

A PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE SELF-EVALUATION PROJECT AT THE THREE
MASSACHUSETTS FORESTRY CAMPS

Massachusetts Department of Correction

John J. Fitzpatrick
Commissioner

James F. Mahoney
Director of Forestry Camps

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INTRODUCTION

During the month of March, 1970, a self-evaluation research project was carried out at the three forestry camps of the Department of Correction. The goal of this project was to determine the extent to which the three camps measured up to the standards of the American Correctional Association. A questionnaire developed by the American Correctional Association, based on its Manual of Correctional Standards, was administered to thirty-five of the camp personnel. One of the important aspects of this research, therefore, is that the ratings are the product of those directly involved in the operations and programs of the camps.

A major aim of the self-evaluation project was to provide some systematic information on the strengths, weaknesses, and needs of the forestry camps. Such information will provide a basis for short and long range planning for improvements in programs, procedures, and physical facilities.

Another important aspect of this research was to encourage the respondents to evaluate the correctional standards themselves. That is, if a respondent felt that a particular standard was inappropriate, invalid, or irrelevant, he could point this out in specific terms in his response. This kind of critical appraisal of the standards will be very useful to the American Correctional Association for their next revision of the Manual. Eventually, the American Correctional Association plans to use the revised correctional standards as part of an accreditation system for correctional institutions, camps, and systems, much like the hospital accreditation process of the American Hospital Association.

Since other correctional systems across the nation are participating in this self-evaluation project, it will be possible to compare the ratings of the Massachusetts forestry camps with those of other camps which have been evaluated. At present, self-evaluation has been completed for four forestry camps outside of Massachusetts. These studies will provide some comparative data which may be helpful in interpreting the findings of the evaluation of the Massachusetts forestry camps.

METHOD

The items or questions in the American Correctional Association ^{questionnaire} ~~were~~ taken directly from the chapter on camps in the Manual of Correctional Standards. Each respondent received a copy of this chapter so that he could read it over before filling out the questionnaire. Thus, each item on the questionnaire could be evaluated in its proper context. Every item was scored with one of the following symbols:

- (X) The provisions or conditions are present to the extent that the item may be positively answered without qualification.
- (-) There is some minor variation or omission of the requirements as described in the Manual.
- (0) The essential factors are missing or so limited as to be ineffective.
- (NA) The item cannot be applied to the local situation. Each use of this symbol required an explanation on an attached form.
- (?) The respondent does not know whether or not the institution meets the conditions or provisions of this item.

Each camp was rated by a number of evaluators (camp officers and senior camp officers) and by a final evaluator (the camp supervisor). The ratings of the evaluators on each item were summarized for the final evaluator before he

made his assessment. However, the final evaluator's rating was not necessarily a recording of the consensus on each item. Rather, it was his judgment as shaped by the opinions of the preliminary evaluators. Where there was disagreement on the ratings of a particular item, the final evaluator generally consulted with the preliminary evaluators in order to help him make the most informed response.

The comparison of the Massachusetts camps with the four camps that have already been evaluated will be based on the ratings of the final evaluators. The reason for this is that the 'final evaluators' ratings are the only ones provided by the American Correctional Association for the four camps outside Massachusetts.

A total of 35 evaluators completed questionnaires at the three Massachusetts forestry camps - 12 evaluators at M.C.I., Plymouth, 12 at M.C.I., Monroe, and 11 at M.C.I., Warwick. This represents 97% of the forestry camp personnel, and clearly reflects the support for the research among the staff at the camps. (The only camp employee who did not fill out a questionnaire was out of work due to illness at the time of the research.)

The distribution and collection of the questionnaire and the summary of the ratings of the preliminary evaluators was done by the staff of the Officers Training Academy. The overall coordination of the project was also handled by the Training Academy staff under the supervision of the Deputy Commissioner for Personnel and Training. The Commissioner, the Director of Forestry Camps, and the Assistant Director of Forestry Camps also played important roles in initiating and developing this self-evaluation project.

RESULTS

Table I presents the percentage of forestry camp standards that were considered to be completely met - i.e., the percentage of "X" responses.¹ The rating of the final evaluator and the combined rating of all evaluators are presented separately for each forestry camp. For example, at M.C.I., Plymouth the final evaluator felt that 91.7% of the standards were completely met, while the combined responses of all evaluators at Plymouth resulted in a rating of 82.3% of standards completely met. At M.C.I., Monroe and M.C.I., Warwick the final evaluators made ratings of 88.9% and 92.6% respectively; the combined ratings of all evaluators at these camps were 79.5% and 90.1% respectively. Thus, the overall rating of the three final evaluators was 91.0% and the overall rating of all evaluators from the three camps was 83.8%.

