



# TRINITY COUNTY

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TO: The Honorable Michael B. Harper  
Judge of the Superior Court

FROM: Trent Tuthill, County Administrative Officer

CC: Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: Response to Recommendations of 2023  
Grand Jury Solid Waste Committee Final Report  
Re: 2023 Trinity County Grand Jury Report – Solid Waste Report

DATE: February 22, 2024

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The Grand Jury Solid Waste Committee has requested a written response to their final report on the 2023 Trinity County Grand Jury Report – Solid Waste Report. The response of the County Administrative Officer is as follows:

**Finding #1:** Not all the old bins that need to be replaced have been switched out. There is no coordinated time of delivery and no notification to the gate attendants of the date of delivery.

**Response:** Disagree partially. With the exception of one transfer site, all old bins have been upgraded.

**Recommendation #1:** A) Develop a master plan to have all new dumpsters placed in their appropriate locations. B) As part of the master plan, communicate with each gate attendant as to when and where their dumpsters will be installed. C) Make sure that all bin pockets are cleaned thoroughly before placement as part of the master plan.

**Response:** Recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. Hyampom is the only location not complete. Estimate completion by April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

**Finding #2:** A lack of fire breaks around some of the transfer sites with a large accumulation of slash and yard debris creates a fire hazard. The Morbark tub grinder is underutilized because of a lack of qualified personnel.

**Response:** Agree

**Recommendation #2.** A) Train and qualify additional personnel to operate the tub grinder. B) If Trinity County Solid Waste is unable to train additional personnel, sell the used Morbark tub grinder and contract with a local contractor to dispose of all yard waste and slash each spring.

**Response:** A and B) recommendations require further analysis. Fire breaks have been cut annually around Hayfork, Hyampom, Ruth and Van Duzen. Remaining transfer sites are scheduled for fire break completion by June 30, 2024. Potential future tub grinder usage is being reviewed with Trinity County Resource Conservation District, Forest Service and The Watershed Research and Training Center. Based upon the analysis and potential usage over the next 6 months, a determination will be made regarding future usage and potential disposition.

**Finding #3:** Big Bar, Hobel and Hyampom transfer sites do not have proper shade coverings for the gate attendants as required by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

**Response:** Agree

**Recommendation #3.** Construct proper permanent shade cover for Big Bar, Hobel and Hyampom to meet OSHA standards.

**Response:** Recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. Shade covering projects are scheduled for Big Bar, Hobel and Hyampom transfer sites and have estimated completion dates by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

**Finding #4:** The entry gates at Burnt Ranch transfer site allows for illegal dumping.

**Response:** Agree

**Recommendation #4.** Relocate the gate to deny any illegal dumping.

**Response:** Recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The specific gate relocation project is planned and the Solid Waste division supports the project. The timing of project implementation will be driven by funding and concurrence with CalTrans.

**Finding #5:** Some transfer sites have unclear signage indicating their entrances, which creates a dangerous condition especially for those on major highways or major county roads.

**Response:** Agree

**Recommendation #5.** A) All transfer sites that utilize a major highway or County Road should be clearly marked with signage from both directions. B) All signage should meet CalTrans specifications for size and distance from the entrance.

**Response:** Recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. Solid Waste Division concurs with the recommendation and signage will be updated as permits and coordination with CalTrans is complete, funds and staff time are available to complete the project. Estimated completion date is August 31, 2024.

**Finding #6:** Due to the local bears having access to garbage from in ground bins, the bears have carried large amounts of trash to surrounding areas of the transfer sites. This has created not only an unsightly mess around the transfer site, but a dangerous environment for the gate attendants who fear for their safety.

**Response:** Agree

**Recommendation #6.** A) Clean up and maintain all areas that have trash that has been spread by the bears. B) Create procedures for gate attendants and supervisors to report bear issues using Wildlife Incident Report (WIR). This will allow everyone to know about active bears in the area. It also adds the capability to create a revocable bear depredation permit from Fish and Wildlife providing for bear removal.

**Response:** A and B) Recommendations have not been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. Recommendation A is a continual process, but with the new bins distributed the wildlife disturbances at the transfer sites should decrease. Solid Waste Division staff previously worked with Department of Fish and Wildlife personal on bear issues and any real progress was minimal. Staff will be trained on the WIR process and report future incidents.

**Finding #7:** Each transfer site has inadequate signage. There is no ability to clearly read the hours of operation or any other information that the public needs to know.

**Response:** Partially disagree. Some transfer sites do have inadequate signage, but other transfer sites do have adequate signage.

