



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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PRESS RELEASE

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EXTENSIVE UNPERMITTED GROW DISMANTLED

Sheriff's Office personnel with the Santa Cruz County Cannabis Licensing Office have identified and dismantled two additional unpermitted commercial cannabis operations, including one of the largest unregulated grow sites in recent county history.

On May 30, the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office executed a search warrant on Summit Road near Russell Ridge to follow up on an investigation of a nearby property during late 2018. At that time, Sheriff's Office personnel observed several unlawful greenhouses on a parcel of land that had been graded and stripped of vegetation.

During service of the warrant, investigators found more than 9,734 cannabis plants inside 11, 3,000-square-foot non-permitted greenhouses and other indicia of commercial cannabis cultivation including numerous generators, pallets of soil and fertilizer.

Investigators determined the site was managed by four on-site staff who lived full-time in a small trailer and allowed sewage and other household fluids to run off onto the property without proper disposal. The site appears to have been active for at least two years, with cannabis crops diverted to the black market.

The property owner faces civil fines, and the property was red-tagged by County regulatory staff due to numerous building and grading violations. No arrests have been made at this time.

In a separate enforcement last week, Sheriff's Office personnel executed a search warrant at a remote cultivation site north of Boulder Creek which was also discovered while investigating a separate, nearby unregulated commercial cannabis cultivation.

This site included four greenhouses and was operating without a local or state commercial cultivation license. Investigators seized 762 cannabis plants. The operator was contacted by personnel and cooperated with the investigation.