Table I also indicates that the overall percentage of standards completely met for the four camps outside Massachusetts was 89.2% according to the ratings of the final evaluators. Thus, a comparison of the overall rating of the Massachusetts camps (91.0%) with that of the camps outside Massachusetts (89.2%) reveals that the policies, practices, and programs of the Massachusetts forestry camps are at least on a par with those of other camps which have participated in self-evaluation. (It is well to point out here that the four camps which have already participated in self-evaluation are probably within the most progressive correctional systems in the nation.)

In Table II the percentage of "X" responses and the percentage of "-" responses are presented, along with the sum of these percentages for each camp.

¹ In determining the percentage of "X" responses, the "NA" responses and the "?" responses were eliminated from the total number of responses. Therefore, this percentage refers to the number of "X" responses out of those that were rated "X", "-", or "O".

(The "-" response refers to those standards which were considered to be essentially met, but with some minor variation or omission of the requirements.) An important feature of this table is the section labeled, Combined "X" and "-" Responses. The statistics here are of interest because they indicate the percentage of standards that were either completely met, or that could be completely met with only minor changes in practices or policies. For example, at M.C.I., Plymouth, according to the rating of the final evaluator, 91.7% of the standards were completely met, and 100.0% of the standards could be completely met with only minor changes. According to the combined responses of all Plymouth evaluators, 82.3% of the standards were completely met, and 96.6% of the standards could be completely met with only minor changes. Viewed another way, none of the standards was completely missed in the view of the final evaluator, while only 3.4% of the standards were completely missed according to the overall rating of all Plymouth evaluators.

Table II also indicates that the findings for Monroe and Warwick on the combined "X" and "-" responses were very similar to the Plymouth findings, described above. There was, then, a close agreement among the ratings of the final evaluators and those of the preliminary evaluators at the three camps both in terms of the proportion of standards that were completely met, and in terms of the proportion of standards that could be completely met with only minor changes.

The "Total" column of Table II indicates that the combined "X" and "-" responses of the three final evaluators was 98.7%. For the four forestry camps outside Massachusetts, the combined "X" and "-" responses of the final evaluators was 96.1%. Thus, again, the Massachusetts camps compare favorably with those outside the state.

In Table III the percentage of evaluators giving an "X" response is presented for each standard. The standards have been ranked according to the "Total" columns in this table. For example, all the evaluators at the three camps agreed that standards one through three were completely met - i.e., (1) "Something of real value is produced in the camp work program"; (2) "Control over mail and visits is administered by the camp officials"; (3) "Care has been taken to avoid locating camps or becoming involved in work projects where liquor is sold or houses of prostitution are operating." On the other hand, only 54.2% of the evaluators felt that standard number 27 was completely met. An advantage of this table is that it provides some specific information on the strengths and weaknesses of each camp by presenting the percentage of evaluators who considered each standard to be completely met.

SUMMARY

The goal of this report was to spotlight the strengths, weaknesses, and needs of the forestry camp program by examining the extent to which the camps measured up to the standards of the American Correctional Association. Perhaps the most striking aspect of the study was the consistently high ratings given to the camps by the evaluators. According to the ratings of the final evaluators, 91.0% of the camp standards were completely met, and, indeed, 98.7% of them could be met with only minor changes. Similarly, according to the overall ratings of all evaluators, 83.8% of the standards were completely met, and 96.0% of them could be completely met with only minor changes. It should also be mentioned that the ratings of the Massachusetts forestry camps were found to be slightly higher than those of the four camps outside Massachusetts which have

participated in the self-evaluation project.

An impressive aspect of the study was the similarity in the ratings of the final evaluator and the preliminary evaluators for each camp. A comparison of these ratings among the three camps also revealed a close agreement. This convergence of the ratings within the camps and between the camps indicates that a high level of reliability and validity is associated with the results of the study.

Finally, the report provided some specific data on the strengths and weaknesses of each camp by indicating, for each item on the questionnaire, the percentage of evaluators who considered the standard to have been completely met. This information may be useful to forestry camp administrators since it suggests some particular areas where changes could be considered.

All the data from this self-evaluation study will be forwarded to the American Correctional Association for analysis by their staff. They will send to the Department of Correction an up-to-date comparison of the Massachusetts forestry camps with all other camps in the nation which have been evaluated. When this material is received from the American Correctional Association, it will be made available to all interested personnel of the Department of Correction.

