



County of Santa Cruz

PROBATION DEPARTMENT

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September 21, 2000

Agenda: October 3, 2000

Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

REPORT ON JUVENILE RANCH/CAMPS UTILIZED IN THE CARE OF COURT WARDS BUDGET

Dear Members of the Board:

On June 20, 2000, during Probation Department Budget hearings, your Board requested information on recidivism of ranch/camp placements. This report is made in response to that request and includes: a description of the ranch/camps used during FY 1999-00; a discussion of the probation criteria and case review which is made prior to ranch/camp recommendations to the court; data on ranch/camp placements for FY 1999-00; a brief discussion about recidivism; and data on recidivism for FY 1998-99 ranch/camp participants.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Ranch/camps **differ** from traditional group home programs in that they are institutional rather than "homelike" settings. The sleeping arrangements are therefore typically group barracks rather than bedrooms. The ranch/camps are highly structured and somewhat isolated geographically. The programs do provide counseling, however, the orientation is behavioral rather than the classical therapeutic modality. Program activities focus on school, training, and physical exercise. Within the continuum of dispositional options available to Juvenile Courts in California, credit for time served, or "custody credits," are accrued for time spent in juvenile halls, ranch/camps, and the California Youth Authority, but not for group homes and residential treatment programs (such as our own Redwoods Program).

Once Probation receives a Court order to place a minor into a ranch/camp, the Placement Supervisor generally sends inquiries to all contracted facilities to assess if the minor meets their eligibility criteria. Unless otherwise indicated, the first preference is for the Fouts Springs Youth Facility in Stoneyford, CA. However, in response to the directions of the Court (which may request a longer program) and the needs of the minor (who may express concerns with potential

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gang conflicts in the northern or southern state) may contravene this preference. The following is a summary description for each program.

Bar-O Boys Ranch, 15005 Highway 199, Gasquet, CA

Bar-O Boys Ranch is located on the Smith River in the Six Rivers National Forest. It is operated by the Del Norte County Probation Department. The monthly cost is \$1,850 and its program length ranges from eight to nine months. The maximum capacity is 42 boys. Del Norte County Office of Education provides the participants with special and regular educational services. Bar-O Boys Ranch customizes its treatment program, targeting home and peer issues. Substance abuse counseling is provided via 12-step meetings and group counseling. Boys are also afforded an opportunity to be trained and certified in welding. Progression through the program is evaluated bimonthly.

Fouts Springs Youth Facility, 1333 Fouts Springs Road, Stoneford, CA

Fouts Springs Youth Facility is collaboratively operated by Colusa and Solano County Probation Departments. The monthly cost is \$2,780, and its program length is approximately six months. The maximum capacity is 70 boys. Colusa County Board of Education provides special and regular educational services. The camp implements a behavior modification program, based on the individual's needs, which includes counseling, work, and academic components. Fouts Springs offers a "Life Challenge Class," including a minimum of 90 hours substance abuse counseling for those minors experiencing drug dependency difficulties. This program incorporates the 12-step model and includes a "rope course" and "wilderness adventure trip" lasting two nights and three days.

Fouts Springs also operates the Snow Mountain Academy. Its length is approximately 100 days. The maximum capacity is 34 boys. The academy's goal is to provide training in discipline and leadership. These skills and values are instilled in the minor through a vigorous physical program. The successfully graduating minor is rewarded with a traditional native-American sweat lodge experience followed by a "wilderness" trip for two to five days.

Los Prietos Boys Camp, Paradise Road, Santa Barbara, CA

Los Prietos Boys Camp is located in a rural setting of the Los Padres National Forest. The maximum capacity is 56 boys. The program cost is \$1,500 per month and the program length is approximately five months. The educational curriculum provides regular and special education services. Counseling is provided by Licensed Clinical Social Worker and private agencies.

