

# **Final Resource Conservation District Municipal Services Review**

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**December 2007**



# EL DORADO LAFCO

LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

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## FINAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT MUNICIPAL SERVICES REVIEW

Adopted December 5, 2007

### Commissioners

*Ted Long*                      *Francesca Loftis*  
*Ron Briggs*                      *Carl Hagen*  
*Ken Humphreys*                      *Harry Norris*  
*James R. Sweeney*

### Alternates

*Helen Baumann*                      *Roberta Colvin*  
*Michael Cooper*                      *Norm Rowett*

### Staff

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*Tom Gibson*

*Portions of this report were prepared by Tiffany Sonnier*

**RESOLUTION NUMBER L-2007-45**

Resource Conservation District  
Municipal Services Review  
LAFCO Project No. 2007-06

**WHEREAS**, the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 set forth in Government Code Sections 56000 et seq. governs the organization and reorganization of cities and special districts by local agency formation commissions established in each county, as defined and specified in Government Code Sections 56000 et seq. (unless otherwise indicated all statutory references are to the Government Code); and,

**WHEREAS**, the Commission, pursuant to Government Code §56430, has conducted a service review of resource conservation districts in El Dorado County; and

**WHEREAS**, the service review is consistent with recommendations of the Commission on Local Governance for the 21st Century, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research LAFCO Municipal Services Review Guidelines, the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 and locally adopted policies for municipal service reviews; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission has comprehensively reviewed all agencies within the designated geographic area that provide the identified services; and

**WHEREAS**, on October 24, 2007, the draft Municipal Services Review came on regularly for hearing before the Commission; and

**WHEREAS**, at that time, an opportunity was given to all interested persons, organizations, and agencies to present oral or written testimony and other information concerning the municipal service review and all related matters; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission heard, discussed and considered all oral and written testimony related to this service review; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission has made determinations regarding the resource conservation districts in El Dorado County, and has prepared a written statement of these determinations, attached as Exhibit A of this resolution; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission finds the project to be exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act under Section §15306 of the CEQA Guidelines.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, DETERMINED, ORDERED AND FOUND:**

Section 1. Each of the foregoing recitals is true and correct.

Section 2. The Executive Officer is directed to file a Notice of Exemption in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and local ordinances implementing the same.

Section 3. The El Dorado Local Agency Formation Commission finds that the service review is adequate to fulfill its obligations under Government Code §56430 and makes determinations regarding the resource conservation districts in El Dorado County.

Section 4. The El Dorado Local Agency Formation Commission adopts the Final Resource Conservation District Municipal Services Review as set forth in Exhibit A attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the El Dorado Local Agency Formation Commission at a regular meeting of said Commission, held December 5, 2007 by the following vote of said Commission.

Long, Briggs, Hagen, Humphreys, Loftis  
AYES: Norris, Sweeney  
NOES: None  
ABSTENTIONS: None  
ABSENT: None

ATTEST:

Allison Moroso  
Clerk to the Commission

[Signature]  
Chairperson

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## **I EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

State mandates enacted in 2000 establish requirements for a Local Agency Formation Commission to conduct comprehensive reviews of all municipal services in its County. This service review includes all resource conservation districts in El Dorado County. The MSR complies with all guidelines adopted by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research. It will be available to other agencies and to the public and will serve as a basis for consideration of future sphere of influence determinations and government reorganizations.

The information contained in this document does not explicitly plan for future management or operational responsibilities of resource conservation districts, nor will any action or change in services result directly from LAFCO's adoption of the document. The purpose of this service review is to provide a description and analysis of the resource conservation districts in the County. This document will be used as a guide for future decisions by LAFCO in determining an agency's ability to provide services by serving as the basis for future sphere of influence determinations and government reorganizations.

The service review and LAFCO's adoption of a resolution making determinations are categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (Class 6, §15306). In undertaking this service review and making determinations, LAFCO considered its responsibilities under federal and state civil rights and environmental justice laws.

