



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 18-0812, **Version:** 1

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Supervisor Ranalli recommending Board:

- 1) Receive presentation from Chief Mike Webb, CAL FIRE Amador-El Dorado Unit, on Growlersburg Conservation Camp #33 that includes information on the Camp's history and the fire suppression, emergency response, fuels management, forest restoration and community service programs provided by the Camp;
- 2) Approve and authorize signature of Chair on Proclamation recognizing the Growlersburg Conservation Camp Program on its 50 Year Anniversary of providing fire suppression and community service work throughout the County of El Dorado and the State of California; and
- 3) Encourage the community to attend the Growlersburg Conservation Camp's 50 Year Celebration on Friday, June 1, 2018, at the Growlersburg Camp in Georgetown. (Est. Time: 10 Min.)

**Clerk of the Board note:** [On May 24, 2018 Cal Fire reported to the County that this event is not open to the public as originally believed. We apologize for the inconvenience.](#)

The Growlersburg Conservation Camp began operating in 1967 and was dedicated on May 18, 1968, by El Dorado County's Assemblyman Eugene "Gene" Chappie. El Dorado County Board of Supervisors Chairman, Supervisor W.C. Worrell attended this event. Assemblyman Eugene "Gene" Chappie sponsored a legislative Resolution to name the camp "Growlersburg" in recognition of the nickname for the town of Georgetown.

The primary mission of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) Conservation Camp Program is to provide an able-bodied, trained work force for fire suppression and other emergencies such as floods and earthquakes. In addition, fire crews work on conservation projects on public lands and provide labor for local community service projects. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) serves and safeguards the people and protects the property and resources of California.

CAL FIRE is currently authorized to operate 39 Conservation Camps statewide that house nearly 4,300 inmates and wards. These camps are operated in conjunction with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). Through this cooperative effort CAL FIRE is authorized to operate 196 fire crews year-round. These crews are available to respond to all types of emergencies including wildfires, floods, search and rescue, and earthquakes. When not responding to emergencies, the crews are busy with conservation and community service work projects for state, federal, and local government agencies. Fire crews perform several million hours of emergency response each year and many more hours on work projects in local communities.

The Growlersburg Conservation Camp can house a population of 132 inmates who work in assignments devoted exclusively to serving the community. The Camp staffs five firefighting hand crews that respond to wildfires throughout the State of California as well as to local emergencies such as flooding, rescues and snow incidents. When they are not responding to emergencies, the Growlersburg Crews are in our community constructing fuel breaks, removing dead trees, completing prescribed fire projects, and assisting parks, schools, cemeteries and other local agency with

projects. Growlersburg Crews provide labor for fuel reduction and vegetation management projects for the El Dorado County Department of Transportation, the Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park in Coloma, and the University of California, Berkeley's Blodgett Research Forest on the Georgetown Divide. Each year, Growlersburg crews alone provide over 400,000 hours of fire suppression and community service work and over 100,000 hours of emergency response work.

The Growlersburg Camp also includes a wood shop, welding shop and a mill to provide the crews with the resources to maintain camp equipment and develop the materials to produce benches and picnic tables for community parks and custom inlaid tables for firehouses across the state. The opportunity to use this equipment and construct these products provides additional vocational experience for the inmates and contributes to the mission of CAL FIRE and CDCR. Growlersburg picnic tables and benches are well known for their quality and recognizable throughout the County's parks and campgrounds.

Inmate firefighters are low level, non violent offenders who must earn the right to work in a Conservation Camp program through their non-violent behavior and conformance to rules while incarcerated. Only minimum-custody inmates are eligible to volunteer for assignment in a Conservation Camp. Each inmate is carefully screened and medically cleared on a case-by-case basis before they can be accepted into the program.

The values that are forged at the Growlersburg Conservation Camp through community service and hard work include pride and respect. Inmates are allowed family visits that will assist them to reintegrate back to their families when paroled. Community college coursework is available as well. This effort contributes to parolees that are less likely to re-offend and more likely to move on in their lives and re engage in society.

Year round emergency response, forest restoration, community projects and rehabilitated inmates are all incredible benefits of the CAL FIRE/ CDCR Conservation Camp Program.