



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ELK CREEK, MO., MAN IS FOURTH DEFENDANT SENTENCED FOR DISTRIBUTING METH IN NATIONAL PARK

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that an Elk Creek, Mo., man was sentenced in federal court today for distributing methamphetamine within the Mark Twain National Forest in Douglas County.

Dickie D.Clouse, 41, of Elk Creek, Mo., was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Gary A. Fenner this morning to three years and 10 months in federal prison without parole.

On Nov. 15, 2002, **Clouse** pleaded guilty to a federal information that charges him with conspiracy to distribute in excess of 50 grams of methamphetamine in Douglas County from at least as early as May 2001, to Aug. 1, 2001.

By pleading guilty, Graves said, **Clouse** admitted that he provided a trailer to co-defendant **Miguel Mendoza** so that **Mendoza** would have a place to stay and distribute methamphetamine. **Clouse** also assisted by acting as a lookout and informer and running errands for **Mendoza** in his drug trafficking activities, receiving a small amount of money and methamphetamine from **Mendoza** in return. **Clouse** admitted that he conspired to distribute more than 200 grams, but less than 350 grams, of methamphetamine.

Clouse is the last of four defendants sentenced in the conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine in the Mark Twain National Forest. Graves explained that the four co-defendants conspired to traffic the drug in Douglas County from at least as early as May 2001, until they were indicted by a federal grand jury on Sept. 30, 2001. The information to which **Clouse** pleaded guilty replaces the charges against him contained in the indictment.

The investigation into the criminal conspiracy, Graves said, was launched in the spring of 2001 after law enforcement officials received numerous complaints of drug trafficking activity

occurring at the Hebron River Access Area on the North Fork River in Douglas County. The public area is within the jurisdiction and confines of the Mark Twain National Forest.

* **Miguel Mendoza**, 35, who resided in the Mark Twain National Forest during the period of the conspiracy, was charged with one count of conspiracy to distribute 500 grams or more of methamphetamine, three counts of distribution of methamphetamine, and one count of possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine. **Mendoza** was convicted on all five counts of the indictment by a federal jury in Springfield on March 14, 2002, after a four-day trial. **Mendoza** was sentenced to 30 years in federal prison without parole on each of the five counts, with those sentences to run concurrent with one another.

* **Michael R. Clinton**, 42, of Dora, Mo., was sentenced on Sept. 12, 2002, to 15 years and one month in federal prison without parole. On April 29, 2002, **Clinton** pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute 500 grams or more of methamphetamine and one count of carrying a firearm during and in relation to the conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine.

* **Kella A. Dobbs**, 22, of Dora, Mo., was sentenced on May 23, 2002, to 3 years and 1 month in federal prison without parole. On Oct. 18, 2001, Dobbs pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute in excess of 500 grams of methamphetamine.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney David P. Rush. It was investigated by the South Central Missouri Drug Task Force, in cooperation with the Missouri State Highway Patrol and the U.S. Forest Service.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow