



# COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### UNREGULATED CANNABIS SITES DISMANTLED

Continuing to protect the regulated cannabis industry, local neighborhoods and the environment, Sheriff's Office personnel with the Santa Cruz County Cannabis Licensing Office have dismantled two additional unregulated commercial cannabis operations.

During the week of May 6th, state and local officials executed a search warrant on 8 related land parcels in the 17000 block of Bear Creek Road in Boulder Creek as part of an investigation into unregulated commercial cultivation, illegal grading and stream diversions. Investigators found water from a tributary of Bear Creek was being used to cultivate cannabis, seizing 1,079 plants. No arrests were made, and additional investigation is underway to determine the extent of environmental impact from the stream diversion.

State and local officials also executed a search warrant for an 80-acre parcel of land in the 500 block of Whalebone Ranch Road in Boulder Creek as part of an investigation into unregulated commercial cultivation, illegal grading and land clearing. Investigators seized 1673 cannabis plants under cultivation inside large, non-permitted greenhouses, 61 pounds of processed cannabis, 50 pounds of recently harvested cannabis plants, 6.9 pounds of processed cannabis concentrate, gold and silver valued at approximately \$67,000, and \$53,330 in U.S. currency.

Additional evidence of commercial sales was located at the Whalebone Ranch Road site, as well as a loaded handgun, one loaded unlawful assault rifle, one loaded unlawful AK-47, and one rifle. Numerous loaded high-capacity ammunition magazines as well as tactical body armor were confiscated. Investigators are determining whether the precious metals and currency were proceeds from commercial cannabis sales. No arrests were made.

Participating agencies include the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Cal Fire and Santa Cruz County Planning Department. Both cases have been turned over to the District Attorney's Office for potential criminal charges.