The structure of this review is as follows: Sections II and III provide the necessary background (legislative, demographic and physical) and the methodology for the review. Section IV defines resource conservation services considered in the study. Section V provides a detailed description of each district, along with the final analysis and determinations. For each of the nine categories of required determinations, staff has prepared recommended determinations recognizing the following: unique land use and planning conditions, government organization and fiscal circumstance that affect the provision of services, effects of rapid demographic changes and growth, communities with different and similar service needs, and efforts to enhance service and impediments to doing so.

## II **BACKGROUND**

### A. **Legislative Framework**

In 1997, the State Legislature established the Commission on Local Governance for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (CLG). The CLG was tasked with assessing governance issues and making recommendations, directing special attention to the Cortese-Knox Local Government Reorganization Act of 1985, the then-57 Local Agency Formation Commissions governed by the Act and citizen participation in local government. CLG members included a broad spectrum of constituent groups and perspectives including counties, cities, special districts, educators, industry and elected officials.

The CLG determined that LAFCOs needed more specific background information on agencies to assist them in making informed decisions before specific proposals came before them. The CLG concluded that this information was necessary for LAFCOs to encourage orderly growth and to provide planned, well-ordered, efficient urban development patterns and to advantageously provide for the present and future needs of each county and its communities. Specifically, the CLG recommended that information on public service capacity and issues be gathered through periodic service reviews, ultimately constituting a statewide body of knowledge that could be used to resolve California's growth-related public service issues. Based on these recommendations, the State Legislature enacted Government Code §56430 as part of the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (CKH), which became effective on January 1, 2001.

Section 56430 of the CKH Act, in part, states as follows:

- (a) In order to prepare and to update spheres of influence in accordance with Section 56425, the commission shall conduct a service review of the municipal services provided in the county or other appropriate area designated by the commission. The commission shall include in the area designated for service review the county, the region, the sub-region, or any other geographic area as is appropriate for an analysis of the service or services to be reviewed, and shall prepare a written statement of its determinations with respect to each of the following:
  - (1) Infrastructure needs or deficiencies
  - (2) Growth and population projections for the affected area
  - (3) Financing constraints and opportunities
  - (4) Cost avoidance opportunities
  - (5) Opportunities for rate restructuring
  - (6) Opportunities for shared facilities



- (7) Government structure options, including advantages and disadvantages of consolidation or reorganization of service providers
- (8) Evaluation of management efficiencies
- (9) Local accountability and governance
- (b) In conducting a service review, the commission shall comprehensively review all of the agencies that provide the identified service or services within the designated geographic area.
- (c) The commission shall conduct a service review before, or in conjunction with, but no later than the time it is considering an action to establish a sphere of influence in accordance with Section 56425 or Section 56426.5 or to update a sphere of influence pursuant to Section 56425.

In addition, several sections of CKH empower LAFCOs to obtain information for service reviews:

- Section 56378 authorizes LAFCOs to initiate and make studies of existing governmental agencies. “In conducting those studies, the commission may ask for land use information, studies, and plans of cities, counties, districts, including school districts, community college districts, and regional agencies and state agencies and departments. (Those agencies) shall comply with the request of the commission for that information...”
- Section 56846 states, “Every officer of any affected county, affected city, or affected district shall make available to a reorganization committee any records, reports, maps, data, or other documents which in any way affect or pertain to the committee’s study, report, and recommendation and shall confer with the committee concerning the problems and affairs of the county, city, or district.”
- Section 56844 authorizes the Commission to undertake a study or report in place of a reorganization committee, thereby transferring those access rights.

## **B. Relationship Between Spheres of Influence and Service Reviews**

The CKH Act requires LAFCOs to develop and determine the sphere of influence (SOI) for each applicable local governmental agency that provides services or facilities related to development. Government Code §56076 defines a SOI as “a plan for the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency.” Service reviews must be completed prior to the establishment or update of SOIs (§56430(a)). Spheres of influence must be reviewed and updated, as necessary, not less than once every five years (§56425). El Dorado LAFCO’s policies already contain the update requirement (Policy 4.2).

