



**Outdoor Enthusiasts are Asked to be on the  
Lookout for Marijuana Grow Sites on Public Land**  
*Citizens urged to be cautious and report to law enforcement*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 27, 2011**

**LANSING** – The Michigan State Police (MSP) and other law enforcement agencies are asking citizens to be on the lookout for indications of illegal marijuana growing this summer. If you come across suspicious activity or an area that may be an illegal marijuana grow site, immediately notify law enforcement officials.

These marijuana grow sites are often connected to drug trafficking organizations (DTO), which are highly-organized criminal enterprises trafficking in multiple illegal narcotics. For several years, DTOs have established large-scale marijuana growing operations on public lands in many western and southern states. In recent years DTOs have been targeting national and state forests, public and private lands, including large tracts of mining and paper company lands, in the Upper Midwest. In 2010, there were confirmed DTO growing operations in Indiana, Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper and Lower Peninsulas. These grow sites will contain anywhere from hundreds to thousands of plants.

“Our public lands are intended for recreational purposes, like hunting, camping, fishing and mushrooming,” said D/F/Lt. Dave Peltomaa, Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program coordinator. “These illegal marijuana grow sites are a potential threat to public safety and the chemicals and pesticides used in their cultivation are harmful to the environment. We are asking citizens to report any marijuana grow site on public land to law enforcement as soon as possible.”

DTOs operate in the same areas that you live, work, and recreate. The public plays a significant role in helping law enforcement stop this significant and growing problem. However, citizens should take caution when encountering potential grow sites and those people involved with them. Due to the high-dollar value of processed marijuana, DTOs have shown a willingness to use deadly force to protect their crops. Booby traps and cameras have also been found at marijuana grow sites.

“If you come across a marijuana grow site, make note of where the plot is located, leave the way you came in, and call the police,” Peltomaa added.

(more)

Remember to pay attention to the people and activity around you. Possible indicators of an illegal marijuana grow site can include:

- Seeing vehicles or people in unusual locations or at odd hours.
- Repeatedly seeing vehicles or people in an area with no obvious reason for being there.
- Noticing foot paths or trails that seem heavily used in non-traditional hiking or trail areas.
- Seeing a vehicle or person with an unusual amount (or assortment) of camping or gardening equipment such as fertilizer, PVC/plastic piping, irrigation hoses, plastic planters, tents or tarps or hand tools.
- Vehicles dropping off or picking up people in remote areas.
- People who dodge into the woods or otherwise attempt to hide when seen along roads.
- Patrolled or guarded woods or swamps areas, people with firearms outside of hunting season or non-traditional hunting areas.
- Tents, tarps or primitive structures made from trees or saplings in unusual locations in the woods.
- Very messy camps with garbage or litter strewn about.

These are only some examples of what you could encounter in and around public lands. This list should not be considered all inclusive, but instead as potential indicators of illegal activity.

Cooperation between the general public and law enforcement is critical in the effort to prevent DTOs from damaging public lands and threatening you or your family's safety. To report a suspected marijuana grow site, citizens should contact US Forest Service Law Enforcement, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Michigan State Police, DEA or your local law enforcement agency. If you wish to leave an anonymous tip, call 1-800-235-HEMP (4367).

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**CONTACT:** D/F/Lt. Dave Peltomaa, MSP Investigative Support Section, (517) 241-0164.



**PHOTO 1 CAPTION:** The picture above was taken at a DTO-type grow in Northwestern Michigan. Grow sites contain hundreds to thousands of marijuana plants.



**PHOTO 2 CAPTION:** The picture above was taken at a DTO-type grow in Northwestern Michigan. Grow sites may be accompanied by messy camp sites.