



***Humboldt County, Nevada
Sheriff's Office
Ed Kilgore, Sheriff***

PRESS RELEASE

DATE: August 27, 2010

LOCATION: Humboldt County, Santa Rosa Range near Orovada

TOPIC: Marijuana Grow Investigation

DETAILS: On Monday, August 23, 2010, The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office received information from a District Ranger with the U.S. Forest Service regarding an incident that occurred in the Santa Rosa Range near the community of Orovada over the weekend of August 21-22nd. According to the Forest Service, a resident from Reno and his son were on a hunting trip on the west side of the Santa Rosa range when they were confronted by three Hispanic males. By the actions of these three individuals, it appeared to the subject and his son that these three did not want them to proceed any further into the canyon that they were currently hiking in. According to the reporting person, these three subjects also began to circle around him and his son in a very aggressive manner. Eventually, the reporting person and his son were able to leave the location and made contact with a Forest Service employee.

Believing that this confrontation was very similar to the type of confrontations which are indicative of suspect behavior around large outside marijuana gardens, Humboldt County Sheriff Ed Kilgore immediately requested the assistance of numerous outside law enforcement agencies to assist in this potential investigation.

On the morning of August 24th, the Sheriff met with members of his Special Response Team, detectives from the Nevada Division of Investigations (both the Winnemucca and Elko Offices), The Washoe County Sheriff's Office (Air Support Unit/"RAVEN" and "ATAC" detectives), BLM Criminal Investigators and Rangers, as well as law enforcement personnel from the U.S. Forest Service. After an action plan was developed, this multi-jurisdictional team responded to the location of the confrontation.

Air Support from the Washoe County Sheriff's Office quickly located what appeared to be a covered camp located several miles up in the same canyon where the Reno resident was confronted. Law Enforcement personnel on the ground hiked to the camp and discovered it to be void of any humans but full of uncultivated marijuana plants.

After the camp was secured, members from the Humboldt County Search and Rescue Unit along with Washoe County Air Support assisted in packing the plants and trash out of the canyon. Because of the extreme isolated area of where this camp was located, the plants had to be removed with the assistance of horses and mules.

This event was very similar in nature to an incident that occurred in October of 2008 when three BLM employees were confronted and held at gunpoint in the area of Greely Crossing in Northern Humboldt County. No suspects were ever arrested in this incident and this case is still open.

On Friday, August 27, 2010, an exact count was done on the plants that were recovered. 4,020 plants were seized by law enforcement. The estimated street value of these plants and the product that they would have produced was \$8 million.

Since illegal marijuana harvests often coincide with various hunting seasons in Nevada, the public should be very cognizant of the following points:

- If you are out in the desert, or in the mountains and come upon something suspicious, or out of place, stay away from it, and contact law enforcement as soon as possible
- Be very observant of and very cautious around any isolated camping areas (tents) that you may come across where no specific recreational activities usually occur
- Be cognizant of a pattern of particular vehicle traffic in and out of an area that is very isolated
- Always advise someone of where you are headed when traveling out into the desert or mountains

Recent interactions between these illegal growers and members of both the public and law enforcement have unfortunately demonstrated that they (the growers) are becoming increasingly violent and confrontational in an effort to protect their criminal crop. Sheriff Kilgore encourages members of the public to be extremely cautious and careful when in locations far away from the public eye.

If anyone has any information that would assist law enforcement in this investigation, please contact either the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office at (775) 623-6419 or Lieutenant Jim Mercado at the Nevada Division of Investigations (NDI) at (775) 623-6525.

**RELEASING AUTHORITY:
SHERIFF E.R. KILGORE**

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