

Siskiyou County Sheriff's Office Marijuana Enforcement Update (SIMIT & NSMIT)



Sheriff Jon E. Lopey
Detective Sergeant Cory Persing
Detective/OIC Chris McGrew

December 2, 2019



Agenda

- Overview of Siskiyou County
- SIMIT Statistics '18 & '19
- NSMIT Statistics '18 & '19
- Costs & Fiscal Summary
- SUMIT summary ('18-'19)
- Assessment
- Recommendations





Summary of Siskiyou County

- 5th largest county geographically in state (6,172 square miles)
- Overall, county has seen economic declines
 - Decline of timber & mining has led to gradual economic declines
 - County largely relies on ranching, farming, tourism
- **Siskiyou County has approximately 1500 to 2,000 illicit marijuana sites**
- Crime, child abuse, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, & related social issues major challenges (17.7% poverty rate)
- Surge of “Green Rush” players have significantly changed landscape
- Illicit drugs equate to “CORE” of crime, social, mental health, economic, and homelessness problems
- Interagency cooperation, collaboration, & proactive strategies are very good (e.g., prevention, enforcement, treatment, etc.)
 - We have three (3) drug task forces (SUMIT, NSMIT, & SIMIT) (DOJ pulling out of SUMIT)
 - SCSO is understaffed & has suffered approximately 30% reductions the last 10 – 15 years



Siskiyou Interagency Marijuana Enforcement Team (SIMIT) - 2018

- 21,426 illicit plants seized (\$64,278,000 retail value)
- 14,406 pounds of processed cannabis seized (\$14.4M)
- 140 properties (search warrants) + MN HIDTA “link”
- \$157,368,000.00 total value for processed cannabis
- 19 arrests; 14 cited (78 cases pending)
- 9 pounds of concentrated cannabis seized
- 6 BHO “concentrated cannabis” labs seized
- 7 firearms seized; \$25,222 – drug proceeds
- Fire dangers, refuse, pollution, “Quality of Life” “Key”





Siskiyou Interagency Marijuana Investigation Team (SIMIT)



2018

- 21,426 illicit plants seized
 - \$128.5M to \$192.8M (East Coast Retail)
- 14,406 lbs. processed marijuana
 - \$28.8M to \$43.2M (East Coast Retail)
- 140 search warrants + MN “Link”
- 19 arrests, 14 cited (78 cases)
- 9 lbs. of concentrate cannabis seized
- 6 BHO concentrated labs seized
- 7 firearms seized + \$25.2K money
- Fire dangers, refuse, pollution, “quality of life” issues “Key”
- Carbon Monoxide Deaths - 3

2019

- 44,369 illicit plants seized
 - \$266.2M to \$399.3 M
- 16,759.5 lbs. processed
 - \$33.5M to \$50.3M
- 154 search warrants
- 9 arrests, 10 cites (70+pending)
- 15 firearms seized
- \$29,596.00 drug currency seized
- Fire dangers, refuse, pollution, “quality of life” issues “Key”
- Carbon Monoxide Deaths – 2
- Murder & Mayhem now “Linked”



SCSO “On-Highway” Seizures

2018

- October 5 – October 25 (SCSO)
- Six seizures of Illicit marijuana during routine traffic stops
 - 5,183 pounds of illicit marijuana seized
 - \$10.2 millions’ worth of illicit drugs
 - Marijuana destined to other states
 - Seizures indicators of massive illicit drug trafficking organization links
 - Detective visit to Minnesota revealed “links” to Siskiyou County product

2019

- Roughly similar time frames
 - 63 illicit plants seized
 - \$378K to \$567K (Retail)
 - 2,074.4 lbs. of processed or partially processed marijuana
 - \$4.2M to \$6.2M (Retail)
 - Seizures again indicative of major DTO activity & links
 - Major on-highway transfers out-of-state
 - “U-Haul Incident” – Pursuit & overt effort to harm deputy



SIMIT Funding Summary

- One detective, 1 to 2 “extra help” detectives
- **DEA (DCEP \$67,500.00) = flight, Equipment, & O.T.**
- HIDTA funding & DEA funds “key” factors
- Asset Forfeiture funds occasionally beneficial
- **\$13,564.58 (USFS) = Exhibit B (MOU) (NSMIT)**
 - Trends seen dictate private vs. public land grows
- **\$5,765.36 for Equip & \$7,799.22 for O.T. \$\$\$**
 - **Most USFS funds are allocated for NSMIT**
- National & Statewide recognition of efforts



North State Major Investigation Team (NSMIT)



