analysis by the ArcView Group (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/irisdorbjan/2019/08/15/california-is-worlds-biggest-legal-pot-market-says-new-report/>), a private research firm.

Since recreational cannabis became legal, law enforcement has seized thousands of pounds of cannabis plants in Mendocino (<https://krctv.com/north-coast-news/eureka-local-justs-28-properties-for-illegal-marijuana>), Sonoma (<https://www.krcrtv.com/north-coast-news/eureka-local-justs-28-properties-for-illegal-marijuana>), Sonoma (<https://www.krcrtv.com/north-coast-news/eureka-local-justs-28-properties-for-illegal-marijuana>) and analysis by the ArcView Group (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/irisdorbjan/2019/08/15/california-is-worlds-biggest-legal-pot-market-says-new-report/>), a private research firm.

14093536.php?psid=cG5Ew), Siskiyou (<https://www.kdrv.com/content/news/Raids-seize-more-than-46k-marijuana-plants-at-Siskiyou-County-illegal-grow-sites-511084792.html>), Trinity (<https://www.redding.com/story/news/local/2019/07/31/sheriff-over-66000-pot-plants-found-trinity-county-raid-butane-honey-oil-bho-marijuana-cannabis-weed/1878831001/>) and Santa Barbara (<https://www.independent.com/2019/06/26/20-tons-of-cannabis-seized-during-four-day-raid/>) counties, but in Riverside, the Marijuana Eradication Unit's raids have become so routine that Sheriff Bianco has given them a hashtag: #marijuanamonday.

(<https://www.facebook.com/RiversideCountySheriff/posts/29525710514267167>

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[RZpHzHypXDI4TadoNcppOlbQQCJT03S017iqXZCbmxlrPtnZydnjPcj\\_N6Tm7L60cO4Ww&\\_tn=-R](#)).

Each week, images are shared on department social media accounts of deputies raiding unlicensed grows and then disposing the loot into chippers and landfills.

([https://www.instagram.com/p/B0GzTEUAVJc/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/p/B0GzTEUAVJc/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link))

The unit has conducted raids throughout the county, but in the Anza Valley alone it has confiscated more than 150,000 plants and more than 5,000 pounds of processed cannabis. Additionally, it has disposed of 97.8 tons of cannabis.

 riversidecountysheriff  
Anza, California

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We are kicking your bud!!! 🚫🌿🚫 Zero tolerance with illegal marijuana grows. Just another Marijuana Monday in Anza. 🙌🙌🙌 The Hemet Station's Detective Bureau led Marijuana Enforcement efforts this morning in Anza. Several search warrants were served after the department received numerous complaints from residents. The Sheriff's Department is committed to eradicating illegal marijuana grows in the county and will continue their efforts throughout the year. #weedbegone #marijuana #420nomore #illegalgrows #sheriff #riversidecounty #riversidesheriff

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Bianco, who worked at the Hemet sheriff's station overseeing Anza before he was elected sheriff, said the number of unlicensed grows has spiked since the passage of Proposition 57, which allows people who are suspected of being transnational drug traffickers

to the county from nations including Mexico, China and Laos.

"This is not Mom and Pop that are out there growing marijuana. These are criminal organizations," Bianco said. "The massive illegal grows are lost on those who just say 'California made it legal to smoke marijuana.' Especially down in the Anza Valley, it's getting worse. There are quite a lot more illegal grows than what was thought."

The crackdown, Bianco said, is a response to complaints from Anza Valley residents about inescapable cannabis odor and crime that's accompanied the proliferation of unlicensed grows. One of those residents is Gary Worobec, who in 2018 founded [Take Back Anza](https://www.takebackanza.org/) (<https://www.takebackanza.org/>), a community group whose members are pushing back against the cannabis industry's growth in the region.

Worobec said he founded the group not because he is against cannabis, but because the unchecked growth of the industry poses serious dangers to the community, including petty theft, frequent use of guard dogs and a murder that allegedly took place the night before the June 5 raids. He said Californians who support the cannabis industry don't understand the chaos that has swept agricultural communities like Anza since 2016.

"Property up here was very inexpensive back then; you could buy 10 acres for \$20,000. It was out of the way, 45 minutes from any law enforcement. There was a good climate. Not very many people," he said. "People living in cities aren't suffering the effects of this. They don't have these big grows next to them."

Worobec has lobbied Riverside County Supervisor Chuck Washington to publish public notices in English, Spanish, Vietnamese and Hmong that clearly state cannabis cultivation without county permits is illegal.

"There's no inspections. They don't abate odor. The sheriff has told us that carbofuran (a rodent repellent) is being used. Plus, I can't tell you the amount of people who complain about having water stolen, who've had wells run dry. That's all collateral damage. It's not the marijuana plant it's the collateral damage."



Gary Worobec of Take Back Anza talks about the problems that large-scale cannabis operations create in his community of Anza, Calif., Oct. 3, 2019.

(Photo: Jay Calderon/The Desert Sun)

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# Civil is the new criminal

The region's growers say Worobec and Bianco are sensationalizing events.

Local growers founded the High Country Growers Association last year to fight back against what they say is disinformation. The group believes the cannabis industry could have a positive impact on the Anza community.

The group's co-founder, Kendall Steinmetz, started growing cannabis on a balcony at his mom's house in Redondo Beach during the late 1960s when he was a sophomore in high school. At the time, the counterculture movement was embracing the plant for both healing and enjoyment.

Steinmetz said cannabis has been one of the Anza Valley's major crops since at least 1996, when California voters passed [Prop. 215](https://ballotpedia.org/California_Proposition_215,_the_Medical_Marijuana_Initiative_(1996))) ([https://ballotpedia.org/California\\_Proposition\\_215,\\_the\\_Medical\\_Marijuana\\_Initiative\\_\(1996\)\)](https://ballotpedia.org/California_Proposition_215,_the_Medical_Marijuana_Initiative_(1996))), allowing patients and caregivers to grow cannabis for medical use. The industry grew further after the 2003 passage of [SB 420](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=200320040SB420) ([https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=200320040SB420](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=200320040SB420)), which allowed cannabis cooperatives to grow at a larger scale for patients and caregivers.

After decades of drug wars, Steinmetz said today's law enforcement is using code enforcement to continue pursuing growers and cannabis users.

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In Riverside County, the pretext of the raids has mostly been code enforcement issues, as county [ordinance](https://countyofriverside.us/Portals/0/Documents/Marijuana%20Docs/Ordinance%20925%20-%20marijuana%20cultivation.pdf?ver=2016-11-28-120743-307) (<https://countyofriverside.us/Portals/0/Documents/Marijuana%20Docs/Ordinance%20925%20-%20marijuana%20cultivation.pdf?ver=2016-11-28-120743-307>) prohibits residents from growing more than 24 cannabis plants for personal use. Law enforcement follows up on code enforcement complaints, which anyone can report, with abatement notices. After the notices are issued, if property owners don't abate, they follow up with raids.

Growers say the raids are ineffective at clamping down on what they estimate to be around 1,000 grows in the region, serving to rile up the community and inflame tensions between the cannabis proponents and detractors, particularly on social media, where "Take Back Anza," the High Country Growers Association and even Bianco spar over cannabis-related issues.

Steinmetz also said the county has been selective in how it enforces code violations. As in many rural communities, many people in the Anza Valley have sheds or animals that aren't in keeping with county code.

A more sensible solution than raids, Steinmetz said, would be issuing more permits. The county sheriff and supervisors, he said, are aware of the number of grows in the region, yet [have only issued 50 cultivation permit recommendations](#).



(<https://www.desertsun.com/story/news/politics/2019/07/05/riverside-county-issues-first-permits-cannabis-retail-and-cultivation/1639354001/>), to date.

"It's a PR stunt," Steinmetz said of #marijuanamondays. "Drive anywhere and 80% of these properties have code enforcement violations."

Edison Gomez-Krauss, a 31-year-old member of the Anza Valley Advisory Council, said Bianco's raids on unlicensed grows haven't made much of a dent in what he said are more than a thousand unlicensed grows throughout the region. He said Bianco is just telling residents what they want to hear.

"Sure, the Gary Worobecs feel invaded. Sure, they feel like their way of life may be threatened. So when somebody comes around and says he's going to eradicate cannabis in the valley, it appeals to them. And now every Monday (Bianco) is posting a picture, 'Look at me, I'm chopping down plants. Look at me.'"

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## The fight for an 'inclusive' market

The association's leaders say they don't encourage growers to break the law, but they admit that many of their members are growing cannabis without permits because, Steinmetz said, Prop. 64 has made it impossible for small-scale, legacy growers to operate.

