

**Date:** February 19, 2020

**To:** Honorable Donna L. Stashyn  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
Superior Court, County of Solano  
600 Union Avenue  
Fairfield, CA 94533

**RECEIVED**  
C  
FEB 20 2020

**From:** Lt. S. Turner  
Camp Commander  
Delta Conservation Camp, CC#8

SOLANO COUNTY  
GRAND JURY

**Subject:** Solano County Grand Jury 2019-2020: Delta Conservation Camp Recruitment Challenges

Dear Honorable Judge Stashyn,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the ladies and gentlemen of the grand jury for their visit to Delta Conservation Camp, CC#8. Delta Camp is continuously seeking suggestions and recommendations on ways to improve the working and living conditions for the staff and inmates alike. We strive to foster an atmosphere of pride and a solid commitment to the service of our surrounding communities.

Pursuant to Penal Code Section 933.05, I am responding to the Solano County Grand Jury's finding and recommendations that are presented in the 2019/2020 Grand Jury Report entitled: Solano County Grand Jury 2019-2020, Delta Conservation Camp Recruitment Challenges.

The Grand Jury has provided recommendations in two (2) areas. The following is a response to each recommendation and a status update to any actions taken by CDCR to date.

Recommendation 1 suggests that the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and Cal-Fire expand their recruitment system to find more potential trainees from other correctional facilities, such as county jails. There is no question that Delta Conservation Camp and the Fire Camp system as a whole have experienced hardships in remaining fully staffed with qualified Inmate Firefighters. As of the date of this response, the 18 Northern California fire camps are at 70.89% of designated capacity. The 2011 AB109, 2014 Proposition 47 and 2016 Proposition 57 have all negatively impacted the Camps Program by redirecting felonious offenders to county jails instead of state prisons, classifying many potential felonies as misdemeanors, and changes to credit earning. Unfortunately, none of these direct adverse impacts on fire camp populations can be dramatically changed without a swing in public opinion and the passing of new legislation. The camp population continues to face upcoming challenges in competing for inmates with Alternative Custody Programs and increased Milestone Credit Programs offered at larger institutions.

CDCR has attempted to counter these challenges in several ways. All inmates are received into state custody through Reception Centers at various prisons in the state. Efforts have been made to educate Correctional Counselors (the staff responsible for the initial classification) on the classification criteria for fire camps to assist them in better identifying those inmates eligible for fire camp. Recruitment and educational videos have been developed to better inform the inmate population of the fire camp program and the benefits of volunteering and participation.

State of California

Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation  
California Correctional Center

Recruitment posters and flyers have been created for posting in facilities where potential candidates are assigned. In one case, a direct bulk mailing was conducted to reach potentially eligible inmates within state facilities.

CDCR has worked with several counties to establish County Border programs where inmates sentenced to county jail, but meeting the requirements for fire camp can be housed at state fire camp facilities. However, it can be difficult to entice many counties to take advantage of this program as personnel resources must be committed to identify and screen potential candidates. Many counties simply don't have the population numbers to make the time commitment worthwhile on their part.

CDCR recently raised daily pay for all inmates assigned to Fire Camps and is considering additional pay increases to entice candidates to volunteer for the program. Cal-Fire is currently considering an increase to emergency pay rates as well. CDCR is exploring the idea of changing time to serve requirements for placement at conservation camps. Additionally, CDCR is continuously looking for ways to increase the desirability of fire camps for inmates by increasing privileges and providing additional opportunities for education and self-help programs.

Recommendation 2 suggests that the county jail systems provide English language education opportunities for inmates to increase communication skills thereby increasing the number of viable candidates for the program. Delta Camp is a firm believer in the requirement of effective communication within the camp program. In emergency situations, inmate firefighters must be able to clearly understand and execute commands given by their Cal-Fire Captains. Lives can literally depend on it. Likewise, Inmate Firefighters must be able to clearly relay information up the chain of command to ensure that all personnel on emergency assignments have clear expectations and understandings of required mission tasks.

CDCR and Cal-Fire believe strongly in educational opportunities to help promote rehabilitative efforts. We acknowledge that this recommendation has interesting merits; however, CDCR has no authority to implement English language education programs within the county jails.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (707) 425-4878.

Thank you for your time and consideration,



Lt. S. Turner  
Camp Commander  
Delta Conservation Camp

cc: Solano County Grand Jury Office  
S. Peery, Warden, CCC  
S. Cagle, Chief Deputy Warden, CCC  
R. St. Andre, Associate Warden, Camps Division  
K. Langslet, Captain, Camps Division