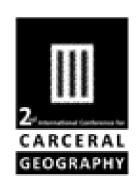
CALIFORNIA CONSERVATION CAMPS



Sabrina Puddu - sabrinapdd@gmail.com 2nd International Conference for Carceral Geography 11-12 Dec 2017 University of Birmingham This paper is the outcome of a research conducted in 2014 when I was visiting scholar at GSAPP-Columbia University of New York and postdoctoral research fellow at the Department of Architecture, Università degli Studi di Cagliari, Italy. The postdoctoral research project - Territories of Production. On the architecture of rural penal colonies - was funded by P.O.R. FSE 2007-2013 - EU (European Social Fund) and RAS (Regional Government of Sardinia).

Part of the research on the California Camps has been published in "The Funambulist. Politics of Space and Bodies n.4 < Carceral Environments>", 2016. https://thefunambulist.net/architectural-projects/the-funambulist-magazine-04-mar-apr-2016-carceral-environments-is-now-out

I would like to thank the Cal Fire Museum and all the members of the staff of the California Camps (CDCR and Cal Fire) who I had the chance to meet in the Summer 2014.

NB: Images missing copyright clearance have been obscured and properly referenced

The californian archipelago of national prisons is constituted by more than 40 medium and high security walled-prisons (about 130.000 inmates) and by 43 California Conservation Camps (about 4000 inmates). The conservation camps are rural facilities characterized by a more permissive life-style, where inmates are employed both as fire-fighters regarding eco-disaster emergencies and as manual laborers at the service of local public agencies. The camps are managed by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), in collaboration with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and, more recently, the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

The camps' basic philosophy of criminals being instilled with a work ethic in a bucolic environment is almost unconditionally praised by adverse political parties and public opinion. Such consensus sets them apart from the sharply contrasting views about the condition of labor and incarceration in American prisons. Beyond this apparent ideal form of incarceration there remains a complex and contradictory phenomenon that, from the periphery of the correctional system, challenges the opportunity to rehabilitate people through labor as well as the simultaneous amplification of scope and retreat of architecture in a project of carceral environments.



Photograph by Francesco Zuddas + Sabrina Puddu. Rainbow Conservation Camp 2014. Any use or reproduction of this image should be previously autorised by the authors.

The bucolic character of the camps destabilizes the certainties with which architecture exerts its disciplinary power in prison environments. Yet, there is much more design intentionality than the eye can plainly see.



Photograph by Francesco Zuddas + Sabrina Puddu. Rainbow Conservation Camp 2014. Any use or reproduction of this image should be previously autorised by the authors.



This tryptic - which depicts the Conservation Camps of Pine Grove, Vallecito and Gabilan, as settlements embedded into their respective landscapes - syntethises the main arguments at the base of this research.

1. Camps are national territorial garrisons in remote areas of the state. They have an inescapable relationship with the landscape in which they are located and that they seek to safe-guard. The geographical scale of the Conservation Camps Program is essential not only to show the capillar development of the nation's correctional geography but also for understanding the role of the latter in the formation of the rural condition and environmental awareness of modern California.

2. Despite the geographical, landscape and topographic variations, and the bucolic camouflage, the camps are not simple, unplanned settlements displaying a non-rational spatial arrangement. Whereas the buildings look like innocuous cottages scattered throughout the landscape, a closer comparative analysis of the camps' layouts reveals them as elements in a tactically organized plan that follow few repeated patterns. The rationale of the camps lies, more than in the 3Dimensional qualities of architecture, in the plan of the camp and in the design of the ground.

3. The crew – a unit deriving from the fire brigades and the military legacy - is the basic unit of the dayly routine and social organization of the camp and it is superimposed over the typical social structure of prisons (individual-mass; inmates-officers; racial groups). First of all, in an oligarchic organization – where 2 institutions are in charge of the prisoners – the dichotomy inmates-wardens falls apart. Secondly, in the camps, inmates are not regarded as individual subjects, who would be part of an indefinite mass of prisoners, and whose spatial counter figure is the egalitarian series of cells of canonical prisons. Dormitories' typologies are an evidence of this instance, that the crew is the main social organisation of the camp.



Drawings by Sara Usai + Sabrina Puddu. 1.Pine Grove 2.Vallecito 3.Gabilan Any use or reproduction of this image should be previously autorised by the authors.

METHODOLOGY

A study of a complex and contradictory phenomenon by putting together many fragmentary truths. Using taxonomy and drawing to collect evidence.

- 1. Interdisciplinary academic studies
- 2. Narratives (public opinion in press/TV/podcast and Institutional propaganda)
- 3. CDCR and CALFIRE official reports

Collecting evidences from:

- 4. Taxonomy and retracing/drawings (location, plan layout, dormitories)
- 5. History (and archival research) to make sense of taxonomy: iterations of models and exceptions, shifts in typological experiments.
- 6. Site visit (meeting the staff) and direct observation (Photo essay)

When the "Jungle" Met the Forest: Public Work, Civil Defense, and Prison Camps in Postwar California

Volker Janssen

For suggestions on how to use this article in the U.S. history classroom, see our "Teaching the *IAH*" Web project at http://www.indiana.edu/-jah/teaching/.

In January and February 1969, winter rains pounded southern California counties mercilessly. The wettest winter in eighty years caused millions of dollars in losses in the region's agriculture, ravaged canyons with flash floods, and buried roads and freeways east of Los Angeles and neighboring Orange County. Matters went from bad to worse on February 25 when six thousand Southlanders fled their canyon homes in fear of mudslides. Many stayed behind, such as the Quick family: mother, father, and their four children. Five of the Quicks' neighbors died in the disaster. Cut off from the outside world for three days in Silverado Canyon on the western slopes of the Santa Ana Mountains, the Quick family was rescued by a team of convicts from the region's prison forest camp.¹

The Quicks were no "bleeding-heart" liberals likely to mollycoddle criminals. Volunteers in Ronald Reagan's gubernatorial campaign, they supported the Vietnam War and cracking down on Berkeley student protests. But the 1969 flood washed out their law-and-order stand. Grateful for the "heroic deeds" of the sleep-deprived, soaked, and starving "men who put their life on the line for others," Mrs. R. Quick asked the governor in a letter to reduce their sentences. She showed no interest in the men's criminal record—it was their race that caused Mrs. Quick's biggest surprise: "Everyone always shows the worst side of negroes. None were there to record the negro prisoners up to chests in water (raging water) forming a human chain passing children and people to the other side." It was not just their courage and strength that seemed remarkable, but "the gentle way they handled the children." Like most of the flood victims, Mrs. Quick saw model citizens in

Volker Janssen is an assistant professor of history at California State University, Fullerton. He would like to thank Michael A. Bernstein, Bill Deverell, Christopher Endy, Phil Ethington, Stephen Garton, Theodore Hamm, Michael Meranze, John Nieto-Philips, Robert Self, Joseph F. Spillane, participants in the University of California, Los Angeles History Seminar and the Los Angeles History Seminar at the Huntington Library, the editors of the *JAH*, and the anonymous readers of the *JAH* for their advice and suggestions.

Readers may contact Janssen at vjanssen@fullerton.edu.

¹ William J. Drummond, "Earthslide Buries Pomona Freeway: May Not Be Cleared This Week," *Los Angeles Times*, Feb. 13, 1969, p. A1; Richard West, "Wettest Season in 79 Years: Season's Rainfall Reaches Highest Mark in 79 Years," *ibid.*, Feb. 19, 1969, p. 1; George Getze, "End of Rain Won't Mean End of Slides, Geologist Predicts," *ibid.*, Feb. 22, 1969, p. A1; Jerry Ruhlow, "Deluge Floods Canyons, Streets, Disrupts Power: Police in County Report Chaotic Conditions after 3-Inch Rainfall in 3 Days," *ibid.*, Feb. 24, 1969, p. D1; Gordon Grant, "Devastation in Canyons: Sound of Water Sets Scene," *ibid.*, Feb. 25, 1969, p. C1; and Don Smith, "Drenched County Braces for More Troubles: Canyon Hardest Hit by Up to 7 Inches of Rain," *ibid.*

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The Journal of American History

December 2009

Historian Volker Jansenn uses the camps as a pretest to study the relationship between rural and urban California in the XX century. He shows how detention policies for the camps were the embodiment of a broader State intentionality that, beyond that of reform and incarceration of criminals, wanted to drive attention towards the rural areas of California.

"Another Second Chance": Rethinking Rehabilitation through the Lens of California's Prison Fire Camps

Philip Goodman, University of Toronto

Many scholars and practitioners treat rehabilitation as a black box that, if working, necessarily outputs low(er) recidivism rates. In contrast, this article proposes a constructionist view that asks how those on the front lines of the "carceral archipelago" actually think about, and experience, rehabilitation. Here I examine California's prison fire camps, atypical carceral settings in which state prisoners work as wildland firefighters. The camps present a puzzle: how is it that there exists in California—routinely considered an extreme case in the shift toward warehouse prisons a penal setting in which rehabilitation not only survives, but affects many aspects of everyday life for prisoners, staff, and administrators alike? The answer, I argue, is that despite some important historical continuities—especially around work and the twin impulses to reform and punish (cf. Garland 1985; Hutchinson 2006)—rehabilitation has evolved considerably. This includes a focus on an abstract notion of work ethic not dependent on the learning of concrete work skills, as well as a neoliberal discourse about personal responsibility. In sum, rehabilitation exists in the fire camps not in spite of the "punitive turn," but in many ways precisely because of it. Implications include: (1) rehabilitation can be (and perhaps always is) more malleable and multifaceted than is often recognized; (2) the fire camps are simultaneously prisons and nonprisons, and those in them both inmates and heroes; and (3) punishment is a messy, variegated phenomenon in which the relationships between larger discourses and social structures and practices on the ground are dynamic and varied. Keywords: rehabilitation; neoliberal punishment; prison fire camps; responsibilization; punitiveness.

"I see myself as somebody waiting their turn for another second chance."

- Reggie (prisoner, fire camp in central California)

"No one but an academic simpleton will even use the world 'rehabilitation' without apprehension."

