

Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Pilot Program for un-permitted cannabis cultivation

*Community Development Agency
Nevada County Board of Supervisors
August 10, 2021*



Background

Commonly used by City/County municipalities by:

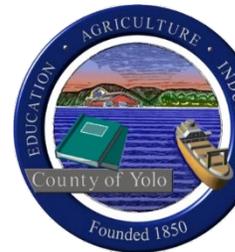
- Fire Agencies
- Law Enforcement Agencies
- Service Districts
- Community Development Agencies



Background

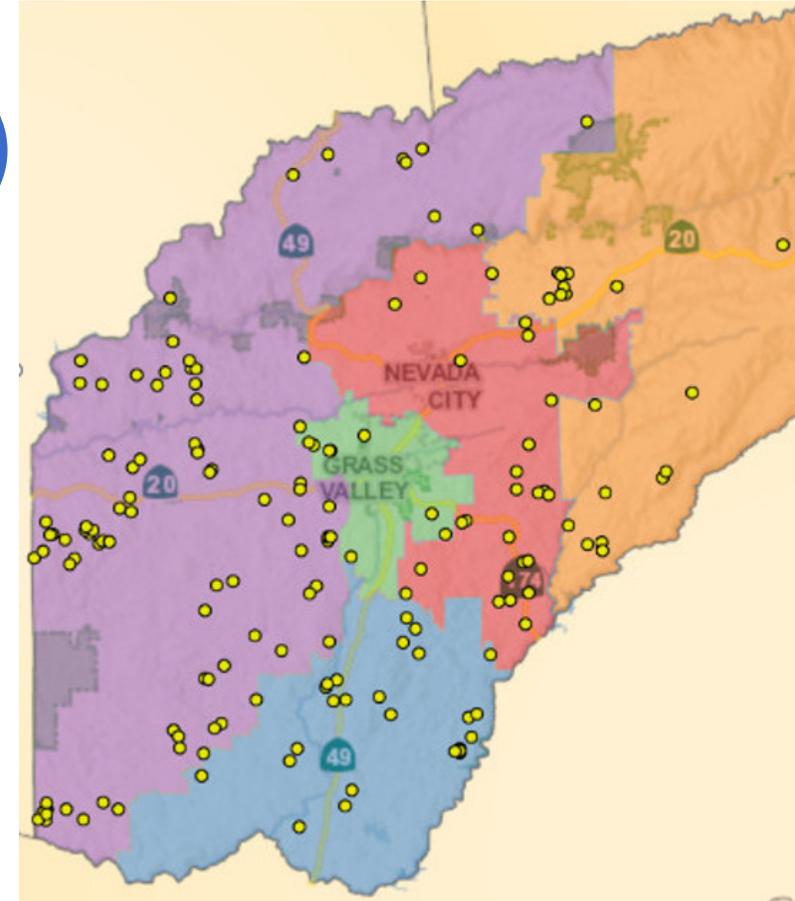
Rural Counties Currently Using Aerial Imagery Technology for Cannabis Enforcement:

- Sonoma County
- Humboldt County
- Tehama County
- Yolo County
- Glenn County



UAS Pilot Program

- **167 Neighborhood Complaints (2020)**
- **Sight obstructions and barriers**
- **32% of sites unverifiable**
- **Neighbors impacted**



UAS Pilot Program

Unpermitted Cannabis Enforcement

- 2 structure/wildland fires previously unverifiable
- Resources pulled during Jones fire
- Unpermitted electrical, generators, etc.
- Dangerous to public and environment



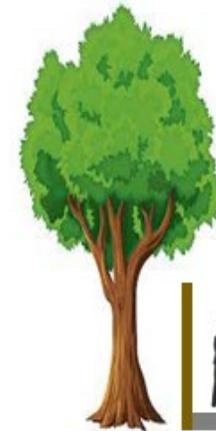
Primary Pilot Program Benefits

- Improved staff safety
- Program effectiveness and efficiency
- Supports community complaint driven process
- Supports permitted cannabis industry
- Fiscal efficiency/responsibility
- Addition to existing tools



UAS Procedures Example

- Neighborhood complaint received
- Staff attempt to inspect from publicly accessible area, reporting party's parcel, or another vantage point
- UAS operation plan approved by division Program Manager
- Certified staff member operates UAS vertically from publicly accessible area, being mindful of neighborhood privacy, noise nuisances, etc.



Publicly Accessible Road

UAS Procedures Example

- If no violation is observed, no photos are taken, and flight is ended
- If violations are observed, necessary photos of the violation only are taken
- UAS is returned to operator and inspection ended



Safeguards for Privacy

- Flight review and pre-approval
- Only used from right of way, publicly traveled road, or neighboring parcels when consent is provided
- Only flown vertically, not over private parcels
- No photos of any persons or non-specific violations are recorded
- Record retention policies consistent with Code Compliance. Release of photos would require Court order



Outreach

- **Community Associations/Boards**
- **Fire Districts**
- **Neighborhood Groups**
- **Law Enforcement Agencies**
- **Commercial Cannabis Applicants/Permittees**
- **Design Professionals**
- **Letters of Support**
 - Homeowner's association
 - Local Fire Authorities
 - Numerous community members



Primary Feedback

- **Limit use to unpermitted cannabis only**
 - Pilot Program is for unpermitted cannabis only, no need to use with permitted cultivators as ordinance allows compliance inspections
- **Employee safety/training**
 - All UAS operators will obtain and maintain FAA licensing, which includes annual testing
- **Data privacy**
 - Data will be retained consistent with current record retention policies and procedures
- **Protection of neighboring property privacy rights**
 - Only photos of violations will be taken
- **More enforcement**
 - This pilot program will enhance enforcement efforts
- **Implement other tools like regular plane/helicopter flights monthly instead**
 - Other tools such as satellite imagery and helicopter flights are not cost effective and less efficient



UAS Pilot Program Implementation

- **Pilot Program would be in place for next growing season**
- **Pilot program procedures and FAQ on website**
- **Once implemented:**
 - Updates will be provided to the Board regarding program effectiveness, enforcement related statistics, pilot program successes and failures
 - Community feedback encouraged



Suggested Recommendation

Proceed with the implementation of an Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) pilot program specific to unpermitted commercial cannabis enforcement

