

# Feds eradicate 5-acre illegal marijuana grow west of Colorado Springs, find 18,300 plants

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Federal authorities eradicated 18,300 marijuana plants Thursday from an illegal grow operation spanning across about five acres of land in the Pike National Forest west of Colorado Springs.

The U.S. Forest Service says it also seized 2,000 pounds of marijuana growing infrastructure as part of the operation, which centered at a scene about six miles outside of Woodland Park, though an exact location was not provided.

The materials found included irrigation pipe, camping gear, tarps, chemicals and multiple 50-pound bags of fertilizer, authorities said.

A forest service spokesman said no arrests have been made and that an investigation into the grow is ongoing.

A Drug Enforcement Administration official says the agency was involved in the operation, though the forest service is the lead agency. The El Paso County Sheriff's Office SWAT team and the Department of Homeland Security are also assisting the forest service in the case.

Further details on the operation were not immediately made public on Thursday.

Anyone with further information on the grow is asked to call U.S. Forest Service Law Enforcement at 303-275-5266 or a local law enforcement agency.

Last week, the forest service found more than 13,450 plants and a loaded shotgun during a similar raid in the San Isabel National Forest in Huerfano County. Though no arrests were made in that bust, authorities say they confiscated more than a half-ton of cultivation materials that included irrigation piping, pesticides, camping gear, and flammable liquids.

Illegal marijuana grows on federal land have become an increasing issue across Colorado over the past several years. The problem has become a focus of federal prosecutors.