Prepared by:

Francis J. Carney
Edward F. Callahan

Table I
ACA Self-Evaluation Project
Proportion of Correctional Standards Met

	50	60	70	80	90	100	"X" %
1. M.C.I. Plymouth							
Final Evaluator							91.7%
All Evaluators							82.3%
2. M.C.I. Monroe							
Final Evaluator							88.9%
All Evaluators							79.5%
3. M.C.I. Warwick							
Final Evaluator							92.6%
All Evaluators							90.6%
Total							
Final Evaluators							91.0%
All Evaluators							83.8%
NATIONAL AVERAGE*							89.2%

INTERPRETATION: The Bargraph indicates the proportion of questions that were answered affirmatively by both the Final Evaluator and all the evaluators, without qualification.

* The National Average refers to the overall rating of 4 forestry camps which have participated in the ACA Self-Evaluation Project to date.

Table II

The Combined "X" and "-" Responses of the Final Evaluator
and of All Evaluators for Each Camp

<u>Responses</u>	<u>Camps</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>Plymouth</u>	<u>Monroe</u>	<u>Warwick</u>	
<u>"X" Response</u>				
Final Evaluator	91.7%	88.9%	92.6%	91.0%
All Evaluators	82.3%	79.5%	90.6%	83.9%
<u>"-" Response</u>				
Final Evaluator	8.3%	11.1%	3.7%	7.7%
All Evaluators	14.3%	15.2%	6.3%	12.1%
<u>Combined "X" and "-" Responses</u>				
Final Evaluator	100.0%	100.0%	96.3%	98.7%
All Evaluators	96.6%	94.7%	96.9%	96.0%

Table III

Rank of Standards According to Percentage of Evaluators Giving an "X" Response

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Standard</u>	<u>Percentage of Evaluators Giving "X" Response</u>			
		<u>Plymouth</u>	<u>Monroe</u>	<u>Warwick</u>	<u>Total</u>
1.	Something of real value is produced in the camp work program.	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
2.	Control over mail and visits is administered by the camp officials.	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
3.	Care has been taken to avoid locating camps or becoming involved in work projects where liquor is sold or houses of prostitution are operating.	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
4.	The safekeeping of prisoners is an essential function of prison management and there is no delegation of this responsibility other than to correctional employees.	100.0%	100.0%	90.9%	97.1%
5.	Recreational, religious, and educational programs are the direct responsibilities of correctional workers.	91.7%	100.0%	100.0%	97.1%
6.	There is a predetermined plan in writing concerning procedures that are to be followed in foreseeable emergencies such as escapes, serious injuries, etc.	100.0%	91.7%	100.0%	97.1%
7.	Work crews are limited to prisoners who need <u>not</u> be accompanied by armed guards or <u>controlled</u> by the use of chains or other discredited forms of mechanical restraint.	91.7%	91.7%	100.0%	94.3%
8.	The selection of prisoners for camp assignment is made by a classification committee.	91.7%	100.0%	90.9%	94.3%
9.	As a means of rewarding them for their labors wages are paid to the prisoners.	100.0%	100.0%	81.8%	94.1%
10.	The institution encourages and plans healthy, helpful contacts by carefully selected people from surrounding communities who are willing to contribute time and effort to camp programs.	75.0%	100.0%	100.0%	91.4%
11.	There is an orderly, officially prescribed, method of handling disciplinary matters.	91.7%	91.7%	81.8%	88.6%
12.	The legal and moral responsibility for the welfare of the inmate is assumed by the prison officials and is not delegated to other agencies.	91.7%	75.0%	100.0%	88.6%

Table III

Rank of Standards According to Percentage of Evaluators Giving an "X" Response

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Standard</u>	<u>Percentage of Evaluators Giving "X" Response</u>			
		<u>Plymouth</u>	<u>Monroe</u>	<u>Warwick</u>	<u>Total</u>
13.	Prison authorities have established sound camp quotas.	91.7%	75.0%	100.0%	88.6%
14.	Malingering, particularly if repeated, results in the prisoners being returned to the institution.	100.0%	66.6%	90.0%	85.3%
15.	Inasmuch as the actual value of the work done by prisoners will not be shown by ordinary accounting procedures an adequate explanation of this fact always accompanies the financial statement which has been issued.	80.0%	83.3%	88.9%	84.6%
16.	Inmates are given a thorough medical and dental examination just prior to camp assignment.	100.0%	63.6%	81.8%	82.4%
17.	The visiting Chaplain is oriented to the limitations of correctional responsibilities and oriented to the camp program and philosophy.	66.6%	100.0%	75.0%	81.3%
18.	Well marked limits for either a prison camp or work area are maintained.	91.7%	50.0%	90.9%	77.1%
19.	A complete set of well considered and properly approved rules and regulations for operations of the camp and work project are available in writing to all staff personnel.	75.0%	66.6%	90.9%	77.1%
20.	Caution is exercised in the assignment of inmates to farms or camps when their cases have held public interest.	41.7%	83.3%	100.0%	74.3%
21.	In accounting procedures books are kept in such a manner as to reflect net earnings.	66.6%	58.3%	90.0%	71.4%
22.	Such employees have a thorough understanding of what they are expected to do in case of emergencies.	50.0%	83.3%	80.0%	70.6%
23.	With regards to responsibilities for the supervision of prisoners there is a clearly defined agreement between the cooperating agencies and the correctional agency.	66.6%	50.0%	90.9%	68.6%
24.	Employees of other governmental agencies are familiar with the laws, rules, and regulations pertaining to prisonnel.	41.7%	75.0%	81.8%	65.7%
25.	The positive criteria and negative factors as cited in the MANUAL are taken into full consideration to determine whether an inmate is suitable for camp assignment.	27.3%	66.6%	90.9%	61.8%