— Richard Korn (1992:4; quoted in Ward and Maruna 2007:1)

California's prison system is routinely castigated as the poster child of the "punitive turn"—ground zero, so to speak, of a late twentieth century move away from rehabilitation and toward retribution, incapacitation, and actuarial justice (see, for example, Campbell 2009; Gilmore 2007; Hunt et al. 1993; Irwin 2005; Page 2011; Petersilia 2006; Stateman 2009). A popular view among criminologists and sociologists is that rehabilitation grew in importance as an organizing principle in American punishment through early- and mid-twentieth century, reaching its peak in the 1950s and 1960s as *the* dominant penological paradigm. According to the same popular view, during the last quarter of the twentieth century rehabilitation was replaced by a more conservative position emphasizing a visceral, emotive form of punishment predicated on concerns about safety, responsibility, and a seemingly unquenchable drive to incapacitate (e.g., Allen 1981; Garland 2001; Irwin 1980; Pratt et al. 2005; Rafter and Stanley 1999; Rotman 1995; Simon 1993). Exacerbating

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Social Problems, Vol. 59, Issue 4, pp. 437–458, ISSN 0037-7791, electronic ISSN 1533-8533. © 2012 by Society for the Study of Social Problems, Inc. All rights reserved. Please direct all requests for permission to photocopy or reproduce article content through the University of California Press's Rights and Permissions website at www.ucpressjournals.com/reprintinfo/asp. DOI: 10.1525/sp.2012.59.4.437.

Sociologist Philip Goodman finds the Conservation Camps Program to be an invaluable platform for observing the ambiguities and contradictions of prison labor and its blurring of exploitation and rehabilitation.



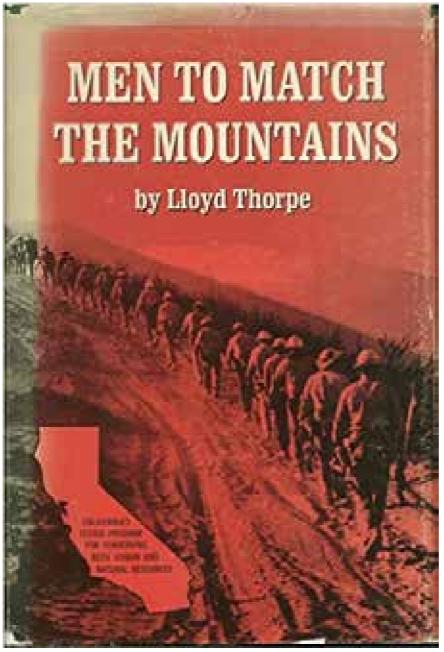
A residence Painting Carry softing the tire on a small the residence, in during these Paintings are the form them.

The Incarcerated Women Who Fight California's Wildfires

By choice, for less than \$2 an hour, the female inmate firefighters of California work. their bodies to the breaking point. Sometimes they even risk their lives. systemices: exist it into

forests Lynn Jones elimbed from the back of a red track with "L.A.

County Fire" pointed on its side. Ten more women poind out after
bet, at a spot on the border of Agents Hills and Malibs, in Southern
California. They could see flames in the vicinity of Maliboliand Highway,
from a fire that had been borning for about an hour. Jones and her crew
some helmen and yellow Nomes fire retardant entity yellow handkenshiele
crewred their mouths and necks. Each woman carried 50 pounds of
sepalpment in her lankpack: gloves, flams, book, full sates bottles, safety
and medical gear and an emergency elector, in case they were corresponded
by flames. As the "accord sare," Jones was one of two women who carried
a chair new with her. His was also one of California's 250 or so femaleissuate forefighters.





The New York Times, 2017

Men To Match The Mountains, 1972

CDCR Official Website, 2017

State of California

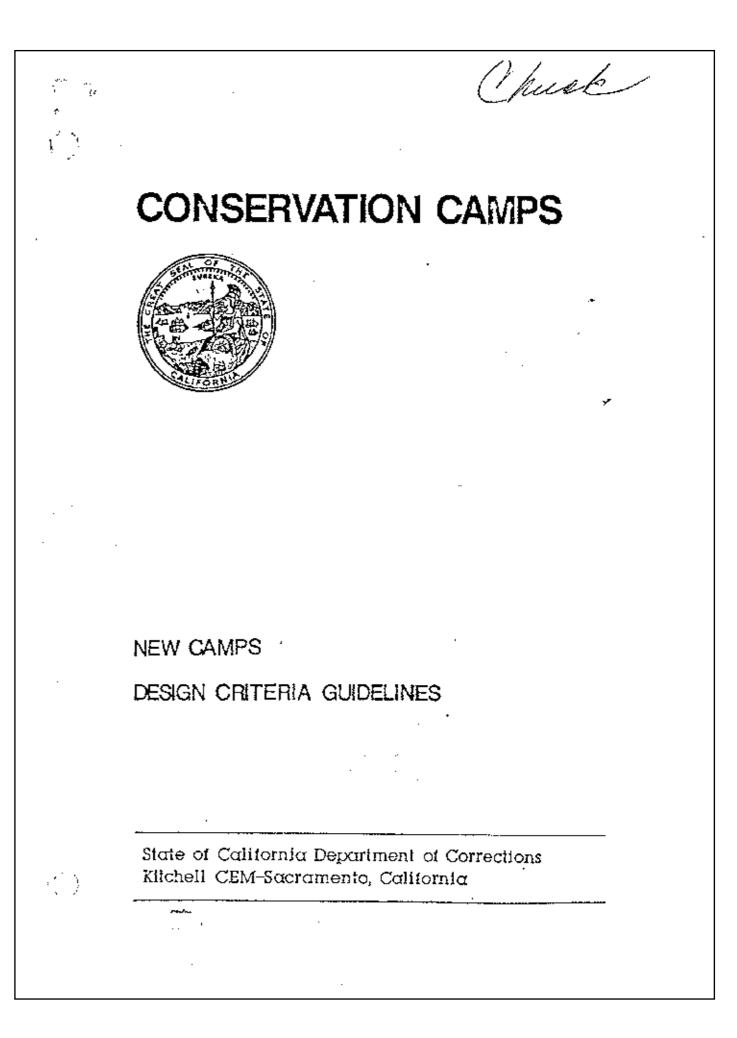
California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Adult Institutions, Programs, and Parole