The information and determinations contained in a municipal service review are intended to guide and inform SOI decisions. Service reviews enable

LAFCO to determine SOI boundaries and to establish the most efficient service provider for areas needing new service. They also function as the basis for other government reorganizations. Section 56430, as noted above, states that LAFCO can conduct these reviews “before, in conjunction with, but no later than the time it is considering an action to establish a SOI.”

The subject service review is being conducted in order to comply with the legislative deadline of January 1, 2008, which requires LAFCO to complete all MSR and SOI updates by that date. Completion of this study would allow the Commission to amend or update the spheres of influence for the resource conservation districts within the El Dorado County.

### **C. Service Review Guidelines**

The Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) was directed by statute (§56430) to prepare guidelines to assist LAFCOs in complying with the new service review requirements. In that regard, the final *Local Agency Formation Commission Municipal Service Review Guidelines* was released in August 2003. OPR’s intent in developing these guidelines was “to provide a structure to assist LAFCOs to carry out their statutory responsibility of promoting orderly growth and development, preserving the state’s finite open space and agricultural land resources, and working to ensure that high quality public services are provided to all California residents in the most cost effective and efficient manner.” These guidelines were utilized in the preparation of this service review document.

The guidelines identify several possible goals and objectives for municipal service reviews to be achieved through written determinations in the nine required areas. These goals and objectives are as follows:

- Promote orderly growth and development in appropriate areas with consideration of service feasibility, service costs that affect housing affordability and preservation of open space, important agricultural land and finite natural resources.
- Encourage infill development and direct growth to areas planned for growth in general plans.
- Learn about service issues and needs.
- Plan for provision of high quality infrastructure needed to support healthy growth.
- Provide tools to support regional perspectives or planning that address regional, cross-county or statewide issues and processes.
- Develop a structure for dialogue among agencies that provide services.
- Develop a support network for smaller or ill-funded districts that provide valuable services.
- Provide backbone information for service provider directories or inventory reference documents for counties that do not have them.

- Develop strategies to avoid unnecessary costs, eliminate waste and improve public service provision.
- Provide ideas about opportunities to streamline service provision through use of shared facilities, approval of different or modified government structures, joint service agreements, or integrated land use planning and service delivery programs.
- Promote shared resource acquisition, insurance policies, joint funding requests or strategies.

The guidelines emphasize that “LAFCOs may need to modify these recommendations to reflect local conditions, circumstances and types of services that are being reviewed.” To that end, El Dorado LAFCO also utilized its own set of policies for service reviews (Policy 5 et seq.), which incorporate the goals and objectives listed above.

**III STUDY METHODOLOGY**

**D. Selection**

Faced with a state mandate to complete service reviews, El Dorado LAFCO held a workshop at its January 23, 2002 meeting. Staff presented background material on the scope of and need for these studies. Prioritization of these studies was suggested by staff based on the following criteria:

- Spheres of influence are substantially deficient.
- Services are provided by agencies affected by pending applications.
- Services are deteriorating; there is an anticipated inability to provide services; there are identified adverse public health or environmental issues or studies in process.
- Service reviews have been requested.
- All or partial funding is available from outside agency resources.
- Reviews are less complex and may be completed with minimal technical analysis.

In June 2006 the LAFCO Commission adopted a plan of action for prioritizing municipal service reviews, which identifies the three resource conservation districts as the next agencies to be studied.

**E. Subject Agencies**

There are three (3) resource conservation districts (RCDs) in El Dorado County, each of which is an independent special district responsible for implementing its programs within its service area:

- El Dorado County Resource Conservation District
- Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District
- Tahoe Resource Conservation District

**Table 1: Resource Conservation District Summary Chart**

<b>FY 2005-06</b>	<b>El Dorado County RCD</b>	<b>Georgetown Divide RCD</b>	<b>Tahoe RCD</b>
District Acreage	617,241	345,060	Approx. 300,000*
Population	125,293	16,600	31,514
Annual Budget	\$220,616	\$200,886	\$2,581,633
Grants	\$10,933	\$50,263	\$1,571,967
Expenditures (Exp.)	\$94,312	\$88,795	\$2,122,017
Exp. per Acre	\$0.15	\$0.26	\$57.35
Full-time Staff	4 (shared)	4 (shared)	12