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Muriel Wright Center, (Girls Program) Bernal Road, San Jose, CA

Muriel Wright Center is located in South San Jose. It is operated by the Santa Clara County Probation Department. The monthly cost is \$3,420. They offer two program lengths: a ninety-day program and a five-month program. The maximum capacity is 64. The education program is provided by the Santa Clara County Office of Education and in addition to regular education classes, a Special Day Class is offered. Muriel Wright offers individual and group counseling as well as providing additional mental health services, if needed. For girls with drug and alcohol problems, they offer several programs to address these issues. Additional programs offered are an independent living skills course, a Girl Scouts program, parenting classes, sexual abuse treatment, sex education and gang intervention.

PROBATION DEPARTMENT USE OF RANCH/CAMPS

The Welfare and Institutions Code requires that the most suitable placement for a minor is the least restrictive environment which both protects the community and serves the youth's needs; preferably, this is the minor's home. It is internal Probation Department policy that each case is examined by the placement screening committee prior to a recommendation for ranch/camp. If the committee believes a recommendation for ranch/camp is warranted, the assigned probation officer will have a formal case review with the Juvenile Division Director. The following case details are examined:

- The law violations which lead to the consideration for ranch/camp and its implications on public safety risk.
- The severity of offense history.
- The prior record of offenses.
- The prior provision of services and resources.
- A determination as to whether an alternative community supervision plan could provide the needed structure, support and supervision necessary to ameliorate public safety risk..
- Individual factors including age, maturity, cognitive ability, medical and substance abuse history.

After considering the above criteria, an alternative to ranch/camp is recommended if it is determined that the youth and community could benefit from a less restrictive placement or supervision program. A ranch/camp recommendation may be submitted to the court when a court ward has a serious delinquent history, poses a present public safety risk and has not been amenable to prior treatment efforts. The court ultimately makes the final decision to order ranch/camp placement. The order for ranch/camp is generally made as a sanction for ongoing offense behavior and a failure to respond to less restrictive therapeutic efforts. The average offender has sustained two felony law violations, 4 misdemeanors, over three probation violations

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prior to their commitment to ranch/camp. Frequently, there are other offenses “dismissed but considered” by the court at disposition as a result of negotiation. Unlike therapeutic programs and group homes, a ranch/camp commitment is a sanction in which the court credits the minor with time served in custody, similar to a commitment to the Juvenile Hall or the California Youth Authority. There is, therefore, a maximum amount of time that can be served in these secure settings based on the minor’s offense history.

While ranch/camps can serve as a punitive sanction, they also provide rehabilitative services, such as job development, substance abuse treatment, and education. Under California law, a placement to ranch/camp must be considered by the Court prior to commitment to the California Youth Authority unless the offense is of such a magnitude that it demands the most serious sanction available.

The youth ordered into ranch/camps are a small sub-population of the youth referred to probation. To offer some perspective, there are 27,500 youth in Santa Cruz County between the ages of 11 through 17. There were 2,750 youth in calendar year 1999 cited or arrested by local law enforcement, including those individuals cited or arrested multiple times. There were 1000 youth receiving some form of probation supervision in 1999. Out of these 1000 youth, 13 were ordered into ranch/camp in calendar year 1999 and 7 were ordered into the California Youth Authority during that year.

RANCH/CAMP SUMMARY ACTIVITY FOR FY 1999-00:

- 1) Twenty individual court wards were served in FY 1999-00, all males.
- 2) Average age was 16.6 years at time of placement.
- 3) Seventy percent of the minors had previously been in group home placement.
- 4) Four of the males were terminated from ranch/camp prior to program completion due to misbehavior, but were re-admitted in the same year.
- 5) An additional five minors were terminated from the program due to misbehavior, new law violations, or running away, and were not re-admitted.
- 6) The average length of stay for graduates was 4.9 months and 3.9 months for non-graduates.
- 7) Ten minors successfully graduated from ranch/camp.
- 8) Probation recommended against a ranch/camp in 67% of those who received a ranch/camp sentence by the judge.