"The industry was created out here in rural-residential zones," Steinmetz said. "It's essentially total exclusion. They've limited the zoning of cultivation to either agricultural zoned properties or manufacturing and industrial zones."



Prop. 64, which Steinmetz opposed, overturned those laws and forced legacy medicinal growers to seek permits from the counties and cities. The process can cost tens of thousands of dollars, which growers say makes it nearly impossible for small-scale growers.

"Once legalization happened, some of us wanted to participate in the industry rather than just let Phillip Morris-type corporations take care of us. In reality, we're the legacy farmers that brought this issue to the table," Steinmetz said.

Prop. 64 classified cannabis as a commercial rather than agricultural product. In addition to seeking permits, in the Anza Valley, where more than 95% of the land is zoned as rural-residential, growers who've long operated on rural-residential zoned land must apply to be rezoned, an additional burden beyond the tens of thousands of dollars the permitting process requires.

"If you can come up with \$100,000 to get a zoning change, then you're not shut out. You can put your paperwork in and cross your fingers. But they made it so hard that only 17 out of the thousands of grows went through that process and they were the ones with big backing," Steinmetz said.

Riverside County charges about \$12,000 for re-zoning applications and \$3,500 for conditional use permits on re-zoned property. The planning department charges an additional fee conditional use permits for cannabis cultivation, which costs about \$30,000 depending on the property. Growers may also have to bear additional costs for legal services and for changes the planning department requires for re-zoning.

Gomez-Krauss, who's running as a Democrat to represent the region in California's state Assembly, noted the Anza Valley's libertarian ethos and said the increased presence of law enforcement upset many conservative members of the community he's spoken to since the raids started.

"It's not like I call the cops if I hear my neighbor popping off gunshots out here. He's just popping off rounds!" he said. "One of the reasons people move out here is to be free and to not be bothered by neighbors. When you move out to a place like Anza, there's a reasonable expectation of smells and sounds. Farming comes with smells."

Gomez-Krauss isn't a grower. He supported Prop. 64 in 2016, he said, because he hoped it would create a pathway to legalization for growers without permits and bring needed growth to the Anza Valley's struggling economy, where more than half of the community is on food stamps and government subsidies. Instead, Gomez-Krauss said, Riverside County — the sheriff and the board of supervisors — have allocated their resources toward playing "whack-a-mole" going after unlicensed grows.

Worobec disagrees, saying the raids are showing signs of success and starting to temper the number of unlicensed grows in the region. In addition to enforcing the law, Worobec also said the raids have spread awareness about the laws governing cannabis cultivation in Riverside County — something he said few of the growers who purchased cheap agricultural land in the region post-Prop. 64 were aware of.



Trash and fence posts are all that is left from an illegal cannabis grow that was raided earlier this year in Anza, Calif., October 3, 2019.

(Photo: Jay Calderon/The Desert Sun)

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## 'Everybody's doing it ... that's part of the problem'

"People were coming up here with real estate agents and you'd take them aside and ask, 'Did you know it's illegal to cultivate cannabis without a permit in Riverside County?' and they'd say 'Oh! I had no idea.' Everybody's doing it and that's part of the problem," Worobec said.

The cannabis industry, Worobec said, has altered the social fabric of the Anza Valley and ushered in a host of unintended consequences.

"Once some of these pot growers moved in, they just started blocking off roads. I used to be able to drive my car up there. People would ride horses. It wasn't a problem. Now, it's fenced off and you can no longer pass," he said as he drove through Aguanga.

Throughout Anza, many property owners may have sheds or yards that are out of code, Worobec said, but, unlike the High Country Growers, he isn't concerned about selective enforcement and supports the sheriff's focus on code issues that affect the community most.

"There's no quality of life or damage issues with some (code violations)," he said. "If some guy's got four goats and an old shed, that might not be up to code, but that's the countryside."

Sage Town Hall Association President Bill Donahue said his two dogs, Roicéad and Jameson, were shot when they ventured onto a grower's property.

"It's my duty as a dog owner to keep my dogs on my property, so I didn't have an issue with them being shot other than if those guys weren't drug dealers, they wouldn't have shot them and it would've been a neighbor calling me up, going, 'Hey, your dog's up here. Can you come get him?'" Donahue said.

While he understands why legacy growers are upset Prop. 64 overturned historic medicinal use laws that allowed them to grow 99 plants in collectives, he said everyone, pro- and anti-cannabis Californians, should respect the law.



Cannabis plants grow at a pot farm in Anza, Calif., October 3, 2019.  
(Photo: Jay Calderon/The Desert Sun)

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"They don't seem to understand that state law was changed based on the voting of the public," he said of the High Country Growers Association. "They're making this big stink and arguing that they're legacy growers, but that's not a legal concept."

Steinmetz said he and other growers would continue to press on as they have for decades, despite the dangers of the underground economy and the threat of imprisonment.

"We're only here because people kept going against the will of the country, state, city and county, with all the worst consequences thrown at us," he said.

*Sam Metz covers politics. Reach him at [samuel.metz@desertsun.com](mailto:samuel.metz@desertsun.com) or on Twitter @metzsam.*



Seized plants in a greenhouse at one of two sites raided by Riverside County sheriff's officials and those from other agencies on Monday, Oct. 7, 2019, in Anza. Two people were arrested.

(Photo: Riverside County Sheriff's Department)

## RIVERSIDE COUNTY Cannabis



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- [Over 22 tons of weed seized in past week from several sites in Anza. Sheriff focuses on illegal grows](https://www.desertsun.com/story/news/crime_courts/2019/10/08/anza-marijuana-raids-lead-20-tons-pot-seized-and-four-arrests/3908294002/?utm_source=oembed&utm_medium=onsite&utm_campaign=storylines&utm_content=news&utm_term=4012723002) ([https://www.desertsun.com/story/news/crime\\_courts/2019/10/08/anza-marijuana-raids-lead-20-tons-pot-seized-and-four-arrests/3908294002/?utm\\_source=oembed&utm\\_medium=onsite&utm\\_campaign=storylines&utm\\_content=news&utm\\_term=4012723002](https://www.desertsun.com/story/news/crime_courts/2019/10/08/anza-marijuana-raids-lead-20-tons-pot-seized-and-four-arrests/3908294002/?utm_source=oembed&utm_medium=onsite&utm_campaign=storylines&utm_content=news&utm_term=4012723002))
- [A model of sustainable commerce: carbon footprint, grid concerns push SoCal weed industry to be more green](https://www.desertsun.com/story/money/business/2019/10/10/southern-california-weed-cultivators-candescent-leading-way-sustainability/2345019001/?utm_source=oembed&utm_medium=onsite&utm_campaign=storylines&utm_content=news&utm_term=4012723002) ([https://www.desertsun.com/story/money/business/2019/10/10/southern-california-weed-cultivators-candescent-leading-way-sustainability/2345019001/?utm\\_source=oembed&utm\\_medium=onsite&utm\\_campaign=storylines&utm\\_content=news&utm\\_term=4012723002](https://www.desertsun.com/story/money/business/2019/10/10/southern-california-weed-cultivators-candescent-leading-way-sustainability/2345019001/?utm_source=oembed&utm_medium=onsite&utm_campaign=storylines&utm_content=news&utm_term=4012723002))
- [Riverside County issues first 69 permit recommendations for cannabis businesses in unincorporated areas](https://www.desertsun.com/story/news/politics/2019/07/05/riverside-county-issues-first-permits-cannabis-retail-and-cultivation/1639354001/?utm_source=oembed&utm_medium=onsite&utm_campaign=storylines&utm_content=news&utm_term=4012723002) ([https://www.desertsun.com/story/news/politics/2019/07/05/riverside-county-issues-first-permits-cannabis-retail-and-cultivation/1639354001/?utm\\_source=oembed&utm\\_medium=onsite&utm\\_campaign=storylines&utm\\_content=news&utm\\_term=4012723002](https://www.desertsun.com/story/news/politics/2019/07/05/riverside-county-issues-first-permits-cannabis-retail-and-cultivation/1639354001/?utm_source=oembed&utm_medium=onsite&utm_campaign=storylines&utm_content=news&utm_term=4012723002))

Hi, I'm Sam



As the political reporter, I write about how national and state-level politics take shape in the Coachella Valley. I look for stories about people in power and how the decisions they make affect our community. If you're curious about criminal justice, campaign finance or the internal politics of fire departments and water districts, [support our journalism and subscribe to The Desert Sun](#) today.



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We do not support the Colitas Farms project at this location.

