

CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Growlersberg Conservation Camp, Georgetown, CA

Reason for the Report

The California Penal Code requires Grand Juries to inspect and report annually on operations of all public prisons located within boundaries of each county.

Scope of the Investigation

Members of the Grand Jury inspected the Growlersberg Conservation Camp on October 10, 2001. The members were given an escorted tour of the facility by the Assistant Camp Commander and the Camp's Stationary Engineer. Several hours were spent in a general discussion regarding all aspects of the camp operation. The following documents were reviewed:

- Inmate Orientation Handbook;
- Policies and Procedures Manual;
- Camp Reports;
- California Department of Corrections (DOC) Quarterly Reports issued October 1, 2001; and
- Grand Jury Reports for 1998/1999, 1999 /2000, and 2000/2001.

Findings

F1: This Grand Jury agrees with the 1998/1999 Grand Jury's Report following Findings and Recommendations:

- The DOC and the California Department of Forestry (CDF) administer the camp jointly.
- The design capacity of the camp is 80.
- Current population was 131.
- Inmates are typically confined at the camp for 9 months.
- This is a minimum-security facility, with open dorms and no fences.
- Only carefully screened minimum security inmates are assigned to the camp;
- Inmates do conservation and rescue work and fire suppression.
- Every inmate has a full-time job either working on a conservation crew or in camp (kitchen, clerks).
- The Grand Jury recommended that there be more publicity about the good work done by the inmates and staff.

F2: This Grand Jury agrees with the 1999/2000 Grand Jury's Report following Findings:

- Housing areas were clean and well kept.
- The food preparation area was clean, and the food was good.
- Inmate welfare and recreation was provided for.
- The kitchen needed to be updated, especially the range vent hood.
- Management by the correctional staff seemed to be very efficient and professional.

F3: This Grand Jury agrees with the 2000/2001 Grand Jury's Report following Findings:

- The range hood was a danger.
- Housing areas were clean and orderly.
- The food preparation area was clean and orderly, and the food was good.
- There was virtually no compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

F4: The camp is well organized; every inmate is fully employed. The camp is maintained by the inmates under staff supervision.

F5: The CDF, subject to the Governor's planning and budget process and legislative approval, is planning to replace the original buildings (circa 1965) beginning in FY 03/04.

F6: The camp is designed for 80 with a present population of 137. It is anticipated that the 137 will be reduced to 120 in the near future.

F7: Over the past 37 years the camp has enjoyed excellent relationships with its neighbors and neighboring communities.

F8: All staff assigned to this camp is experienced with many years' managing inmates, facilities, and programs.

F9: No weapons are kept at the camp. All DOC staff members maintain weapons in their homes. If necessary they will arm themselves to respond to emergencies (for example, an escape).

F10: Any inmate in need of a program not offered at this camp (such as education or mental health) is transferred to another State DOC facility.

Recommendations

R1: The State should rebuild the 1965 buildings to bring the camp up to 2003 standards.

