
Project Pride

You may not be aware of some of the Stakeholders that benefit from the work performed by the Conservation Camp Program. Following are just some of the stakeholders we do work for:

***Department of Transportation
Department of Parks and Recreation
Bureau of Land Management
County Department of Public Works
School Districts
Fairgrounds
Fire Protection Districts
Cemetery Districts
U.S. Forest Service
Resource Conservation Districts
Department of Fish and Game
Department of Food and Agriculture
U.S. Fish and Wildlife***

If you have any additional questions regarding the Conservation Camp Program, contact Intermountain Camp at (530) 294-5289 or Devil's Garden Camp at (530) 233-3634.

***California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation***



*California Department of Forestry
and Fire Protection
California Department of Corrections
and Rehabilitation*

presents

***Prisons Without
Walls***

Working in the Community

You've probably seen news footage of fires burning in California. What you may not have realized is that the firefighters you see dressed in orange are actually inmates. What makes inmate fire crews unique is the amount of training they receive and the selection process they go through before being assigned to a conservation camp.

The training begins when the inmate enters one of three training institutions: California Institute for Women in Chino, the California Conservation Center in Susanville, or the Sierra Conservation Center in Jamestown. Potential crew members are put through several weeks of physical conditioning to see if they can handle the rigors of crew work. If they pass the physical fitness portion of the training, they go on to the firefighter portion taught by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). Each inmate receives 64 hours of fire crew training, conducted by CAL FIRE fire captains. This training includes both classroom and field exercises and includes instruction in fire behavior, fire tools, aircraft and fire safety. If the crew member passes this portion of the training, they are assigned to a conservation camp.

Each morning, the custody of the conservation crew is transferred from Correctional staff to Forestry staff and the crews go out to perform conservation related work projects. Both departments ensure the safety and security of the public while supervising inmates. Concern for security begins well before inmates come to camp, however.

Before an inmate is deemed eligible to enter the Camp Program, he or she must go through "classification". The inmate goes before a Classification Committee which is made up of a Correctional Captain, Correctional Counselors, and a representative of CAL FIRE. The Committee reviews the inmate's probation reports, criminal record, and recommendations from the Central Office in Sacramento. Inmates who have committed a sex offense, a crime of arson, have a high violence potential, or are escape risks, are excluded from camp eligibility.

While Ensuring Your Security

Inmates that are assigned to conservation camps are classified as "minimum security" inmates. Typically they have two years or less to serve on their sentences. They receive a sentence reduction for every day they perform work on a work project.

A great deal of preparation also goes into the approval of a work project being considered by Intermountain Camp. Before a conservation crew is scheduled for a work project, the project site is reviewed by the camp division chief and lieutenant for safety and security concerns. The project is rated as either Level I, II, or III depending upon these concerns. All projects, regardless of the security level, involve strict supervision by the fire crew captain. If the security concerns surrounding the project are too great, the project will not be undertaken.

Before a fire captain can supervise a conservation crew, they must be specially trained. Fire crew captains receive over 200 hours of training in inmate supervision. The average crew captain that supervises a conservation crew has over five years of experience in the Camp Program.

Conservation crews perform a variety of work projects including the building and maintenance of thousands of miles of trail in state parks. On average, conservation crews dedicate over eight million hours of project work each year to federal, state, and local government agencies. They save the California taxpayer millions of dollars annually.

Conservation crews are also responsible for the construction of many of the fuel breaks that make the difference in California between a fire that is contained and controlled and one that continues to spread.