	United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service	**News Release**	**KLAMATH NATIONAL FOREST** 1312 Fairlane Road, Yreka, CA 96097 (530) 841-6131 www.fs.usda.gov/klamath	
Date: September 8, 2010		**For Immediate Release**	Contact: Tom Lavagnino (530) 841-4485 tlavagnino@fs.fed.us	

The Klamath National Forest Continues to Clean-Up Illegal Marijuana Growing Operations

The Klamath National Forest has been and will continue to clean-up and rehabilitate known illegal marijuana growing operations and campsites on National Forest lands. After law enforcement officers have discovered, investigated, and collected evidence from these sites, the task of cleaning up and removing significant amounts of garbage falls onto each ranger district. Once the sites have been declared secure, crews will hike or be flown in to the more remote sites and begin removing the trash and rehabilitating the impacted environment.

It seems every year these sites become more frequent and harder to find and access. These organized grow operations are not unique to the Klamath National Forest and are increasingly becoming a major environmental impact to the forests throughout the west.

This July, the Klamath National Forest removed over 3-miles of black plastic pipe used to irrigate marijuana grow sites. In addition, over 2,600 pounds of debris was removed by a helicopter sling load (garbage carried in cargo nets below the helicopter) on 3 sites on the Happy Camp/Oak Knoll Ranger District. Much of this debris consisted of food containers, pesticide containers, empty fertilizer bags, car batteries, and empty propane tanks. According to one Forest Service law enforcement officer, who wishes to remain anonymous, "I think people would be shocked at the amount of environmental damage that is done within each of these sites" and continues, "It is not unusual for us to find that a nearby creek has been dammed and diverted with black piping to provide water to these grow sites and dozens of trees illegally cut within the area."

Illegal wildlife poaching is also becoming a major issue with these camps. The Forest Service is finding carcasses of animals that have been killed by the individuals living within these grow sites including bear, deer and elk. Other illegal drug-related activities have also been reported at these grow sites and some can be extremely dangerous and toxic. Law enforcement officers have removed hundreds of pounds of garbage including pesticides, insecticides, rodent poisons and fertilizers.

The Klamath National Forest has performed thirteen clean-up operations this year and over 13,000 pounds of garbage and plastic hose line has been removed. Another 5-7 cleanup operations are planned on the Forest before October. This year the Klamath National Forest has received $150,000 for cleanup operations. The dollars were part of a larger fund established by the Forest Service in California, specifically designed to clean-up illegal marijuana growing operations.

Hunting season is quickly approaching and many more members of the public may be stumbling upon remote active or inactive marijuana growing operations in the forest. If you do find any suspicious campsite or grow site, do not take any chances. Immediately leave the area and report your findings to the local law enforcement authorities. Try and describe what you observed and the exact location (to the best of your abilities) of the site. Also, record and report any vehicle license plate(s) or descriptions of people and vehicles in that vicinity. Above all, consider your safety first and do not take any independent action.

Editorial Note: attached are six photographs showing clean-up operations on the Klamath National Forest. You may reprint any/all of these pictures without permission. For a higher resolution photo, contact the Klamath National Forest.

Illegally cut timber at remote campsite.

Part of the trash collected and bagged at the campsite

Empty fertilizer bags at the campsite.

Example of a vacated marijuana growing campsite.

Collected black plastic pipe ready for transport.

Forest Service crews loading pipe onto a truck after being flown to a helispot