

# Placerville Police News Release



## For Immediate Release

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## Restorative Cleanup Operation

### NEWS RELEASE

**Placerville Police Department**  
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### Placerville, CA – Restorative Policing Cleanup Efforts Continue

On Sunday, April 6, 2014, the cleanup of trash and waste left behind from illegal homeless camps continued in Placerville. A volunteer effort coordinated by the El Dorado County Watch and City of Placerville brought over 30 citizen volunteers, councilmembers, and support from local businesses and community based organizations.

This is the continuation of an ongoing Restorative Policing effort. The Placerville Police Department has engaged in several outreach operations in the past several weeks. Past and current operations have included input and assistance from Mental Health, the Community Resource Center (CRC), Christ Like Services, Veteran Support Groups, and community volunteers. In a Restorative Policing effort, teams utilize maximum discretion when evaluating options in dealing with the illegal camps as it is understood this is not a "one size fits all" issue. Evaluations are made in the field to determine the best options (i.e. mental health, crisis management resources, enforcement, etc.) to fit each situation presented.

In the past several weeks, officers have encountered and removed approximately 20 illegal camps along Broadway, Placerville and Ray Lawyer Drives, and along the El Dorado Trail. Approximately 10 individuals have been contacted in the vicinity of illegal camps and offered outreach services. Outreach, enforcement, and cleanup operations have led to the recovery of a loaded shortened shotgun and scoped rifle in an illegal camp, the collection of over a dozen syringes and other contraband indicative of narcotics use, and an overwhelming amount of trash scattered along the hillsides. A registered sex offender was arrested on a warrant in the vicinity of one camp, and another subject was arrested for possession of burglary tools during a prior operation.

Community volunteers have been responsible for the heavy lifting in the trash cleanup efforts. City crews and volunteers were supported by the El Dorado County Watch, members of ECV, Hauck Construction, H&H Equipment Rentals, JP Lee Excavating, Raley's, and El Dorado Disposal. Hundreds of bags of trash and several dump truck loads were filled during the cleanup effort. "These continued efforts will help to reduce the risk of fire and help to minimize the negative impacts these illegal camps have on the environment and our community. Our overriding goal here is to help make homelessness a transitional period as opposed to a lifestyle," Chief Scott Heller said, "We are attempting to direct and connect those camping on the hillsides with resources."

Community volunteers, city workers, and police personnel agree homelessness is not a crime. Chief Heller echoed this, "When it comes to enforcement operations we do not focus on the status of being homeless. Homelessness in and of itself is not a crime," Heller continued, "As police officers we focus on behavior, not status, and when someone violates the law and endangers public safety, homeless or not, we are compelled to act. Conversely, when someone does not violate the law, yet are in a state of crisis and in need of services, homeless or not, we will do our best to connect them with help."

The Police Department will be continuing the cleanup and restorative policing efforts in the upcoming weeks. Another cleanup day will be organized and we will be looking for more volunteers to help. If you are interested in volunteering, or have information to share please contact Sgt. Brody Jordan at (530)642-5210.

These cleanup efforts are proving to be effective in preserving the environment as well as preventing potential fire risks. The photographs below show the type of debris collected from the hillsides that, if left unattended could have a negative impact on the environment:



