



ILLEGAL POT PLANTATIONS DESTROY OUR FORESTS.... *WHILE POT DESTROYS OUR KIDS*

By Roger Morgan, Exec Director, Coalition for A Drug-Free California

Mexican cartels and criminals are causing incredible ecological and environmental devastation in our National Parks and Forests.. No one is safe, neither man nor beast. To protect their valuable crop they kill anything that can eat, steal or destroy the crop including deer, bear and other wildlife even people who haphazardly trip across the plantations.

To combat fungus and pests, they import and use pesticides that have been banned in the US for years. As the pesticides and fertilizers flow into the soil, it is absorbed into the plants themselves, creating an enormous safety hazard for those who smoke marijuana. But it also pollutes the soil, and ultimately flows into the rivers and streams killing all in its path.

They ring the plantations with poisons for rodents. As the rodents die, so also do the hawks, eagles, coyotes and other birds and animals that feed on their remains. When the harvest is complete, they leave behind miles of water pipes, campsite remains, bags of fertilizers and nitrates that seep into the earth and streams, and devastated earth for our already overburdened game wardens and forestry department personnel to clean up. For every one acre of plantation, they destroy ten acres.

The end product that they sell is often contaminated, laden with pesticides, fungus and fertilizers. Lab tests in Long Beach showed two samples had pesticide levels that were 1400 times the legal limit for food. So aside from other harms to health, education, welfare, crime and traffic safety, even those who smoke this junk get poisoned by the crop in case they are wondering why they cough a lot.

Our National Forests are a precious resource, owned and enjoyed by all Americans. It is an outrage to allow this devastation to continue, because of the insatiable demand by a minority to get high. We need to take our forests back, raise awareness, and aid and increase the resources available to keep the forests safe, maybe by offering a reward to Mexicans and their families for exposing grow sites.

Of equal concern is the fact that Humboldt and Mendocino Counties openly base their economies on growing and selling illegal marijuana, in defiance of federal law. The federal government has spent billions eradicating illicit drugs abroad, and we have an "Afghanistan" within our own borders. . .

It is folly to think that the cartels will simply go away if pot is legalized. There will be ample market inside and outside of California for cheaper, dirtier pot. The violence

occurring in Mexico between warring cartels could very well happen on this side of the border.