Name:	Address:
1. Jack Peters	11055 YUS HWY 395
2. Paulette Culendale	90 WESTERN DR
3. Jeanette Nelson	611 PINE NUT RD
4. Merinda Woods	9050 9/395 Bridgeport
5. <del>Katy Schlegel</del>	Hwy 395
6. <del>Billie</del>	Hwy 375 #22
7. Danni L. Anderson	631 Camp Antelope Rd Coleville
8. Augusta Harrison Huerta	775A Cranney Rd. Coleville
9. Bryan Herron	1802 Los Padres Pt
10. CALES HAN	2037 ROUTE 10 TRAIL

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Name:

Address:

1. Rosemarie Murray ROSEMARIE MURRAY 54 HIXON DR. COLEVILLE
2. David Murray DAVID MURRAY 54 HIXON DR. COLEVILLE
3. Barbara Guterl BARBARA GUTERL- 704 EASTSIDE- COLEVILLE
4. Doris Jones DORIS JONES 106607 Hwy 395 COLEVILLE
5. Jed Nail & R.R. Brown 1089 52 Hwy 395 #23 Colville CA 96107
6. DIANA RIISE Diana Riise 632 MEADOW DR, COLEVILLE
7. DARYL RIISE " "
8. Joan Ansberry JOAN ANSBERRY 378 Patricia Ln. Coleville
9. P.J. Estes P-J ESTES 108952 Hwy 395 #28, Coleville
10. Donald J. Sudd 703 Pine Nut COLEVILLE, CA 96107

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Name:

Address:

Coleville

1. Jay Joseph Knowles Ranch 470 Lone Company R
2. Pena Mattice <sup>Yerington NV</sup> 48 Peoples Lane / 470 Lone Company Rd. Coleville,
3. John E Mattice 48 peoples lane Yerington NV 89444
4. Josie Mattice 48 Peoples Lane Yerington NV 89444
5. Crystal Mattice 107 Jugs Circle Yerington NV 89444
6. Dennis Joseph 2100 Lovellace Way Carson City NV 89706
7. KATHY Streetor 2708 Lovellace Way Carson City NV 89
8. Donna K. Hartage 5 Grant View Dr Smith NV 894
9. Sallie K. Joseph 470 LONE company Rd. Coleville, CA 96
10. \* all either related or affiliated with the

KNOWLES RANCH, 470 LONE COMPANY Rd, COLEVILLE

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Name:

Address:

1. Betty Jo Brown 660 meadow Dr. Coleville

2. Rebecca Brown 660 meadow DR coleville CA 96107

3. CS HARAMIS CS HARAMIS 967 N. RIVER LN., WALKER

4. ALISON HARAMIS 967 NORTH RIVER LANE 96107

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

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10. \_\_\_\_\_



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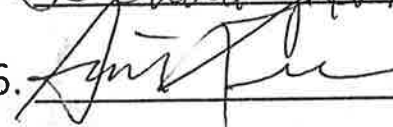
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Name:

Address:

1.  Jenna Casanova 209 Pinon Pl. Coleville, CA 96107
2.  Brenden Casanova 209 Pinon Pl Coleville, CA 96107
3.  Brannon Holte 493 Mule Deer Coleville CA 96107
4.  Jamie Sanchez 428 Meadows Dr Coleville CA 96107
5.  Richard Jensen 239 Millcreek Dr. Walker CA 96107
6.  NORTH RIVER Rd Walker, CA 96107

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Name:

Address:

1. Leannette Kite 26 HFU Cir #8  
Coleville Ca Coleville
2. Jane Kite 26 HFU Circle #6 Ca. 96
3. Joyce Studebaker 26 HFU Circle #7 Coleville  
Ca
4. Mary 106472 US Hwy 395 Coleville,
5. Jessamune 106472 Hwy 395 Coleville, CA
6. Shirley 106452 HW 395 Walker

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Name:

Address:

1. Dennis Eastey 234 Pine nut Rd Coleville, CA 96107
2. Dennis Eastey 234 Pine nut Rd Coleville, CA 96107
3. Amber Lopez 234 Pine nut Rd Coleville, CA 96107
4. Michael Lopez 234 Pine nut Rd Coleville, CA 96107
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

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Name:

Address:

1. Les Bates PO Box 9981 Tahoe Valley Calif 96161
2. Kevin Julian 1292 Larson Ln Coleville, CA 96107
3. Chad Casanova 209 PINON PL COLEVILLE
4. David Newman 189 Patricia Lane
5. Jeff Conca 50 Mill me L Dr Coleville
6. Sage Garcia 1292 Larson Ln Coleville CA 96107

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Name:

Address:

1. John Anthony J. Howard 106865 Hwy 395 #19
2. CHAS TAYLOR 1574 LARSON LN COLEVILLE, CA 96107
3. Tim SULLIVAN 51 HUGGANS LANE BRIDGEPORT CA 93517
4. Richard G. [unclear] 447 NORTH RIVER LANE
5. PAUL PHELPS 432 PATRICIA LANE COLEVILLE CA -
6. R. J. PADGETT 115 MULE DEER RA. COLEVILLE, CA 96107

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Name:

Address:

1. Mr J Diverney 525 EAST SIDE RD
2. RONALD ELDEN 10537 US Hwy 595 #5
3. John Ruzicka 115022 Hwy 245 TOPAZ
4. Rich Malekos 599 mill Creek
5. SCOTT MOORE 279 N. RIVER LANE.
6. MIK SAKANE 279 N. RIVER LANE.

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Name:

Address:

1. James Ricker 701 Meadow Dr. Coleville CA 96107
2. Kelly Varnoy N. 395 Mill Creek #6
3. Kristine Herkloff 143 Western Dr Coleville CA
4. Nancy Lewis 360 Meadow Dr. Walker CA
5. Dan Guir 472 Meadow Dr Coleville Ca
6. ghhwntu 80100 Hwy 395 Bridgeport Ca

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Name:

Address:

1. Dwain Chichester 110554 Hwy 395 96107
2. Angelina Martinez 1451 Agate Rd #B 99444
3. BECKY LAMBERT 111598 Hwy 395 Coleville CA 96107
4. LORANNE DUNCAN 341 Meadow Dr. Coleville Calif.
5. Agnes McCourtney 365 N. River Ln Coleville CA
6. Colleen Jones 1292 Larson Ln Coleville



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Name:

Address:

1. Pat Shanahan 547 N. River Ln, Coleville, CA 96107
2. Orlando Morris 655 N. River Ln, Coleville, CA 96107
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
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Name:

Address:

1. TERRY WALTON 450 EASTSIDE LN. Coleville CA.
2. MISTI SULLIVAN 51 HUGGANS LANE 93517
3. Penny Galvin 171 Cunningham Lane Coleville CA 93516
4. MIKE MOONEY 208 MAIN ST 93517
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

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We do not support the Colitas Farms project at this location.

Name:

Address:

1. Ron + Lynda Kaiser 621 Meadow Dr Coleville, Ca
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

## Petition Against the Proposed Colitas Farms Marijuana Growing Project

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Name:

Address:

1. ~~Steve~~ *Blaine Castro*      *289 Cranney Ln Coleville CA*
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
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January 1, 2020

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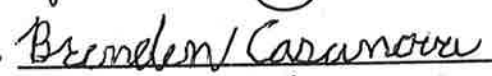


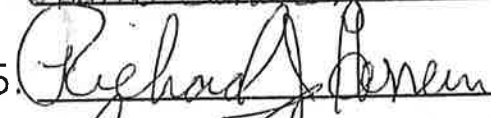
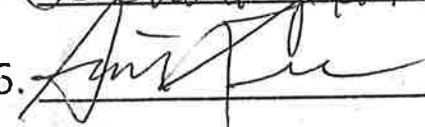
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Name:

Address:

1.  Jenna Casanova 209 Pinon Pl. Coleville, CA 96107
2.  Brenden Casanova 209 Pinon Pl Coleville, CA 96107
3.  Brannon Holte 493 Mule Deer Coleville CA 96107
4.  Jamie Sanchez 428 Meadows Dr Coleville CA 96107
5.  Richard Jensen 239 Millcreek Dr. Walker CA 96107
6.  Art Fie North River Rd Walker CA 96107

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Name:

Address:

1. Raudel Saldívar 88 S BUCK EYE RD
2. Seth Gilmore 149 Mill Creek Drive Coleville CA 96107
3. Agnes M'Courtney 365 - W. River Ln Walker
4. Clinton McKinley 260 Mill Creek Dr. Walker
5. Desarae 149 Mill Creek Dr Walker
6. James Mills James Mills 95 Sierra View St BRIDGEPORT CA 93517