RECIDIVISM STUDY (FY 1998-99)

Court wards who are ordered into ranch/camp placements are the juvenile justice system’s recidivists. One finding in juvenile justice research is that a small group of juveniles commit a majority of the offenses. Another finding is that early onset of delinquent behavior (14 years of age and under) is associated with longer delinquent histories (“criminal careers”), which

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frequently carry on into adulthood. These factors must be taken into account when analyzing recidivism. For example, recidivism may be lower for a youth who has participated in an early intervention program than a youth who has participated in a ranch/camp after a lengthy juvenile offense history. Given the intractability of this small probation sub-population, recidivism is expected to occur at a higher rate after program graduation than for other probation sub-populations that meet the criteria for less restrictive settings.

The Probation Department examined all 28 court wards who were released or terminated from ranch/camp placements during FY 1998/99. The amount of days since release from ranch/camp up to August 15, 2000 was calculated for each individual. To create a basis for comparison, an equal period of time for each individual was examined prior to the ranch/camp placement. The average time period for comparison was 1.7 years pre and post ranch/camp involvement.

The findings are charted in the attached Appendix A. Pre and Post recidivism is presented side by side in bar charts for misdemeanor and felonies. Pre and post data on probation violations is included in the chart containing misdemeanors.

Summary

Youth sent to ranch/camps have, on the average, sustained five to seven sustained law violations and slightly over three probation violations prior to their ranch/camp commitment. The recidivism study delineated in the appendix showed that youth released from ranch/camps during FY 1998/99 sustained significantly fewer offenses and probation violations after ranch/camp placement than during an equal period of time prior to ranch/camp placement. Most significant is the overall reduction in sustained felony (more serious crime) behavior. The use of ranch/camp placement eliminated community risk for this high risk group of offenders during their ranch/camp placement. This overall reduction in community risk has continued since their reintegration. Some subcategories showed slight increases post ranch/camp. There was an increase of two felony sex offenses and one violent misdemeanor. These samples are too small to be conclusive, however the sub-categories warrant investigation over time with larger samples, as they may have program implications for the ranch/camps and probation services upon reintegration.

Conclusion

The Probation Department continues to explore ways to improve the services to this population. The PARK program, which was funded by the Board of Corrections Challenge Grant, was not available until November 1999. None of the youth sent to ranch/camps in 1999 received the PARK service.


The GROW Family Preservation Program is a family-based, intensive services program that was utilized by 30% of the minors who ultimately were committed to ranch/camp in FY 1999-00. It will remain a departmental goal to increase the number of youth who could benefit from these placement prevention resources during in the upcoming year.

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The department is in the process of examining the use of family preservation programs like PARK and GROW to provide intensive "wraparound" re-integrative services as a post ranch/camp option in addition to the services these programs provide before placements. The rationale for this is that the youth graduating from ranch/camps are at risk for future placement. The GROW and PARK programs could provide the structure, supervision and support necessary to ensure their success, productivity and sustainable change in the community.

IT IS THEREFORE RECOMMENDED that your Board accept and file this report on ranch/camps utilized in the Care of Court Wards budget.

Sincerely,


JOHN P. RHOADS
Chief Probation Officer

JPR:SM:FN

RECOMMENDED:



