



**SOLANO COUNTY GRAND JURY**  
2012-13

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

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

2012-13 Solano County Grand Jury

## **I. SUMMARY**

In accordance with California Penal Code §919(b), the 2012-13 Solano County Grand Jury conducted an inspection and inquiry into the condition and management of the Delta Conservation Camp (Delta Camp). In a review of Delta Camp, the Grand Jury found inadequate safety and security measures for the public, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) personnel and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE) personnel. The Grand Jury also has concerns with the State's modification of the inmate classification point system allowing higher risk inmates to be housed at Delta Camp.

## **II. INTRODUCTION**

Delta Camp, located in rural Solano County, opened in June 1988 and is one of 39 fire camps located throughout the State of California. These camps house state prison inmates, whose main mission is to supply quick response fire strike teams that assist CALFIRE, or other fire agencies that request their assistance through mutual aid agreements. Delta Camp inmates may also be hired by public agencies and/or non-profit organizations for community projects.

CDCR is responsible for the security, supervision, care and discipline of inmates assigned to the camp. CALFIRE supervises "in-camp" inmate assignments and "fire-line" assignments in the field.

## **III. METHODOLOGY**

The 2012-13 Grand Jury:

- Reviewed the following:
  - 2011-12 Grand Jury report on Delta Camp, including Findings and Recommendations
  - "Response to Findings and Recommendations" from CDCR
  - Applicable sections of California Code of Regulations (Title 15)
  - University of California, Berkeley Classification Point Study
- Interviewed Delta Camp Staff from CDCR and CALFIRE
- Inspected Delta Camp facilities

#### IV. STATEMENT OF FACTS

Delta Camp is located in rural Solano County at 6246 Lambie Road, off Highway 12, between Rio Vista and Suisun City. The camp is in the jurisdiction of the Solano County Sheriff's Office, who would be first responders in the event of an emergency. The camp houses up to 132 state prison inmates. At the time of the 2012-13 Grand Jury tour, 104 inmates were assigned to the camp, leaving 28 open beds. During the 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. (first shift) the ratio of inmates to correctional officer could be 132:1. The Grand Jury found Delta Camp to be clean, orderly, and well-equipped.

CDCR is responsible for the security, supervision, care and discipline of inmates assigned to the camp. CALFIRE supervises inmate assignments for CALFIRE projects and "fire-line" assignments in the field. Staff at Delta Camp consists of the following:

- CDCR
  - Lieutenant
  - Two Sergeants
  - Eight Correctional Officers
- CALFIRE
  - Division Chief
  - Battalion Chief
  - Twelve Captains
  - Mechanic
  - Waste Treatment Officer
  - Office Technician

Due to recent changes in California's criminal justice policies, specifically, California State Assembly Bill 109 (Prisoner Realignment), the number of prisoners housed in the CDCR has decreased, particularly at the lower risk levels. Some newly-convicted felons and almost all parole violators who previously would have been sentenced to state prison will now serve their terms in county jails.

All inmates assigned to Delta Camp are classified utilizing Title 15 of the California Code of Regulation. Inmates are interviewed and given a numerical risk score by the CDCR Classification Unit. This "score" is based on a variety of factors, including type of crime committed, gang affiliations, age of inmate, prior violent behavior, and prior disciplinary actions. Prior to 2012, an inmate housed at Delta Camp could not have a score higher than 27 points. The CDCR recently conducted a study on its classification policies utilizing *The Expert Panel Study of the Inmate Classification Score System* by the University of California, Berkeley, which can be found on the CDCR website at [www.cdcr.ca.gov/Reports](http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Reports). After reviewing this study, CDCR adopted a new classification scoring system.

Under the new classification scoring system, the cut-off scores for placement in the four security levels in the state prison system have been raised. This means that some prisoners may now be housed in lower security units than they were under the old regulations. Title 15 §3375.1(a) sets the following cut-offs for the four security levels in the state prison system:

- Level I - classification score of 0 through 18 (Previously 0 through 18)  
Facilities with open dormitories and low security perimeter
- Level II - classification score of 19 through 35 (Previously 19 through 27)  
Facilities with open dormitories and a secure perimeter
- Level III - classification score of 36 through 59 (Previously 28 through 51)  
Facilities with a secure perimeter and external armed coverage
- Level IV - classification score of 60 and above (Previously 52 and above)  
Facilities with secure perimeter and internal and external armed coverage

The new scoring system allows inmates with a point total of up to 35 points be housed at any fire camp. The effect of this scoring change on Delta Camp inmate behavior is not known at this time.

