



Humboldt County Fish & Game Advisory Commission
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HC Board of Supervisors
825 Fifth Street
Eureka, CA 95536

Re: Unpermitted Cannabis grow site environmental clean up

Honorable Supervisors:

The Humboldt County Fish and Game Advisory Commission is concerned that the abated unpermitted cannabis grow sites may not have been environmentally cleaned up. Commissioner Jim Clark scrutinized records from the Planning Department, Sheriff's Department and the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. Reportedly, eighty-six abatements occurred during the 2019 abatement season. Sixty-five records of the eighty-six abatements were obtained. Three notices of violations were issued to the associated responsible parties by the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board as of September 3, 2020. No public records for post abatement enforcement at the County level could be found on line.

Violations in the following categories have occurred: non-permitted grading, streamside management, non-permitted buildings including dwellings, sewage disposal, solid waste, and abandoned vehicles. These violations, as examples, included 66 non-permitted buildings and 24 abandoned vehicles. Although not all materials remaining at abated grow sites may be classified as hazardous waste, many are harmful to fish and wildlife. One issue is that there is no public information that quantifies or qualifies that what is left on abated grow sites, or whether it has been cleaned up.

We understand that clean-up and restoration when the responsible party is not cooperative is complicated and time consuming. Because of this, we think it is important that cannabis abatement clean-up progress be presented to the public in an easy to understand and timely way. The public should have opportunity to easily find what nuisances might continue to pose a threat to fish and wildlife and public health and safety, and agencies and compliant responsible parties should be recognized for successful clean-up progress.

The Fish and Game Commission recommends that the Board of Supervisors cause two issues to be resolved. Accounting and timely reporting on the materials left on abated grow sites, and restoration of the environment on these grow sites. Restoration should be timely as there are seasonal influences, such as winter rains, that may degrade materials and influence distribution into the environment. Commissioner Jim Clark will attend the BoS meeting in case there are any questions. Please let our secretary know when it is scheduled for a meeting.

Sincerely,

HUMBOLDT COUNTY FISH & GAME ADVISORY COMMISSION

/s/ John Clark

John Clark, Chairman

File: Correspondence
Cannabis