

# News from around the Ojai Valley

## Police raid medical marijuana collective



Details

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Sespe Creek Collective, a Ventura County cannabis dispensary, was raided by the Ventura County Sheriff's Office (VCSO) and Oxnard Police Department Nov. 3, according to the collective's CEO Chelsea Sutula. That action came five days before voters will decide on Proposition 64 that would make recreational marijuana legal in California.

Sutula, who served on a medical marijuana study group chaired by Ojai City Councilman William Weirick, confirmed that Sespe Creek's medicine was confiscated during the raid.

**See also:** [Ojai could be first in county to allow medical marijuana providers](#) Ojai Valley News, Aug. 11 2016.

"We can't deliver. We're out of operation for the near future," she said.

Sespe Creek delivered medicine to Ojai Valley patients in the past.

Sutula's Ventura home was raided as was the home of a Sespe Creek colleague, she said.

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Sutula's four animals also were impounded, she said.

Approximately 30 armed police officers arrived at Sespe Creek's Oxnard offices at approximately 9:30 a.m., she said.

"We were not shown a warrant, it was sealed," she said.

The officers detained and interviewed the six to seven employees present, according to Sutula.

"We were all told that we weren't being arrested, we were detained, so we didn't need a lawyer present," she said.

Sutula confirmed that computers and personnel files were seized from the offices.

Digital patient files are accessible from the seized computers, she said.

All Sespe Creek employees were dismissed except for Sutula, who was arrested by the Oxnard Police Department at approximately 1:30 p.m. She was not informed of the charges against her, she said.

Capt. Garo Kuredjian, of VCSO, confirmed Nov. 7 that Sutula was arrested on charges of alleged possession of marijuana for sale, sale of marijuana, conspiracy and perjury.

After approximately three hours in an Oxnard holding cell, Sutula was informed that an error had been made, and she needed to be transferred to the Ventura County Main Jail.

"I was a little distressed because I had gone most of the day without any food or water," she said. "I had asked for food and water throughout the day. I was denied it until 4:05 a.m (Nov. 4)."

Sutula conceded that a Ventura County officer told her she could drink water from the sink at one point, but she was not provided a cup.

Kuredjian could not comment on Sutula's situation in particular, but confirmed she came into into the Jail at 9:30 p.m and was released at 7:20 a.m. He added that there is water available in each cell.

Sutula was released on a \$20,000 bond Nov. 4, Kuredjian confirmed.

Weirick said Nov. 4 he was aware of the raid but had received no further information. Weirick said he had formally requested an urgency action item to be included on the agenda for the Ojai City Council's next regular session, to address various marijuana-related issues, including local action on California Proposition 64 if it passes.

"After this, people are going to be justifiably on pins and needles for the next couple days," said Risa Horowitz, a medical marijuana advocate and a former member of Weirick's study group. "This is not compassionate," she added, noting that many Sespe Creek patients rely on their lab-tested, specialized medicines for a host of ailments.

Sutula is due in court Nov. 18 at 8:15 a.m.

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