Operations Manual



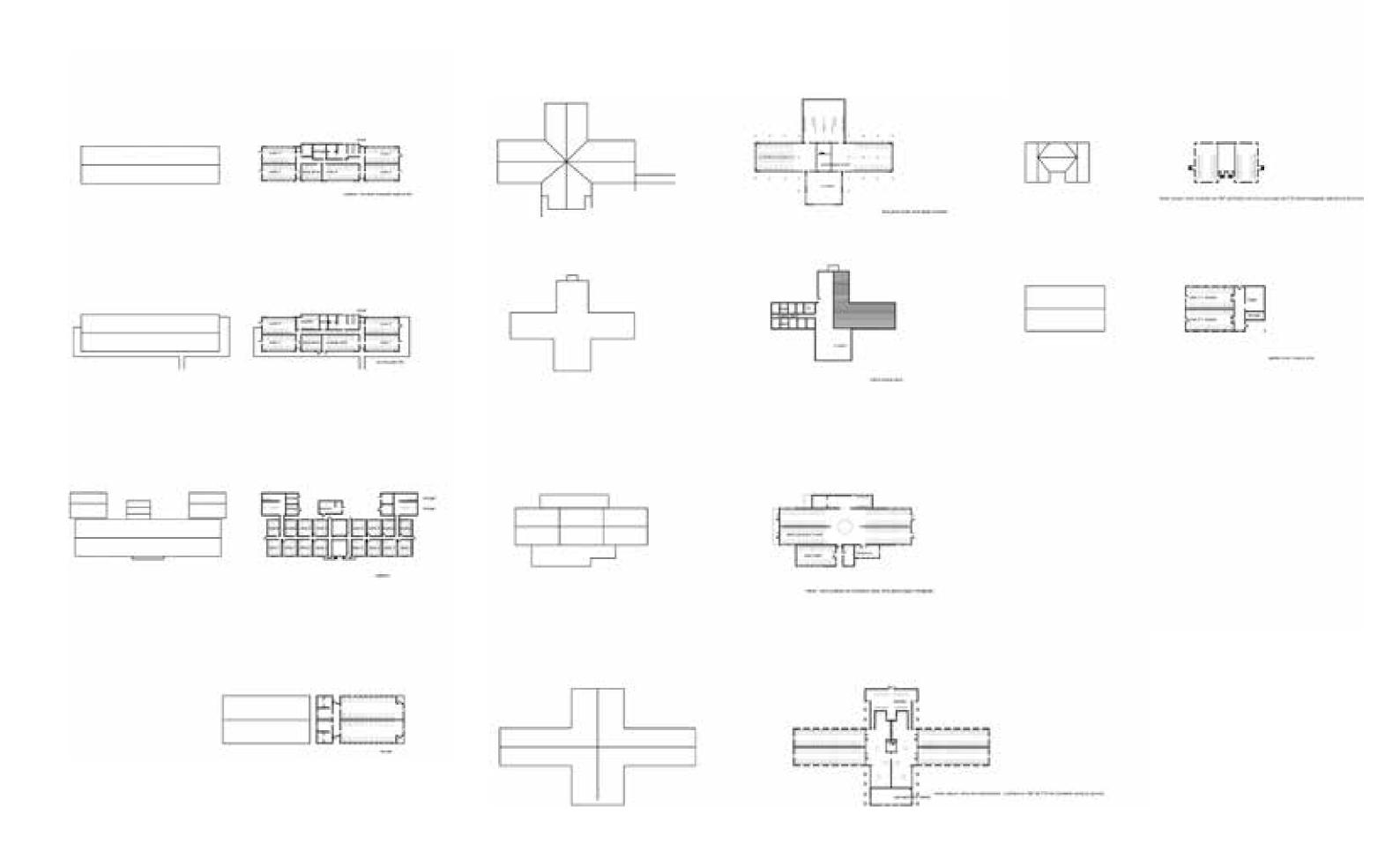
"Public Safety, Public Service" ©

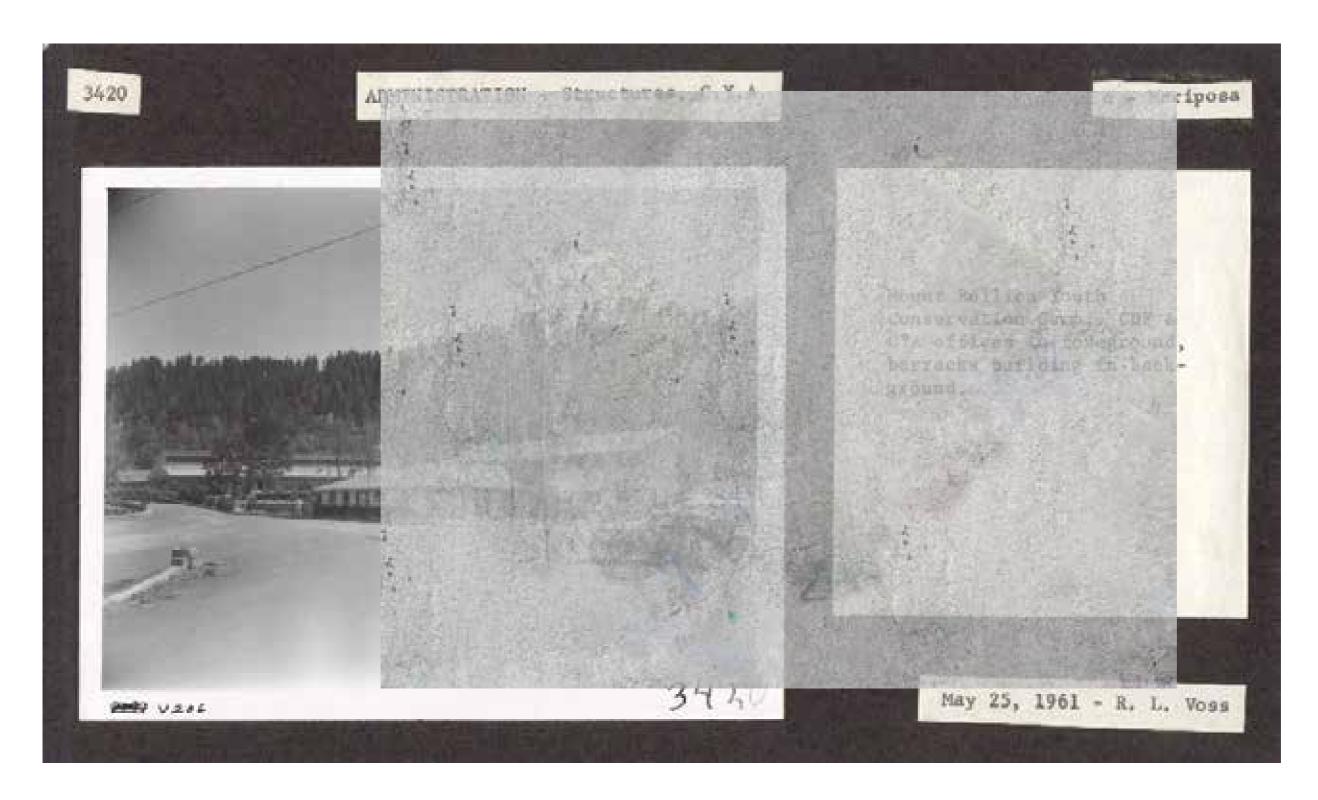
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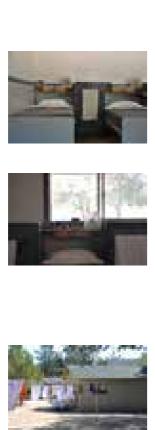
Courtesy of CAL FIRE Museum



Drawings by Sabrina Puddu Any use or reproduction of these drawings should be previously autorised by the authors. History: making sense of taxonomical studies and exceptions

































































Character of the landscape vs. series of objects (furnitures, tools, clothes, people)

1.

CONSERVATION CAMPS ARE TERRITORIAL GARRISONS OF NATIONAL POWER IN A RURAL DOMAIN



Photograph by Francesco Zuddas + Sabrina Puddu. Raimbow and Fenner Canyon Conservation Camps 2014. Any use or reproduction of these images should be previously autorised by the authors.

Map of California's Correctional and Rehabilitation Institutions





Map of California's Correctional and Rehabilitation Conservation Camps (Published 12/17/2013)



Conservation camps not only have a precise role in the pervasive capillarity of californian penal system, but they have also taken part to the definition of the identity of rural California, shaped by heavy material and immaterial human activities with high impact on the Californian territory