2018

- Ops hindered – Wildfires
- Gazelle-Callahan Road
 - 5,071 illegal plants
 - 15 active greenhouses
 - Drug cartel suspected
- CAMP-NSMIT Op Humbug,
 - Illegal marijuana + carbofuran
- Siskiyou Co – Arkansas Case
 - 80 lbs. cannabis = Follow-Up
 - 20 lbs. marijuana, firearm, ammo

2019

- Focus shift to private lands
- 17,230 illegal plants seized
- 1,044 lbs. of processed
- 8 arrests (3 firearms seized)
- \$103.4M to \$155.0M retail (East Coast) (3-plant yield)
- NSMIT “regional”
- Some “Repeat Offenders”



NSMIT Funding Summary

- Detective Sergeant – SCSO
- **DEA (DCEP \$67,500) = flight, Equipment, & O.T.**
- HIDTA funding & DEA funds “key” factors
- \$17,000.00 HIDTA funds provided for overtime
- Asset Forfeiture funds occasionally beneficial
- **\$13,564.58 (USFS) = Exhibit B (MOU)**
- \$5,765.36 for Equip & \$7,799.22 for O.T. \$\$\$
- HIDTA Award (Wash DC) Operation Forest Watch 2/7



SIMIT & NSMIT TOTALS - 2019

- 61,599 illegal marijuana plants eradicated
- 17,763.5 lbs. of processed marijuana seized
- 18 firearms seized
- Arrests, citations, & pending cases 70+
- Values = \$369,594,000.00 to \$554,391,000.00
 - Marijuana plants (3-plant yield) East Coast Retail
- Values = \$35,527,000.00 to \$53,290,500.00
 - Processed marijuana (East Coast Retail)



Marijuana & “Murder”

2019

- Murder Victim: Hunter Sims, 31, Texas (Feb. 7, 2019)
 - 2nd trip to CA to purchase marijuana (shot in head)
 - Mr. Eddie Dodge, 41, Redding (suspect) – Trial started
- Murder Victim: Spencer Hodgson, Klamath, CA
 - From Santa Cruz, owned marijuana business (sold product)
 - Link to marijuana unknown at this time
- Murder Victims: Ms. Rosey Vang, 49, WI & Ms. Mor Hang, 81, Dorris, CA (Double Homicide) at marijuana site (Mar. 20, 2019)
 - Pleasant Valley Estates (Butte Valley); both shot with rifle (Cartel?)
- Attempt Murder – “Shots fired” shots fired at wife of suspect (Lee Xeng Yang, 53) 4 kids present at time
- One Sac Co SO murder suspect and MN fugitive captured at site in 2019



Siskiyou Unified Major Investigation Team (SUMIT)



- **399.36 lbs. marijuana (2017) 617.28 lbs. – '18**
- **279.22 grams concentrated cannabis – 2017**
- **314.2 grams concentrated cannabis – 2018**
- **12,412 grams of meth seized – 2018**
- **10,644.3 grams heroin seized – 2018**
- **83 firearms seized – 2018 (12 in 2017)**
- **\$435.5K money seized ('17) \$104,985 in 2018**
- **Murder, mayhem, DTO activity all “linked”**



