

The murder this past weekend of Fort Bragg, California City Councilman Jere Melo puts an all-too-human face on a long-festering environmental crisis.

Melo was shot and killed in a remote area in Mendocino County by a squatter who was reportedly growing marijuana on forest lands there. Councilman Melo, whose day job was to manage 150,000 acres of Mendocino forest lands owned by an investment firm, was shot to death as he investigated reports of illegal pot growing on the property.

By all accounts, Melo was one of the good guys. He'd served on the Fort Bragg City Council for the past 15 years. At the time of his death, he was working on a proposal to convert a closed Georgia Pacific lumber mill into a biomass plant that would convert timber waste into electricity.

Melo's untimely death brings into sharp focus a major, ongoing environmental and public safety crisis: criminals commandeering both public and private lands to cultivate marijuana groves, operate meth labs and pursue similar drug crimes. In the process, they threaten unsuspecting recreationists and other members of the public who stumble upon their remote drug sites, and trash pristine lands with toxic chemicals, illegal pesticides, human waste, etc.

The New York Times [recently reported](#) that looming budget cuts by the State of California threaten to end state law enforcement's longstanding Campaign Against Marijuana Planting (CAMP). The CAMP initiative, led by California's Attorney General with assistance from the federal Drug Enforcement Administration and local law enforcement officials, deploys drug agents to remote areas of California in an attempt to destroy the state's massive, illegal marijuana crop. The program also seeks to offer [inpatient treatment orlando](#) to help people deal with their drug problems. The Times reports that CAMP agents have eradicated more than 20 million plants during the program's 28-year history, including 4.3 million in 2010 alone. The [drug rehab tampa fl](#) can help to overcome addiction.

According to a study by this [drug rehab miami fl](#), the use and cultivation of marijuana is a controversial subject, one that divides Californians and Americans generally. But there's far more unanimity of public opinion when it comes to prosecuting and disrupting the efforts of those who violate others' private property rights or trespass upon and despoil the public lands in order to pursue their illegal drug activities. The tragic death of Jere Melo underscores the point that, along with the environmental degradation and privatization of our wilderness areas, such illegal drug operations can extract a very human cost.