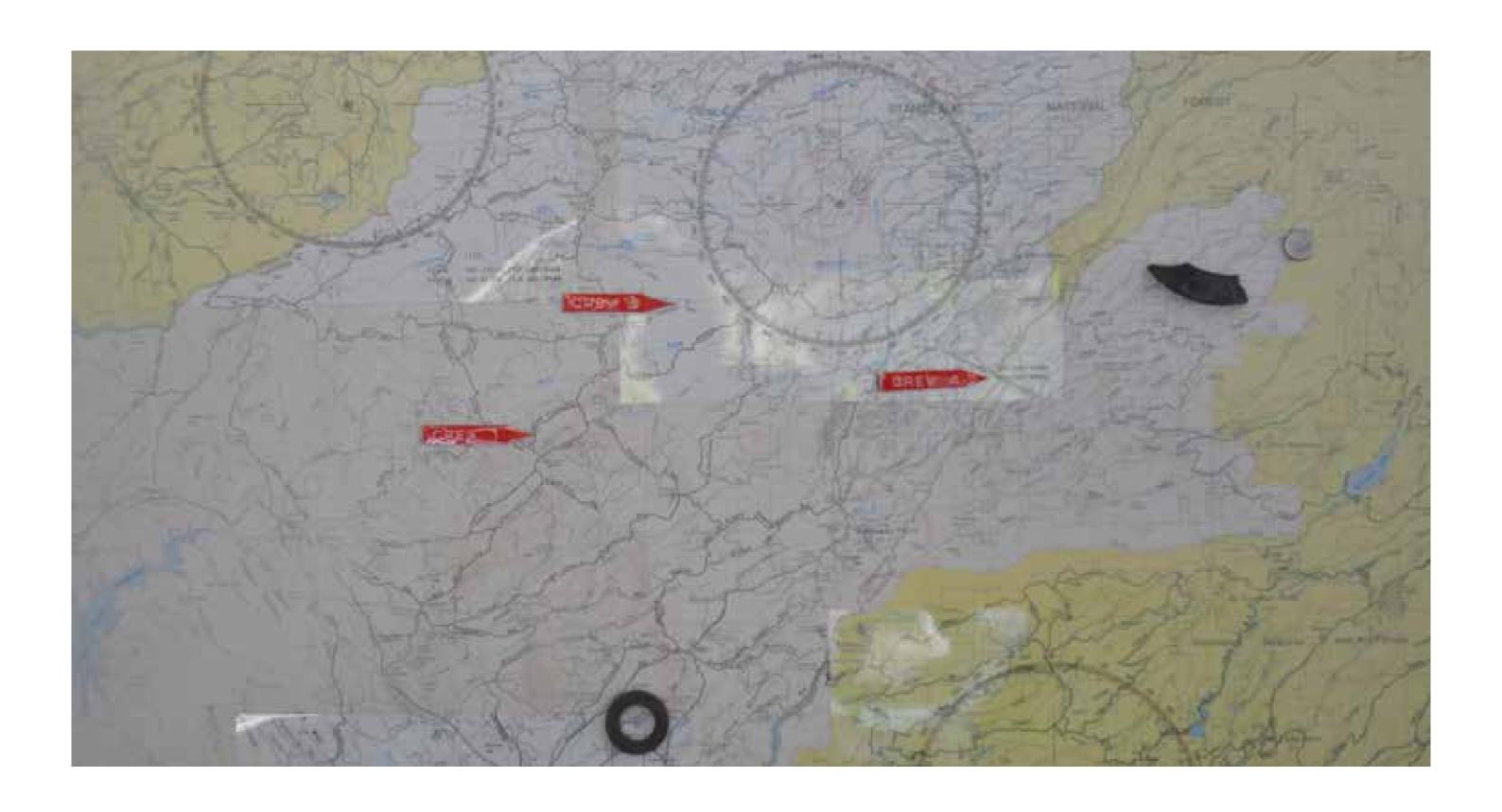




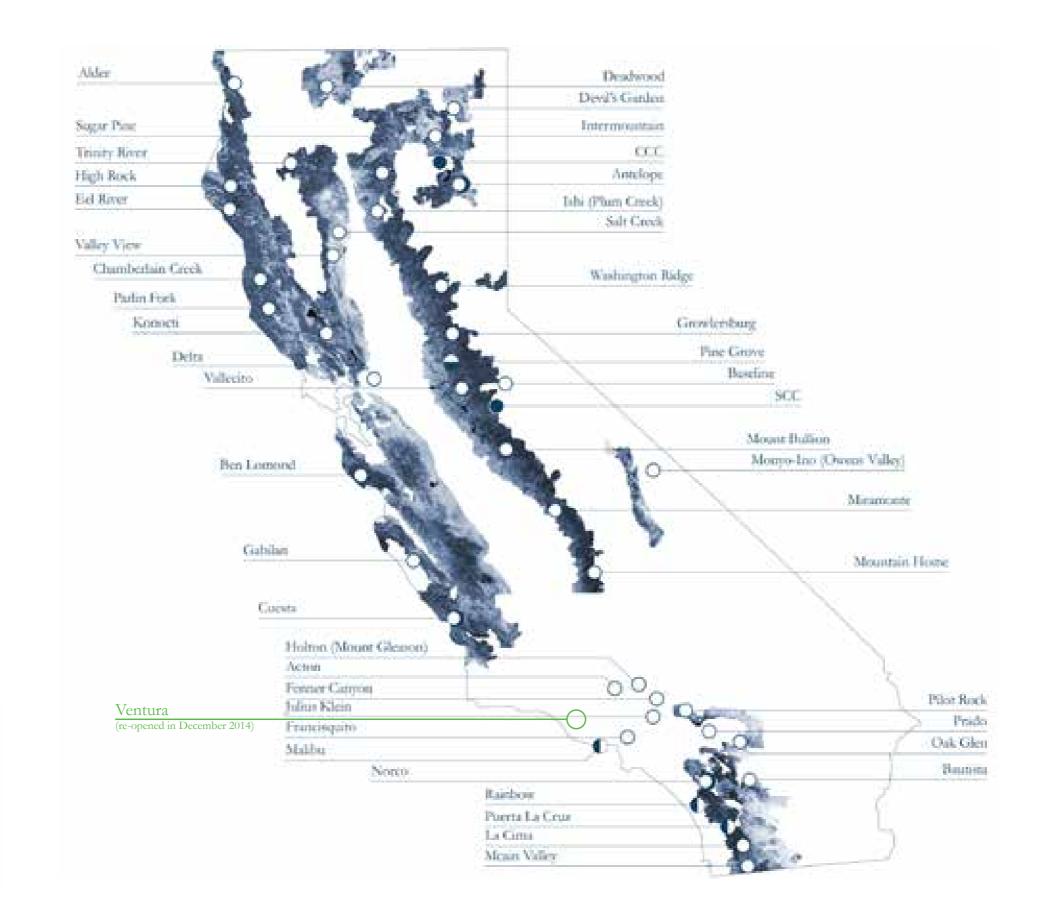
In the essay When the 'Jungle' Met the Forest (2009), historian Volker Janssen observes that the Conservation Camps Program in the 1940s-1960s was the first correctional experiment in California to be massively settled in remote areas of the state, thus contributing to removing the prison from being an exclusive domain of the city and preceding the now common tendency to build correctional institutes in rural areas.

Sandow Birk's paintings depicting California's thirty-three state prisons, represent modern and contemporary californian carceral facilities as intrisicantly embedded in a landscape whose structure and imagenery they have contributed to create. A perceptive paradox arises from Birk's romantic style, at the intersection between the bucolic idillus and the carceral realm.

'San Quentin in the Fog' and 'Pleasant Valley State Prison' are part of the series "Prisonation: Visions of California in the 21st Century" by Sandow Birk



Ruth Gilmore (Golden Gulag, 2007) has shown how high security walled facilities built in the recent history of California followed strategies of localization according to parameters - surplus land and surplus labour - related to promises of regeneration of depressed rural and suburban communities. Conservation Camps's strategic localisation has followed different parameters and strategies, like the explicit contingent needs of the Cal Fire (necessity to evenly cover their area of responsibility) and the more or less implicit National strategies and ideological apparatus inherited from the New Deal and promoting decentralization, ruralization, and environmental values in rural areas.



Training Facility / Conservation Center

Female Camp

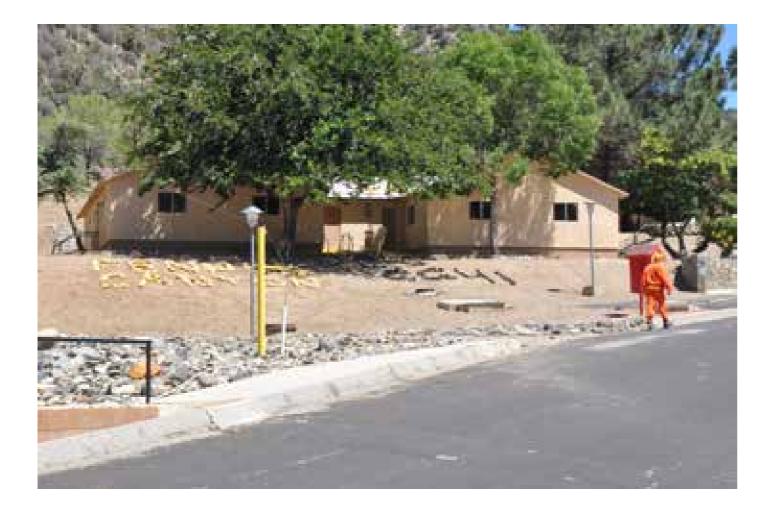
Male Camp

Camp associated to a parent institution.

Youth Camp

2.

THE CREW IS THE BASIC UNIT OF THE ROUTINE AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE CAMP



Camps' population is mostly composed by male adults with an average age of 30. Most of them have drugs-alchool problems and come from a city environment, thus have no previous experience of rural labour and life.

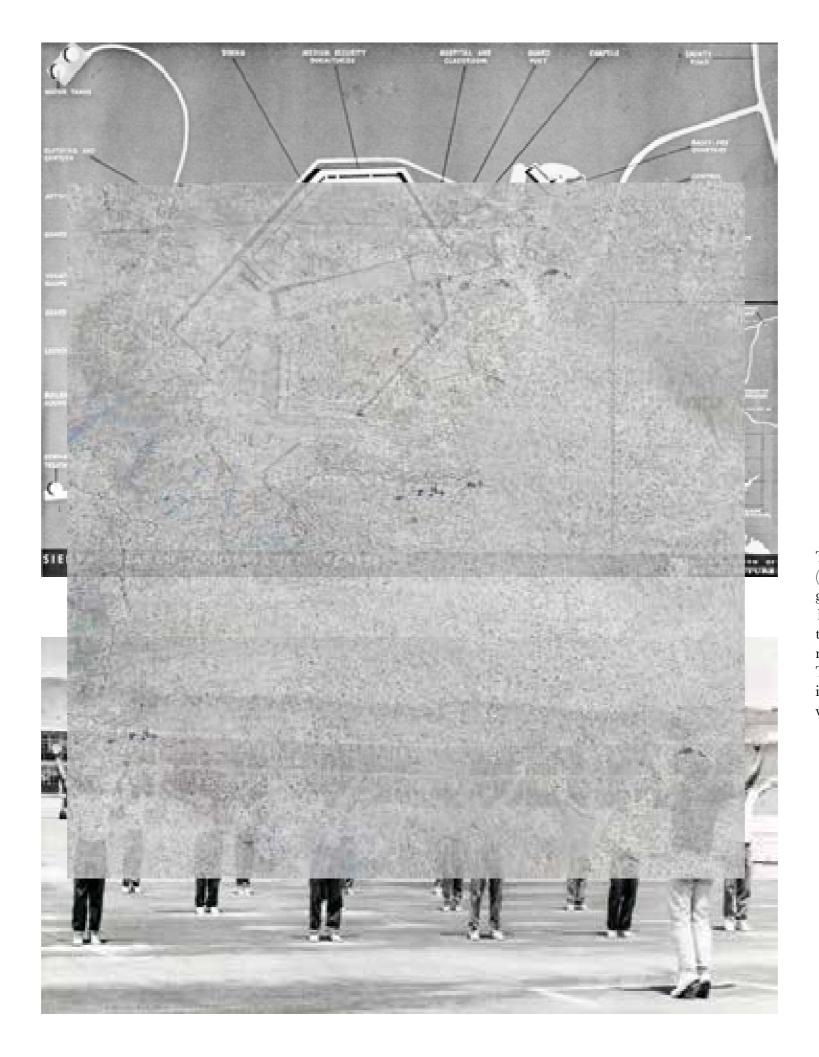
In the conservation camps, inmates are granted greater freedom of movement, being allowed to circulate indoors and outdoors in accordance with the camp's routine and regulations, and within an area that is not marked by a wall or a fence. The relationship between staff and inmates is not ruled by a hyper-technological apparatus of surveillance. Conversely, the personnel (officers and fire captains) lives in constant physical contact with the inmates.



Photograph by Francesco Zuddas + Sabrina Puddu. Rainbow Conservation Camps 2014. Any use or reproduction of this image should be previously autorised by the authors.

