



**SOLANO COUNTY GRAND JURY
2011-12**

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

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2011-12 Solano County Grand Jury

I. SUMMARY

California Penal Code §919(b) states "the Grand Jury shall inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the County." Pursuant to this statute the 2011-12 Solano County Grand Jury inspected the Delta Camp on November 4, 2011.

Delta Camp appears to be well maintained and efficiently operated with some exceptions. The Camp is operated in conjunction with California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). The Grand Jury identified safety and security issues regarding the first watch (11 p.m. - 7 a.m.), camp security, and under utilization of the camp.

II. INTRODUCTION

Delta Camp opened in June 1988. The facility is located in rural Solano County off Lambie Road between Rio Vista and Suisun City, which is in the jurisdiction of the Solano County Sheriff's Office. The Camp is run jointly by the CDCR and CAL FIRE. Delta Camp provides mutual aid for the seven Bay Area Counties in California and can house up to 132 inmates.

CDCR is responsible for the security, supervision, care, and discipline of the inmates at Delta Camp. CAL FIRE supervises inmate assignments in-camp and on fire-line assignments in the field.

The Camp provides a facility for low-level inmates who are formed into six fire crews for firefighting. When not actively training for or fighting fires, the crews are utilized for cleanup of public and camp areas. During non-working hours, inmates are allowed to work on personal development such as education, personal improvement, and fire certification.

All inmates at Delta Camp are classified by Title 15¹ and must meet those requirements. Title 15 requirements exclude inmates who committed crimes consisting of any capitol offense, sex crimes, arson, or any prior escape attempts within the past ten years from participating in Delta Camp. All inmates are reviewed by the Unit Classification Committee before placement. The camp has a zero tolerance for gang activity and violations of regulations. Any serious violation of camp regulations will return inmates to a higher security level facility. Inmates must be able to read and write, understand instructions, and acknowledge their orders by signature.

¹ California Code of Regulation, Crime Prevention and Corrections, Division 3 Rules and Regulations of Adult Institutions, Programs and Parole, dated January 1, 2011.

III. METHODOLOGY

The 2011-12 Grand Jury interviewed Delta Camp management personnel representing both CDCR and CAL FIRE. In addition, the Grand Jury inspected the following Camp Facilities:

- Main Office
- Recreational area including Hobby Shop
- Conjugal visiting house
- Laundry
- Inmate dormitory
- CAL FIRE dormitory and recreation area
- Storage areas
- Vegetable growing area
- Equipment repair shop
- Sign shop
- Grounds and perimeter
- Waste Water Treatment Facility

IV. STATEMENT OF FACTS

At the time of this investigation there were 108 inmates in the program designed for 132. Inmates are assigned to fire crews which range from six to eight crews depending on the population at Delta Camp. Staff at Delta Camp consists of the following:

CAL FIRE

- Division Chief
- Battalion Chief
- Twelve Captains
- Mechanic
- Waste Treatment Operator
- Office Technician

CDCR

- Lieutenant (vacant at the time of visit)
- Two Sergeants
- Eight Correctional Officers

Education is encouraged through study for General Education Development (GED), correspondence courses towards a college degree, on-the-job training for fire technician and waste water treatment certification. Inmates may earn a Fire Fighter I certificate that is recognized by CAL FIRE for possible future employment. Additional personal development programs include voluntary participation in alcoholics and narcotics anonymous and religious programs.

Inmate duties include responding to fires, floods, mud slides, rescue, cleaning up after major automobile/truck accidents, and assisting local agencies upon request. Inmates perform additional duties as required.

Kitchen areas meet Title 15 requirements in cleanliness, preparation, and dietary requirements. Kitchen assignment is considered a preferred job for inmates.

Staff expressed concerns about safety of personnel and camp security as follows:

- Only one officer on duty during the first watches (11 p.m. - 7 a.m.)
- Lack of security cameras to monitor the perimeter of the facility
- Lack of fencing and security of the sleeping quarters as demonstrated by escapes of three inmates during 2011

V. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding 1 – Only one Correctional Officer is on duty for the first watch (11 p.m. - 7 a.m.).

Recommendation 1 – CDCR consider implementing item 1a or items 1b-1d:

- a. increase staffing during the first watch
- b. installing a camera system to provide additional security of the camp
- c. providing a panic button for the officer to use in case of a medical or personal emergency
- d. providing direct communication by radio to the Solano County Sheriff's Office, who are the first responders for incidents at the camp

Finding 2 – The camp is not being operated at its maximum inmate population, thereby limiting its ability to provide service to the community.

Recommendation 2 – CDCR explore a mutual agreement with sheriffs' offices that would allow joint use of Delta Camp for eligible inmates.

Finding 3 – Three inmates have escaped from Delta Camp in the last 18 months.

Recommendation 3a – CDCR add an additional officer to the first shift

Recommendation 3b – CDCR review and enhance the classification process that qualifies inmates for placement at Delta Camp

Recommendation 3c – CDCR install a video surveillance system to increase day and night security on the perimeter of the camp

Recommendation 3d – CDCR provide a security system to alert officers of an exit from the sleeping quarters during night-time lock down

Recommendation 3e – CDCR install fencing around the sleeping quarters for better security

COMMENTS

Delta Camp is a cost effective way to house inmates compared to other prisons in the State, and this program is beneficial to the community as well as the inmates.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Warden, California Correctional Center, Susanville, California

COURTESY COPIES

Facility Commander, California Department of Corrections, Delta Conservation Camp
Battalion Chief, California Department of Forestry, Delta Conservation Camp
State Senator Lois Wolk, 5th District
Assemblymember, Mariko Yamada, 8th District
Solano County Board of Supervisors
Solano County Sheriff