



KLAMATH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sheriff Chris Kaber

3300 Vandenberg Rd
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(541) 883-5130
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Media Release

Date: September 2, 2021

Re: Illegal grow & water diversion

Contact: Brandon Fowler – PIO / Emergency Manager
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On September 1, 2021 Klamath County Sheriff's Office deputies took down and destroyed an illegal marijuana grow in the 13000 block of Crystal Springs Rd near Olene. The property owner leased the property to individuals for what was supposed to be a licensed commercial hemp operation. Investigators, however found no licensed hemp or marijuana operations only illegal marijuana production numbering 11,000 plants.

This illegal production includes substantial diversion of water from the Lost River. Officials estimate this amounted to 1.5 million gallons, or 4.6 acre feet, of water. Prosecution is being considered pending the completion of the investigation.

Sheriff Chris Kaber states: "KCSO and partners with the Basin Interagency Narcotics Enforcement Team (BINET), have been tracking numerous operations for several weeks. Recent legislative changes have made it easier to obtain warrants to destroy illegal growing operations. Earlier this week KCSO participated in an operation with BINET that took down three illegal grow sites of over 22,000 plants."

During the most recent legislative session H.B. 3000 was passed and became law in July, allowing law enforcement greater flexibility in destroying illegal growing operations. These changes give agencies the ability to destroy these operations with fewer personnel and quicker turnaround. Oregon Department of Forestry provided assistance with the heavy equipment needed to destroy this growing operation.

Unfortunately, we're seeing a trend where people come in and lease property for purposes that appear legal and offer large sums of money. Property owners need to be aware that ultimately, they are responsible for the damage caused by the operations as well as the cleanup after law enforcement destroys the illegal grow.



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