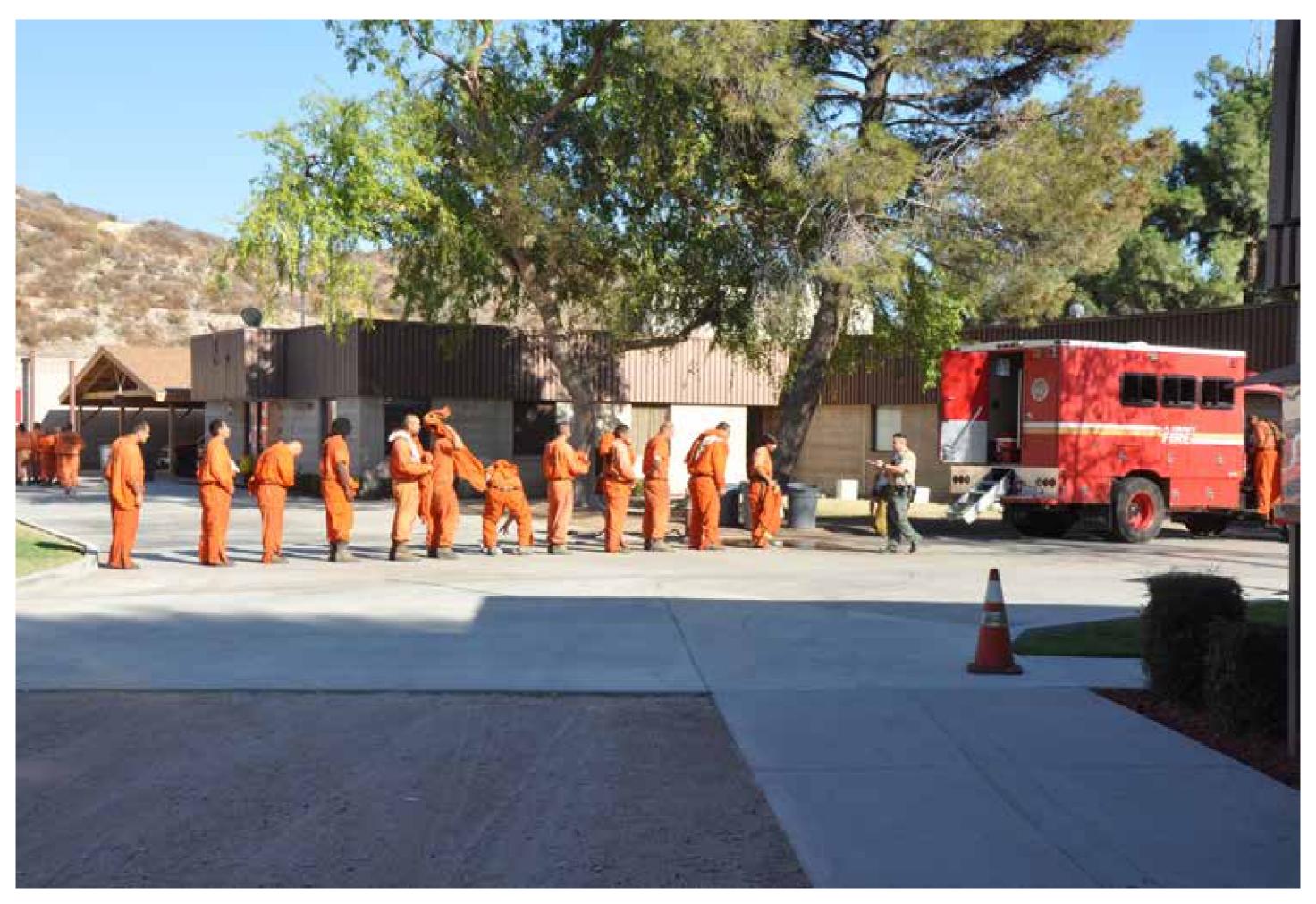


Who are the inmates awarded the "priviledge" to spend their sentence in the camps?



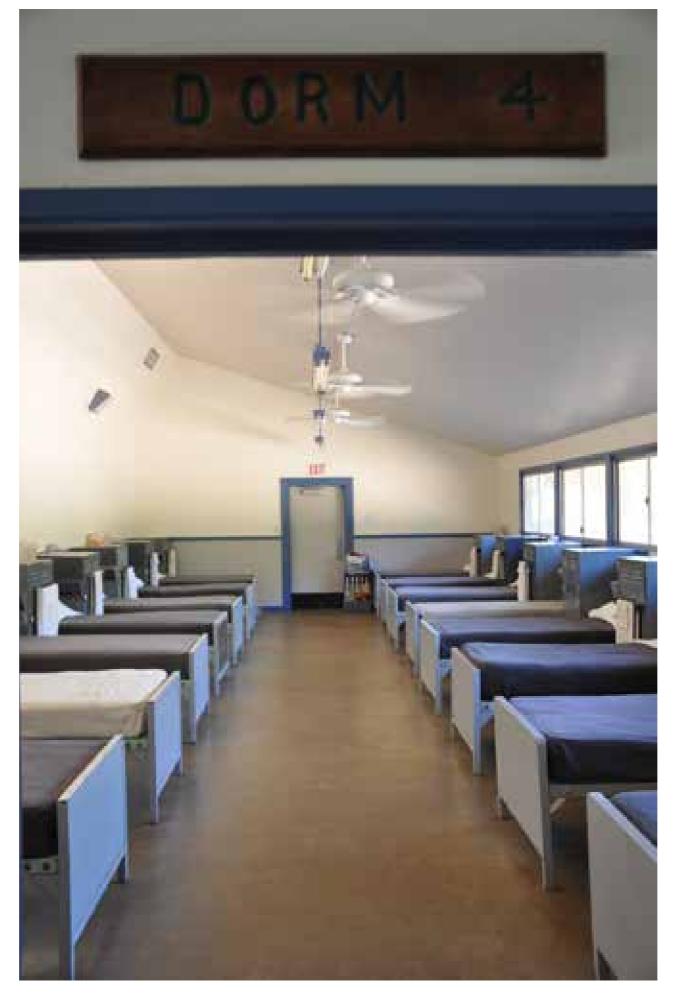
The eligibility criteria for the choice of the inmates (psycho-physical ability to work; non-violent crimes; good behaviour) were scientifically established in 1960s, when also 2 conservation centers were built to train and observe the eligible inmates before moving them to the camps.

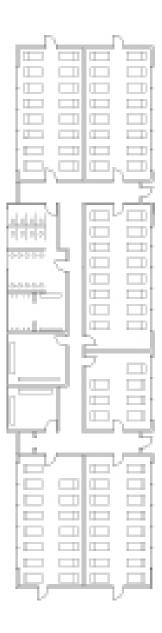
These criteria (more or less loose) are very important for they determine the fluctuation of workforce in the camps.



Photograph by Francesco Zuddas + Sabrina Puddu. Holton Conservation Camps 2014. Any use or reproduction of this image should be previously autorised by the authors.

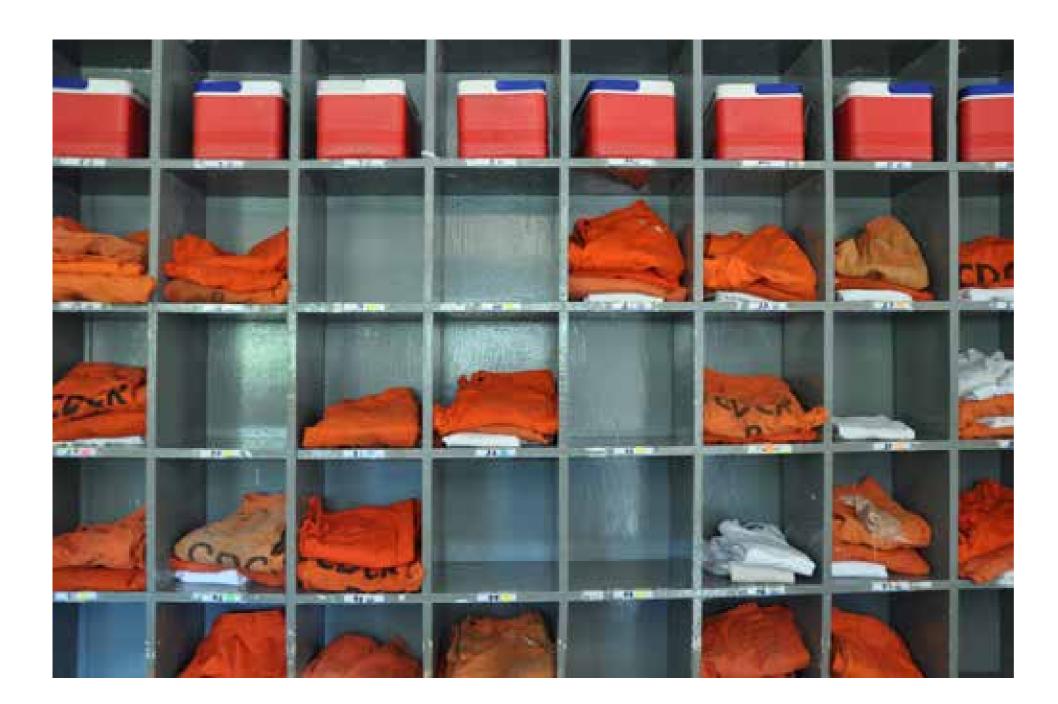
The inmates are organized in crews of 12-17 and headed by a fire captain, thus reproducing the hierarchical structure and social tactics typical of the military organization of fire brigades.

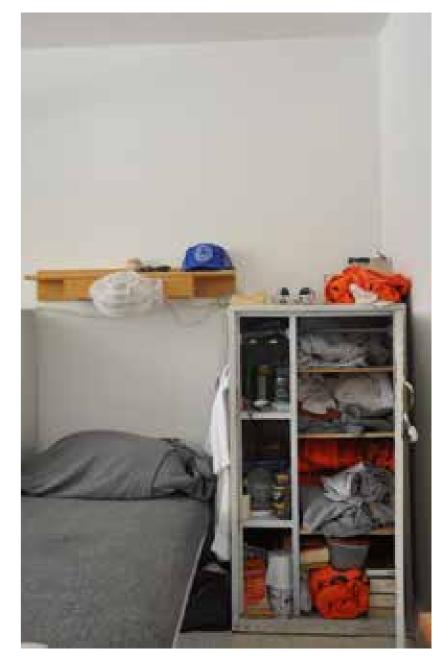




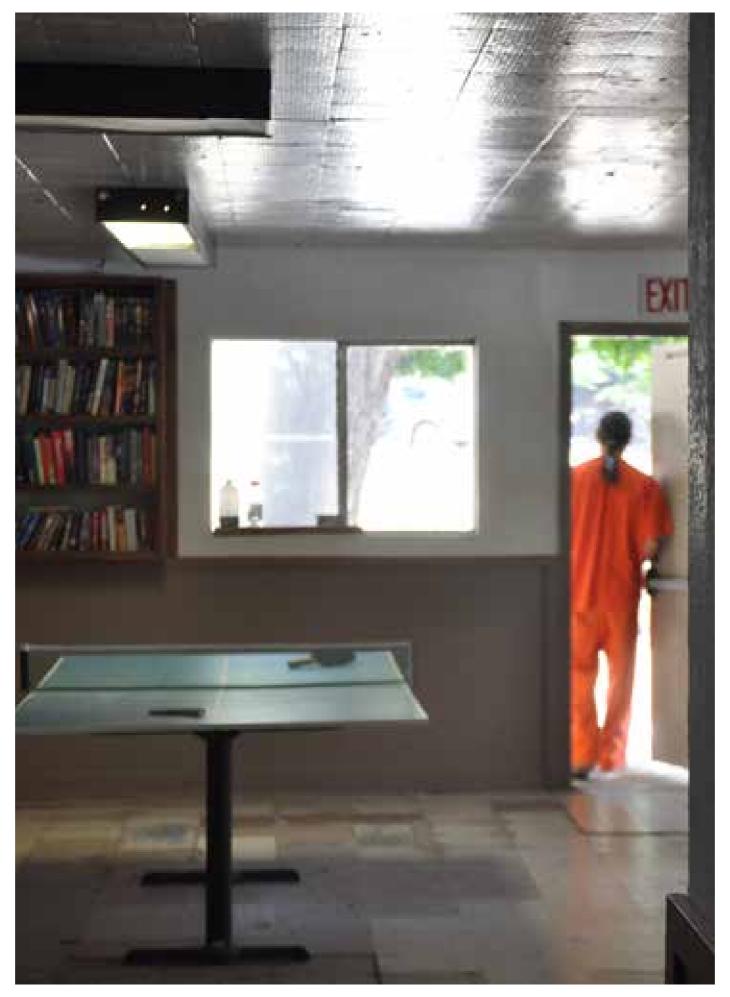
Photograph by Francesco Zuddas + Sabrina Puddu. Rainbow Conservation Camps 2014. Any use or reproduction of this image should be previously autorised by the authors.