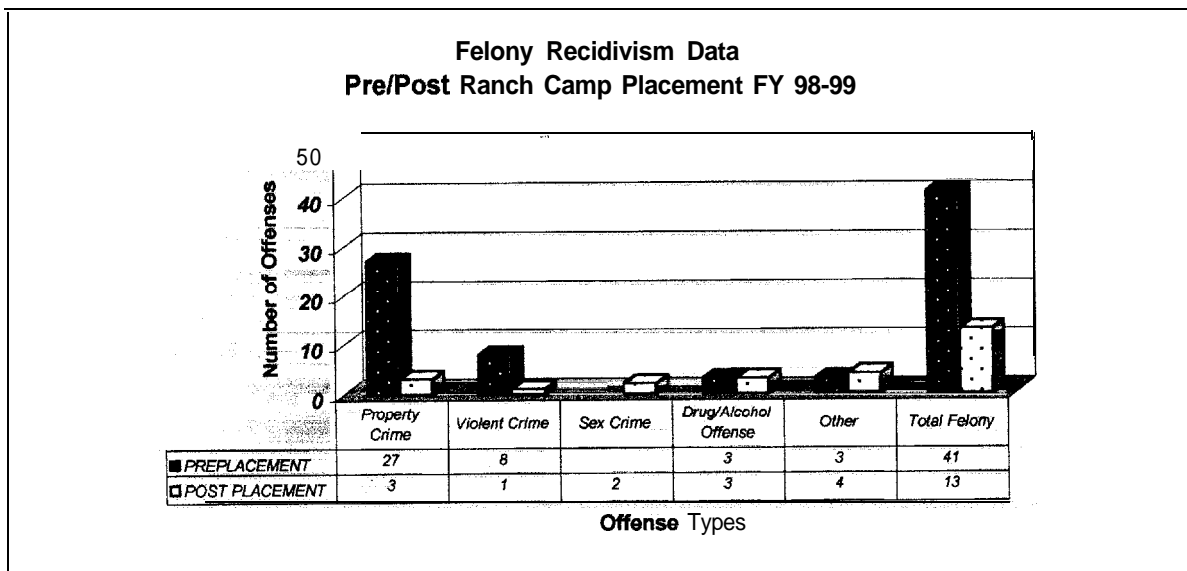
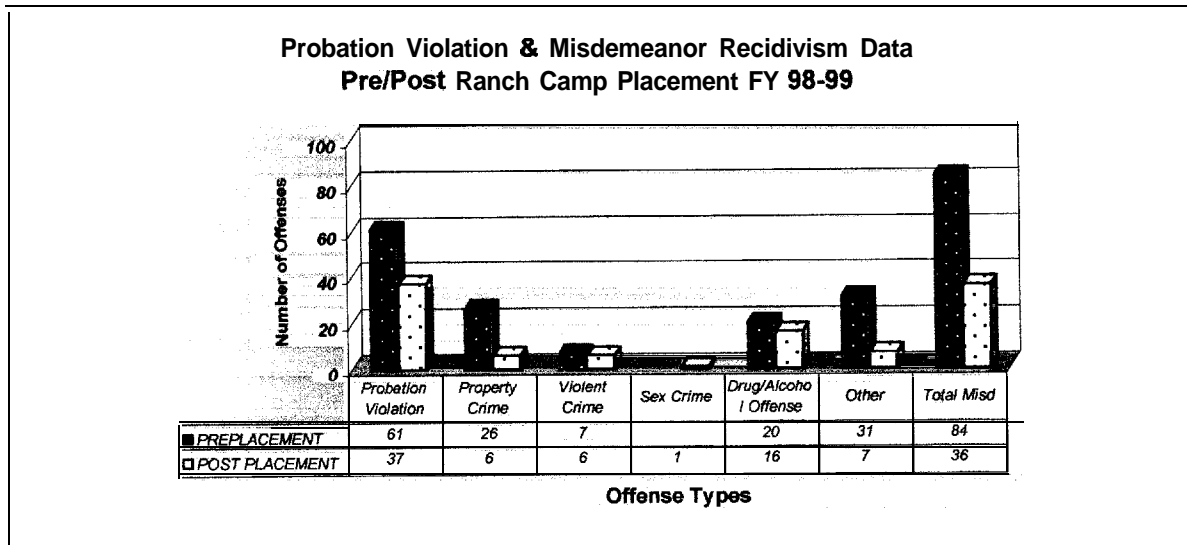
SUSAN A. MAURIELLO
County Administrative Officer

cc: County Administrative Officer
courts
Probation Department

RECIDIVISM STUDY

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Pre & Post Ranch Camp Placement Comparison on Recidivism
All Youth in Ranch Camp during Fiscal Year 98/99
Recidivism Data/Post Placement for Equal Time Period as Prior Placement



The above study looked at recidivism statistics after release from ranch camp placement until August 15, 2000 as compared to an equal amount of time prior to the ranch camp commitment. The offense data represents all sustained offenses committed by the 28 youths who were in ranch camp placement during fiscal year 98/99.