

Dear Supervisors,

Robinson Creek Road in Mendocino County has undergone an enormous and tragic change in culture and safety since large cannabis growers have been doing business in the upper portions of the watershed.

CalFire considers Robinson Creek Road to be one of the most dangerous fire escape situations in the entire county. It is a long, winding, one lane dirt road with many blind corners and few turn outs.

Ever since the large grows have been established, there have been numerous traffic accidents with reckless and intoxicated drivers, resulting in private property damage and in one case forcing an older individual off the road and into a ditch.

Concurrently there has been an enormous amount of dumped trash, including empty beer bottles thrown off into the grasslands by passing drivers. These bottles can ignite a grass fire when the summer sun shines through them onto dry vegetation.

For the past few years there have been large numbers of soil trucks and water trucks going up and down the road, which at any point in time makes it difficult for any emergency vehicles to access the watershed. These trucks have torn up the small amount of asphalt at the beginning of Robinson Creek Road and it has resulted in large potholes on the rest of the road, which drivers try to avoid by driving on the wrong side of the lane, resulting in increased chances of collisions.

Robinson Creek is a steelhead fishery, and over the past 35 years has received grant monies and private funding to restore habitat. Fish and Wildlife Service has documentation of illegal water drafting from the creek from one of the historic summer refuge pools, among other locations. The Robinson Creek aquifer is extremely depleted and cannot survive any more development.

Since growers have established territories here, there have been numerous documented wildlife poisonings.

Robinson Creek has traditionally, in the 37 years that I have lived here, been a community of people who generally look out for one another. Now we have had incidents of growers threatening neighbors with guns and breaking into private property to hook up to electricity and draft water. We are now living in a changed culture, and a dangerous one.

Any further expansion of the cannabis industry should require an Environmental Impact Report. It should also require some soul-searching on the part of our elected officials and our community. What kind of a future do we have here if it is being overtaken by individuals who care nothing for the integrity of the land and its inhabitants, but only the bottom line of the almighty dollar?

Sincerely,
Sheryl Greene
Co-Coordinator,
Robinson Creek Fire Safe Council