The dormitories are organised according to the crews. The crew is not only a working unit, but also the basic unit in the dayli activities of the camp.





Institutional control over the single individual is not exerted as an act of individual inspection, but through the control of relational group dynamics.



Racial structure re-emerges in spare time: the leisure tv rooms are usually three and more or less informally dedicated to the most prominent social groups (white, black and latinos)





Photograph by Francesco Zuddas + Sabrina Puddu. Any use or reproduction of this image should be previously autorised by the authors.



Photograph by AP Photo/Reed Saxon published in Business Insider, 8 Aug 2015.

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Local



Fewer prison inmates signing up to fight California wildfires

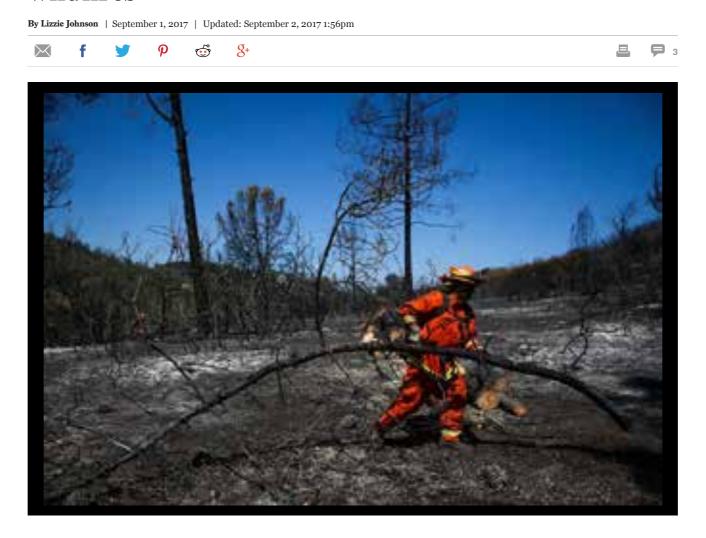
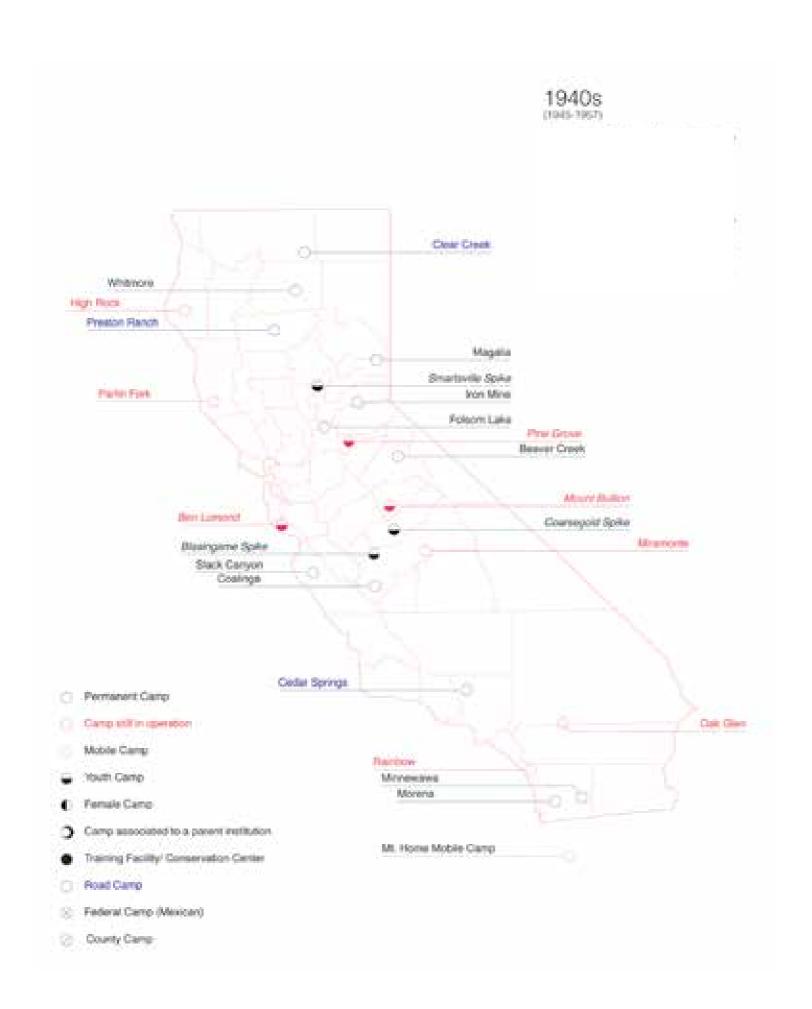


IMAGE 1 OF 1

Photo: Gabrielle Lurie, The Chronicle

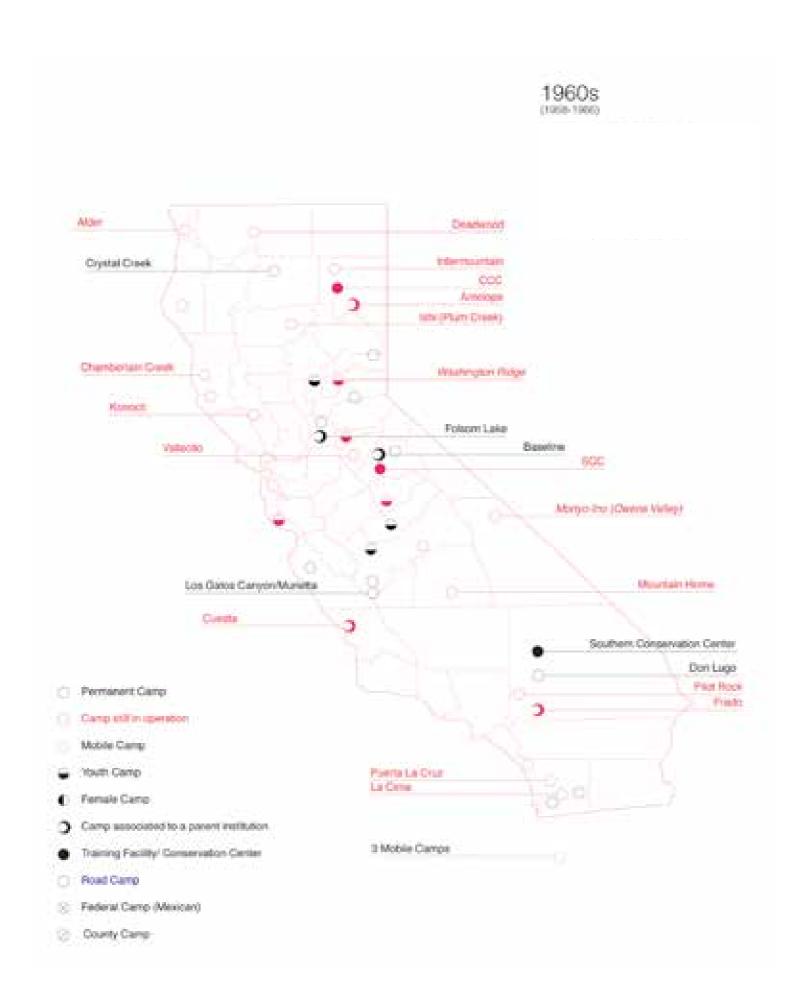
An inmate from the Delta Conservation Camp #8 organizes wood while mopping up the Canyon fire in Napa, Calif., on Tuesday, Aug. 15, 2017. below:Inmates from the Delta Conservation Camp #8 break for lunch after ... more

Thomas Rohl adjusted the 30-pound pack strapped to his back and hopped into a nearby fire rig. He was in a remote part of Solano County, on his way to help put out a grass fire smoldering a few miles to the west.













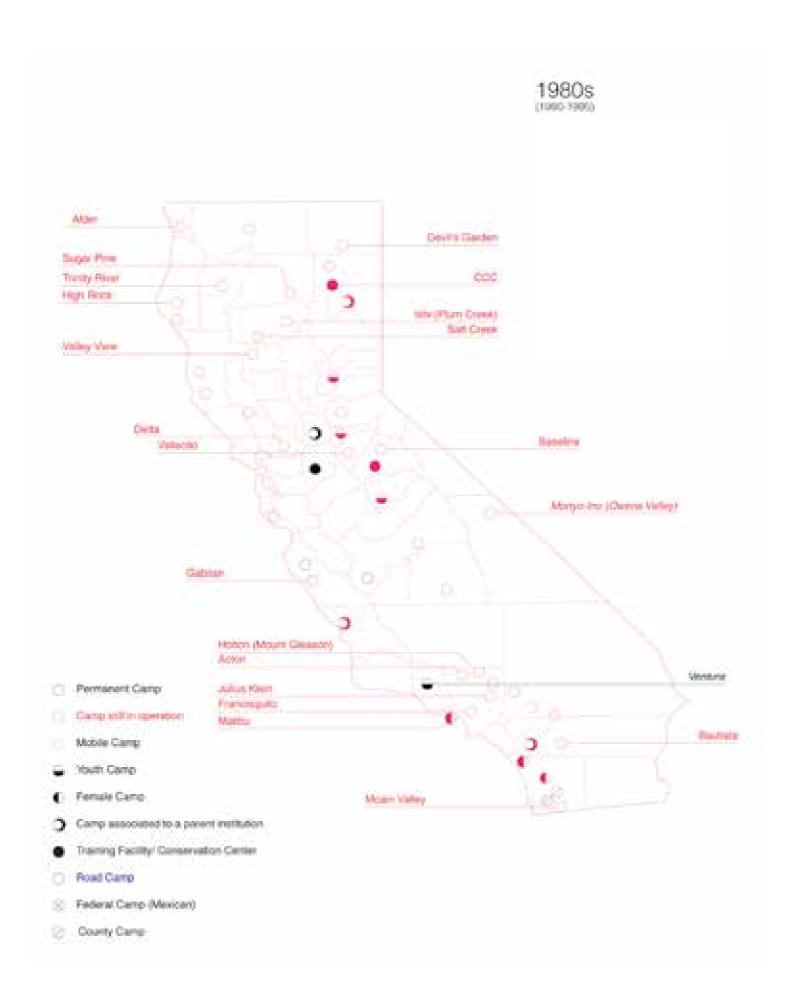


"The Conservation Camps are operated jointly with the Department of Youth Authority (wards), and the Department of Corrections (inmates). They are designed to provide a living-and-working experience in a beneficial outdoor environment that will be conducive to rehabilitation of wards and inmates assigned to the camps. In addition they function to provide an essential trained force that is highly effective for fire fighting and other resource protection and conservation work."