Delta Camp houses Level I and Level II inmates who are formed into six fire crews for firefighting. A crew consists of a maximum of 17 inmates. When not actively training or fighting fires, inmate crews are utilized for various landscape projects, weed abatement and general cleanup of public lands. Public agencies or non-profit organizations can hire an entire crew for \$279 per day for their services. The Grand Jury toured Delta Camp on December 12, 2012, and was informed that several crews were out of the facility performing landscape maintenance at Rockville Hills Park and Lake Solano.

When not performing firefighting or maintenance duties, inmates can participate in educational, recreational programs or religious services that are offered throughout the camp. Inmates with a mechanical aptitude may work in the equipment garage repairing fire vehicles, chain saws and other firefighting tools.

Minor medical issues are resolved with a "sick call" program where medical staff visits the camp weekly. Inmates with a more serious medical problem can be taken to the local hospital for treatment or returned to a CDCR facility for additional treatment.

The current Grand Jury reviewed the 2011-12 Grand Jury report on Delta Camp. That report indicated the following findings:

- Only one correctional officer was assigned to the first shift (11pm – 7am).
- There are no perimeter security cameras
- There are no exit alarms on the inmate dormitory
- There is no direct communication with the Solano County Sheriff's Office



The 2011-12 Grand Jury report recommended the following:

- Adding a second officer to the first shift (11 pm -7 am)
- Installing a perimeter security cameras
- Installing exit alarms on the inmate dormitory
- Equip CDCR personnel with a portable radio for immediate communication with Solano County Sheriff's Office

In the response to the 2011-2012 Grand Jury Report, CDCR management stated current staffing levels were appropriate given the inmate population and their classification level. They also indicated the cost of installing and maintaining security camera equipment was prohibitive and would not be installed. CDCR stated, "Given the classification and population of (Delta Camp) inmates, supplemental alarm systems are not essential to their mission."

The 2012-13 Grand Jury agreed with the 2011-12 Grand Jury findings and recommendations. The current Grand Jury discovered none of the recommendations were instituted. The increase in classification score for Level II prisoners to be housed at Delta Camp makes the 2011-12 Grand Jury's recommendations more critical for implementation. The addition of more serious offenders at the camp underscores the need for updated security. For these reasons, the 2012-13 Grand Jury recommends Delta Camp management revisit and reconsider these security concerns.

The 2012-13 Grand Jury is aware of the recent changes to the scoring system used to classify inmates. This modified scoring system allows higher risk inmates to be assigned to Delta Camp. This change could affect the operations of Delta Camp and possibly put Delta Camp staff and the surrounding communities at greater risk.

## **V. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Finding 1** – The modified scoring system allows higher risk inmates to be assigned to Delta Camp with only one Correctional Officer on duty during the first shift (11pm – 7am).

**Recommendation 1** – California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation staff the first shift with a minimum of two correctional officers.

**Finding 2** - There are no security cameras at Delta Camp.

**Recommendation 2** – California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation install security cameras at Delta Camp.

**Finding 3** – There are no exit alarms in the inmate dormitory.

**Recommendation 3** – California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation install exit alarms in the inmate dormitory.

**Finding 4** – California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation officers have no immediate communication with Solano County Sheriff's Office first responders in the event of an emergency.

**Recommendation 4** – California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation equip personnel with a portable radio capable of immediate communication with the Solano County Sheriff's Office.

**COMMENTS:**

Delta Camp plays an integral role in California's statewide wildfire response and provides California with a trained, well-equipped workforce for fire suppression and other activities. California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation inmates risk their lives to fight wildfires while participating in positive rehabilitation programs.

The Grand Jury is aware of recent changes to the scoring in the classification of inmates. This scoring will allow for higher risk inmates to be housed at Delta Camp. Future Grand Juries should closely monitor the activities at Delta Camp and any effect it may have on our community.

**REQUIRED RESPONSES**

Warden, California Correctional Center, Susanville, California

**COURTESY COPIES**

State Senator Lois Wolk, 5<sup>th</sup> District  
Assembly Member, Mariko Yamada, 8<sup>th</sup> District  
Secretary, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Jeffrey Beard, PhD  
Clerk, Solano County Board of Supervisors  
Solano County Sheriff/Coroner  
Mayor, City of Suisun City  
Mayor, City of Rio Vista  
Mayor, City of Fairfield  
Lieutenant, CDCR, Delta Camp  
Battalion Chief, CALFIRE, Delta Camp