

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

FROM: Board of Supervisors

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 10, 2024



3/19/2024

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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 Board of Supervisors 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:** Partially Disagree

All new dumpsters have been delivered with the exception of the Hyampom Transfer Site. The Hyampom Transfer Site will have a completed delivery by April 30, 2024 as per CAO Tuthill.

**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

A schedule and workplan is being developed to address the slash and yard debris. The Natural Resources Department is currently assessing the use of the tub grinder and the county's ability to utilize the machine at our transfer sites.

This is posing a challenge as the tub grinder requires a Class A driver and the county's Class A driver pool is limited. Under current fire season restrictions, the use of the tub grinder has a limited season of use between the end of the rainy season and the start of fire season. In addition, the tub grinder has limited use capacity due to California emissions regulations, further restricting the county's ability to fully utilize the machine. For these reasons, assessing the cost to benefit ration of owning the tub grinder should be considered by the Solid Waste Department.

Fire resilience at the transfer sites can be reached by the annual brushing and fuels

reduction work at each transfer site where applicable. These efforts may be accomplished in-house or in collaboration with local organization such as the Trinity County RCD or the Watershed Center.

**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

The recommendation for the incorporation of shade coverings will be accomplished at the Big Bar, Hoble and Hyampom Transfer Sites by June 30, 2024, as per CAO Tuthill.

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

**Response:** Agree

The access road to the Burnt Ranch Transfer site is very precarious and presents a real challenge when considering a change in gate location. The topography of the site leaves very little opportunity for alternative options. Discussions with Solid Waste, DOT and Caltrans will continue until a safe and viable option is identified.

Working with Caltrans for funding availability and signage placement may take time. Consistent effort and exploration of all options should be ongoing until a resolution is found.

**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

Signs are in the process of being designed and updated. Coordination with Caltrans for permitting and placement is active, and signs are estimated to be completed and placed by 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

The placement of the new bear bins will help decrease bear access to trash. Procedures to contact Fish and Wildlife to file a Wildlife Incident Report (WIR) have been established and will be followed by transfer site attendants. The combination of these two actions will lead to a decrease in bear issues.

**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

Although several transfer sites do not have proper signage, others do.

All transfer sites will have proper and adequate signage indicating:

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

This will be fully accomplished by 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

A second gate attendant will be hired as of April 1, 2024. Solid Waste staff will implement the proper disposal of metal and yard waste as recommended every 90-120 days.

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

**Response:** Agree

We agree these problems exist while recognizing there is no absolute solution. Historically, Solid Waste has tried to install security measures to prevent vandalism, however the remote locations of the sites leave them highly vulnerable to vandals and thieves. The county will continue to repair and restore the kiosk to the best of our ability. These added costs are and will continue to be a burden on the Solid Waste budget. We recognize that each transfer site is unique to the community it is serving. We are open to solutions and will continue to seek a remedy for this problem.

**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. We are in concurrence that it is not warranted to contract with a medical supply company to remedy this finding. We take the safety of our county staff very seriously and recommend that quality first aid supplies be in place at every transfer site location, and that they be kept fully stocked immediately.

**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

The Burnt Ranch Transfer Site is testing the use of a satellite phone. This has proven to be a positive outcome so far. All other sites have adequate cell service. We recommend that for those transfer sites, the gate attendant be offered the same cell phone stipend as other county employees who use their private cellphones for work purposes.

**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

It's not plausible for the county to hire a floating attendant to cover transfer sites when an employee is unable to cover their shift. Every effort is made to minimize the public effect of any gate attendant shortage. Recommendation B has been implemented; the main communication is by means of the Solid Waste website and Facebook page.