

Residents of homeless camp near Mendota evicted

By Rory Appleton
rappleton@fresnobee.com

The residents of a homeless encampment just outside of Mendota were evicted on Nov. 20 by Fresno County sheriff's deputies.

Sheriff Margaret Mims said at a news conference that the occupants of the shanty town were given at least six different notices to leave the property, which is owned by Westlands Water District. The camp, which sprang up about seven years ago, [grew to](#) around 50 residents after years of drought created hardship for field workers.

Mims said many of the residents already had left by the time deputies arrived.

Westlands will secure the property and staff it with private security.

Occupants have two weeks to pick up any property they left behind. It is unknown when the encampment will be demolished.

The Fresno County public works department had ordered Westlands to dismantle the camp more than a year ago.

Westlands spokesman Johnny Amaral said the eviction was "the best of a bunch of bad options."

He blamed the growth of the camp in the dry drainage area on a lack of water allotment, saying it was the second year that Westlands had received no water.

Animal control, medical and temporary housing services were provided for the evicted residents, Mims said.

Rory Appleton: [559-441-6015](tel:559-441-6015), [@RoryDoesPhonics](https://twitter.com/RoryDoesPhonics)