January 1, 2020

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Name:

Address:

1. Theresa Underwood 512 N. River Ln Coleville  
St Pt
2. ROBERT CARPENTER 512 N RIVER LN Coleville
3. Danny/Darryl Dawn 1410 Ski Run Blvd S. Lake Tahoe
4. Steven Raney 1410 Ski Run Blvd., S. Lake Tahoe
5. NATEW LODEN Coleville CA
6. DORA JOHNS Walker CA

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Name:

Address:

1. John Wise Tapaz LAKE
2. Donna Roberts 2712 Cunningham Coleville, CA.
3. Marian Kayton Eastside Ln. Coleville, C.
4. Jerry VanderBrake US 395 COLEVILLE, CA
5. Debra VanderBrake 109132 Hwy 395 Coleville
6. Clark Roberts 2772 Cunningham, Coleville, CA 96111
7. Jaqueline R. Gallo 594 Meadow Rd. Coleville, CA
8. Priscilla Barton 395 Coleville.
9. Vi Moldenkauer 287 Pines Rd. Coleville, CA 96111
10. \_\_\_\_\_



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Name:

Address:

- |     |                         |  |
|-----|-------------------------|--|
| 1.  | <u>Judith Engelhart</u> | <u>27155 E Hwy 26 Linden, CA 95236</u> |
| 2.  | <u>Walt Engelhart</u>   | <u>P.O. Box 731 Linden, CA 95236</u>   |
| 3.  | <u>Rial Engelhart</u>   | <u>27155 E Hwy 26 Linden CA 95236</u>  |
| 4.  | <u>Mark Engelhart</u>   | <u>141 St 3rd Colusa Ca, 95920</u>     |
| 5.  | <u>Connie Engelhart</u> | <u>P.O. Box 238, Linden, Ca 95236</u>  |
| 6.  | _____                   | _____                                  |
| 7.  | _____                   | _____                                  |
| 8.  | _____                   | _____                                  |
| 9.  | _____                   | _____                                  |
| 10. | _____                   | _____                                  |

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Name:

Address:

1. MARK L ROESER
2. Maryl Roeser
3. 746 North River Lane, Coleville, CA 96107
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
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Name:

Address:

1. Stephen E. Walden  1189 East Side Ln, COLEVILLE, CA
2. KRISTINE M. WALDON  1189 EASTSIDE LN, COLEVILLE, CA
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
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Name:	Address:
1.	 251 Crawley Lane Coleville
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3.	
4.	
5.	
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9.	
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Name:

Address:

1. James H. Patton 1135 Eastside Lane Coleville CA 96107
2. Jim Patton 1135 EASTSIDE LANE COLEVILLE CA 96107
3. Pam Verbits 108952 Hwy 395 #31 CA
4. Mary Roeser 746 N. River Lane, Coleville, CA 96107
5. Wm. B. Young 746 N. River Lane, Coleville, CA 96107
6. Jennifer Roeser 2990 McGee Creek Rd, Crowley Lake, CA 93546
7. Joe Roeser 2990 McGEE CREEK RD, CROWLEY LAKE CA 93546
8. Berry Roeser 745 N. River Ln. Coleville, CA 96107
9. Mike Elam 745 N. River Lane, Coleville, CA
10. \_\_\_\_\_

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Name:

Address:

1. Nancy Boardman 45 N. River Lane, Coleville, CA 961.
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
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Name:

Address:

1. Marilyn D Summers 116 116 Hwy 395 Topay, Ca 96123
2. Tom Summers 116 116 Hwy 395 Topay Ca.
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
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Name:

Address:

1. Sandra Bero      108952 Hwy 395 # Coleville 9610
2. D. Floyd J. Bero      108952 Hwy 395 #13 Coleville 96107
3. Ruth Ricks      701 Meadows Dr Coleville Ca 96107
4. Thelma J. Ricks      701 Meadows Dr. Coleville Ca 96107
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
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Name:

Address:

1. Betty Wilcox
2. Jessica Johnson
3. Manny Ramirez
4. Karen Donahue      747 N River Ln
5. Kathy Padgett      115 Mule Deer Rd.
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
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Name:

Address:

1. Greg Rondy 148 MEADOW DRIVE, COLEVILLE CA 961
2. Eric Woods 90509 US #395 Bridgeport CA 93517
3. Bryan Walters 107537 US HWY 395 Walker ca. 96107
4. Kathy Miller 106833 Hwy 395 Walker CA
5. Michele Drenniamy 2258 Eastside Lane Coleville 961
6. Eileen Gonzales 11149 US HWY 395 #B COLEVILLE 9610
7. Chris Beesley 111391 US HWY 395 COLEVILLE 9610
8. Betty Camp Hwy 395 Coleville 9617 (CALIF)
9. Mark Mooneyhan 373 Pinet Coleville, CA 96107
10. \_\_\_\_\_

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Name:

Address:

1. Brad MARQUETTE 115348 US HWY 395, Topaz, CA 96133
2. Randy Walker 1052 E. Mono Lake Dr., Mono City, 935
3. DAVID HUGGANS 105 HUGGANS LN. BRIDGEPORT, CA 93517
4. Matthew Hussman 171 Cunningham Ln. Coleville CA ~~9613~~ 96107
5. James McKnight 503 N RIVER LN Coleville CA 96107
6. [Signature] 503 RIVER LN Coleville CA 96107

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Name:

Address:

1.	<u>Susan Barnes</u>	<u>124 Hare CRT. Walker, CA</u>
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____
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Name:

Address:

1. Jerry W Byrd      903 N. River Lane, Walker CA
2. Stacy L Byrd      903 N. River Lane, Walker, CA
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January

1, 2020

**Petition Against the Proposed Colitas Farms Marijuana Growing Project**

The following residents of Walker, Coleville, and surrounding communities of Mono County, CA strongly oppose the issuance of an Operations Permit to the applicant Colitas Farms, located at 324 North River Lane for the following reasons:

- Decreased quality of life due to foul odors emitted from the crop and processing
- Security and safety issues for the residents, no local law enforcement in our vicinity (at least 45 min away)
- Visual blight of a large industrial complex directly adjacent to homes (two 10,000 sq. ft. metal buildings, with a height of 21.8 feet, along with other surrounding out buildings)
- Increased traffic on a private, narrow, non- county maintained road
- Decreased property values
- Negative impacts on local water table (usage of over 1.2 million gallons/year drawn from well)

Although this property is zoned agricultural, it and the surrounding parcels, have only been used historically as residential properties. This proposed industrial complex is not really agriculture as we know it in the valley and will not help retain the rural environment and scenic beauty of the Antelope Valley.

Our valley is a large agricultural area with more appropriate options available.

We do not support the Colitas Farms project at this location.

Name:

Address:

- |     |                      |                                |
|-----|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1.  | <u>Roger Donahue</u> | <u>747 N. River Ln. Walker</u> |
| 2.  | _____                | _____                          |
| 3.  | _____                | _____                          |
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| 5.  | _____                | _____                          |
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January 1, 2020

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Our valley is a large agricultural area with more appropriate options available

We do not support the Colitas Farms project at this location

Name:

Address:

1. Virginia J. Walker 324 North River Lane
2. D. Walker 324 North River Lane
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
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Our valley is a large agricultural area with more appropriate options available.

We do not support the Colitas Farms project at this location.

Name:

Address:

1. Annie Ann NORTH RIVER LANE APN # 002-460-016-000
2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3575 OWENS RIVER Rd. MAMMOTH LKS, CA
3. Kelly Turner NORTH RIVER Lane apn 002-460-016-000
4. \_\_\_\_\_ 3575 OWENS RIVER R. ML CA 93546
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
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9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_



## Petition Against the Proposed Colitas Farms Marijuana Growing Project

The following residents of Walker, Coleville, and surrounding communities of Mono County, CA STRONGLY oppose the issuance of an Operations Permit to the applicant Colitas Farms, located at 324 North River Lane for the following reasons:

- Decreased quality of life due to foul odors emitted from the crop and processing
- Security and safety issues for the residents, no local law enforcement in our vicinity (at least 45 min away)
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Our valley is a large agricultural area with more appropriate options available.

We DO NOT support the Colitas Farms project at this location.

Name:

Address:

1. Lynn L. Schreiner      594 Meadow Dr., Coleville, CA 96107

2. Brian R. Schreiner      594 Meadow Dr., Coleville, CA 96107

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Jan 13 at 9:10 AM  
Dear Supervisor Peters,

I am writing today to voice my opposition to the planned Marijuana farm in Walker on North River Lane.

I understand that this issue will come before you and the Board of Supervisors next month. I, along with a large group of residents strongly oppose this operation based on the following concerns:

- **The potential for overwhelming odors** emanating from both the growing and the processing of the marijuana. I live next to (around 900 feet away) the only existing Mono County marijuana farm, Tilth Farms. Being an outdoor grow, we endure very strong odors for a couple of months during the late summer and fall. Colitas farms is proposing an indoor, year round grow. We fear that the strong odors will be constant.

-**The visual blight** caused by the out of character and extremely large metal buildings that will be right on the street and directly across from our residential neighborhood. They are proposing two, 22 foot tall, 10,000 sqft buildings with large fans at each end, blowing the (misted) exhaust out into our neighborhood. They are planning on using an untested, non-local tree fence to hide the buildings. We don't have confidence that this will accomplish the county required visual shielding. This project will not maintain the existing rural and agricultural character that is so important to the residents of our county.

-**Security and safety of the residents.** We have no local law enforcement in Walker. I know that response times will be from 30 to 45 minutes. If a security issue arises, we feel very vulnerable. I know of several incidents with other California marijuana farms where armed gunmen crashed marijuana farm gates and stormed the property. The Colitas location in our neighborhood would be an easy target and leave our families and children very vulnerable to such violence.

-**Negative impacts to our local groundwater resources.** When this project was first presented to the Mono County Planning Commission, the county staff was under the impression that Colitas was going to use surface water from the two irrigation ditches running through their property. It was subsequently discovered that it is against state regulations to use any surface water for the irrigation of commercial marijuana. The county now knows that the projected 1.2 million gallons of annual water use will come from a local well on the property. I know that the county doesn't have jurisdiction with regards to water, but we feel this large draw of water will possibly effect the local residential wells on the adjacent and surrounding properties. Two adjacent wells recently went dry illustrating the vulnerability of our local water table. We just don't know what an impact this will have on our neighborhood.

I feel that any one of these above concerns would disqualify this project from being located so close to our community. Together, I feel our request for the denial of the permit is very sound and just.

I am not against the marijuana industry in general. I just feel that this is the wrong location.

I understand that not approving a project is a difficult thing to do. I know this property is zoned Agricultural and they have completed all the necessary permits up to this point. But this doesn't mean this project is properly located and should be approved by the Board. Please show our local community that you too know what is proper and what is not.

**This is a new industry for our county. There are many new and difficult issues that we need to wade through. Going forward we will discover new challenges to overcome, new opportunities to learn from.**

**Please view this as an opportunity to learn from and to act appropriately. Please create the proper regulations so the industry and the communities can go forward with confidence that this will be a safe, secure, accepted, and profitable industry for our county.**

Sincerely,  
CJ Haramis  
967 North River Lane  
Walker, CA  
(760)274-5982

January 21, 2020

Mono County Board of Supervisors

John Peters

Dear Mr. Peters,

Kelly Turner and I, Scott Lee, have purchased the adjacent lot next to 324 N. North River Lane. APN# 002-460-016-000. We are on the east side of the proposed Colitas Farms.

We closed escrow November 2019. We were unaware of the proposed Cannabis Farm. We do not have any issues with the new marijuana laws or the uses. However, we do have an issue with privacy, hazards to our livestock/pets, high industrial buildings, the usage of water, the traffic on the private road, safety, and noise.

We were planning on putting in a domestic well. Most all wells in the area are domestic. We are aware that this proposed business will be drawing over a million gallons a year of water. We know that the average family of four uses approximately 144,000 gallons per year. As county supervisor, can you assure every parcel that is zoned mixed use agriculture, as we are, can be granted the same water usage as the proposed Cannabis Farm? What would happen if all these parcels had commercial wells? It was discussed with a Mono County Health official, that more than one of these wells, of this size, in close proximity would certainly need scrutiny.

Can the county guarantee that ourselves, our children, grandchildren, livestock and pets will be safe from any water contamination, odor, air quality, noise, excessive traffic, disgruntled employees? Please take into consideration that we plan on retiring next door and purchased for the sole reason of privacy, zoned to house our horses, pig, goat, sheep and dogs. A place for our children, grandchildren to visit. This is where we want to live out the rest of our lives.

Just because a parcel is "zoned" a certain way, doesn't mean there shouldn't be careful consideration to whom the county allows in their jurisdiction. Cannabis farming is a new industry and we hope that proper research and deliberating is done with great care. As we stated, in the beginning of letter, we are not against cannabis farming, we just feel this is the wrong location.

Facts to be considered:

Our Pets and livestock

We have a lot of concern over wind blowing leaves and or marijuana seeds onto our property, and it will happen. We live on the Owens River, over 1200 acres and know there is no way around the fact the wind howls and the seeds land where you least expect it. We don't have anything of hazard, but marijuana is. On the PetMD website we found that if ANY of our

livestock or pets ingest marijuana that it never has a positive outcome, it can cause an array of problems and in some cases death. Just the odor of the cannabis can cause issues.

#### Excessive Water Usage

January 1997 an early thaw caused considerable damage to the west Walker River, Wells, septic systems, and several thousand gallons of stored toxic chemicals from Pickle Meadows Marine Station. These chemicals entered the water table. Residents were forced to drink bottled water for most of that year. There may still be residual lingering chemicals to date. Pumping 1.2 million gallons per year may trigger issues with any residual chemicals left in the water table.

#### Private Road

The North River Lane is a private road. We own half way into the center. With the said Colitas Farms amount of traffic and employees, this does not fall under legal jurisdiction of a "private road" California vehicle code 490 states that "private road or driveway" is a way or place in PRIVATE ownership and used for vehicular travel by the owner and those have express or implied permission from the owner but NOT by the members of the public.

Both Kelly and I have been in the Mammoth area for 30 plus years. We have a love for the area and have close friends all throughout the county. We are reasonable people and open to listening to others ideas and we are certainly entertain any new businesses. We know that change is inevitable and we are not against all new things. We just feel that this proposed Colitas Farms is not in the right area. We are pensive as we try to fathom what a problem this will be if it is permitted. We will continue to fight this.

Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated,

Scott Lee

Kelly Turner

3575 Owens River Rd.

Mammoth Lakes CA. 93546

Coy and Donna H. Patton  
1135 Eastside Lane  
Coleville, CA 96107  
(530) 495-2991

January 10, 2020

Mono County Board of Supervisors  
Attn: John Peters, Supervisor District 4  
P.O. Box 128  
Bridgeport, CA 93517

Dear Supervisor Peters,

This letter is not in opposition to growing marijuana in Mono County. However, it is in opposition to the location of the proposed Colitas Farms Growing and Manufacturing Project.

It is my understanding and belief that additional environmental review is not required, **except as might be necessary to examine whether there are significant effects peculiar to the project or its site**. (I refer you to **CEQA Compliance**, Mono Co. CDD Planning Division 10/17/19.)

We in our community have concerns for our wells during the drought years. A manufacturing complex pumping 1.2 MILLION gallons of ground water in the midst of our community would greatly increase the risk of wells being affected during the dry times, and is detrimental to surrounding properties. (I refer you to **Policy 1.L.3**, Mono Co. CDD, Planning Division 10/17/19.)

If permitted, this commercial growing and manufacturing complex on North River Lane will alter the character of our community. (I refer you to **GOAL 4 and Objective 4.B**, Mono Co. CDD Planning Division 10/17/19.)

**Operation Permit** may be denied based on community opposition. (I refer you to Mono County Cannabis Projects Update 11/7/19.) In light of widespread opposition to the location of Colitas **Farms Cultivation and Manufacturing on North River Lane**, I believe that the **Operation Permit** must be denied.

This is a critical time regarding planning for our communities. It is imperative that Mono County set guidelines so as not to start a policy of permitting any industrial complex in the midst of a residential area.

Thank you for your time and attention to this most important matter.

Respectfully submitted,

12/

Coy and Donna H. Patton

COPY

### **LAND DEVELOPMENT TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (LDTAC)**

The LDTAC first reviewed the application on Dec. 17, 2018, and recommended acceptance for permit processing. Based on community input, the applicants revised their project description to remove the outdoor grow and cultivate indoors only. With the change in project description, LDTAC reviewed the application again on Feb. 19, 2019, and re-accepted the permit for processing.