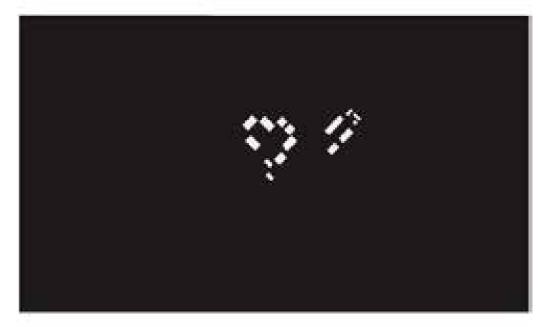
State Foresters Report 1969

"The **primary mission** of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) Conservation Camp program is to <u>provide an ablebodied</u>, trained work force for fire suppression and other <u>emergencies such as floods and earthquakes</u>. In addition, fire crews work on conservation projects on public lands and provide labor on local community services projects. The CDCR/CALFIRE annual operating budget is approximately \$2.35 million per camp. [...] <u>saving</u> <u>California taxpayers approximately \$100 million</u>". CDCR official website 2017

"Camp liaisons are also responsible for implementing the statewide Camps Information Program to make the public more aware of the <u>tax dollars saved by camp inmates through their project work, wildland fire fighting, and other emergency activities.</u>" (DOM 2014, p.2)

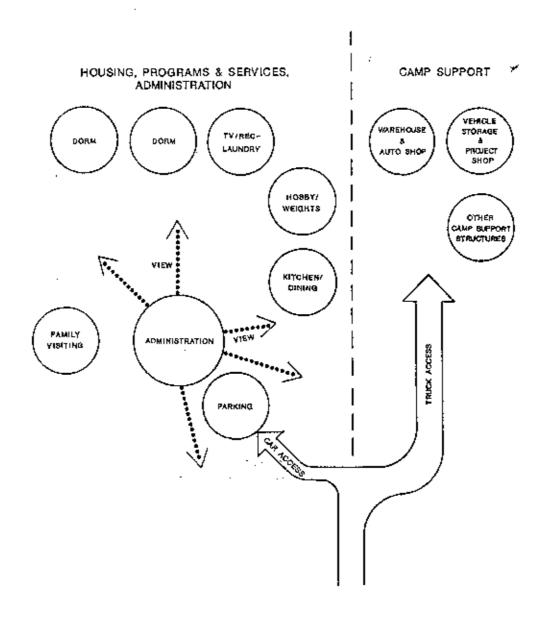






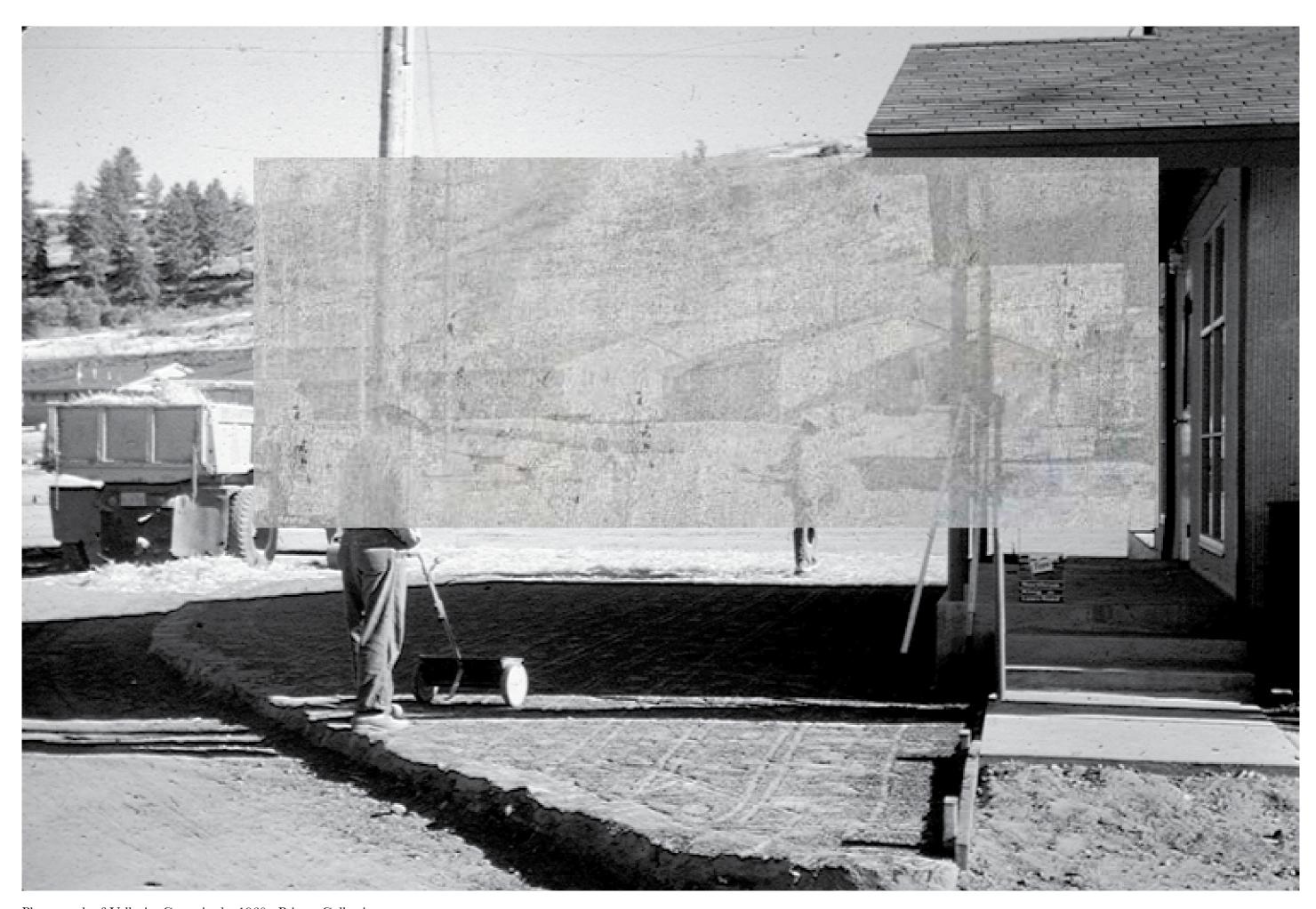


If sites permit, housing, administration, programs and services should be clustered together and separated from camp support buildings. The view from the administration building should include the approach to the camp, the camp yard, the housing area, as well as program and service buildings if possible. The warehouse and yehicle storage buildings should be across from one another with 50' - 75' of separation between.



CAMP

The character of the Conservation Camps relies on the ambiguity between the reassuring domestic appearance that is perceived from the threedimensional image of the buildings and the tacit societal regulation registered by the two-dimensional layout: the military quintessence of the camp.



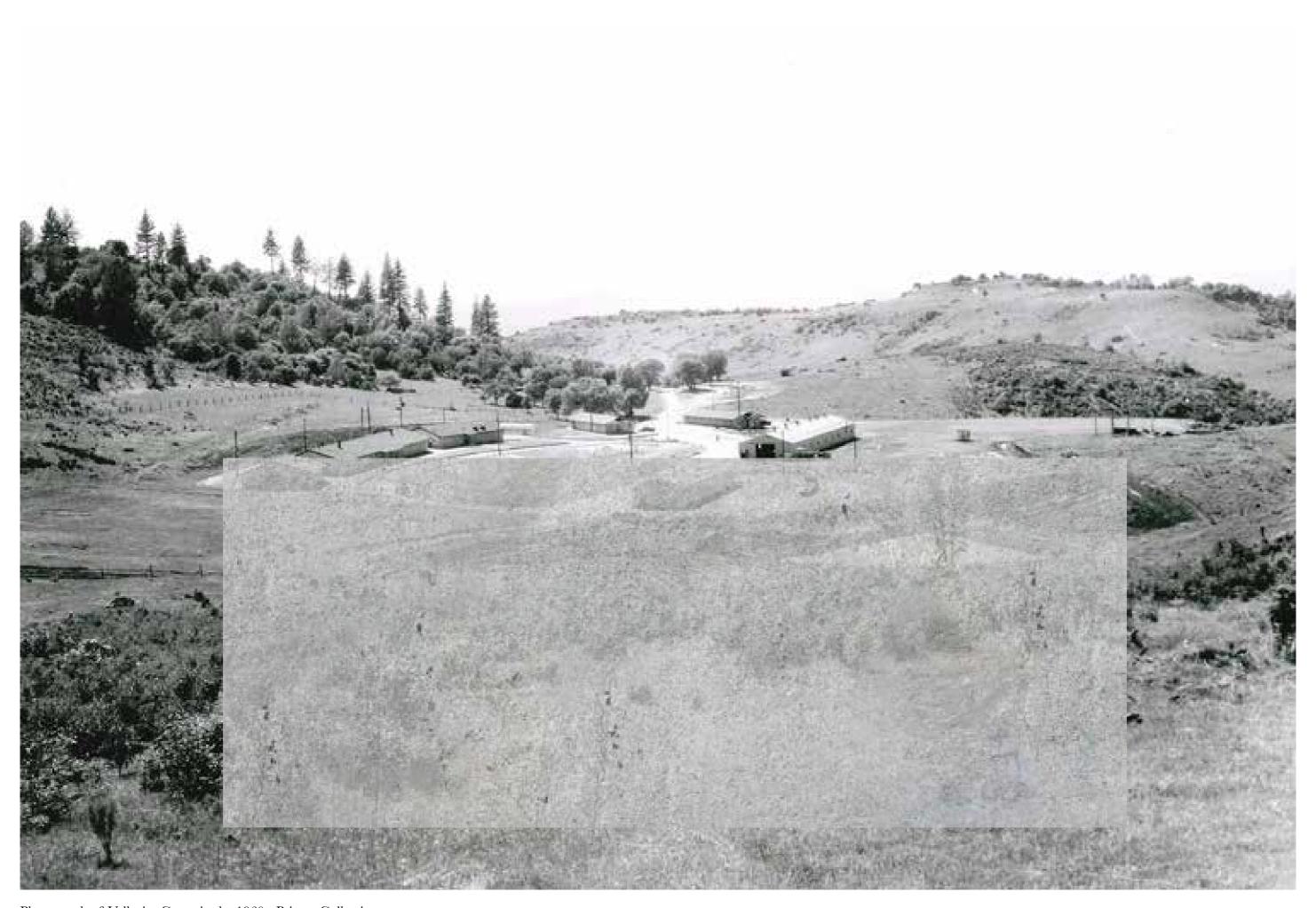
Photograph of Vallecito Camp in the 1960s. Private Collection.