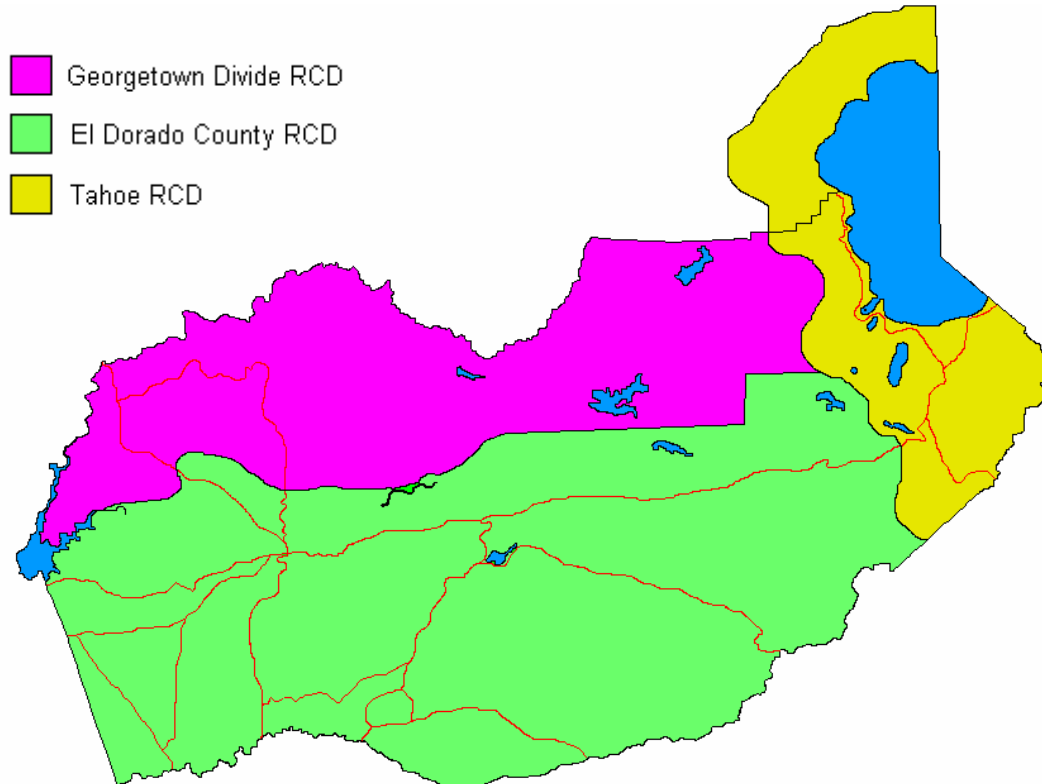
\* Approximately 175,000 acres in El Dorado County; 125,000 acres in Placer County

The El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation Districts are administered by the same staff and share a common office space, so the two agencies' descriptive and analysis sections are combined in order to eliminate a duplication of efforts. However, in instances in which the districts differ, such as in governing boards for example, the sections will be separated from one another.

**F. Study Area**

The study area for this service review contains all of El Dorado County. The three RCDs serve the entire study area. El Dorado County RCD serves the southern portion of the west slope of the county, the Georgetown Divide RCD serves the northern portion and the Tahoe RCD serves the California portion of the Tahoe Basin, including both El Dorado and Placer Counties.

**Map 1: Resource Conservation Districts in El Dorado County**



**G. Goals of the MSR**

In addition to the potential uses identified in the OPR guidelines, El Dorado LAFCO will use the municipal service review information to:

- Adopt legally valid spheres of influence for each of the resource conservation districts.

- Provide substantial analysis and information necessary for the consideration of potential consolidation or other major reorganization efforts which may be considered in the future by the resource conservation districts.
- Provide substantial analysis and information to support informed decisions regarding annexations and/or reorganization applications which may be submitted to LAFCO in the future.