Table III

Rank of Standards According to Percentage of Evaluators Giving an "X" Response

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Standard</u>	<u>Percentage of Evaluators Giving "X" Response</u>			
		<u>Plymouth</u>	<u>Monroe</u>	<u>Warwick</u>	<u>Total</u>
26.	The visiting Chaplain is paid on a per diem basis.	91.7%	16.7%	66.7%	57.6%
27.	The granting of "good time" is not used as a means of rewarding prisoners for their work or good behavior.	0.0%	50.0%	70.0%	54.2%
		82.3%	79.7%	90.6%	83.8%

Appendix A

Supplementary Reports

In addition to completing the questionnaire on the camps, many evaluators filled out supplementary reports. A major purpose of these supplementary reports was to provide the evaluator with an opportunity to explain an "NA" response - i.e., to spell out why he felt a particular standard was not applicable to the Massachusetts forestry camp program. These reports could also be used to make suggestions for revisions of the standards on forestry camps for the next publication of the Manual of Correctional Standards. A brief summary of the highlights of the material in these supplementary reports will be presented here.

The evaluators filled out a total of 49 supplementary reports on the 27 items in the questionnaire. Those issues which were mentioned by at least three evaluators will be briefly discussed here. Perhaps some generalizations will emerge from the evaluators' comments which will have implications for changes in practices or for revisions of correctional standards.

1. "Good Time". The item which generated the largest number of comments by the evaluators was concerned with the granting of "good time" or "camp time" as a means of rewarding camp inmates for their work or for good behavior. One out of three evaluators filled out a supplementary report on this issue.

The item in the questionnaire stated, "The granting of "good time" is not used as a means of rewarding prisoners for their work or good behavior." According to the Manual of Correctional Standards, the rationale for not granting extra "good time" or "camp time" to camp inmates was that it tends to discriminate against certain inmates. For example, there may be some lifers or sex offenders who have proven themselves to be very dependable workers and well-behaved inmates within the walled institutions. However, because of their offense these inmates would be ineligible, by statute, for transfer to a forestry camp. Accordingly, they would not be eligible to earn the extra "camp time." According to the Manual this is a discriminatory practice.

In general, the evaluators who filled out a supplementary report on this item did not agree with the position on "good time" which was presented in the Manual. There was a consensus that the current practice of awarding two-and-a-half days per month "camp time" is beneficial to the camp program and that it ought to be maintained.

2. Inmate Wages. Some dissatisfaction was expressed with the current practice of paying all camp inmates (with the exception of those in MDTA programs) at the same rate of fifty cents a day. It was suggested that a pay scale be established, ranging up to one dollar a day (which is double the top pay rate of those within the walled institutions. The main concern of the evaluators making this recommendation was to provide greater incentive for camp workers and to allow camp officials to reward those who are the most conscientious workers.

3. Accounting Procedures. Several other evaluators reported that they were not aware of any accounting procedures which reflect the work and services provided by the camp inmates. Their primary concern was that the camp program has not been receiving the credit it deserves for the money that the program has saved for the Commonwealth. Given this interest on the part of the personnel of the camps, perhaps the financial report of the Director of Forestry Camps could be shared with them since ^{this} report does contain the figures of the Department of Natural Resources on the amount of money that has been saved for the state by the work of the camp men.

4. Orientation to Camp Program. One general issue which was raised by several evaluators was the need for better orientation procedures for those people outside the Department of Correction who are working with the camp inmates. It was suggested that a handbook be written which would contain all the relevant rules and regulations. Such a handbook would help to make the orientation process more systematic.