### **CEQA COMPLIANCE**

The County contracted with Resource Concepts Inc. (RCI) to conduct a 15183 analysis (Attachment 4). CEQA mandates that projects consistent with the development density established by existing zoning, community plan, or general plan policies for which an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was certified shall not require additional environmental review, except as might be necessary to examine whether there are project-specific significant effects peculiar to the project or its site. The 15183 analysis found no significant impacts peculiar to cannabis cultivation, processing, and manufacturing Type 6, or beyond the scope of mitigation measures stated in the Mono County General Plan EIR. The 15183 analysis specifically reviewed potential impacts related to land use, housing, soils, water, air quality/odors, transportation, biological resources, energy and mineral resources, hazards, noise, public services, utilities, aesthetics, cultural resources, recreation, and greenhouse gas emissions (GHG).

Ultimately, the review determined:

1. The land use and planning impacts of the proposed agricultural cultivation were analyzed in the EIRs certified in conjunction with the adoption of the Mono County General Plan;
2. This parcel is no different than other agricultural parcels in the surrounding area; there is nothing unusual about the proposed project that would change or in any way affect the severity of these impacts. The impacts are not peculiar to the parcel or the project;
3. There is no new substantial information indicating that the land use and planning impacts of the project will be more severe than described in the EIR; and
4. There are no cumulative or off-site land use and planning impacts from the proposed project that were not addressed in the prior EIR.

### **GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY**

The General Plan land use designation for this property is Agriculture with a 10-acre minimum (AG-10). According to the Mono County General Plan, "the 'AG' designation is intended to preserve and encourage agricultural uses, to protect agricultural uses from encroachment from urban uses, and to provide for the orderly growth of activities related to agriculture." Permitted uses under the Agriculture land use designation include single-family homes, accessory buildings, non-commercial composting, and all uses proposed in conjunction with a bona-fide agricultural operation. Commercial cannabis cultivation is permitted subject to a Use Permit and compliance with Chapter 13, and a Cannabis Operation Permit pursuant to Mono County Code Chapter 5.60.

The proposed development is also consistent with Antelope Valley Area Plan policies contained in the Mono County General Plan Land Use Element.

### **MONO COUNTY LAND USE ELEMENT, COUNTYWIDE LAND USE POLICIES**

**Objective 1.I. Maintain and enhance the local economy.**

**Objective 1.L.** Provide for commercial cannabis activities in Mono County in a way that protects public health, safety, and welfare while also taking advantage of new business and economic development activities.

**Policy 1.L.3.** Avoid, reduce, and prevent potential issues specific to commercial cannabis activities that may adversely affect communities.

**Policy 1.L.4.** In recognition of the potential economic benefits of this new industry, encourage the responsible establishment and operation of commercial cannabis activities.

## **MONO COUNTY LAND USE ELEMENT, ANTELOPE VALLEY POLICIES**

**GOAL 4.** Provide for orderly growth in the Antelope Valley in a manner that retains the rural environment, and protects the area's scenic, recreational, agricultural, and natural resources.

**Objective 4.A.** Guide future development to occur within the US 395 corridor and existing communities.

**Policy 4.A.3.** Along the Highway 395 corridor between existing communities, provide for limited development that is compatible with natural constraints and the Valley's scenic qualities.

**Objective 4.B.** Maintain the scenic, historic, agricultural, and natural resource values in the Valley.

**Objective 4.D.** Maintain and enhance the local economy.

## **PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

A public hearing notice was published in the Oct. 5, 2019, issue of The Sheet and the Oct. 3, 2019, issue of Mammoth Times (see Attachment 2) and was mailed to surrounding property owners within 300 feet of the proposed project (Attachment 3) on Oct. 2, 2019. No comments have been received as of the drafting of this staff report.

On October 9, 2018, prior to the first version of the application being accepted for processing, a petition with 49 signatures against the project was submitted to the Community Development Department. This petition was based on the previous project description that included an outdoor grow area. The petition comments on a number of topics including: general opposition to the legality of cannabis; watershed impacts; Water Board and/or Air Quality District compliance; location/site control; well/water impacts; pest control; natural hazard impacts; size of buildings; character of potential employees; odor and air quality impacts; visual impacts; noise; lighting; security; biological and cultural impacts; infrastructure; and regulatory impacts. The submitted petition is available upon request.

## **USE PERMIT FINDINGS**

*In accordance with Mono County General Plan, Chapter 32, Processing-Use Permits, the Planning Commission may issue a Use Permit after making certain findings.*

## USE PERMIT VS. OPERATION PERMIT

*Use Permit*

- 1. Compliance with Chapter 13, Commercial Cannabis Activities
- 2. Compliance with state regulations
- 3. Must satisfy Use Permit findings
- 4. Must satisfy Ch. 13 findings (Site Control, Odor Control, Setbacks, Signage, Visual Screening, Lighting, Noise, Parking, Fire Protection, and Water Conservation)
- 5. Must provide required documentation

*Not Found*

Operation Permit

- 1. Compliance with Mono County Code 5.60 Cannabis Operations
- 2. Must satisfy Security Plan requirements per the Mono County Sheriff's Department
- 3. Must provide required documentation
- 4. May be denied based on community opposition
- 5. Annual renewal process



LOU AND MARYE ROESER  
746 N. RIVER LANE  
COLEVILLE, CA 96107  
530-495-2312  
January 28, 2020

John Peters, District 4 Supervisor  
Mono County, CA

Dear John,

Thank you so much for arranging the Board of Supervisors Meeting to be held in Walker at the Community Hall. We certainly realize the effort that goes into such a change. This critical hearing and vote will affect many people living here. Although Lou and I were unable to attend the last RPAC meeting, we are very supportive of the decision by the Antelope Valley RPAC to pursue exclusions for communities throughout the Antelope Valley. The people at the meeting certainly showed their wishes for this action to occur. We wish to participate in helping to draw the exclusion lines especially in the North River Lane area. However, unfortunately, we also realize that this will be too late to help us living in the North River Lane area in our protest against the establishment of this inappropriate, incompatible commercial Marijuana Industry, Colitas Farms that never should have been proposed for this property in the midst of our rural residential neighborhood.

One suggestion to pass on is the lack of acoustics in the Community Hall building, which makes it very difficult to hear unless there is an adequate sound system set up whereby all can hear the speakers. At the RPAC meetings, I, and others in the audience, find it quite difficult to hear as no sound system is used.

We are continuing our previous letter concerning the Commercial marijuana growing, manufacturing and processing plant complex, Colitas Farms. We oppose an operational permit being granted by Mono County for an industrial plant placed on the very visible North River Lane site in this rural residential neighborhood in Walker.

It has come to our attention that we have not been hearing discussions or information concerning the critical importance of hazardous waste and removal components of such a commercial business complex. Just as we, lay people, knew nothing of the possibilities of requesting an exclusion, this subject seems to have been lacking and omitted from the general knowledge we have received. It is unfortunate, that the Antelope Valley, does not have adequate means of communication such as newspapers, local TV coverage, etc., and many residents and citizens are not aware of the right questions to ask in order to receive necessary information. Notices of meetings are only posted in few public spots around the valley and residents do not know what is happening in this valley much less the rest of Mono County. Our TV news comes from Reno, Nevada. Only word of mouth, the telephone, and direct mail are assured methods of news and notices.

Marijuana is a drug according to the FDA and is a controlled substance under Federal Law and listed as a psychoactive drug. THC, occurring in the cannabis plant, is the chemical responsible for most of the marijuana euphoric highs and medicinal effects. This is what makes for the hoped for high value and high prices received by growers, manufacturers, processors, retailers etc. Under Federal law, the major contaminant in cannabis byproducts is a schedule 1 controlled substance. The EPA requires approved hazardous waste removal for all the residue byproducts.

The following parts of the plant are all considered hazardous waste: flowers, trim, roots, stalks, leaves and residue, root balls, exhausted growing medium, failed plants, diseased or otherwise unmarketable leaves, buds and seeds. Residual THC can poison animals and have adverse effects on the local ecology if improperly disposed. Wastewater generated in marijuana production is also considered a hazardous waste. Spent chemicals used to extract plant oils can require hazardous waste removal. Hazardous waste removal will constitute much more heavy traffic by waste removal vehicles on this private, one-way dead end, non-maintained Lane than even we had been aware. There also must be an approved site for the disposal of this hazardous waste. This will put more pressure on Eastside Lane also.

There are also other hazards listed that can effect both employees and others in the neighborhood. Included in these hazards is the combustibility of solvents, and chemicals used and the fire and explosion dangers this poses especially in the oil extraction process. The cannabis plants can cause allergic reactions while the fertilizers and pesticides used also present contamination dangers. The planned buildings are not fireproof or totally self-contained.

Imposing and thrusting this unproved commercial industry into our neighborhood presents threats and issues to the public safety, health and welfare of the citizens and poses dangers and threats to our local ecology. Seemingly Mono County must rely a great

deal on the owners of the marijuana business to prevent any of the threats from happening and County Monitors may only know of certain violations, activities or actions after the issue or action has occurred.

