

From: ["Mark Vande Pol" <groundcover@wildergarten.com>](mailto:groundcover@wildergarten.com)

To: [CannabisEIR <CannabisEIR@santacruzcounty.us>](mailto:CannabisEIR@santacruzcounty.us)

Date: 9/1/2017 3:17:01 PM

Subject: Cannabis Farming

To those responsible:

Much of the ecological damage to the Santa Cruz Mountains over the last century was when electrified irrigation and mechanized tilling was introduced in the Santa Clara Valley. Farms in these mountains were then abandoned wholesale due to simple competitive pressures. Our property was just such a case: a former terraced apple orchard that lost virtually ALL of its topsoil to subsequent erosion. Runoff and channel incision were accelerated, destabilizing whole slopes constituting substantial risk to both fixed infrastructure and natural habitat.

I am concerned that this pattern will be repeated should cannabis farming be introduced to the Santa Cruz Mountains. In my opinion, these local farms will NEVER be competitive with large-scale mechanized agriculture. If they are profitable, they might grow at first, but it will not be long before larger producers with more capital take this market away from these niche producers leaving an even larger problem.

Hence, my largest concern about this process from a planning perspective is that it lacks means to allocate provisions for an end-game strategy. What will become of these farms once they are abandoned? Bankrupted farmers do not possess the financial capability to stabilize their land either from erosion or weed control. I fully anticipate that whatever revenue the County seeks will be quickly overwhelmed by the cost of the consequences, ecological, social, and criminal. Please do not let starry-eyed dreams of short term revenue overwhelm tempered judgment over the longer run. Too many times, we have all seen this before even if it does go largely unrecognized.

Mark Vande Pol

[Wildergarten](#)

25150 Mountain Charlie Rd.

Los Gatos, CA 95033-8320

groundcover@wildergarten.com

831-227-4958 (c)