



National Park Service
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Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Continues the Fight Against Illegal Marijuana Production

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks law enforcement and natural resource staff completed a week-long project to clean up and restore natural conditions to almost 5 acres of park land damaged by illegal marijuana growing in wilderness areas.

In a cooperative effort with the California Army National Guard, California Air National Guard, 5,600 pounds of garbage (159 bags) including 75 propane canisters and 5.8 miles of hose were removed. They cleaned up resident-camp infrastructure from eleven grow sites and nine camps that were occupied by illegal growers in 2007. Among the trash were empty containers from thousands of pounds of fertilizer, pesticides (predominantly malathion), and rodenticides that had been used in a 4.6 acre area. "As the new Sequoia District Ranger, I'm particularly impressed with the effectiveness of this joint, interdisciplinary operation. Aggressively pursuing persons responsible for these illegal grow operations, cleaning up the sites and restoring them to their natural condition will benefit this park for many years to come," remarked Ranger Dan Pontbriand who has just transferred to Sequoia National Park from Washington DC.

Illegal marijuana cultivation in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks causes major damage to wilderness areas that were previously undeveloped and in a natural condition. It costs the National Park Service hundreds of thousands of dollars every year to fight this growing problem. Since 2001 the National Park Service has eradicated more than 306,000 marijuana plants worth approximately \$968,000,000 from Sequoia National Park.

The successful accomplishment of this project with zero injuries, despite very difficult terrain, helicopter operations, and hazardous pesticides, demonstrates the skill and professionalism of the people involved.

Few visitors use the areas targeted by these grow operations due to their rugged nature and inherent hazards. If you are planning to visit the foothills in Sequoia National Park, please contact a visitor center for information, safety tips, and help in planning your visit. Anyone with information about illegal activities or who would like to report suspicious activity in the national parks should call I-888-NPS-CRIME (888-677-2746). You may speak directly to a ranger or remain anonymous when reporting these activities.

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. Anyone caught with connections to this or any other marijuana growing operation on federal lands faces federal prison. *Operation Weed Free*, the investigation into illegal growing of marijuana in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, is ongoing.

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