



Humboldt County Sheriff's Office

826 Fourth Street, Eureka, CA 95501

Date: 04-07-14

From: Lt. Steve Knight
(707) 268-3630

Subject: Death Investigation

Case: 201401515

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On 04-04-14, at approximately 4:30 p.m. , the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office was notified by an absentee landowner that someone had caused environmental damage to the owners property off of Highway 36 near milepost 26.03. The owner reported someone had cut down trees, dug out a pond with heavy equipment and marijuana was growing on the property. The growing marijuana was starter plants, which the owner destroyed.

The property owner also told the Sheriff's Office Dispatcher he was notified by the Bridgeville Volunteer Fire Department that they responded to a structure fire on the owner's 180 acre parcel of property on 04-03-2014, at approximately 4:00 a.m. The three story unoccupied cabin on the property was destroyed by the fire and burnt to the ground. The property owner was responding to the property to evaluate damage to the property and cabin. The owner was requesting a deputy meet him on the property.

On 04-05-2014, at approximately 9:30 a.m. deputies met with the landowner on the property. When deputies met with the landowner he showed deputies the remains of the burned down cabin and told them that just prior to the their arrival, he noticed what may be burnt human remains in the debris.

The property owner who told the detectives no one was supposed to be living in the cabin or on the property.

Deputies examined the possible human remains and called for Sheriff's Detectives, California Department of Justice, the Humboldt County Arson Task Force and the Humboldt County Coroner's Office to respond.

After detectives arrived on scene, they met with property owner who gave the detectives and deputies written consent to search the property which they did. Cal Fire Investigators responded to assist with the fire investigation and environmental damage to the property. Cal Fish and Wildlife responded to assist with the environmental damage investigation. The Coroner confirmed the burnt remains were human. A Humboldt State University Anthropology Professor, who used to be a Humboldt County Deputy Coroner, and three of her students were summoned to the scene to assist with the death investigation due to human body being destroyed by the fire.

At this time it is unknown whether the body is male or female. The identity and cause of death are being investigated by the Humboldt County Coroner's Office.

Anyone with information for the Sheriffs Office regarding this case or related criminal activity is encouraged to call the Sheriffs Office at 707-445-7251 or the Sheriffs Office Crime Tip line at 707-268-2539.

Mike Downey
Sheriff

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