



**Narcotics Bureau**  
*www.lasd.org*  
**Press Release**

**Leroy D. Baca, Sheriff**

<b>Classification:</b>	Felony Cultivation of Marijuana on Public Lands, 11378 CA Health & Safety Code	<b>Incident Date:</b>	May 21 to June 25, 2010
<b>Authors:</b>	Lt. Chris Branuelas, Narcotics Bureau Capt. Ralph Ornelas, Narcotics Bureau Capt. Mike Parker, Sheriff's Headquarters Bureau		

<b>Locations:</b>	Public lands within the Angeles National Forest: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bear Canyon, Newhall</li> <li>• Pole Canyon, Newhall</li> <li>• Maher Canyon, Newhall</li> <li>• Placerita Canyon, Newhall</li> <li>• Sand Canyon, Newhall</li> <li>• Leona Valley, Lancaster</li> <li>• Shake Canyon, Lancaster</li> <li>• Hideaway Canyon, Lancaster</li> <li>• Lake Hughes Area, Lancaster</li> <li>• Shady Oaks Campground Area, Azusa</li> </ul>	
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Detectives from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Narcotics Bureau and Sheriff's Aero Bureau, teamed with members of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, and U.S. Forest Service, have performed six illicit marijuana eradication operations on public lands within Los Angeles County since May 21, 2010.

On Friday, June 25, the multi-jurisdictional team of detectives eradicated over 19,000 plants in the Lancaster area. Their estimated street value was over \$39 million dollars. 2,400 pounds of irrigation equipment, pesticides, tools, and other trash was picked up and gathered into nets by detectives, then flown out of the area by a Sheriff's helicopter. Detectives had to hike miles into the forest to get to the illegal and destructive grow site, and when done, hiked back out.

(PHOTOS AVAILABLE by visiting [www.lasd.org](http://www.lasd.org) which is the website of the Los Angeles County

**For Additional Information Contact:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>E-Mail Address</b>
<b>Sheriff's Headquarters Bureau</b>	(323) 267-4800	
<b>Sheriff's Narcotics Bureau</b>	(562) 946-7125	



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Sheriff's Department)

Since May 2010, Narcotics detectives have located and eradicated a total of 85,192 illicit marijuana plants from public lands, with an estimated street value of over \$170 million dollars. During these operations, the teams also removed thousands of pounds of hazardous chemical fertilizer, pesticides, trash, food, weapons, and camping equipment from the forest. They repaired damage to streams and springs and dismantled extensive irrigation systems which suspects used to divert water away from native plants to irrigate the illicit marijuana crops.

The public who visit nature areas should be cautious of the hazards posed by criminal marijuana farming. Suspects guard and even booby-trap their plants against law enforcement and competing criminal elements. Additionally, many of the fertilizers and pesticides encountered in illicit farming operations involve hazardous substances, some of which are banned in the United States.

"These illegal marijuana grows do more than just harm the people who use illicit marijuana, they destroy and poison public lands," said Captain Ralph Ornelas, Sheriff's Narcotics Bureau. He said, "The many agencies involved in these operations will continue our aggressive efforts to clear the public land of this menace, so that the forest remains available for present and future generations."

Anyone with information about this crime is encouraged to contact their local sheriff's station of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department or the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Narcotics Bureau at (562) 946-7125.

If you prefer to provide information ANONYMOUSLY, you can call "Crime Stoppers" by dialing 800-222-TIPS (8477), texting the letters TIPLA plus your tip to CRIMES (274637), or using the website <http://lacrimestoppers.org>

PHOTOS AVAILABLE by visiting [www.lasd.org](http://www.lasd.org) the website of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. To obtain the posted photos and many additional photos in high resolution, news media representatives can contact Sheriff's Headquarters Bureau at (323) 267-4800.