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2013/2014 DEL NORTE COUNTY GRAND JURY

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND REHABILITATION CAMP 20 – ALDER CAMP

SUMMARY

On January 26th, 2014, two members of the 2013-2014 Grand Jury made a scheduled visit to California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) Camp 20, Alder Camp, in accordance with the California Grand Jury's mandate to conduct annual visits to detention facilities located in Del Norte County.

BACKGROUND

Alder camp was established in 1961 and is currently operated under the directions of CDCR and the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal-Fire). It is one of the most northern camps out of thirty-nine camps in the CDCR camp system.

The primary mission of Alder Camp is to provide crews for wildland fire suppression throughout the state of California. During non-fire season, crews work to improve and maintain Del Norte County's wildland areas, roads sides, and help in rescue work and community service projects.

METHODOLOGY

An introductory meeting with a newly assigned Correctional Lieutenant, and an outgoing Correctional Lieutenant, the Warden, Associate Warden of the California Correctional Center which is the hub of the Northern region camp system, and a Cal-Fire Captain was conducted prior to the tour of the camp to provide information about the camp and inter-agency processes.

DISCUSSION

The tour of the camp was lead by the Lieutenant of CDCR Camp 20 and the Captain of Cal-Fire. The overall impression of the camp, because everything was self contained, was that it was its own city. Everything from plumbing to milling lumber for repairs is done on site.

The facility consists of two office buildings, three dorms, a kitchen, food storage areas, gardens, workshops, vehicle barns, a fuel station and inmate day areas.

Inmates assigned to the camp must complete a thorough screening process. To qualify, they must have no history of any violent or sexual crimes and must be at a minimum security risk. They must also be physically fit and have no more than five years left on their sentence.

Inmates who are accepted for firefighting and camp placement will undergo a two week training program at the California Correction Center in Susanville in which they are trained in fire suppression and safety and evaluated for overall suitability. Other inmates are chosen for the special skills they possess needed for the day to day operations of the camp such as construction and food service.

- The camp averages 100 inmates and can house up to 110. At the time of the tour, the total count was at 96. There are five ready fire crews between 12-16 inmates per crew. Other inmates perform food service, janitorial and maintenance duties in the camp.
- Crews are assigned to state and local agencies when not on fires. One inmate crew is assigned to California Department of Transportation, two crews are assigned to the local State Parks and one crew is assigned to Redwood National Park and the local county roads. Other nonprofit organizations utilizing the crews when not on assignment include Fish and Game, Del Norte County School District, Elk Valley Rancheria, the Yurok Tribe, and the Del Norte County Fairgrounds.
- Camp inmates make approximately \$1.45 -\$2.50 per day and fire crew members can make an additional \$1.00 per hour for time away from camp during fires or other emergencies.
- Educational programs for inmates include GED programs from the educational department at the California Correctional Center, college courses through Lassen College, and several certificate programs such as a tree faller, water treatment, electrician, and plumbing.
- There is a hobby program where inmates make various things such as boxes, clocks and tables. Supplies are purchased by the inmates and the use of the hobby room is a privilege.
- Their recreational program includes soccer, baseball, and handball. Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) are also available along with religious services for most denominations.
- Alder Camp also donates manpower, time and supplies for nonprofit organizations throughout the year. Last year, they made 300 wooden toys for Toys for Tots, participated in search and rescue operations, and the Relay for Life.

FINDINGS

- F1. Staff indicated that Assembly Bill 109 did not have any impact on the placement of level-one inmates in Alder Camp. Inmates feel it is a privilege to go to camp and therefore are more likely to perform to the standard needed for safe and effective camp operation.

F2. Alder Camp is a well run facility whose primary function is to maintain and provide inmate crews for wildland fire suppression. This they appear to do well. In addition, the various skills the inmates take away upon parole can allow their re-entry into general society to be smoother. Any program that includes that as a goal can be considered to be positive.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. Alder Camp's staff is to be commended for the efficient and effective operations of this state funded facility. The only recommendations we can offer at this time is to keep up the good work.