The buildings change the view shed even from across the River and the extremely unpleasant smell is an unavoidable byproduct of the business and permeates all within its reach. In addition, a commercial industrial complex lowers residential property values, denigrates the quality of life, makes this area a less safe and desirable place to live, play and enjoy the scenic valley, clean air and water, wildlife, and the natural landscape all reasons why we all chose to make this area our home. There are 3 naturalized irrigation ditches passing through the Colitas Farms property all vulnerable to pollution. The West Walker River is very close and the reason for the Lane being called the North River Lane is that it parallels the north side of the River. Seemingly, there are no benefits for local residents by the insertion of this industrial business in this totally wrong location of rural residences.

Commercial Marijuana industries makes a disturbance to the natural resources and can cause extensive damage to local ecosystems. The Walker River is famous for its fishing opportunities, contributes to the local economy, and allows fisherman to fish the West Walker River all through the valley and on to Topaz Lake. Hunters also have opportunities to contribute to the local economy. The vast riparian ecology along the West Walker River and all the irrigation ditches supports a large variety of wildlife. The River and irrigation ditches are vulnerable to contamination.

Thinking County wide, the Mono County Tourism department promotes these values as it encourages Mono County as place to not only visit but to make your home with safe neighborhoods and schools, and beautiful places to play and recreate in. Since 95 % of the land in Mono County is public, the Antelope Valley also offers opportunities to own private land, have horses for recreational riding, places for pets, grow a vegetable garden and fruit trees, and participate in a 4-H Club with the possibility of raising animals. In the past, all of these assets have added to the desires of many folks to live or retire here.

Also County-wide, permitting this kind of a commercial marijuana industrial complex to be placed in residential neighborhoods, sets a dangerous precedent in community planning. Local citizens do not desire this unwanted industrial insertion "next door and in my back yard" on a non-county road owned by the residents that is in the absolutely wrong location as the recent RPAC meeting demonstrated. There are other potential marijuana businesses approaching many other private properties in this valley to lease or purchase, some quite close to the schools. We have been told not to address the morality or social issues posed by these issues of which there are many!

We urge you and the other Supervisors to vote not to allow this intrusion on the North River Lane Community area and also to support exclusions for the Antelope Valley communities who also do not want marijuana industries in their neighborhoods.

Thank you for your attention,

Sincerely,

Lou and Marye Roeser and family

January 16, 2020

RE: Colitas Farms Marijuana Growing Project, 324 North River Lane, Coleville, California 96107

Honorable Board of Supervisors:

I have written this letter to you in **opposition** of this project. First, I would like to state that I am not against anyone having a business of this nature, not at all! My opposition is that this type of business does not have a place in our small and peaceful North River Lane community.

If you haven't taken the time to come to our neighborhood and drive down North River Lane, I would love it if you did so as then you would gain a perspective of my concerns. N. River Lane is a non-County maintained road that is narrow and mostly one lane road from my property (at the top of River Lane) to the very end of the road. The narrowness of this road makes it necessary to pull off to the side from time to time to let a neighbor pass as the road generally doesn't support two cars going in opposite directions. This neighborhood is quiet and rural. Neighbors on River Lane are friendly, protective of each other, some retired others not and what we all have in common is our desire and love for this rural area that affords all of us the peace and quiet and a natural environment that we all chose to live in.

The following are concerns that I have regarding the abovementioned project:

- Concerns of increased traffic as well as transportation of equipment up and down River Lane that will undoubtedly breakdown the road, and raise the noise and dust level effecting the quality of my life, my property and that of others.
- Concern about the water table for all of our properties in this area and how the project will impact our fragile wells.
- My concern of how buildings, fencing, lighting, exhaust fans and other industrial sounds relating to this project will disturb the peace and quiet and rural atmosphere of our community as well as other surrounding properties throughout the Walker Valley.
- My concern that if I ever decide to relocate that this type of project on River Lane will undoubtedly serve to decrease my property value and hinder any chance of sale when prospective buyers find out there is a marijuana farm/processing plant right down the street.
- As River Lane is very dark at night, I am highly concerned about my security and safety as I am the first property that people come to driving down River Lane. I also have great concern for the safety of my neighbors on River Lane as I would imagine that this project could and would certainly attract people and crime to our quiet little river community.
- Another important concern that I have is the undoubtedly foul odor. We would all have to endure this smell throughout the valley and especially for those of us living in close proximity to this project. My husband and I bought our property for the beauty of the area, to be soothed by the river, to be in the presence of the wildlife, to sit outside and to be able to live a retired life rich in quality and peace and quiet. Hearing industrial sounds, dealing with the expected increase in traffic and enduring the obtrusive odors would certainly change all of that.

Many of us have researched marijuana farms throughout California and we all have different stories that we have read referencing issues of security, crime, noise, decreased property values, asthma and allergy issues and horribly foul odors that are compared to that of a skunk smell! I would suggest that our quality of life, peace and quiet and our security will drastically be compromised. When we purchased our property we did so because of the serenity, rural atmosphere and quietness all around us and never expected that the County would consider an industrial marijuana farm and processing plant that would be surrounded by and very close in proximity to so many homes.

I am aware that the County is always looking for different types of revenue, and rightfully so, but at what expense to the residents of our small River Lane community and the surrounding homes in the valley? I would sincerely hope that you, above anything else, would consider the problems that will come with this project and the adverse impact it will have in our community.

In closing, I would again encourage Board members that are not familiar with the N. River Lane community to visit this area to consider our concerns. I sincerely request that you ask yourself whether you would support this proposal if it was next door to you and your family? How about next to your Mother's or Grandmother's home? My husband and I worked our entire lives to have this home and be in this community during our retirement years. If I am being honest, I am frightened about the negative impact this will have on my quality of life, the peace and quiet of our community, and my safety and security.

Thank you for your time and consideration as you review my concerns regarding this project.

Sincerely,

Nancy Boardman  
45 North River Lane  
Coleville, California 96107

Dear Board of Supervisors,

I am writing to express my opposition to the Colitas Farms marijuana operation.

This property is located adjacent to a residential neighborhood and will have a negative impact on the residents of North River Lane and surrounding area. Please see the attached aerial view that shows the overwhelming impact this would have on the nearby residents. The red star marks the proposed site, which will be built near the street due to irrigation ditches in the rear of the property.

I am concerned about the following issues:

- **Odors emitted from the crop** (as well as processing odors) The significant skunk-like odor is offensive and will have a negative impact on the residents' enjoyment of their property. The smell travels with the wind and will affect more than just the immediate area.
- **Visual blight of a large industrial complex next to homes** (two 10,000sq.ft metal buildings with a height of 21.8ft.) In the rural beauty of the Antelope Valley, I don't think anyone would choose to live near a huge stinky industrial complex. From what I understand, the applicants do not plan to live at the site at this point or in the near future. If so, they would have included plans for a home to be built. I moved to the valley to enjoy the natural beauty and quiet atmosphere that Walker provides.
- **Security and safety issues for the residents** We have no local law enforcement in Walker. If, and when a security issue arises, how will we be protected? There was a recent incident at a marijuana farm in Stanislaus County. I have no way to protect myself from this kind of incident with the proposed farm so close to my home. There are also children in the community and this type of operation would put them at risk.
- **Negative impacts on water table** (usage of over 1 million gallons/year) The residents use well water. Is this over usage of our resource going to affect the water table? Who will pay to re-drill our wells?
- **Decreased property values** As a licensed California real estate broker, I have the professional background to advise that this will have a negative impact on property values.

Although this property is zoned agricultural, it has only been used historically as a residential property. This proposed industrial complex is not really agriculture as we know it in the valley and will not help retain the rural environment and scenic beauty of the Antelope Valley. As the general plan states: "Residents in the Antelope Valley are interested in preserving the existing rural character of the communities and the Valley as a whole."

Please show the residents of Mono County that you will manage this new and untested industry in a thoughtful and responsible manner. Our Valley is a large agricultural area with more appropriate options available.

I want to be clear that I have no opposition to the commercial production of marijuana, but this is absolutely not the right location for this sort of operation.

Please do not support the Colitas Farms project at this location.

