

2011-2012 GRAND JURY

JUR-2011-2012-003

REPORT

Trinity County Conservation
Camp

Thumbs Up!

**GRAND JURY
FINAL REPORT**

**TRINITY COUNTY GRAND JURY
2011-2012**

FILED



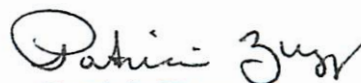
JUN 21 2012

CLERK OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
COUNTY OF TRINITY
BY: STACI WARNER, DEPUTY CLERK

**Judicial Committee
JUR 2011/2012-003
Final Report**

**Trinity River Conservation Camp
Thumbs Up!**

Approved 05/23/12



**Patricia Zugg
Foreperson**

Trinity County Grand Jury Report

Judicial Committee

Trinity River Conservation Camp

Summary

The Trinity County Grand Jury for 2011-12 in May of this year conducted a tour of the Trinity River Conservation Camp # 3 (Camp) as required by California Penal Code, Section 919 (b).

The tour consisted of the dorms, the dining area, the laundry, the recreation rooms, the gym facilities, garden area, wood, metal, and saw shop. The grounds of the Camp were found to be excellently maintained, the facilities clean and neat. The Grand Jurors were served a "Fire" meal in the dining hall.

The primary mission of the Camp is to provide inmate fire crews for fire suppression. The inmate hand crews, when they are not on a fire line, also provide a work force for floods, conservation projects and community services for Local, State and Federal government agencies Schools and Non-profit organizations.

Pride of ownership has resulted in a highly effective operation and a lower recidivism rate.

Background

In May of 1988 the Camp opened in its current location, 14 miles North of Lewiston. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, jointly manage the Camp. The inmates are under the direction of the California Correctional Center (CCC) located in Susanville, California. The Camp is a minimum-security facility and houses up to 131 inmates.

The facility is self-contained, providing its own water treatment plant and sewer plant. The facility is not fenced nor does it have security cameras, although the boundaries are clearly marked.

Method of Investigation

Members of the Grand Jury visited the Conservation Camp in May of this year. The members of the Jury, the Camp Commander, the Cal Fire Division Chief, were joined by the Warden and two Associate Wardens from the California Correctional Center (CCC) located in Susanville, California, who participated in the questions and answers sessions, as well as joining the Jury on the tour of the Camp facilities and grounds.

For the purpose of evaluation, the Grand Jury was served a high protein, high carbohydrate meal that represented what inmates are fed while they are on the fire line.

All areas of the Camp, except the sawmill, were visited.

Previous Grand Jury reports were compared to this years' tour.

Discussion

Preceding the tour of the Camp a question and answer session was held with the Trinity River Conservation Camp Commander, the Cal Fire Division Chief, the Warden and two Associate Wardens from the California Correctional Center (CCC) located in Susanville, California. During this session various topics were discussed, with special emphasis on how the new bill AB109 will affect the operations of the Camp in the future. The Senior State Correctional Officials also accompanied the Grand Jury on the extensive tour of the facility and grounds.

The dorms were clean and neat, the laundry room was well organized, the recreation area provided two television rooms, two pool tables, and a library along with some video games as well as other board games.

The average length of stay of an inmate is one year, plus or minus. They earn, for every day at the camp, two days toward the fulfillment of their sentence. While on a fire they earn \$1.00 per hour, which is kept at the California Correctional Center until they have completed their sentence, or may be used at the commissary.

Only non-violent inmates who meet the strict wide-ranging criteria are assigned to this Camp. The objective of this Camp is to rehabilitate and return the inmate to society as a productive member. The code of conduct is strictly enforced and designed to assist in rehabilitation of an inmate. It is firm, fair and consistent. If an inmate does not adhere to the rules they can be returned to the Susanville California Correctional Center for disciplinary action. The inmates learn not only a routine, but also values and skills, which will enable them to function outside the facility: such as the potential to earn a Water or Sewer Plant Certificate. These particular certificates require a year of supervised practical experience in the field.