#### **H. Agency and Public Participation**

Prior to beginning this study, LAFCO staff contacted the districts to discuss the MSR process and to answer any questions they had regarding MSRs and spheres of influence. Collaboration with the agencies was instrumental in assisting LAFCO staff in the study effort. LAFCO staff used a research questionnaire for gathering information and documentation from the agencies, which was followed up with interviews with the staff and head of each agency. Staff used this information to prepare draft descriptions of the individual agencies, which were circulated to each agency for their technical and administrative review. Their additional information and edits were compiled into the public review draft service review.

An administrative draft of this report was sent to all of the administrators of the districts on September 11, 2007. A public review draft was presented to the Commission at a public hearing on October 24, 2007. The public review period will begin from that point forward for 21 days, during which the Commission may adopt the final document at their December 5, 2007 meeting. A copy of this draft was also distributed to the subject agencies and posted on the El Dorado LAFCO website. The Commission will take into consideration any written comments received during the 21-day public review period and oral comments received at the hearing before adopting determinations for the final service review.

El Dorado LAFCO staff worked diligently to compile and verify information for this report from numerous sources. LAFCO staff would like to recognize the exceptional cooperation received from the participating agency staff members. Many times these individuals provided information with a very quick turnaround or offered assistance that was invaluable to the LAFCO staff. Without such support, cooperation and assistance, the study would not have been as accurate and informative.

## **IV INTRODUCTION TO RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

### **Resource Conservation Districts' Background**

RCDs, which derived from soil conservation districts, emerged in California during the 1930s and 1940s. In 1935, the Federal Government passed legislation establishing the Soil Conservation Service to address the impacts of drought and soil loss resulting from the “Dust Bowl” crisis in the early 1930s. In 1937, President Roosevelt recommended to the Governors of each state to pursue legislation allowing local landowners to form soil conservation districts. These soil conservation districts were originally empowered to manage soil and water resources for conservation. These powers were expanded to include related resources such as fish and wildlife habitat, the responsibility was divided among counties, and the name was changed to resource conservation districts. Formed as independent local liaisons between the federal government and landowners, conservation districts work closely with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Services (formerly the Soil Conservation Service).

RCDs are grassroots government organizations that advise and assist individual landowners and public agencies in planning and implementing conservation practices for the protection, restoration, or development of land, water, and related natural resources. As a local government entity, RCDs can work with any local, state or federal agency through simple cooperative agreements. Many times the RCD can get conservation activities on the ground faster, cheaper and with greater local sensitivity than any other government agency.

RCDs work in urban areas as well as with farmers and ranchers on agricultural-related concerns. California’s size and geographical diversity, along with an ever-growing population, make natural resources stewardship a great challenge in the Golden State. California currently has 103 RCDs, most of which are funded largely through grants, although a few of the RCDs receive limited funds through county property tax revenues. The Department of Conservation and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provide training and in-kind support, as well as a watershed grant program for districts.

### **State Law and Governing Statutes**

RCDs are “single purpose special districts” organized under the State Public Resources Code, Division 9 (Sections 9001-9978). A central component of Division 9 is its authorization for RCDs to be formed for the purpose of addressing local resource conservation needs. Particular emphasis is placed upon the conservation of soil and water resources, although, under the Code, an RCD may be formed for the control of runoff, the prevention or control of soil erosion, the development and distribution of water, and improvement of land capabilities, wildlife habitat restoration, forest fuel management, conservation education and much more. Each RCD within the state of California is an autonomous special district; as such, each district is able to define its own local

goals and objectives based on the issues and needs within its service areas, defined by population and development.

Each district is governed and managed by a locally elected or appointed volunteer board of directors, consisting of five, seven or nine trustees that reside within the district. The board members may be elected or appointed by the Board of Supervisors based upon the recommendations of the supervisor(s) representing the district area.