DISCLAIMER

A member of the Grand Jury did not participate in this investigation.

BAR-O BOYS RANCH
2012-2013 GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS FOLLOW UP

SUMMARY

Each newly appointed grand jury is responsible for monitoring the responses legally required to the recommendations made in the grand jury report from the previous year.

On behalf of Bar-O Boys Ranch, Acting Chief Probation Officer Linda Sanford sent a response dated August 29, 2013 to the Del Norte County Grand Jury regarding the 2012-2013 Recommendations. The full text of the response can be found on the grand jury website at <http://www.co.del-norte.ca.us/departments/grand-jury>.

DISCUSSION

Bar-O Boys Ranch complied, where possible, with the suggested recommendations and is commended for doing so. The grand jury recommended that the Detention Committee follow up on one item.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The grand jury asks the Detention Committee to follow up on progress made to repair and replace the existing septic system.

2013/2014 DEL NORTE COUNTY GRAND JURY

BAR-O BOYS RANCH

SUMMARY

The Del Norte County Grand Jury is mandated by California State law to annually “inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within Del Norte County [California Penal Code §919(b)].” In compliance with this requirement, the 2013/2014 Del Norte County Grand Jury Detention Committee participated in a tour of Bar-O Boys Ranch.

BACKGROUND

Bar-O Boys Ranch is a male residential treatment center located in Del Norte County. This facility is available to court-committed boys between 14 and 18 years of age. In addition to accepting wards from the court system, the ranch can also contract directly with parents for the placement of their children who are currently in the juvenile justice system.

Originally known as Bar-None-Camp, this rehabilitation camp has been in operation since 1955. John Ostrum and his wife, the founders of Bar-O Boys Ranch, purchased an old dude ranch on sixty acres of land for the express purpose of opening a rehabilitation camp where boys would be helped to **develop their own good character traits**.

The Del Norte County Probation Department currently oversees the operation of Bar-O Boys Ranch. Although 59 years have come and gone, the purpose of the ranch remains the same.

METHODOLOGY

On Wednesday, October 13, 2013, members of the Grand Jury Detention Committee interviewed the Deputy Director of Bar-O Boys Ranch. He enthusiastically provided us with background information regarding Bar-O. We discussed statistics concerning staff to student ratio, overall philosophy regarding day to day living, and facility adequacy for the current wards. After we took in the information presented to us, we had a time whereby the Deputy Director answered our questions, both general and specific. This question/answer session included discussion regarding the two recommendations made by the 2012-2013 Grand Jury. At the end of our meeting with the Deputy Director, he shared contact information with us and gave directions on how to reach Bar-O Boys Ranch. We set our tour date for Thursday, October 24, 2013.

DISCUSSION

At 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 24, 2013, the Detention Committee of the 2013-2014 Grand Jury arrived for our tour of Bar-O Boys Ranch located just over 30 miles north of Crescent City, California, on Hwy 199.

Welcome

We were greeted in the student/staff-landscaped area just off the parking lot. The Deputy Director talked with us about the pride involved in student/staff landscaping, maintenance, and other utilitarian efforts that enhance the surrounding natural beauty of the ranch. It was, indeed, heartwarming to see the garden which aids in self sufficiency, to enjoy the rock walkways which were beautiful and practical at the same time; as well as to hear the sounds of both the small spring rivulet within the courtyard and the Smith River just a short distance from camp. This initial conversation created a sense of a “Home away from Home” rather than that of a “detention” facility.

Administration

Our tour began with the administrative facility where daily business is conducted and all records are kept current. The staff adeptly handles parents, governmental agencies, educational expectations, facility dilemmas, and the million and one requests and disputes affecting the lives of some 30+ teenage boys.

Barracks

The barracks were of special interest to us because it was highlighted by the 2012-2013 Grand Jury as in need of remodeling or replacement. No positive changes have taken place in the barracks. One additional dilemma was obvious. There was a fire issue as a result of the bricks in the back of the barracks’ stove having collapsed without awareness of the fact that the heat barrier that the bricks provided was gone. The radiant heat kindled the wall to the point where embers began to form inside the wall. The fire was dealt with quickly and effectively.

Another issue concerning the barracks was a carryover from a 2012-2013 Grand Jury Recommendation. It dealt with “the continual backup of the septic system, even, at times, backing up into the shower.” Seeing as how this was “a sanitary as well as a health issue,” the 2012-2013 Grand Jury Recommendation to “immediately correct the septic system” was a point of review for this year’s Grand Jury.

Kitchen/Dining

The kitchen and dining area were well organized and neatly maintained. Food storage is overseen by the cook, but directly handled by students. Students are taught all aspects of culinary skills and can receive certification for future employment opportunities.

Education

The Del Norte County Office of Education provides the educational component of Bar-O Boys Ranch. Instructional staff is provided to the school and emphasis is placed on improving each student’s basic reading, writing, speaking, spelling, mathematics and problem solving skills. In addition to regular academic classes, the school at Bar-O offers certification in the Culinary Arts, Construction Technology, Computer Science, and Landscape Maintenance. Additional life experience classes can be enjoyed, such as, photography, kayaking, small engine repair, pottery, woodshop, welding, screen-printing and stained glass.

Management

“Bar-O Boys Ranch provides a structured environment wherein each boy works on self image, rule following, work habits, and values clarification. As each boy progresses through the three-step program he is equipped to accept more responsibilities. Excuses are not heard and accomplishments are rewarded. The individual’s personal issues are stressed and focus is placed on those behaviors that led to his incarceration. Through this intense living experience, the boys are continually forced to look at their personal weaknesses and strengths and encouraged to take responsibility for them. The boys are inspired to begin to develop the self-image of being “contributors rather than “takers”.” (County of Del Norte Bar-O Boys Ranch – Pride in Work....Pride in Self - web page: <http://www.co.del-norte.ca.us/departments/bar-o-boys-ranch>)

FINDINGS

- F1. There are a multitude of finished and in progress examples of both student and student/staff projects. A garden, an orchard, a fountain, a stone decorative garden bridge, pottery, stained glass, and delicious, warm, homemade banana bread are only a few of the pieces of handiwork we enjoyed on our tour.
- F2. The 2013-2014 Del Norte County Budget funds a staff of twelve for Bar-O Boys Ranch as follows:
- * 1 Deputy Director
 - 1 Youth Program Coordinator (under funded)
 - 2 Senior Youth Group Counselors
 - * 7 Youth Group Counselors
 - 1 Supervising Cook
 - 1 Cook
- * 5 positions designated as ranch resident positions
- F3. There is one clerical employee on staff. This individual is responsible for the boys’ accounts and also serves as the laundry room supervisor. There is also one maintenance man who works 24 hours per week.
- F4. Bar-O Boys Ranch is a 43-bed facility and there are currently twenty boys in residence.
- F5. Last year’s Grand Jury made a point of recommending immediate correction to the unsanitary and unhealthy conditions regarding a failing septic system. We found that the septic tank issue has been resolved. They had a new holding tank installed and all is clean and working well.
- F6. This year’s fire, due to an aged heat system, provides another serious hint that time is taking its toll on all structures and systems within the barracks. The firebrick in the stove was replaced, and a new heat shield barrier was put behind the stove; thus solving this latest barracks issue.
- F7. The barracks were maintained in a neat and orderly manner, but the physical conditions of the barracks itself remain as per last year’s Grand Jury’s Finding, “outdated and in dire need of remodeling or replacement.” Every facility has a maximum lifespan. The barracks

at Bar-O is reaching its “end times.” Being “outdated” can be dismissed, to a point, as merely an issue of decor or the trappings of style; but last year’s failing septic service issue and this year’s fire dilemma, are serious hints that time has taken its toll. Fortunately, no one was ill, injured, or worse.

- F8. We visited the school while it was in session. The students were transitioning from one activity to another and did so with neither fuss nor muss. It appeared to be a friendly atmosphere, and the boys conversed with us as we made our slow procession through their classrooms. It was evident that the boys had been schooled in “visitor etiquette”.
- F9. We saw evidence of the step program wherein each boy was wearing either a white, blue, or green shirt. Advancement in this three step program is considered once each month. Boys in this program do not receive a release date until they reach the last step of the program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

F1 – F6 there are no Recommendations

R7. For the second year in a row, the Grand Jury Detention Committee recommends “funds to be allocated for repair or replacement of the barracks at the Bar-O Boys Ranch.”

F8 – F9 there are no Recommendations.

COMMENDATIONS

C1. The Detention Committee, representative of the 2013-2014 Grand Jury, appreciates all individuals involved in the operation of Bar-O Boys Ranch. Having the opportunity to observe first-hand the heart and mind at work together for the benefit of the next generation of our society is a heart-warming and poignant experience. We thank you for the work you do with these young men.

**2013/2014 Del Norte County Grand Jury
BUILDING HEIGHT REQUIREMENTS
IN THE TSUNAMI ZONE**

SUMMARY

The 2013-2014 County Grand Jury received a letter from a concerned citizen and local businessman who raised a question about the building foundation height requirements required in the Crescent City Tsunami zone along the 101 corridor, south of the city beginning at the “Big Curve” and running south to South Beach.

The 2013-2014 Grand Jury made inquiries to the City Planning Commission and the Crescent City Public Works Director. Building codes and Federal Regulations were researched regarding restrictions to buildings in flood zones and Tsunami zones in coastal areas of the United States and Crescent City in particular.

The Grand Jury found all recent construction projects along the 101 corridor south of Crescent City met all legal requirements.

BACKGROUND

After receiving a complaint regarding building foundation height requirements along the South 101 corridor the area in question was reviewed. The Grand Jury began an investigation to assure all recent construction met the necessary requirements.

METHODOLOGY

The investigation was completed by researching building codes and Federal regulations; and interviews with City of Crescent City officials.

A list of questions was prepared to focus the interview(s) on the building requirements for new construction along the South 101 corridor.

1. Describe the role and responsibility of the Director of Public Works.
2. What are the documentary steps taken to start a new construction on the South 101 corridor?

3. What are the building height requirements and foundation heights for new construction along the Tsunami zone?
4. What is the inspection process and who is responsible?
5. Are records kept of completed inspections and projects?
6. What is the relationship between the City Planning Commission and the Public Works Department?

DISCUSSION

The Crescent City Public Works Director presented a paper copy of a power point presentation describing the scope of work done by the Public Works Department in its mandate to maintain the physical and mechanical infrastructure of Crescent City. Any new development that occurs in Crescent City proceeds through a regulated process beginning with the Community Development Officer. The Community Development Officer also functions as the specific project coordinator through all phases of a project. The project proposal then goes to the Planning Department, Building Department, and finally the Fire Department to assure all code specifications meeting building, fire and infrastructure needs and connectivity are met; i.e. electrical, water and sewer requirements specific to each project.

All documentation of any project is held in files at City Hall, filed by parcel number. A FEMA flood insurance map based on a projected 100 year flood occurring is used to set insurance rates as well as building foundation requirements. The current foundation height limits for the City of Crescent City were set by the 1964 Tsunami flood zone map. The minimum height of a foundation must be 17 feet above the current Crescent City Harbor waterline. All new construction on the 101 corridor has elevation certificates on file at City Hall.

All new construction is inspected in regular phases as the work on the project is completed. Currently the City has its own building inspector as does the County. In the past the Public Works Department would hire an independent expert to do its inspections.

FINDINGS

F1. The Grand Jury finds that all recent construction projects along the 101 corridor south of Crescent City meets all legal requirements.

CITY OF CRESCENT CITY
2012-2013 GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS FOLLOW UP

SUMMARY

Each newly appointed grand jury is responsible for monitoring the responses legally required to the recommendations made in the grand jury report from the previous year.

On behalf of the City of Crescent City, then Mayor Richard Enea sent a response dated September 17, 2013 to the Del Norte County Grand Jury regarding the 2012-2013 Recommendations. The full text of the response can be found on the grand jury website at <http://www.co.del-norte.ca.us/departments/grand-jury>.

DISCUSSION

The City of Crescent City complied, where possible, with the suggested recommendations and is commended for doing so. The grand jury recommended that the City Committee follow up on several items.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. The grand jury asks the City Committee to follow up on progress made by the City Manager in taking a list of policies and procedures to the City Council and scheduling priorities and completion, as well as implementing an annual review by the Department Directors.
- R2. The grand jury recommends that the City Committee follow up on the progress made by City Staff in addressing the possible reuse of the Cultural Center.
- R3. The Grand Jury recommends that the City Committee follow up on progress made by City Staff in researching the idea of using the waste water treatment plant as a training center.

**2013/2014 Del Norte County Grand Jury
CITY OF CRESCENT CITY
FOLLOW UP ON 2012-2013 JURY RECOMMENDATIONS**

SUMMARY

The 2013-2014 County Grand Jury at the recommendation of the Continuity Committee, conducted a follow up to the specific recommendations made by the 2012-2013 Grand Jury Final Report to the City of Crescent City and to assess the City's progress in implementing the recommendations and what specific future actions would be taken, if any, in implementing these recommendations.

The 2012-2013 Grand Jury Final Report and the specific recommendations regarding the City of Crescent were reviewed. The City Manager was contacted and he agreed to be interviewed. He was interviewed by two Grand Jury Committee members on January 28, 2014.

BACKGROUND

The 2012-2013 Grand Jury recommended that the City of Crescent City include a list of policies and procedures in its next Strategic Plan Review with a list of priorities and a schedule of completion for those priorities (Page 3-R-3-Second paragraph).

The Grand Jury was interested in any progress that has been made to the Strategic Plan Review's evaluation of the Cultural Center's transition to a City Hall facility (Page 4-R4-Last paragraph).

The Grand Jury was also interested in any progress being made by the City in reviewing a proposal to create a training center in the Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) facility to insure and attract trained personnel.

METHODOLOGY

A list of questions was prepared ahead of time to focus the discussion on the identified recommendations selected for follow-up.

1. Have the City's Policies and Procedures (P&P) been updated?
2. Is there a procedure to review and update the P&P every six months?
3. What is the current status of the review and updating of the P&P?

FINDINGS

F1. The City of Crescent is continuing to upgrade its Policies and Procedures and it appears to be an ongoing process influenced by personnel shortages. There is a plan to contract out the review and updating of the P&P.

F2. The recommendation of the 2012-2013 Grand Jury to establish a schedule for reviewing and updating the P&P has not been done.

F3. The conversion of the Cultural Center to a City Hall or an Interagency Visitor Center is in limbo; hampered by renovation costs and limited revenue sources that could be allocated for the renovation. The City did not follow through on investigating alternate uses for the Cultural Center.

F4. The WWTP training center is an excellent idea, but lacking sufficiently trained personnel to implement a training center. No plan has been developed as to how the plant can operate as a training center and meet its current and future staff and infrastructure needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. Department Directors should be utilized to review and update Policies & Procedures.

R2. The City Manager still needs to establish a schedule for reviewing and updating the P&P as well as implementing an annual review by the Department Directors.

R3. The City should review the suggestions made by the 2012-2013 Grand Jury regarding alternate uses for the Cultural Center. It is suggested a Citizen's Advisory Committee be established to investigate alternate uses, fee schedule, and creative ways of re-energizing and moving toward sustainability of the facility. The Cultural Center should be a hub of activity within the community.

R4. The City should explore alternate avenues of implementing a training center at the WWTP. It is suggested that contacts be made with College of the Redwoods, Rural Human Services and ROP to pursue possible partnerships. Establish recruitment and retention incentives. Utilize Pelican Bay State Prison as a model for training and operation.