The garden area is not only for the inmates to learn the life skill of responsibility, but to help offset the cost of food for the Camp.

The inmates receive 67 hours of fire training prior to coming to the camp. The fire fighting skills they learn also assist them to find a job with fire departments such as Cal Fire when they are released from prison.

Other social skills are learned that help inmates assimilate back into society once their sentence is served, such as cooperation, teamwork and mutual respect.

The rehabilitation rate of the Camp is high; the return rate of inmates to the prison system is below 30% as compared to the 70% rate of return at other facilities.

Inmate man-hours provided for community service projects in year 2011 were 24,296. The community service projects were for:

- The Resource Conservation District
- County Parks
- The Peddler's Faire
- Schools
- Roads
- County Airports
- County Cemeteries

Fire hours the inmates provided for California Department of Fire was 19,848 and for Federal fires the inmate hours were 1,752. This was a very minor fire year. For comprehensive data please see Appendix.

With the steep forested terrain and immense size of Trinity County, 3,200 square miles, response time is critical in controlling a fire. The responding Camp crew is on their way within 5 minutes of being notified of a fire. There are six (6) crews with 12 to 17 inmates in each. They are totally self-contained. Unlike other fire departments, which must be housed in motels and fed in restaurants, the Camp crews take everything they need to be self-contained, such as sleeping bags, food, and personal hygiene items. If needed a mobile kitchen is dispatched to the fire. The costs of comparable services are; four (4) times greater than the cost of inmate crews. This is a cost effective way of fighting fire.

Currently the bill AB109 does not affect the Camp. In the year 2013 they will begin to feel the effects. The non-violent inmate populations they currently draw from will no longer be available in the quantities as before. Just how they will be able to work within these confines this presents is yet to be determined.

The availability of fire crews is in question as six (6) Northern California Camps are slated for closure as the inmate populations' fall with institution of bill AB109. The identities of those Camps are not presently available.

Findings and Recommendations

Finding 1:

The Camp was found to be clean, neat and well managed. The rehabilitation rate is outstanding in returning inmates as productive members of society.

Recommendation 1:

Keep up the good work.

Finding 2:

Trinity County receives a number of very valuable services from this Camp, not the least of which is fire protection.

Recommendation 2:

The Board of Supervisors should do everything in their power to insure the continuance of the Camp in our county.

Finding 3:

There is a question as to the preservation of the Conservation Camp System because of the decline in inmate population brought about by AB109.

Recommendation 3:

The Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff should work with the California Department of Correction to find a mutually beneficial solution.

Responses Required

In accordance with the California Penal Code Section 933.05, a response is required as indicated below:

Respondent	Finding/Recommendations	Due Date*
Board of Supervisors	2&3	90 days
Trinity County Sheriff	2&3	60 days

*Number of days after filing date of this Grand Jury Report

The governing bodies indicated above should be aware that comment or response of the governing body must be conducted subject to the notice, agenda, and open meeting requirements of the Brown Act.

Appendix**California Department of Forestry Community Service Statistics**

APPENDIX

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																		
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	STATE GOVERNMENT SUBTOTAL		58,992	38.33%	
	FEDERAL GOVERNMENT				
	NATIONAL PARK SERVICE				
	WHISKEYTOWN	2,499	19,992	12.99%	
	TOTALS		19,992	12.99%	
	USFS				
	ALL PROJECTS	3,162	25,296	16.44%	
	TOTALS		25,296	16.44%	
	BLM				
	ALL PROJECTS	2,764	22,112	14.37%	
	TOTALS		22,112	14.37%	
	FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SUBTOTAL		67,400	43.79%	
	TOTAL PERSON DAYS FOR TRCC				
	TOTAL HOURS FOR TRCC (EXCLUDING FIRE PROTECTION)		153,912		
	FIRE PROTECTION				
	CDF FIRES	2,481	19,848	91.89%	
	FEDERAL FIRES	219	1,752	8.11%	
	FIRE PROTECTION SUBTOTAL		21,600		

Trinity River Conservation Camp

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