

CUSTODY AND CORRECTIONS, AND OTHER HUMBOLDT COUNTY FACILITIES

Released June 9, 2023

SUMMARY

The 2022-23 Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury visited one State and seven County facilities. The Grand Jury is required to visit and evaluate the physical conditions and management of public prisons, Penal Code 919 (b). The only prison in Humboldt County is California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Eel River Conservation Camp #31.

We also exercised the option to visit the Humboldt County Correctional Facility and chose to visit six other county facilities. We evaluated the management, operation, and physical conditions of those facilities.

We found several consistent issues most pressing. The number of unfilled allocated positions causes concern on many levels. Existing staff are overworked due to understaffing, causing some to face mandatory overtime on a regular basis. When there are staff shortages with overworked employees, client services suffer. We also noted, with the exception of the Juvenile Detention Center and the Sheriff's Garberville Station, every facility had some combination of peeling paint, leaking ceilings, water stains on walls, and drafty and broken windows. At the Humboldt County Animal Shelter appalling and dangerous conditions exist for staff and the public. The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury believes these require immediate attention.

We know Humboldt County can do better. We commend the staff of the sites we visited for their hard work, dedication, and service to our community. Our county employees deserve to have safe working conditions and well-maintained facilities and County staff salaries must reflect the importance of the work being done by them.

Overall, the 2022-23 Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury was impressed with the services being provided by the staff given the parameters of tight budgets, understaffing, and the need for physical improvements to the facilities.

BACKGROUND

The California Civil Grand Jury system mandates inspections of state prison facilities, as established by the State Constitution, Article 1, Section 23, 1850. Civil Grand Juries were created by the State Constitution. California's Grand Jury system is unique and one of the oldest civil institutions in America and has been part of California law since statehood in 1850. The Grand Jury is an independent body and, as an instrument of the court, subject only to the court's jurisdiction.

The primary function of the Grand Jury is to act as a public watchdog by investigating and reporting on affairs of local government. This includes county jails, mental health facilities, state prisons and work camps, or any place in the County a person in custody can be taken, including police stations and county work sites.

METHODOLOGY

The 2022-23 Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury conducted scheduled visits and interviews at the following locations.

Facilities Inspected:

- Sheriff's Department
 - Humboldt County Correctional Facility – 9/21/22
 - Sheriff's Work Alternative Program - Sheriff's Farm – 11/2/22
 - Humboldt County Sheriff's Office Animal Shelter – 1/5/23
 - Humboldt County Coroner - Public Administrator's Office – 2/16/23
 - Humboldt County Sheriff's Garberville Station – 4/20/23
- Other Humboldt County Facilities
 - Humboldt County Juvenile Detention Center – 2/10/23
 - Sempervirens Psychiatric Health Facility – 1/18/23
- State of California Facilities Located in Humboldt County Eel River Conservation Camp #31 – 3/9/23

The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury referenced state laws, policy and procedural manuals, literature, and online rules and regulations pertaining to each facility. When necessary, additional research and follow-up interviews were conducted. This was done to confirm and clarify the condition, compliance with state mandates, and management of each facility. We evaluated staff and their duties, inmate treatment and services, facility resources and overall maintenance.

DISCUSSION

HUMBOLDT COUNTY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

The 2022-23 Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury visited the Humboldt County Correctional Facility (HCCF) and was provided a tour of various areas within the building. The HCCF is located in downtown Eureka, California, adjacent to the County Courthouse. The facility has a maximum capacity of 417 inmates. At the time of our visit, there were approximately 245 inmates in residence.

The Correctional Facility is operated as a Direct Supervision Facility with Correctional Deputies posted inside the housing units to supervise inmates around the clock. The goal of the Deputies is to create an environment that is safe for all.

The staff are employees of the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office. The County contracts with *Well Path* for 24 hour medical and dental care. The behavioral health and substance abuse services are provided through the Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services.

Incoming individuals receive a medical clearance by a nurse as they enter the facility. They are reviewed for any medical needs and if any serious medical concerns are raised the individual is transported to the hospital. If an individual is under the influence of substances during intake they are placed in a holding and observation cell for 4-6 hours to allow the inmate to get sober. Persons suspected of having contraband are placed in a separate holding cell where they will receive a body scan. All movement of staff and inmates is controlled from the central command post where staff can maintain visual contact with most aspects of the facility.

The College of the Redwoods Adult and Community Education Program facilitates educational opportunities such as anger management, GED, ESL, and computer literacy. Various groups offer religious services and addiction assistance.

The Behavioral Health component is understaffed. At the time of our visit, we learned there were four clinician positions allocated with only one filled.

The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury found the staff to be professional and dedicated. The county is experiencing difficulty recruiting and hiring staff to work in the Correctional Facility. The Sheriff and the Department of Health and Human Services are responsible for staffing positions at HCCF. It's time to explore recruiting and hiring incentives that will improve the overall quality of services provided at the facility and increase staff morale and reduce job burnout.

FINDINGS: Humboldt County Correctional Facility

The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury finds that:

- **F1:** The Humboldt County Correctional Facility staff makes an effort to treat the resident population with respect and compassion, often under very difficult conditions.
- **F2:** The unfilled allocated positions for Correctional Deputies and Behavioral Health Clinicians in the Humboldt County Correctional Facility is causing morale issues and job burnout. **(R1, R2)**

RECOMMENDATIONS: Humboldt County Correctional Facility

The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that:

- **R1:** By March 31, 2024, the Humboldt County Sheriff create and implement an incentive plan to retain dedicated current Correctional Deputies at the Humboldt County Correctional Facility. For funding recommendations see the wording below recommendation #2. **(F2)**
- **R2:** By March 31, 2024, the Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services create and implement an incentive plan to retain dedicated current Behavioral Health Clinicians within the Humboldt County Correctional Facility, and recruit and hire new Clinicians to staff the unfilled allocated positions. For funding recommendations see the wording below recommendation #2. **(F2)**
 - **Funding Recommendation:** The Grand Jury recommends the Humboldt County Sheriff provide funding for **R1**, and the Department of Health and Human Services provide funding for **R2**, with appropriations in the current fiscal year. If current appropriations are not sufficient, the Grand Jury recommends the Department of Health and Human Services, at its next earliest opportunity, pursue additional funding from an appropriate agency, including state or federal agencies, or submit to the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, a request for additional funding, sufficient to fund the above recommendations.

SHERIFF'S WORK ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Work Alternative Program (SWAP) provides an alternative to incarceration for eligible inmates who are 18-80 years of age and have a sentence of 180 days or less. At the time of the 2022-23 Humboldt County Civil Grand jury visit there were 125 inmates in the program. The program is supervised and monitored to provide safety to the participants and the community. Qualified inmates may choose to participate in the wood yard, farm operations, or other SWAP assignments one day a week instead of serving their sentence in the Humboldt County Correctional Facility. This allows individuals to keep their jobs, homes, and families together while remaining productive and serving time as sentenced. Each day at SWAP takes one day off an individual's sentence. The various operations provide community service and job skills that can be valuable upon completion of their sentence. Inmates must qualify for the program. Individuals with sex-related and felony charges are not eligible for SWAP.

SHERIFF'S FARM

The 2022-23 Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury visited the Sheriff's Farm located in Fortuna, California adjacent to Rohnerville Airport. The Sheriff's Office refers to the SWAP Farm as the "*Crown Jewel of the Sheriff's Department.*" The Farm raises livestock and grows a variety of vegetables and fruit that are used in the preparation of meals at the Humboldt County Correctional Facility. When there is a surplus of produce, vegetables, or fruits, the farm donates to other county programs and community food organizations. The Farm is essential and invaluable for what it offers to the Humboldt County Correctional Facility and the community.

The Farm has several Correctional Deputies assigned whose duties include supervising the inmates and overseeing food production and the care and feeding of the animals. Correctional Deputies are assigned to work at the farm for defined periods of time. When a new Correctional Deputy is assigned to the farm there is no time overlap between the incoming and outgoing staff. This results in the new Correctional Deputy needing to learn the job "from scratch" rather than benefiting from the knowledge already gained by the outgoing person.

The fresh food from the Farm for the Humboldt County Correctional Facility reduces food costs and the SWAP program reduces the cost of housing inmates, both of which decrease the financial burden to the County.

The Civil Grand Jury compliments the Correctional Deputies and the Sheriff's Farm inmates for making this Farm work.

FINDINGS: Sheriff's Work Alternative Program - Sheriff's Farm

The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury finds that:

- **F3:** The Sheriff's Work Alternative Program - (Sheriff's Farm) provides fresh food for the Humboldt County Correctional Facility reducing their overall food and labor costs. When there is a surplus, they donate food to other county programs and community organizations.
- **F4:** Incoming and outgoing Correctional Deputies at the Sheriff's Work Alternative Program - Sheriff's Farm do not regularly have an overlapping period at the Farm, resulting in a lack of transferred knowledge and skills. **(F4)**

RECOMMENDATIONS: Sheriff's Work Alternative Program - Sheriff's Farm

The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that:

- **R3:** By March 31, 2024, the Humboldt County Sheriff schedule no less than one month of overlap between incoming and outgoing Correctional Deputies at the Sheriff's Farm. **(F4)**

HUMBOLDT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE ANIMAL SHELTER

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office Animal Shelter in McKinleyville is under the direction of the Sheriff. The building is adjacent to the California Redwood Coast - Humboldt County Airport. The Animal Shelter provides a safe environment for stray, abandoned, and neglected domesticated animals while awaiting adoption.

A Program Manager oversees a staff of receptionists, animal care assistants, volunteers, and inmates from the SWAP program. Playtime and exercise are provided for the animals by volunteers. There were two unfilled allocated positions at the time of our visit.

The Humboldt County Animal Shelter building is 19 years old and has severe deferred maintenance issues. There were water stains on the ceilings and walls throughout the building. Several rooms had chipped paint and cracked walls. During the winter storms of 2022-2023, several rusted lamp posts blew down making it unsafe for anyone using the parking lot. The other lamp posts are rusted as well and pose a safety hazard. The staff reported a need for modern security cameras to replace the outdated ones, to both record people who unlawfully drop off animals and to monitor the security of the facility.

The animals are kept in pens that are clean and well supplied with water and warm blankets or cots. The shelter is overcrowded and some of these animals are housed in cages in the hallway.

A room is provided for the isolation of sick animals that are under the care of a Veterinarian. The controlled substances for euthanasia are kept refrigerated and locked in a safe and secure room. A freezer is used to store bodies of deceased animals, which are disposed of according to state law.

The staff of the Sheriff's Animal Shelter are dedicated and work closely with animal rescue organizations in the county to house and adopt animals. They make a considerable effort to reunite lost pets with their owners. Staff expressed frustration with overcrowding due to the lack of space.



Image 1: Rusted and corroded light pole base.



Image 2: Fallen rusted

FINDINGS: HUMBOLDT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE ANIMAL SHELTER

The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury finds that:

- **F5:** The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office Animal Shelter staff and volunteers are enthusiastic and dedicated to creating a positive work environment that leads to a concerted effort in caring for the animals.
- **F6:** Due to the limited space, the Sheriff's Office Animal Shelter works with nonprofit organizations to handle the overflow resulting in less animal euthanasia.
- **F7:** The Sheriff's Office Animal Shelter has multiple building maintenance issues such as the compromised roof and obsolete security cameras requiring immediate attention. The security camera issue was also noted by the 2021-2022 Grand Jury. **(R4)**
- **F8:** Several lamp posts in the parking lot of the Sheriff's Office Animal Shelter have collapsed, and others are showing signs of continued deterioration, weakening the integrity of the metal, thereby endangering the public, staff, volunteers and parked vehicles. **(R5)**

RECOMMENDATIONS: HUMBOLDT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE ANIMAL SHELTER

The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that:

- **R4:** The Humboldt County Sheriff review and schedule the repair of deferred maintenance items, specifically the ongoing roof leaks and outdated security cameras in the Animal Shelter. These repairs should be completed no later than March 31, 2024. For funding recommendations see the wording below recommendation #5. **(F7)**
- **R5:** The Humboldt County Sheriff schedule maintenance to replace or repair exterior lamp posts in the Humboldt County Animal Shelter parking lot. These projects should be completed no later than March 31, 2024. For funding recommendations see the wording below recommendation #5. **(F8)**
 - **Funding Recommendation:** The Grand Jury recommends that the Humboldt County Sheriff provide funding for **R4** and **R6** with existing appropriations in the current fiscal year. If current appropriations are not sufficient, the Grand Jury recommends that the Humboldt County Sheriff, at their next earliest opportunity, pursue additional funding from an appropriate agency, including state or federal agencies, or submit to the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, a request for additional funding, sufficient to fund the above recommendations.

SEMPERVIRENS PSYCHIATRIC HEALTH FACILITY

Sempervirens Psychiatric Health Facility (SV) provides in-patient treatment in a secured facility for persons who have serious and persistent mental illnesses in need of acute psychiatric care. It is a 16-bed facility and is the only public inpatient psychiatric facility within Humboldt County. Sempervirens shares its facility at 720 Wood Street in Eureka with the Coroner's Office and the Public Works Department. Sempervirens is open 24 hours, 7 days a week. Patients can walk-in for same-day services during business hours, 8 am - 5 pm Monday through Friday. The ACCESS hotline provides crisis services and assesses eligibility for further treatment. If possible, staff provide a prompt and thorough assessment of the crisis to avoid hospitalizations. Assault and suicide assessments are included and done before receiving any services.

Admissions may be voluntary or based on a petition for a legal hold under Welfare and Institutions Code section 5150 (WIC 5150), and patients come from many sources that include hospital emergency rooms, police, community health clinics and patient self-referrals. Most admissions start at the Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU), which has a three-bed capacity. The Crisis Stabilization Unit evaluates the subject. If they pose a danger to themselves or others, or are gravely disabled due to mental illness, they may be referred for admission into Sempervirens.

Sempervirens provides comprehensive psychiatric evaluations, assessment, and treatment for people who have acute and chronic mental illness. If the staff Psychiatrist determines the need for a longer stay, the patient is admitted to Sempervirens under WIC 5150, which is a 72-hour legal hold.

Treatment is based on stabilization with individual counseling, group activities, family meetings, and medication support. The treatment team consists of psychiatrists, nurses, mental health clinicians, social workers, and activity therapists. They provide care and assistance, including discharge planning, that links clients and their families to community providers and/or outpatient services.

The 2022-23 Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury noted the building that houses Sempervirens has many deferred maintenance issues. During our visit we noted that the roof was leaking and there was a broken window in the nurse's station. Some patients complained of drafty windows in their bedrooms.

The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury finds this facility could benefit from facility maintenance, expansion or, ideally, a new building.

FINDINGS: Sempervirens Psychiatric Health Facility

The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury finds that:

- **F9:** The Sempervirens Psychiatric Health Facility is a building in disrepair. The deferred maintenance issues concerning rain water leaking from windows, the ceiling, and drafty dormitory windows cause discomfort and increase anxiety for residents and staff. **(R6)**

RECOMMENDATIONS: Sempervirens Psychiatric Health Facility

The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that:

- **R6:** The Department of Health and Human Services Behavioral Health Branch review and create a maintenance schedule to repair the leaking roof and broken windows throughout the Sempervirens Psychiatric Facility by no later than March 31, 2024. For funding recommendations see the wording directly below. **(F9)**
 - **Funding Recommendation:** The Grand Jury recommends that the Department of Health and Human Services Behavioral Health Branch provide funding for **(R6)** with appropriations in the current fiscal year. If current appropriations are not sufficient, the Grand Jury recommends the Department of Health and Human Services Behavioral Health Branch at its earliest opportunity, pursue additional funding from an appropriate agency, including state or federal agencies, or submit to the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, a request for additional funding, sufficient to fund the above recommendations.

HUMBOLDT COUNTY JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER

The Humboldt County Probation Department's Juvenile Detention Center (HCJDC) is a 30-bed facility with a total of 18 cells, located in a state-of-the-art building completed in 2022. During our site visit we found the staff welcoming and cooperative.

The facility houses individuals ages 12-25, who have been sentenced or are detained pending court proceedings. Individuals sentenced under the age of 18 can complete their sentences at this location until the age of 25. New detainees receive a physical examination conducted by a full-time nurse, who administers basic first aid and monitors chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and other medical issues. The nurse also makes referrals to medical and mental health providers, as needed.

The Juvenile Corrections Officers, who monitor the facility inside and out, are set up within a closed, secured station with large viewing windows and up-to-date security cameras. The main hall is well supplied and fills the space between the monitoring station and the sleeping quarters. There is a large dining hall and a well-stocked commercial kitchen, where staff strive to accommodate required dietary needs. The facility has two large outdoor recreational areas. The inmates are taught by a qualified teacher provided by the Humboldt County Office of Education. Each inmate is evaluated, and a specialized educational program is created for them. Many of the inmates had previously been truant or behind in their education.

The educational program provides access to the following:

- GED/High School Proficiency
- Special Education
- College credits (via online courses at College of the Redwoods)
- Music
- Art

Personal health and wellness practices, including mindfulness and breathing exercises, are encouraged as optional self-care routines. Basic hygiene, healthy social skills, and anger management are taught and expected to be observed by every detainee. Substance Use Disorder classes are held in conjunction with Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. Some religious needs are met by a volunteer chaplain. All detainees receive regular behavioral health care even though there are unfilled allocated positions for these services. Visitation protocol allows in-person, non-contact visits by parents, immediate family, adult friends, and spouses.

The 2022-23 Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury notes that the starting salary of Juvenile Corrections Officers is not commensurate with the skills required. At just over \$19 per hour, the Detention Center is challenged by poor recruitment and a high turnover rate.

On top of their regular correctional responsibilities, the Juvenile Corrections Officers are expected to provide behavioral health crisis care at night and on weekends. Mandatory overtime is a near-constant demand, so staff burnout and retention issues are a chronic problem.

FINDINGS: Humboldt County Juvenile Detention Center

The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury finds that:

- **F10:** The Humboldt County Juvenile Detention Center offers programs and rehabilitation options for an incarcerated young person's reentry into society.
- **F11:** The Corrections Officers at the Juvenile Detention Center demonstrated professional and compassionate care.
- **F12:** The Corrections Officers at the Juvenile Detention Center are challenged by understaffing and mandatory overtime leading to burnout and high staff turnover. **(R7)**

RECOMMENDATIONS: Humboldt County Juvenile Detention Center

The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that:

- **R7.** No later than March 31, 2024, the Humboldt County Probation Department creates and implements an incentive plan to retain current Humboldt County Juvenile Detention Center Corrections Officers, and recruit and hire new officers to staff the unfilled allocated positions. For funding recommendations see the wording directly below. **(F12)**

- **Funding Recommendation:** The Grand Jury recommends that the Humboldt County Probation Department provide funding for **(R7)** with appropriations in the current fiscal year. If current appropriations are not sufficient, the Grand Jury recommends that the Humboldt County Probation Department, at its next earliest opportunity, pursue additional funding from an appropriate agency, including state or federal agencies, or submit to the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, a request for additional funding, sufficient to fund the above recommendations.

HUMBOLDT COUNTY SHERIFF'S CORONER - PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Coroner - Public Administrator's Office is under oversight of the Humboldt County Sheriff. The staff was professional and courteous during our guided tour.

The County Coroner's office is in Eureka, occupying the original General Hospital building on Harris and I streets, which dates back to the early 1900s. The present office was established by the Deputy Coroner in 2009. The Coroner - Public Administrator's Office shares its location with the Sempervirens Psychiatric Health Facility and the Public Works Department.

In Humboldt County, the Coroner and Public Administrator's Office has been consolidated under the Sheriff's oversight since February 1, 2015. The two offices share similar responsibilities, but they have separate operational functions.

All reportable deaths are investigated by the Coroner's Office; property is received and safeguarded for the deceased, next of kin are notified, autopsies and investigations are conducted. Cremation services and burial at sea for the destitute are provided by the county.

The Coroner's Office is instructed to investigate the circumstances, manner, and cause of questionable deaths according to California Government Code Section 27491.

Estates in question are directed for review by the Coroner - Public Administrator. They adjudicate the deceased's property and advocate for their heirs. This includes but is not limited to finding and certifying wills, identifying heirs, and filing court-required documents. When there is no will or known heirs, the Coroner - Public Administrator is responsible for the storage and legal disposal of property and must administer the estate or place it in probate.

There were concerns expressed about the additional responsibilities associated with the consolidation of the Coroner and the Public Administrator positions.

CADAVERS

While the cadavers await processing, they are stored in a locked refrigeration room on gurneys and wooden shelves. The Coroner's office works with three local mortuaries, and the families of decedents to arrange the disposition of remains.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

The Coroner's forensic room provides enough space to handle one autopsy at a time. The autopsy table is made of stainless steel. However, the autopsy room cabinets and countertops are constructed of wood, which is a porous material. This surface material is unsanitary and to, prevent potential biohazards for staff and volunteers, should be upgraded to meet Occupational Safety and Health Administration best practices for forensic facilities.

We viewed the Evidence Room. It is a small space and seemingly disorganized, but it was evident that the Coroner's staff knew where all the items were located. However, it would serve overall preservation of forensic evidence and items if the room contained units specifically designed for the storage of evidence. The Coroner's office could benefit from a new facility.

We observed that the generator noted by the 2021-22 Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury is now fenced and secured, allowing for continuous operation during blackouts, as recommended in their report.

The 2022-23 Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury noted the Coroner's Office staff and volunteers maintain busy schedules and perform their duties efficiently. The staff and volunteers should be commended for their ability to absorb the responsibilities of increased suicides and Fentanyl related deaths while recovering from several years of the COVID-19 pandemic.

FINDINGS: Humboldt County Sheriff's Coroner – Public Administrator

The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury finds that:

- **F13:** The Humboldt County Coroner's autopsy room cabinets and countertops are constructed of wood, a porous material, creating a potential biohazard for the staff. **(R8)**
- **F14:** The Humboldt County Coroner's evidence room lacks organized storage cabinets and has limited space, potentially compromising the secure storage and preservation of material needed for forensic, legal, and administrative purposes. **(R9)**

RECOMMENDATIONS: Humboldt County Sheriff's Coroner – Public Administrator

The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that:

- **R8:** No later than March 31, 2024, the Humboldt County Coroner's autopsy and cadaver storage rooms be upgraded to meet modern standards and best practices, including the removal of porous surfaces that can absorb biological materials. For funding recommendations see the wording below recommendation #9. **(F13)**

- **R9:** The Humboldt County Coroner evidence room be re-organized no later than March 31, 2024. For funding recommendations see the wording below recommendation #9. **(F14)**
 - **Funding Recommendation:** The Grand Jury recommends that the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office provide funding for **(R8)** and **(R9)** with appropriations in the current fiscal year. If current appropriations are not sufficient, the Grand Jury recommends the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office at its earliest opportunity, pursue additional funding from the Board of Supervisors, sufficient to fund the above recommendations.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND REHABILITATION, EEL RIVER CONSERVATION CAMP #31

The 2022-23 Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury visited the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Eel River Conservation Camp #31 (ERCC). Eel River Conservation Camp #31 is a state prison and a conservation camp that serves the fire protection needs of California. The prisoners are nonviolent offenders who have fewer than five years remaining on their sentence. They live year-round at the camp, which is located just north of Redway, California. The prisoners make up crews that are assigned to work directly with CAL FIRE, California's Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, for multiple conservation tasks. This is a men's-only camp.

The prisoners volunteer for camp assignments and are monitored by the corrections personnel for fitness, health, and attitude toward their work. ERCC jobs are primarily dedicated to fire suppression and fire management when needed. The Camp has a capacity for 120 inmates and at the time of our visit there were 52 prisoners. In past fire seasons, prisoner crews have yielded substantial savings to the State of California.

There are prisoners who make up the fire crews, and also prisoners who either work in the mobile kitchen during fire incidents or do a variety of jobs at the camp. The work crews receive pay into their personal trust funds, which they may use for canteen supplies and for savings that can be used as a start-up fund upon their release.

The camp's prisoners have access to school courses, recreation opportunities, and a commissary that is operated by the prisoners. In addition, the camp has a dog. For the most part, attending the camp is a privilege for the prisoners and bad behavior is not tolerated. Little conflict occurs since most of the prisoners do not want to go back to prison.

ERCC is fully staffed with Correctional Officers and CAL FIRE personnel. The facility itself is well-maintained and in good repair. The staff apparently enjoy and take pride in the work they are doing.

One matter of concern to the 2022-23 Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury is the fact that the camp shares a boundary and a driveway with Recology's Redway Transfer Station located at the entrance to the camp. There is no adequate fencing separating Eel River Conservation Camp #31 and the transfer station. This location has occasionally served as a drop-off point for contraband. There is an obvious need to sequester this area to prevent contraband from being exchanged with the prisoners living in the camp.

FINDINGS: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Eel River Conservation Camp #31

The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury finds that:

- **F16:** The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Eel River Conservation Camp #31, maintains a successful rehabilitation program, which provides prisoners with fire-fighting and other valuable job skills, while assisting with the reduction of their imposed sentences.
- **F17:** The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Eel River Conservation Camp #31, shares a boundary and driveway of its property with Recology's Redway Transfer Station. Due to the lack of adequate fencing, the transfer station functions as a drop-off place for contraband. **(R11)**

RECOMMENDATIONS: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Eel River Conservation Camp #31

The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that:

- **R11: The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Eel River Conservation Camp #31, build a fence to help deter the passing of contraband by March 31, 2024. (F17)**
 - **Funding Recommendation:** The Grand Jury recommends that the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and/or the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) provide funding for **R11** with appropriations in the current fiscal year. If current appropriations are not sufficient, the Grand Jury recommends that, at the earliest opportunity, they pursue additional funding from their respective agencies sufficient to fund the above recommendations.

HUMBOLDT COUNTY SHERIFF'S GARBERVILLE STATION

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Garberville Station interacts with Central Dispatch in Eureka for services provided to Southern Humboldt County. There are two deputies assigned per shift, with each shift lasting 10 to 12 hours. After-hour calls to the station are forwarded to Central Dispatch. There is no holding cell at the station, so anyone arrested in Southern Humboldt County is transported by the deputies to the Humboldt County Correctional Facility in Eureka.

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Garberville Station is in a new building shared with the Garberville Library, located at 715 Cedar St., Garberville, California. We found no directional signs to lead the public to the station from U.S. Highway 101, Redwood Drive, or on Cedar Street. We observed there are existing signs directing the public to the library, so adding three additional signs would not be difficult.

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Garberville Station is well organized. Of particular note is the evidence room, which is well designed and secure. Evidence labeled and secured in the locker can only be accessed and retrieved by Sheriff's Office personnel.

There are no hours of operation posted for the public to view. There is staff on duty from 8 am to 4 pm, Monday through Friday to answer the telephone, interact with visiting members of the public, and support the deputies.

FINDINGS: Humboldt County Sheriff's Garberville Station

The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury finds that:

- **F18:** The Humboldt County Sheriff's Garberville Station lacks directional signs on Redwood Drive and Cedar Street making it difficult for the public to find its location.
- **F19:** The Humboldt County Sheriff's Garberville Station lacks directional signs on US-101 in both directions making it difficult for the public to find its location.
- **F20:** The Humboldt County Sheriff's Garberville Station does not display their hours of operation or telephone contact numbers on its building for proper public access and availability.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Humboldt County Sheriff's Garberville Station

The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that:

- **R12:** The Humboldt County Sheriff request and secure directional signs on Redwood Drive and Cedar Street no later than March 31, 2024. For funding recommendations see the wording below recommendation #14. **(F18)**
- **R13:** The Humboldt County Sheriff request and secure directional signs on US-101 from California State Department of Transportation no later than March 31, 2024. . For funding recommendations see the wording below recommendation #14. **(F19)**
- **R14:** The Humboldt County Sheriff direct the staff at Sheriff's Garberville Station to post the hours of operation and contact telephone numbers no later than December 31, 2023. For funding recommendations see the wording below recommendation #14. **(F20)**

- **Funding Recommendation:** The Grand Jury recommends that the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office provide funding for **R12, R13, and R14** with appropriations in the current fiscal year. If current appropriations are not sufficient, the Grand Jury recommends the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office at its earliest opportunity, pursue additional funding from the Board of Supervisors, sufficient to fund the above recommendations.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Pursuant to California Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the Grand Jury requests each entity or individual named below to respond to the enumerated Findings and Recommendations within specific statutory guidelines.

Responses to Findings shall be either:

- The respondent agrees with the finding
- The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefore

Responses to Recommendations shall be one of the following:

- The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action
- The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a time frame for implementation
- The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a time frame for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency where applicable. This time frame shall not exceed six months from the date of the publication of the Grand Jury report
- The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefore.

REQUIRED RESPONSES – Within 90 days

Humboldt County Board of Supervisors

(F1, F4, F7, F8, F9, F13, F14) and (R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R8, R9, R12, R13, R14)

REQUIRED RESPONSES – Within 60 days

The Humboldt County Sheriff

(F1, F4, F7, F8, F13, F14) and (R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R8, R9, R12, R13, R14)

INVITED RESPONSES

Department of Health and Human Services

(F9) and (R6)

Humboldt County Probation Department

(F12) and (R7)

Humboldt County Human Resources Department

(F1, F4, F7, F8, F9, F13, F14, F18, F19, F20) and (R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R12, R13, R14)

State of California, Department of Transportation

(F17) and R11)

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.
--

Responses are to be sent to:

The Honorable Judge Neel
Humboldt County Superior Court
825 5th Street, Eureka, CA 95501

2022-23 Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury
825 5th Street, Eureka, CA 95501

GLOSSARY

- **BH** Behavioral Health - Division of Health and Human Services
- **DHHS** Department of Health and Human Services
- **ERCC #31** Eel River Conservation Camp #31
- **HCCF** Humboldt County Correctional Facility
- **HCCGJ** Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury
- **HCJDC** Humboldt County Juvenile Detention Center
- **OSHA** Occupational Safety and Health Administration
- **SV** Sempervirens Psychiatric Health Facility
- **SWAP** Sheriff's Work Alternative Program

BIBLIOGRAPHY

2018-2019 Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury Report

2021-2022 Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury Report

[AB109](#) CA Prison Realignment

[AB 2147](#) Expedited Expungement for Formerly Incarcerated Fire Camp Participants

[CA Gov Code Chapter 10, Section 27460-27530](#) Coroner

[CA Gov Code Chapter 2, Section, 26640-26646](#) Prisoner's Property

[CA Gov Code Chapter 7, Section 21300-24308](#) Consolidation of Officers Coroner-Public Administrator

[CA Gov Code Chapter 8, Section 25800-25803](#) Animal Shelters

[California Board of State and Community Corrections \(BSCC\)](#) Standards for Correctional Institutions

[California Legislative Information](#) California Government Codes

[Humboldt County Sheriff's Office Animal Care & Control](#) Procedural Manual, November 2018

[Laura's Law](#) Assisted Outpatient Treatment

[Proposition 47](#) Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act

[Proposition 57](#) Juvenile Criminal Proceedings

[SB 823](#) Department of Juvenile Justice Realignment