Marijuana in Siskiyou County – Mt. Shasta Vista

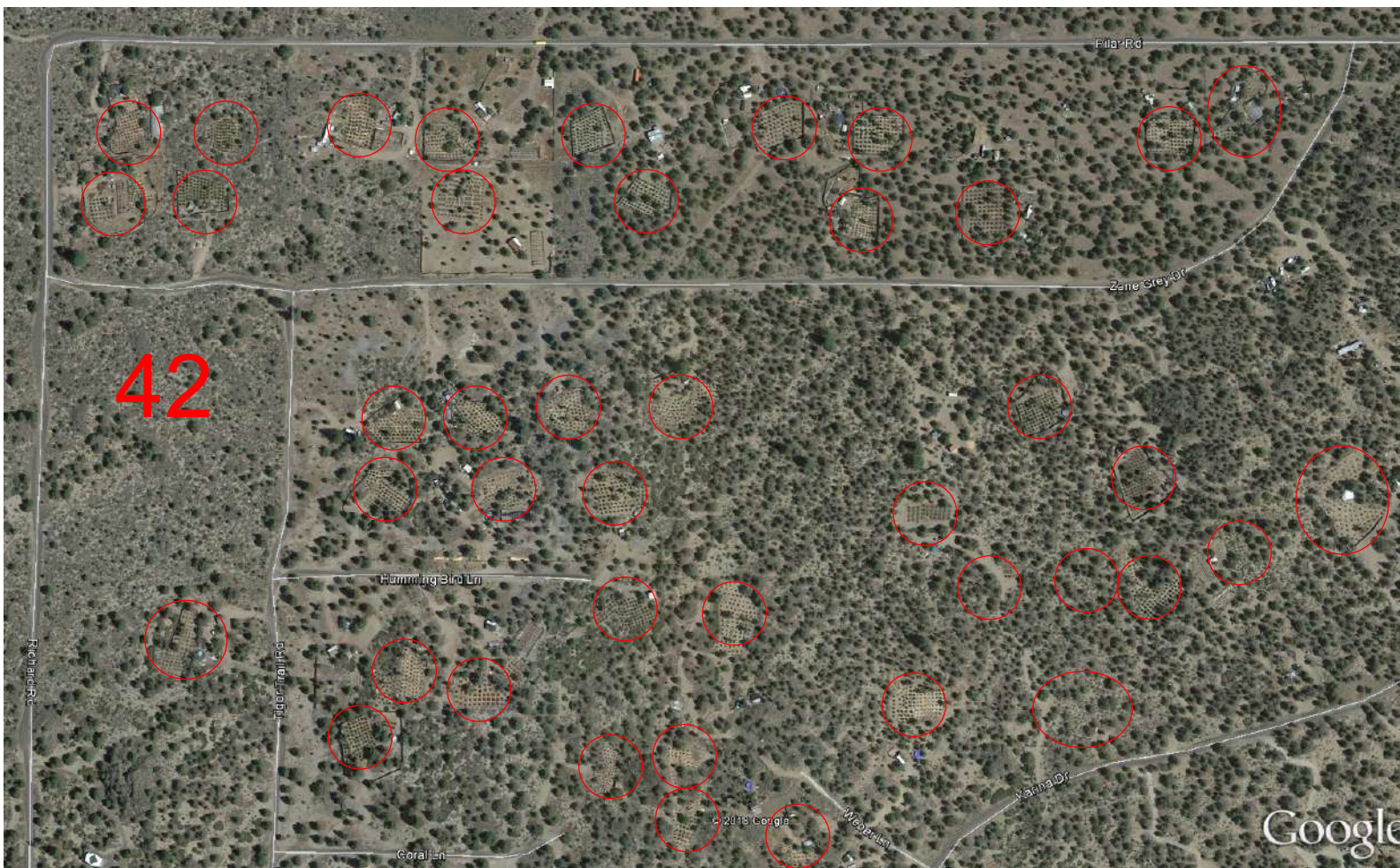




Photo = #1 "Priority"





Photos





Photos





Local Marijuana Cases





“Other” Seizures



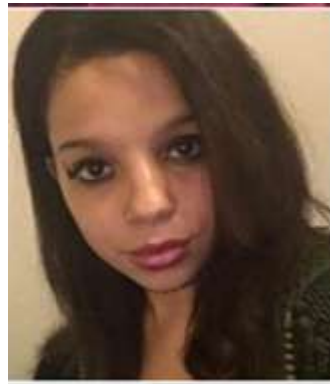


More Pictures





Victims & Suspects





Assessment

- Marijuana is MAJOR health, justice, environmental, & fiscal threat to county & our citizens (quality of life, H2O, HAZMAT such as carbofuran)
- **WE COULD NOT DO JOB WITHOUT DEA DCESP & HIDTA FUNDS!**
- Prop 64 is “DISASTER” – “Black Market” flooded w/quality, cheap marijuana – HAS PROMPTED MORE ILLEGAL PRODUCT EXPORTED TO U.S.
- Board of Supervisors’ decisive actions & “Local State of Emergency” vital
- Some county illicit growers leaving but DTO grows gravitating to private property sites due to CA laws (e.g., Prop 47, Prop 64, SB 54, etc.)
- Children impacted greatly – “Availability & Perception of Harm”
- HIDTA “Status” has led to additional support (e.g., DEA funds)
- DEA (DCESP), WSIN, CA DOJ, SUMIT, USA, CARNG, CAMP, CHP, “vital”
- DARE “partnership” with HHS/BHS a big success story
- Public Works & Code Enforcement Actions very IMPORTANT
- Joint ops w/other counties, water boards, & CDFWL a success in 2018
- County getting big “Pay-Offs” for minimum investment



Recommendations

- SIMIT (SCSO) & NSMIT (DOJ-led) needs full support
- More federal, state, & local drug task forces needed
- Increase in DCESP funding vital to continue fight vs. DTOs
- Continue SIMIT, NSMIT, Public Works, & Code Enforcement
- Sustain “State of Emergency” & Moratorium (#1 - Stop Illegality)
- Interagency Collaboration a Major “Key” (Local/State/Fed)
- Enforce ordinance provisions (fire, water, sewer, home reg’s)
- Still a gap in CDFWL & NCRWCB support – Engagement “key”
- Sustain HHS/BHS prevention strategies (DARE) (+ Treatment)
- Use of CARNG, HIDTA, WSIN, DEA, USFS & USA “CRITICAL”



QUESTIONS?

