CROPPROJECT
CANNABIS REMOVAL ON PUBLIC LANDS

TRESPASS GROW FACT SHEET

"Trespass grows" are illicit cannabis grows on **public** lands. Trespass grows constitute one of California's leading environmental threats by poisoning wildlife on a landscape scale, contaminating water and soil with EPA-banned toxicants, and severely de-watering watersheds.

The Basics

- Trespass grows account for **40-70% of CA's illicit cannabis market**[1]
- 80% of trespass grows are on national forest (NF) lands[2]
- Over 90% of trespass grows are controlled by drug trafficking organizations (DTOs)[3]
- Since 2000, over 23 million plants have been eradicated on CA NFs[4]
- Since 2016, over 3 million plants have been eradicated on CA NFs[4]
- Only 1 in 5 public lands cannabis plants are eradicated annually[2]
- In 2018, 90% of sites contained lethal, controlled or banned pesticides[3], including Sarin-based malathion, Brodifacoum/Bromadiolone, Carbofuran, Methamidophos, and Cholecalciferol[5]
- 30-40% of trespass grows go undetected[13]

Impacts to Wildlife

- 70% of Northern Spotted Owls (ESA Listed) poisoned by rodenticide[6]
- 80% of Pacific fishers (ESA Candidate) tested positive for up to 5 rodenticides[7]
- 92% of mountain lions statewide test positive for one or more pesticide, particularly rodenticides[8]

Impacts to Water

- More than 9 billion gallons of water per year are illegally diverted for trespass grows, or 27,600 acre feet (a yearly water supply for nearly 30,000 homes, or the City of Redding)[12]
- Watershed diversion from trespass grows can account for 23-50% of total surface flow[9]
- Approximately 6 gallons of water per plant per day[10]
- Water theft exceeds minimum instream flows for certain watersheds[11]

Impacts to Communities

- Contaminated watersheds; communities/tribes at great risk of toxicant exposure
- Reduced flows for fisheries, agriculture, tribal gathering, timber production, etc.
- Negative impact to local and state economy (e.g. costly clean-ups, increased enforcement)
- Reduced access to public lands as "no-go areas" due to DTO grows
- Recreation, hunting and other uses of public lands poses toxicant exposure risk
- Undercuts the legal cannabis market
- Loss in ecosystem services, such as clean water and air

References:

[1]Estimates from ONDCP, HITDA, Don Hoang (Forest Service Special Agent in Charge of the Pacific SW Region), Dr. Mourad Gabriel (Co-Director at the Integral Ecology Research Center), Tommy Lannier (Director of the National Marijuana Initiative)

[2]Ferrell, David L. 2016. Issue: Marijuana Cultivation on National Forest System and other public lands, environmental effects, and cooperative activities. US Forest Service Report to Congress. Washington, D.C., USA.

[3]Law enforcement statistics based on eradications

[4]Hoang, Don. 2019. Illegal Marijuana Production and Environmental Impact to National Forest System Lands. US Forest Service Publication 5300, Washington, D.C., USA.

[5]Integral Ecology Research Center trespass grow test results and first-hand reclamations

[6]Gabriel, M. W., L. V. Diller, J. P. Dumbacher, G. M. Wengert, J. M. Higley, R. H. Poppenga, and S. Mendia. 2018. Exposure to rodenticides in Northern Spotted and Barred Owls on remote forest lands in northwestern California: evidence of food web contamination. *Avian Conservation and Ecology* 13(1):2.

[7]M.W. Gabriel, L.W. Woods, R. Poppenga, R.A. Sweitzer, C. Thompson, S.M. Matthews, J.M. Higley, S.M. Keller, K. Purcell, R.H. Barrett, G.M. Wengert, B.N. Sacks, D.L. Clifford, (2012). Anticoagulant rodenticides on our public and community lands: Spatial distribution of exposure and poisoning of a rare forest carnivore. PLoS ONE. 2012 Jul 13;7(7):e40163.

[8]California Department of Pesticide Regulation. 2018. An Investigation of anticoagulant rodenticide data submitted to the Department of Pesticide Regulation. California Department of Pesticide Regulation, Sacramento, CA, USA.

[9]Bauer, S., J. Olson, A. Cockrill, M. van Hattem, L. Miller, M. Tauzer, G. Leppig. 2015. Impacts of Surface Water Diversions for Marijuana Cultivation on Aquatic Habitat in Four Northwestern California Watersheds. PLOS ONE 10(9): e0137935.

[10]Hendron, J. 2017. Illegal Marijuana Sites: A stain on Public Lands. US Fish & Wildlife Service newsroom. <https://www.fws.gov/cno/newsroom/featured/2017/illegal_marijuana_sites>. Accessed 24 May 2019.

[11]California Council of Land Trusts. 2017. Environmental Impacts of Illegal Marijuana Cultivation. Conservation Frontiers (6.1):1-4.

[12]Basic calculation based on law enforcement estimates of number of plants removed, and water requirements per plant per growing season

[13]Estimates from IERC trespass grow GIS modelling and analysis