

# 2012 – 2013 GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

JUR-2012-2013-002  
CDCR/CAL FIRE Trinity  
River Conservation Camp:  
*“Pride and a plan go a long  
way!”*

Board of Supervisor’s Response

County Sheriff’s Response



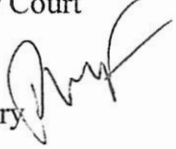
## TRINITY COUNTY

TRINITY COUNTY GRAND JURY

P.O. Box 2308  
Weaverville, CA 96093

**Date:** June 20, 2013

**TO:** Judge Elizabeth Johnson, Presiding Judge  
Trinity County Superior Court

**FROM:** Pat Frost, Foreperson  
Trinity County Grand Jury 

**SUBJECT:** Judicial Committee **JUR-2012-2013-002 CDCR/CAL FIRE Trinity River Conservation Camp: Pride and a plan go a long way!**

Enclosed for your review is a copy of the subject report that was prepared by the Civil Grand Jury's Judicial Committee.

After you have completed your review, please initial and forward copies of the report to the appropriate parties indicated in the "Responses Required" section. For ease in correlating the Responses to the Findings, we are requesting that this cover Transmittal be attached to the Report when it is distributed and that all responses quote the Report number and Report title as shown above. Additionally we ask that respondents provide electronic copies of their responses to streamline the production of the 2012-13 Final Report. We would also ask that you send a copy of this report to the CDCR/CAL FIRE Trinity River Conservation Camp

Thank you for your timely review. If you have any questions, please contact me at 739-3160.

Enclosure: **JUR-2012-2013-002 CDCR/CAL FIRE Trinity River Conservation Camp: Pride and a plan go a long way!**

TRINITY COUNTY GRAND JURY  
2012-2013

Judicial Committee  
Final Report

CDCR/CAL FIRE  
Trinity River Conservation Camp  
**Pride and a plan go a long way!**  
**JUR-2012-2013-02**

**Approved June 20, 2013**

Patrick Frost  
Foreperson

# **Trinity County Grand Jury Report 2012-2013**

## **CDCR/CAL FIRE Trinity River Conservation Camp**

### **Summary**

The Trinity County Grand Jury for 2012-2013 conducted a tour of the Trinity River Conservation Camp as required by California Penal Code, Section 919(b) which states, "The Grand Jury shall inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the County." The Grand Jury found that the facility:

- Has an adequate capacity for current and future needs.
- A functional and well maintain facility that is in very good condition.
- The level of staffing provides for the safety and well being of the entire population of the camp including State Department of Correction and Rehabilitation (CDC&R), CAL FIRE, inmate and visitor populations.
- The facility meets the mandates for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as well as the California Standards Authority (CSA) mandates.
- The camp is a vital institution and an economic engine and as such is a valued part of Trinity County.
- The inmate population is also the work force that keeps the facility in operation. The inmates clean and maintain the physical plant. They also do the cooking, laundry, housekeeping and yard maintenance. It is obvious to even a casual observer that both the paid staff and the inmate population take pride in maintaining a pleasant as well as functional facility.

### **Background**

The Trinity River Conservation Camp opened in its current location in May of 1988. It is located 14 miles north of Lewiston in the mountains of Trinity County and is of great benefit to the County. Over the past 25 years the staff and inmates have put in countless hours helping with maintenance and improvement of Trinity County wildlands, roads and infrastructure, while at the same time providing fire suppression under the direction of CAL FIRE.

The inmates have jobs to do as part of their daily activities. The inmates are supervised by CDC&R staff as they work. Their jobs include maintaining the vehicles used for both firefighting activities and general labor on and around public property in Trinity County.

The camp also has a lumber milling operation and a professional journeyman level wood working shop. Using the locally harvested timber, they mill logs and produce very professional looking pieces of furniture, cabinetry and outdoor wood products for use in the State and County Parks and State owned facilities.

### **Method of Investigation**

1. At the beginning of our visit the committee met with several members of the CAL FIRE staff as well as the area Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation staff and the Assistant Warden from the Susanville CDC&R
2. Tour and inspection. A walking tour of the facility was conducted by the camp staff. The tour included the administrative buildings, the dormitories, the recreation areas, the cafeteria as well as the work shop areas.
3. Review of previous Grand Jury Reports
4. Interviews with staff members from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

### **Discussion**

Members of the Grand Jury visited the Trinity River Conservation Camp on April 3, 2013. Upon our arrival we were met in the office area by members of both the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDC&R) and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE).

We met with the staffs for a little over an hour. Their presentation followed by a question and answer time provided the visiting committee with very helpful information dealing with the why and why not as well as a “nuts and bolts” understanding of how the Camp functions. The professional staff of the camp were very open to our visit, proud of their place of employment.

The camp has room for up to 220 inmates. Inmates must not have been convicted for serious or violent crimes and must have less than five years remaining on their sentence. Inmates must also be physically fit enough to carry on the very demanding endurance of wildland firefighting. The inmates are compensated with a very small amount of money for doing the daily work in and around camp as well as for firefighting. Inmates who participate in the wildland firefighting also get one day off of their sentence for each day they work on a fire. Some of the inmates work in the CAL FIRE mobile kitchen that is part of the camp work detail. When you consider the potential learning and training possibilities that an inmate can participate in, it becomes obvious that an inmate who takes advantage of these opportunities can do very well upon his release from custody if he has invested time in himself. This is potentially a life altering series of events.

### **Concerns delineated in 2010-11, 2011-12 Grand Jury Reports & Reiterated in the 2012-13 Report**

The only concerns expressed in the previous reports deal with the possible elimination of funding and programs provided by the State of California and the over population of inmates in the prison system. One can only hope that the Conservation Camp program as carried out in Trinity County is both an economic plus for the County and also a sociological plus for the County as well as the State.

## **Conclusion**

The inmate fire crews are valuable as first responders who work to mitigate damage done wildland fires, flood and storms. In addition to emergency response the crews also make significant improvements on public lands by making significant reductions in the fuel load of our forested land. The payroll and purchasing power generated by the camp is a very significant positive influence on an otherwise sensitive economy.

## **Findings and Recommendations**

**Finding 1:** The Trinity River Conservation Camp is a well-organized institution that addresses many of the needs of Trinity County as well as the State of California.

**Recommendation 1** Continue the programs. We believe they are making great strides that improve the wellbeing of our community as well as providing a much needed service to the State of California.

## **Responses Required**

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

Respondent	Finding/Recommendation	Due Date*
Board of Supervisors	1	90 days
Trinity County Sheriff	1	60 days

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

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