### County of El Dorado

El Dorado County is at the heart of California's Gold Rush country, often called the "Mother Lode." With its western border touching California's Central Valley, and its eastern boundary meeting Nevada in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, El Dorado County stretches across miles of foothills, valleys and mountain peaks. There are two incorporated cities, Placerville, the County seat, and South Lake Tahoe, 60 miles east of Placerville. Two major highways, U.S. 50 and State Route 49, intersect the county, while State Route 88 establishes the county's southern border with Amador and Alpine Counties.

Over 78% of the county residents live in unincorporated areas. Major residential communities (El Dorado Hills, Cameron Park and Shingle Springs) in the western part of the county serve as suburban areas to the Sacramento Metropolitan Region. The county roads in the southern portion of the county lead to El Dorado wine country, which draws many tourists and locals to the otherwise rural area. The northwestern part of the county is rural, with small, historic communities peppering the landscape. The northeastern part of the county is a predominantly forested area that provides trees for the timber industry and recreation to the county's residents.

The county contains 1,805 square miles (1,155,200 acres), over half of which is in public ownership in the form of national forests and various parks and recreation areas. Within the county, the Bureau of Land Management manages 15,488 acres and the US Forest Service manages 495,653 acres of the Eldorado National Forest. In addition, there are a variety of privately owned timberlands, parks, campgrounds and recreational facilities.



## **V DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF AGENCIES**

### **I. EI DORADO COUNTY AND GEORGETOWN DIVIDE RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

The El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide RCDs share office, staff, and operations; however they retain separate governing boards and funding sources. For these reasons, this section will first outline the differences between the districts, followed by a description of similar funding mechanisms and the projects and programs in which both districts participate.

#### **EL DORADO COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

##### **Formation**

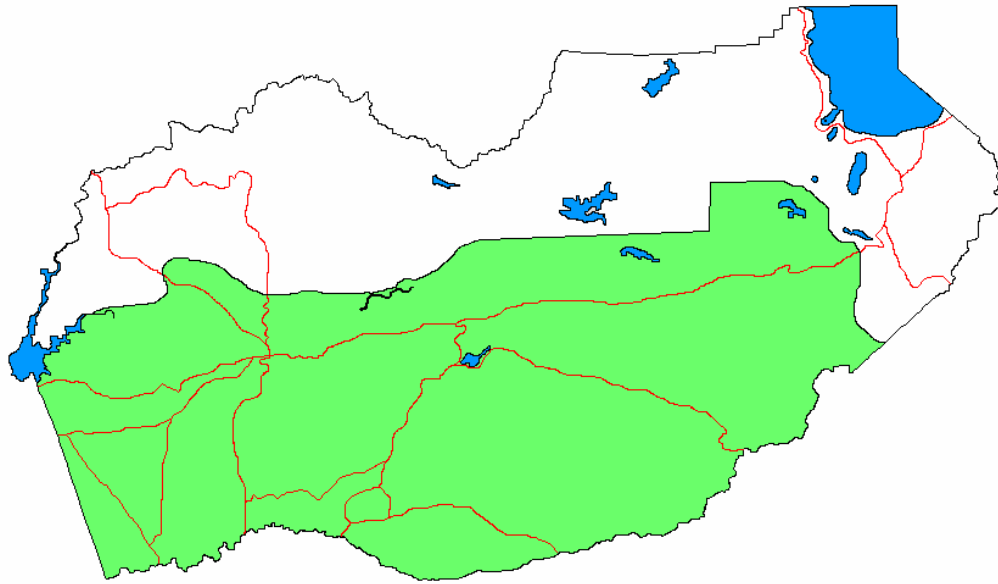
The El Dorado County RCD (EDCRCD) was formed in 1939 by election of the landowners pursuant to the provisions of the California Public Resources Code. At the time, it was the second RCD in California. Prior to district formation, the area was an Erosion Control Demonstration Area administered by the Soil Erosion Service. Due to serious erosion problems on hillside orchards, the district was reorganized as the EDCRCD. This district was created to address soil and other resource management problems in the southern portion of El Dorado County and promote sound land management practices by working with landowners on a voluntary basis to promote good stewardship. In an early action by the original board of directors, they declared that the purpose of the district is "to conserve, improve and properly use all the soil, water, wildlife, plant, and related resources for the benefit of all the people."

