

From: Rodney Smith
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 8:23 AM
To: planning1 <planning@pueblocounty.us>
Subject: Marijuana grow advisory Board Suggestion

Planning and Zoning (Marijuana advisory board)

Unfortunately I will not be able to listen in to the meeting today live due to work. But I wanted to let my thoughts not be heard by the board. So thank you for reading this and sharing this with the group for consideration.

Last week I sent in a comment regarding outdoor grows and the environmental impact that they have on short grass prairie ecological locations throughout Pueblo County.

Over the last week I have given this much more thought as to why this is happening, the historical back ground of this happening before with other farming practices and what if anything we can do to limit its impact in regards to the marijuana industries growth here in Pueblo County.

After listening this boards meeting for the past two weeks, I think that I have somewhat an understanding of your purpose. That purpose outlined by the commissioners was to study and develop processes to assist in responsibly managing outdoor grows within Pueblo County. I may be totally off base with that assumption, but that is what I have taken from listening to the back and forth conversations of your group

So, the ecology of short grass prairie is very fragile. Not to give an agricultural history lesson in the development of the west, but a study of the settlement of the west in the 19th century was commissioned by the U.S. Congress. The findings of that study were rejected and the west was settled like the east as 160 acre farms (for the most part). We know that the short grass prairies were broken out and planted into crops and that those with out irrigation failed over time. In fact, we can still find evidence of those failures to this day. In the 20th century, the short grass prairies were going to be farmed with modern agricultural technology and once again failed, as we can see all over Pueblo County. Many of these failures have led the erosion of the land, loss of native plant species and loss of wildlife habitat.

Knowing all this there has been multiple studies of proper land care techniques and these techniques have been proven to work in the restoration of the short grass prairie environment. All of this leads me to my suggestion for a program to help implement sound farming and land management practices for marijuana grows.

Around me, I have not met one single grower that is from Colorado or even the Western United States. They all come from back east where the rain is plentiful and the land very forgiving of the slightest mistakes, unlike the short grass prairie environment of Pueblo County. Saying that, to help these migrating "farmers" understand the land and its uses they need to be educated. Educating them will help them be more successful, thus help Pueblo County be more successful. A win, win, for the environment, the grower and the county.

I propose a mandatory 40 hour course of instruction on farming in the arid Western United States on Short Grass Prairie Environment provided by Pueblo County to all Grow Owners for free and for all grow employees at a cost to the grow owner. As an example the course would look something like this:

Course: Outdoor Marijuana Grow Farming Education Course

Length: 38 hours classroom instruction

[Comment continues on next page](#)

2 hours exam

Who: Operation Owners-Free of charge

All Operation Employees- Fee paid

When Offered: Once Monthly

Curriculum:

- History of Dry Land Farming in the Western United States
- Ecology of Short Grass Praire
- Ecology of Mountain Alpine Steeps
- Effects of farming on Wildlife
- Effects of irrigation on soil
- Erosion
- Contour farming
- Signs and effects of desertification
- Principles of permaculture in dry land landscapes
- Incorporating multi-plant species farms
- Pasture cropping
- Incorporating multi-animal species farms
- Colorado Fence Laws
- Colorado water law
- Water Management
- Colorado livestock law
- Understanding the Water Cycle of short grass and mountain ecological systems
- Understanding the Mineral Cycle of short grass and mountain ecological systems
- Alternative Energy Sources
- Neighbors
- Pueblo County Ordinances (Lighting, odor, noise, etc...)

It is my belief that many of the problems we are seeing is due to a lack of education and understanding of the environment and laws. If we properly educate those wishing to go into business as outdoor growers, then I firmly believe we naturally will reduce the conflict we are seeing with grows, their neighbors, the zoning violations, etc...

I would be very interested in continuing the discussion on this idea with the board and to hear your feedback.

Respectfully,

Rodney Smith
M. Agriculture Science