

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND REHABILITATION CONSERVATION CAMP (DELTA CAMP)

2010–11 Solano County Grand Jury

I. SUMMARY

The Delta Conservation Camp appears to be well maintained and efficiently operated. California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection have teamed up to provide a secure facility for low-level offenders who have been formed into teams of firefighting crews. When not actively training or assigned to fight fires, the crews are utilized to provide many other services to the region. This training and development of the inmates at Delta Camp is of great value and should continue.

The Grand Jury found some potential safety problems for the fire crews leaving the facility. None of the roads leading onto Lambie Road have stop signs, which could lead to vehicle accidents.

II. INTRODUCTION

Delta Conservation Camp (commonly known as Delta Camp) opened in June 1988 and is located in rural Solano County. It is run jointly by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and the California Department of Forestry (CAL-FIRE).

There are 39 fire camps in the State of California; 19 camps are located in Northern California. There is one all-female camp located in Southern California. Delta Camp provides mutual aid for the seven Bay Area Counties.

CDCR is responsible for the security, supervision, care, and discipline of the inmates in camp and accompanies fire crews assigned to emergencies. CAL-FIRE supervises in-camp work of the inmates and the inmate fire crews on assignment.

Local inmate work sites include maintenance of the Yountville Veterans Home in Napa County, Mount Diablo State Park in Contra Costa County, the Davis CAL-FIRE Equipment Facility in Yolo County, Point Reyes National Park in Marin County, and the Dixon Fairgrounds. Additional projects are undertaken throughout the Delta Area in flood control and fire reduction efforts. Delta Camp also produces a large vegetable garden, which helps to offset food costs. California Penal Code Section § 919 subsection (b) states “the Grand Jury shall inquire into the condition and management of the Public prisons within the county.” Pursuant to this statute the 2010-11 Grand Jury inspected the Delta Conservation Camp on November 18, 2010.

III. METHODOLOGY

The Grand Jury interviewed Delta Conservation Camp staff of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. The Grand Jury interviewed Delta Conservation Camp inmates.

The Grand Jury inspected the following Delta Conservation Camp facilities:

- Laundry areas
- Storage areas
- Equipment repair shop
- Inmate dormitory
- Hobby shop and recreational areas
- Kitchen

IV. STATEMENT OF FACTS

At the time of the Grand Jury's tour there were 121 inmates in the program. The camp's maximum capacity is 132 inmates. These inmates are assigned to six 17-man fire crews. Each crew is supervised by one CAL-FIRE captain and one CDCR correctional officer for most of the work operations.

CDCR staff consists of one lieutenant, two sergeants, and eight correctional officers. CAL-FIRE staff consists of one Battalion chief, 12 captains, one heavy equipment mechanic, one waste treatment operator, and one office technician.

All inmates in the CAL-FIRE sites are classified as Level I and minimum Level II security risk. Inmates assigned to this facility cannot have committed crimes consisting of any capitol offense, sex crimes, arson, or any prior escape attempts within the past 10 years. All inmates eligible for assignment to a fire camp are reviewed by the Unit Classification Committee before placement.

Delta Camp stresses that there is zero tolerance of any gang related problems. All inmates are treated and expected to treat fellow inmates as equals.

All inmates must be able to read and understand their instructions and sign their orders. Inmates are encouraged to get their General Education Development (GED). The staff at the Delta Fire Camp encourages the inmates to further their education and inmates can use correspondence courses to obtain their college degree.

In addition to furthering their education, inmates receive job skills that they can apply when they get out of prison. Staff stated that many of the inmates that enter this program are hired by CAL-FIRE or other fire agencies. Additionally the CDCR staff stated that recidivism rate is likely less than the overall average for all inmates incarcerated.

Work projects are from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. rain or shine five days per week. The work projects are: fires, floods, mud slides, rescue, as well as clean up at major automobile/truck accidents. The fire crews deployed on 24-hour duty are onsite as long as they are needed.

At the time of the Grand Jury's visit, five of the six crews were out on assignment, and the one remaining crew was cleaning their truck, repairing the equipment, and restocking their truck for the next assignment.

The kitchen and housing areas must meet minimum standards established by the State Department of Health Services. These facilities are subject to environmental and health inspections to ensure specific health standards are met.

The Grand Jury found some potential safety problems for the fire crews leaving the facility. None of the roads leading onto Lambie Road, the access road for Delta Camp, have stop signs. This lack of stop signs could lead to vehicle accidents.

V. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding 1 – The lack of stop signs on roads entering Lambie Road poses a safety problem for fire crews leaving the Delta Camp facility and others using Lambie Road.

Recommendation 1 – The Solano County Resource Management should place stop signs on all roads entering Lambie Road, especially Bithell Lane, which has heavy traffic.

COMMENTS

A previous Grand Jury recommended changes be made to the Highway 12/Lambie Road intersection. This Grand Jury commends the California Department of Transportation and the Solano County Resource Management for the steps they have taken to make those changes.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Solano County Resource Management

COURTESY COPIES

Delta Fire Camp
California Dept of Forestry
California Dept of Correction
Solano County Transportation Authority
California Dept of Transportation
Senator Lois Wolk
Assemblyperson Mariko Yamada