##### **Service Area**

The original district covered 28,684 acres with the boundaries coinciding with the El Dorado Irrigation District. Over the years, transfers of land and additions to the district have resulted in the current total of 617,241 acres. Generally, EDCRCD area includes land within El Dorado County south of the South Fork of the American River, excluding the Tahoe basin.

Over half of the land within EDCRCD is in the Eldorado National Forest. Other publicly owned lands include those of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the State of California. The latter two are relatively small acreages. Approximately 370,000 acres are owned by the National Forest and is generally situated east of Pollock Pines and above the 3,000-foot elevations. The remainder of the land in this area is owned by private lumber companies or individual landowners. The district is experiencing a rapid growth of residential areas on the western half, with lots as small as one acre. Primary land uses within the district includes orchards, livestock, and some timber production. Recreational uses are also increasing on these privately owned lands.

**Map 2: El Dorado County Resource Conservation District**



The elevations of the district range from about 300 feet in the Latrobe area on the southwest to 9,963 feet at Pyramid Peak in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. There is no great expanse of flat land in the district. The slopes vary from gently rolling foothills and divide to steep canyon sides and rugged, rocky mountain summits. The principal watershed drainages are Weber Creek and its tributaries, Camp Creek and its tributaries, and the North, Middle, and South Forks of the Cosumnes.

In the last several years the EDCRCD has taken on new resource and watershed management roles in the county. Due to increasing residential development, the County is facing growth in the urban/wildland interface. Fire suppression over the last 50 to 100 years has led to significant fuel loads. EDCRCD is helping shape the present and future needs of a county faced with a rapidly growing population and greater demands on the area's natural resources.

**Governing Board**

**Table 2: El Dorado County Resource Conservation District Board of Directors**

Member	Role	Appointed	Original	Expiration
Robert Beegle	President	12/20/07	12/1/86	12/20/11
Carlan Meyer	Vice President	12-24/06	12/1/86	12/06/10
Ronald Huston	Secretary	12-5-06	12/20/96	12/5/10
Dale Pierce	Member	12-7-04	12/3/96	12/04/08
John C. James	Member	12-20-04	11/24/00	12/20/08
Peter Melnicoe	Associate	12-20-06		12/20/08