Thanks for your consideration,  
Alison Young  
967 N River Lane, Walker, CA

Jan. 27, 2020

Dear Supervisor Peters,

I am writing in response to the Antelope Valley RPAC meeting on Jan. 23rd, 2020. My family and I are in complete support of the RPAC members proposal to draw exclusion lines around the communities of Walker, Coleville, and Topaz from adjacent cannabis growing and manufacturing complexes. In the community of Walker, this would also include N. River Ln., the site of the proposed commercial Colitas Farms growing and manufacturing complex. My family and I, and residents and neighbors of private N. River Ln., are very concerned about the imposing, impacting, non-conforming detrimental change that the permitting of this commercial cannabis complex would make to all our public health, safety and well being, and to our quality of lives, while at the same time, greatly reducing desirability of living here.

We also fully support increased setback requirements (presently only at 300 feet for outdoor grows only, none for indoor) for all OUTDOOR and INDOOR grows to a setback amount that protects not only schools, churches, libraries, playgrounds and parks, but also protects residents, families, neighborhoods and businesses.

In lieu of the Antelope Valley RPAC proposal to draw an exclusion around the community of Walker, including N. River Ln., I truly hope the Mono County Board of Supervisors will vote on Feb. 4, 2020 to oppose the issuance of an operation permit for Colitas Farms based on community opposition and the unique situation of both residential and ag zoned properties on a single lane private lane adjacent to the town of Walker.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kerry Roeser  
745 N. River Ln.  
Coleville, CA 96107  
sierralight@schat.com

Board of Supervisors  
c/o Clerk of the Board  
PO Box 715  
Bridgeport, CA 93517

Jan, 13, 2020

Dear Mono County Supervisors,

I am writing to express my opposition to Colitas Farms establishing a marijuana growing operation in Walker.

I call your attention to the Cali Kosher farms in Patterson, Ca which operates a farm very similar to what Colitas Farms is proposing. The Cali Kosher farm has been targeted by armed robbers and security guards assaulted on more than one occasion. At around 1:30AM on December 29, security cameras show 12 heavily armed robbers at Cali Kosher. It took the sheriff's SWAT team 30 minutes to arrive and drive the suspects off. Two AK-47s, an AR-15 and several handguns were recovered. How long will it take the Mono County SWAT team to get to Walker?

The proposed Colitas Farms property is located adjacent to a residential neighborhood and will absolutely put the residences of Walker at risk.

I am sure you are well aware of the many additional concerns about the proposed location of Colitas Farms.

Please do not support the Colitas Farms in our valley.

Sincerely,



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Lynn L. Schreiner



Brian Schreiner

594 Meadow Dr.  
Coleville, CA 96107



14 January 2020

Dear Supervisor Peters,

As a long time resident of Antelope Valley and North River Lane, I am writing to state my adamant opposition to the permitting of the proposed Colitas Farms cannabis growing and manufacturing project located at 324 N. River Ln., in Coleville, Ca. for the following reasons. The proposed permit would impose a negative impact, decreased quality of life, and would ultimately jeopardize the public health, safety and welfare of the residents, property owners and neighbors of N. River Ln. and adjacent Walker.

1. The strong foul odors would radically decrease the quality of life on this lane and the surrounding areas. There are well over 200 homes located within a one mile radius from this proposed project, including the town of Walker.
2. The imposed visual blight of the two large commercial 10,000 square foot metal buildings (with 24 hour a day fans) approximately 22 feet high potentially permitted on a narrow private road adjacent to other residences is completely incompatible and nonconforming to the area. In spite of the agricultural zoning of the small parcel of 19 acres, a large commercial cannabis growing and manufacturing business is not compatible with the surrounding residences and properties.
3. North River Lane is a private easement road through the private properties on the lane, and is a 20 foot wide (at most), unpaved, unmaintained, non county road. Mono County is considering the permitting of the Colitas Farms commercial complex on this private lane, and has allocated 14 parking places, projecting the increased commercial and employee use and traffic per day, 365 days a year. This commercial use permitting and the associated traffic is not compatible with the private road and the road safety of its residents.
4. There are huge unaddressed public health and safety issues with no nearby law enforcement (the closest is 45 plus minutes away) regarding the proposed Colitas Farms cannabis growing and manufacturing commercial business, including increased traffic with employee housing and additional employees involved in harvesting and oil production, in addition to the daily commercial business traffic.
5. There will be a detrimental effect on property values on North River Lane as well as surrounding areas.
6. The lowering water table is a very big concern for residents and property owners in the area. Several residents of N. River Ln. have already had to replace their wells at a big cost. The proposed Colitas Farms cannabis grow will be a big water user.

In addition, what health and safety regulations are in place now in Mono County to protect the public health, safety and welfare of its residents and businesses, in regards to the proposed permitting of a commercial cannabis growing and manufacturing business (the establishment of a public nuisance) adjacent to residences and the town of Walker on a private road?

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Kerry E. Roeser  
745 N. River Lane  
Coleville, CA 96107  
[sierralight@schat.com](mailto:sierralight@schat.com)

Dear Supervisor Peters,

I am writing this letter to express my objection and opposition to the proposed Colitas Farms project on North River Lane, in Walker.

There are **environmental, economic and social impacts** associated with this proposal as follows:

**Environmental**

- *Water*- lowering of water table
- *Air*- odor, night time lighting
- *Soil*- excessive land coverage, storm water run-off
- *Wildlife*- historical winter migration corridor for the Walker mule deer herd
- *Sound*- fans and other 24hr equipment
- *View shed*

**Social**

- local opposition
- non-local traffic
- nuisance creation
- law enforcement response time
- change in local character

**Economic**


- lowering of property values
- cost of re-drilling existing wells due to lowering of water table
- increase in road maintenance costs

In addition, North River Lane is a one lane private road not suitable for commercial traffic. I consider this proposal to be non-conforming and an imposition on the peaceful, safe, quiet neighborhood we know.

Thank you for your time.

Mike Elam  
745 N. River Lane  
Coleville, CA 96107  
[melam@schat.com](mailto:melam@schat.com)



 2 items (274 KB) 

Mono County Supervisors,

Has anyone brought up the fire danger, toxic fumes and toxic waste that Colitis Farms will be subjecting our neighborhood to. I am concerned that the lack of respect for our physical welfare will definitely worsen if they are allowed to process marijuana with extremely flammable and toxic solvent materials!! Who is going to monitor their actions to make sure there are not toxic fumes being pumped out of these buildings and toxic material not being dumped on the property and going into the water supply!? Also the fire danger is Very Real and with the storage of these solvents on the property it cause an explosion! The fire could be anytime of day or night and we could be caught in our homes, perishing in the fire. We are on a limited access road and we currently pay huge fire insurance prices and what insurance company will cover us with a marijuana oil extracting plant right here on North River Lane!! See below the chemicals and warnings for this extracting process.



# **STOP COLITAS MARIJUANA FARMS**

324 N. RIVER LANE, WALKER CA

COLITAS FARMS WANTS TO PUT UP TWO 22 FOOT HIGH, 10,000 SQUARE FOOT STEEL BUILDINGS RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF OUR NEIGHBORHOOD. THERE ARE 250 HOMES WITHIN ONE MILE RADIUS OF THIS PURPOSED LARGE INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX. THIS WILL CAUSE A DECREASED QUALITY OF LIFE DUE TO FOUL ODORS FROM YEAR ROUND GROWING AND PROCESSING MARIJUANA PRODUCTS AND ALSO SOUNDS OF AIR CONDITIONING, HEATERS AND FANS RUNNING 24 HOURS A DAY. IT WILL CAUSE SECURITY AND SAFETY ISSUES FOR THE RESIDENTS, INCREASED TRAFFIC ON OUR PRIVATE NARROW NON COUNTY MAINTAINED ROAD AND CAUSE DECREASED PROPERTY VALUES!! THE BIGGEST CONCERN WILL BE THE IMPACT ON LOCAL WATER TABLE AS THEY PLAN TO USE 1.2 MILLION GALLONS OF WATER FROM THEIR WELL PER YEAR!!!

**PLEASE SIGN PETITION AND PLEASE SEND AN EMAIL TO OUR SUPERVISOR, JOHN PETERS [jpeters@mono.ca.gov](mailto:jpeters@mono.ca.gov) AND CC HIS SECRETARY, SHEREEN DEDMAN [sdedman@mono.ca.gov](mailto:sdedman@mono.ca.gov)**

**WE NEED TO VOICE OUR CONCERN ABOUT PUTTING IN A COMMERCIAL BUSINESS IN ANY RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD THROUGHOUT MONO COUNTY. EMAILS NEED TO BE RECEIVED BY THE SUPERVISORS BEFORE 2/4/20 WHEN THEY ARE HAVING A SUPERVISORS MEETING FOR FINAL APPROVAL OF COLITAS FARMS.**

**WE NEED YOUR HELP TO STOP THIS!!!**

**THANK YOU**