

Sierra County Health Coordinating Committee (SCHCC)

Minutes

Tuesday, April 24, 2018

The meeting was called to order by LeTina Vanetti, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Sierra County Public Health, at 10:00am at the Carl Scholberg Meeting Room, Tahoe National Forest at the Sierraville Ranger Station, 317 Lincoln St., Sierraville, CA 96126.

Minutes from the last meeting were approved and introductions were made.

Those present were: Jessica Camp (Sierra County Public Health), Chris Alexander (Sierra County Public Health), Shanna Anseth (Public Health Nurse), Megan Andaluz (LFD), Lee Brown (OES), DeeDee Clark (EPHC), Jacie Epperson (DVF), LeTina Vanetti (Sierra County Public Health), Steve Folsom (DVF/Cal Trans), Tom Jones (LHS), Annie Ceresola (LMS), Angela Haick (Calpine Fire), Laurie Marsh (Sierra County Mental Health), Elizabeth Morgan (Environmental Health), Anne Reugebrink (Tobacco Prevention), Bre' Whitley (WIC), Kathy Whitlow (OES), Mary Wright (Sierra County Child Care), Mike Fisher (Deputy Sherriff), Mike Lozaro (DVF), Andrea White (Loyalton Elem.), Toni King (SCBH), Evelyn De Mello (Environmental Health).

Guest Speaker, Sergeant Mike Fisher, gave a presentation on the health risks to first responders and the public related to the various drugs present in Sierra County. His presentation included the following information:

- 3 types of marijuana cultivation and corresponding state laws:
 - Medical (prop 215): The Compassionate Use Act of 1996 is a California law allowing the use of medical cannabis.
 - Recreational (prop 64): The Adult Use of Marijuana Act was a 2016 voter initiative to legalize cannabis in California.
 - Commercial: As of January 1, 2018, now regulated by the Medicinal and Adult-use Cannabis Regulation and Safety Act (MAUCRSA).
- 2 types of grows: Private or Public
 - Private grows are on privately owned property
 - Private grows can create a nuisance in neighborhoods because of the unpleasant odor the plant emits.
 - Public grows are a more serious issue because they are on publicly owned land such as national forests and parks.
 - These types of grows tend to be hidden and more difficult to find.
- Sierra County Ordinances:
 - Only medical and recreational cultivation is allowed on private property.
 - "In no event shall the number of marijuana plants being cultivated on any property exceed 72 plants."
 - Commercial cultivation and retail sales are not legal anywhere in the county.
- Enforcement and violations:
 - It is not a violation to grow marijuana in Sierra County as long as it is within the guidelines of California state law and the Sierra County medical marijuana ordinance making it difficult to enforce and stop criminal activity unless the participants are violating these other laws:
 - illegally grading the land, illegally harvesting timber, water diversion, health and safe code violations, illegal dumping, fish and game code.
 - The cultivation of marijuana on public land is a violation of state law and the environmental impacts are the greatest concern.
 - illegal water diversion, usually by black poly pipes, without water rights creates water supply issues to the surrounding areas and can create erosion and sediment issues in the water supply.

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- Water will often be illegally collected in makeshift containers where the chemicals and fertilizers can be mixed in with the water before it reached the plants.
- human trash and waste left over from the camps set up by growers
 - one local campsite had over 900lbs of trash that had to be disposed
- soil additives, mulch, fertilizers, and pesticides that are improperly used and stored can run off into the surrounding soil, water, and wildlife.
- One of the most serious illegal pesticides that is impacting Sierra County is Carbofuran (Furadan). It is the most toxic carbamate pesticide.
 - Carbofuran is a systemic insecticide that has been banned in the U.S. for many years. It is extremely toxic to animals and humans.
 - Identified by its bright pink appearance, similar to Pepto Bismuths, Carbofuran has a recommended dilution rate of 0.25 teaspoon to 50 gallons of water.
 - In several local grows, the Carbofuran has been applied in its concentrated form directly to the stalk of the plant.
 - When concentrated Carbofuran is found in a grow, the hazmat team must be called in to dispose of the chemical.
 - In addition to the carbofuran chemicals such as rodenticide, herbicides and insecticides are often discarded.
- Location and Identification:
 - The best way to spot a grow a from above via a helicopter.
 - Marijuana plants will often stand out from their surroundings because they will be well watered and bright green.
 - Most of the illegal grows on our public lands are cultivated by those that live outside of the area and are often referred to as Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTO's) and have been linked to organized crime and cartel activity.
 - Medical marijuana grows are very prevalent on the west side of the county in areas like Alleghany and Pike - 200+ grows projected currently. DTO's grows around the rim of the Sierra Valley and several of them Fisher was able to point to from the meeting grounds just miles from town.
 - the Sheriff's department has had luck with conviction of offenders that diverted water, used Carbofuran and pesticides in the national forest..
- BHO: Butane Honey Oil
 - It is a cannabis/hash oil obtained by separating resins from the cannabis plant (all pieces, not just the buds) through solvent extraction. It is pliable/waxy substance similar to honey.
 - Butane is the solvent and has a very low boiling point so will quickly evaporate leaving behind the hash oil.
 - 10% THC is the average in marijuana, while BHO has between 60-80% THC concentration.
 - BHO can be extracted in open or closed extractions and the gas that is released becomes very flammable when extracted even in low quantity if the air fuel mixture is just right (1-4 cans of butane).
 - BHO oil can be used as is or mixed with glycerin and put into vapor cigarettes.
- Safety:
 - There have not been any reported issues of hikers coming in contact with these

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types of grows.

- Fisher cautioned that approximately 80% of the these camps have had a firearm or evidence of a firearm.
 - be cautious of your surrounds when hiking and stay aware from red flags of grows such as black poly pipes in a water supply. Report these finding to the Sheriff's office.
 - Local water supplies have not been tested for Carbofuran and there is no firm evidence it is in the local water supply even though scientific evidence points to the probability of contamination.
- Local Drug Usage:
 - Pot is very common all over the county.
 - Opioids are more common on the west side and occasionally make a presence on the east side of the county. Not many overdoses associated with opioids.
 - Loyalton has some heroin use but meth is more prevalent
 - Not very many "designer drugs" in the county. Very low level drug dealers.
 - Contact the Sherriff's department if you notice someone under the influence of illegal drugs, they have had success keeping those under the influence from interaction with the public.

No additional topics were discussed.

Meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:10pm. The next meeting will be in Downieville on July 24, 2018.