**Recommendation #7.** Trinity County Solid Waste needs to install large easy to read informative signs indicating:

- 1) Hours of operation.
- 2) Accepted materials for disposal.
- 3) Acceptable items for recycling.
- 4) Hazardous waste information.
- 5) Contact phone numbers.
- 6) Website information.

**Response:** Recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. New or additional signs are planned for all transfer sites with an estimated completion date of August 31, 2024.

**Finding #8:** Due to the shortage of gate attendants at the Hayfork transfer sites, there is a concern about items being properly disposed of in the metal, and yard waste areas.

**Response:** Agree

**Recommendation #8.** A) Assign a dedicated gate attendant to oversee the placement of all metal and yard waste to their correct locations and B) All metals should be removed every 90 to 120 days.

**Response:** Recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. A second gate attendant is being hired for Hayfork with an estimated completion date of April 1, 2024 and Solid Waste staff will make every effort to implement the recommendation, depending upon future staffing levels.

**Finding #9:** There is an issue with securing the transfer sites and containers from ongoing theft and vandalism problems.

**Response:** Agree

**Recommendation #9.** A) Install security doors and screens using proper security hardware. B) Broken windows in any kiosk should be repaired or replaced and install a commercial security film.

**Response:** Recommendation requires further analysis. Solid Waste staff agrees there is an issue with securing transfer sites and kiosks. However various security measures have been put in place over the past decade and people always find ways to vandalize. From burning items, shooting, pulling items off foundations with chains, ramming gates with vehicles to breaking windows, vandals have been persistent. Solid Waste staff will continue to repair and replace broken material at transfer sites.

**Finding #10:** There is a lack of first aid supplies at all transfer site kiosks.

**Response:** Partially disagree, transfer sites do have first aid supplies, however the consistent replacement of materials has been an issue when staffing levels fall below minimum levels.

**Recommendation #10.** A) Trinity County Solid Waste contract with a medical supply company to fully stock each kiosk with proper eyewash stations, bandages, etc. to be able to take care of any unforeseen medical emergencies and B) The transfer site supervisor should be required to visit each site monthly to make sure safety practices are being adhered to and that safety supplies and security equipment are stocked and not expired. A record of these visits should be kept on site.

**Response:** A) Recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable. Solid Waste will not contract with a medical supply company due

to the remote and extremely small scale transfer sites. However, Solid Waste will ensure all locations have the appropriate supplies to adequately address potential medical situations. B) Recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The transfer site supervisor will visit each site monthly and ensure safety supplies and equipment is stocked and safety practices are followed. Starting in March 2024, the monthly visits will take place.

**Finding #11:** Most kiosk sites have an inability to communicate with first responders or emergency crews in case of unforeseen events. The Trinity County Grand Jury recognizes that Burnt Ranch has received a satellite phone, based on reporting from the Trinity Journal.

**Response:** Partially disagree. Big Bar and Hyampom are the only other two transfer sites without reliable communication methods. All other transfer sites have adequate cellular phone coverage.

**Recommendation #11.** Where cell service is unavailable, issue all kiosk gate attendants a satellite phone and train them on the proper use of the satellite phone.

**Response:** Recommendation requires further analysis. As stated in the finding, the Burnt Ranch transfer station gate attendant does in fact have a satellite phone and Solid Waste has been determining functionality. Solid Waste is in the process of acquiring satellite phones for Big Bar and Hyampom transfer sites with an estimated implementation date of March 15, 2024. All other transfer sites have adequate communication methods.

**Finding #12:** When a gate attendant is unable to show up for their shift the transfer site closes to the public creating a hardship on the community it serves.

**Response:** Agree

**Recommendation #12.** A) Update Trinity County Solid Waste process to reflect what happens when transfer sites are not covered. Include the following:

1. When an attendant is unable to work their shift, provide an alternate gate attendant.
2. If the alternate gate attendant is unavailable, the transfer site supervisor should cover the shift so that the site is open to the public.

B) keep the website up to date with current pertinent information for the community.

**Response:** Recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The site supervisor does make alternative schedules and plans based upon gate attendant availability. The supervisor is already working a full 40 hour week and is not always available to “cover the shift”. Every effort is made to minimize the public effect of any gate attendant shortage. Recommendation B has been implemented and the main communication is by means of the Solid Waste web site and facebook page. Solid Waste staff will continue to make every effort to ensure gate attendant positions are filled and when shift vacancies occur, make every effort to minimize any impact on the public.

Trinity County appreciates the work of the Grand Jury and the opportunity to improve operations across the county.

Trent Tuthill  
County Administrative Officer