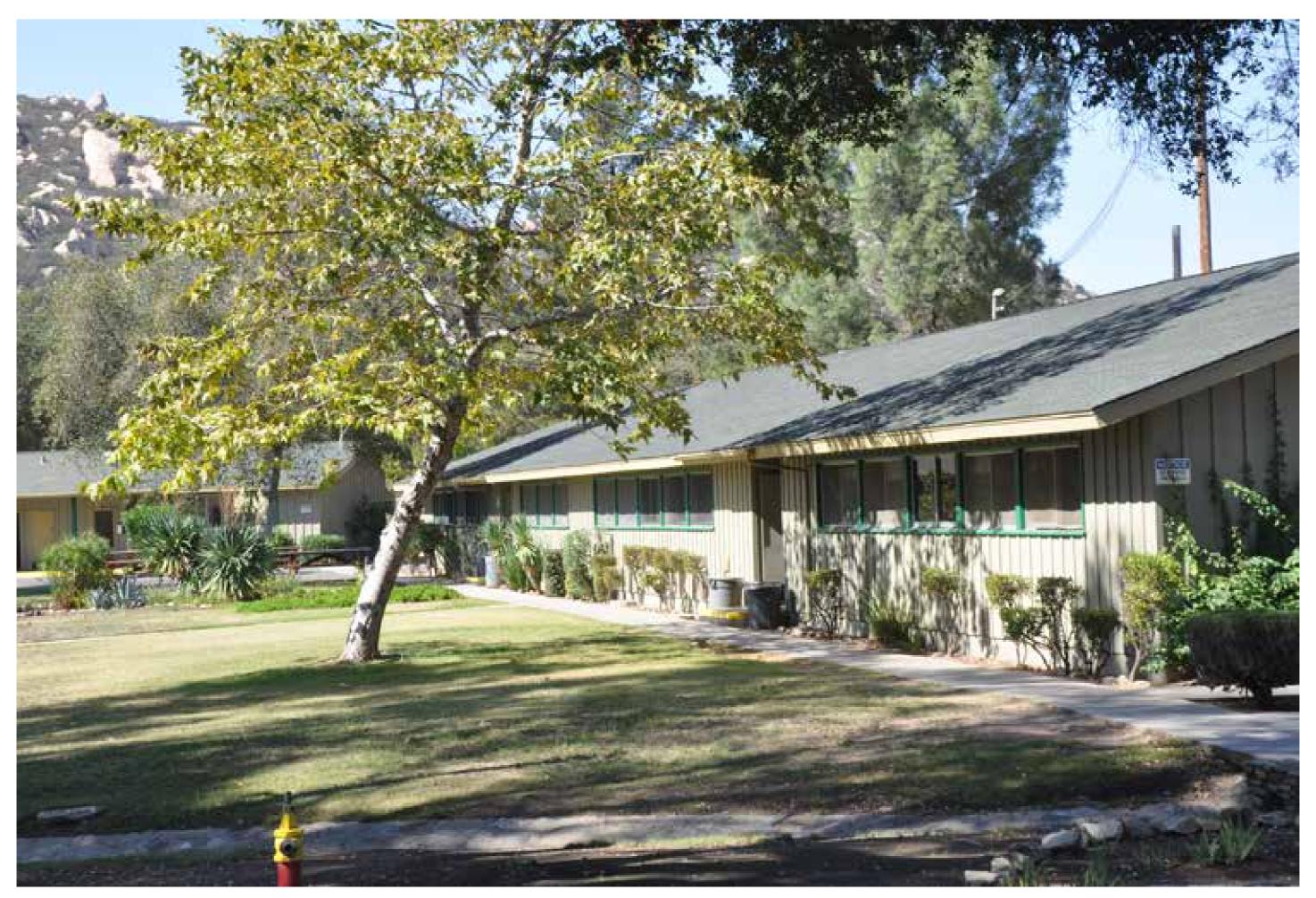
Photograph of Vallecito Camp in the 1960s. Private Collection.







Photograph of Vallecito Camp in the 1960s. Private Collection.



Photograph by Francesco Zuddas + Sabrina Puddu. Rainbow Conservation Camps 2014. Any use or reproduction of this image should be previously autorised by the authors.

Conservation Camp Program

The training, which was equally divided between "on-the-job" and classroom sessions was completed by 264 men during 1961.

1962 State Ferenters Report

Conservation Camp Program

The California Conservation Camp Program serves a dual purpose. The Division of Forestry is provided with manpower to perform the labor levelved in a variety of public conservation projects. Selected immates of the Department of Corrections and wards of the Department of the Youth Authority are provided the benefits to be derived from healthful living and the development of new habits associated with dignified employment in outdoor work. The success of this combination of men and work in the cooperative Conservation Camp Program is evident in its continued expansion.

Growth in 1962.

- Intermoentain Conservation Camp near Higher in Lessen County received the first of 80 innutes from Folsons State Prison on January 4, 1962.
- Deadwood Conservation Camp near Fort Jones in Siskiyou County (only 16 miles from the Oregon State Line) opened on June 1, 1962, with immutes from San Ouestin State Prison.
- Caseta Conservation Camp near San Luis Obigo in San Luis Obigo County, a completely new kind of operation in the California Conservation Camp Program, operad on May 1, 1962. The Forestry administrative offices, foreman's quarters, and warehouse facilities are located in leased military buildings adjacent to the Men's Colony, a Department of Corrections Institution. The correctional functions and living facilities for "camp" insents are provided as part of the normal operation of Men's Colony. The camp crows are received by Forestry personnel at an institution gate each work day, taken to the various projects or functions and returned to the institution at the end of the work period. This arrangement is lacking in the advantages constally associated with the "camp" atmosphere but does provide an essential camp work force in a geographical area where facilities for a separate personnel camp have not yet been made available.

The 345 words and 1980 inmates, a total of 2325 men, are assigned to California Conservation Camps of the following sizes:

- · 3 camps of twenty men,
- · 3 camps of forty men (mobiles),
- 4 camps of sixty men.
- · 1 camp of sixty-five men,
- 2 seventy man camps,
- · 20 cumps of eighty mon, and
- I one-handred man camp.
- These 34 camps are now in operation after 17 years of cooperative effort.

The District II Mobile Conservation Camp was moved twice during 1962.

A sensi-permanent seasonal location was established at Latour State Forest in Shasta County to which the Mobile Camp was moved in May to provide a summer work force for conservation activities on the Forest. The camp was moved to a winter location at MacArthur-Burney Falls Memorial State Park, also in Shasta County, in November.

The othertwo Mobile Conservation Camps were not moved during the year; District I remained at the future site of the Konneti Conservation Camp in Lake County, and the District IV Camp remained on Deer Creek near California Hot Springs in Tulare County.

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PROJECT SUMMER 135A0

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

CAMP EXPANSION PROJECT

HEW CAMP DESIGN CHITERIA GUIDELINES

DIVISION 1 - GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

61000 POLICY GUIDELINGS & DESIGN CRITERIA

.0100 The "New Comps Policy Guidelines (NCPG)" establish the general principles to be utilized in the new comp planning process. As an extension of that guideline, this Design Criteria section deals with more specific aspects of design and technical subjects. It is intended to provide the architect/engineer with basic data and information required to be incorporated into the design of new comps.

While the Design Criteria reflects the experience and requirements of the Department of Corrections, it is not intended to limit the professional judgement of the consultant in matters of design or appropriate application of materials and equipment.

- .0100 Deviation from the provisions of the Design Criteria shall be accomplished only through written approval from CDC.
- .0300 It is the policy of the Department of Corrections with regard to design and engineering criteria that the following concerns be addressed:
 - . Safety & Security needs of the staff and immates.
 - Operational simplicity, durability, and low maintenance of systems (ie parts for equipment locally available).
 - 3. Efficiency and economy of mystems.

Solutions need to be functional and where value engineering provides for functional and program requirements, the least cost solution shall be used. Thus, items of design that are solely related to adding eathering intrigue such as shaping a paraget for appearance or adding reveals in concrete surfaces are unacceptable.

01400 SPECIFICATIONS GUIDMLINES

- .0100 The A/E shall develop specifications organized by standard CSI format, with separate divisions for Electrical (Division 16) and Communications (Division 17).
- .0200 Division 1 Bidding requirements, contract forms, conditions of the contract, and general requirements will be (prepared by CDC) (furnished to Consultant).

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