## GEORGETOWN DIVIDE RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

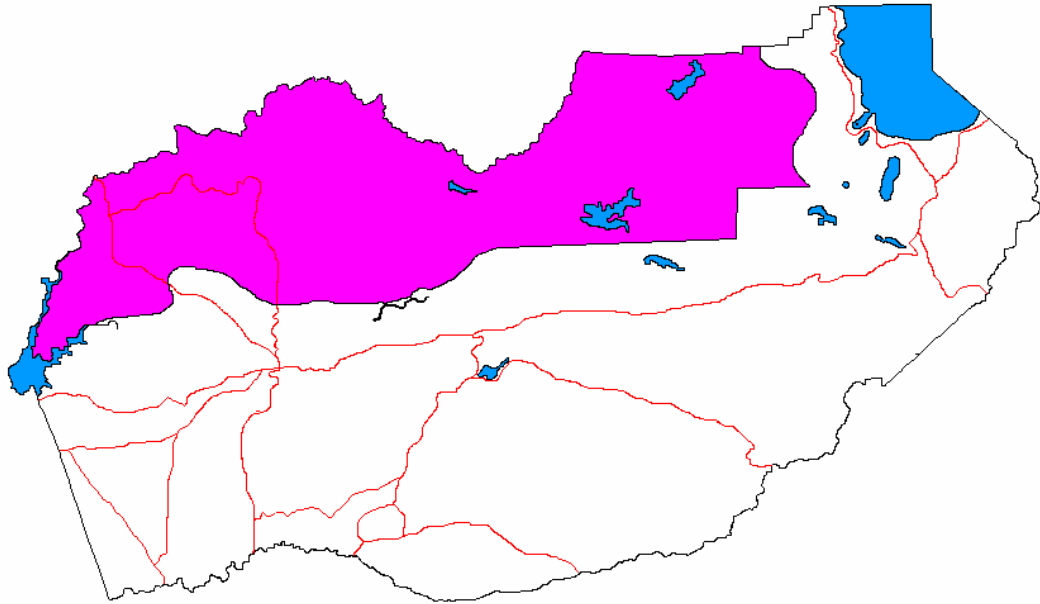
### Formation

The Georgetown Divide RCD (GDRCD) was formed in 1953 under the provisions of the California Public Resources Code, Division 9, following a resolution of approval by the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors in 1956. It was organized to address resource management problems and promote sound management of natural resources in northern El Dorado County.

### Service Area

At the time of formation, GDRCD contained 224,678 acres and gradually increased in size to its present maximum of 345,060 acres. It is located on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada, generally north of the South Fork of the American River and west of the crest of the Sierras.

### Map 3: Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District



The elevations of the district range from 400 feet at Folsom Lake on the west to 9,500 feet at the crest of the Sierra Nevada near the eastern boundary. Essentially there is little or no flat land in the district. The slopes vary from gently rolling foothills and divides to very steep canyon sides and rugged, rocky mountain summits. The principal watershed drainages are the Rubicon River, the Middle and South Forks of the American River, and Silver Creek and its tributaries.

Over half the land east of Georgetown is federally owned and under the supervision of the Eldorado National Forest. The remainder of the land in this area is owned by private lumber companies and individuals, with some owned by the United States Bureau of Land Management and the United States Bureau of Reclamation. The land south and west of

Georgetown is mostly privately owned and is used for livestock, orchards and some timber production. Recreational uses are increasing on these privately owned lands.

**Governing Board**

**Table 3: Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District Board of Directors**

Member	Role	Appointed	Original	Expiration
Sid Davis	President	12/20/04	11/18/80	12/20/08
Bill Bennett	Vice President	12/18/06	12/20/93	12/18/10
Al Hubbard	Secretary	12/20/04	12/20/04	12/20/08
Ray Griffiths	Member	12/18/06	12/20/93	12/18/10
Tom Pederson	Member	12/18/06	12/18/06	12/18/10
Roy Rutz	Associate	12/20/06		12/20/08

**EI DORADO COUNTY AND GEORGETOWN DIVIDE RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

In the following sections, the El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide RCDs will be combined since they share programs and have similar Five-Year Strategic Plans and Annual Plans.

**Growth and Population**

El Dorado County encompasses 1,805 square miles of the Sacramento Metropolitan area and had an estimated population of 173,407 people in 2005. Countywide, El Dorado County experienced a significant population increase since 1990. This surge, largely occurring on the western slope, is attributed to a desire for a higher quality of life and the convenience of close proximity to Sacramento.

As the county's population increases, so will the demands on the districts. In particular, EDCRCD and GDRCD will probably play an increasing role in cooperative watershed planning and management, and in the preparation and administration of grants for watershed projects. These roles will place increasing demands and responsibilities on the district directors and staff.

**Staff**

Although EDCRCD and GDRCD have separate governing boards, they share a staff of four employees for all of their administrative and operational functions.

**Table 4: El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District Shared Staff**

Position	Wage per Hour	Full / Part Time	Benefits
District Manager (GS 11-13)	\$22.51 - \$41.71	Full Time	Yes
Project Coordinator (GS 8-11)	\$16.84 - \$29.26	Full Time	Yes
Project Coordinator (GS 7-9)	\$15.21 - \$24.18	Part Time	Yes
Office Coordinator (GS 1-4)	\$7.97 - \$14.26	Full Time	Yes

**Funding**

El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide RCDs do not receive any funds by assessment of a tax on land or property and all services and informational materials are provided to the public at no charge. This approach is common among resource conservation districts, as they are resource agencies with a primary purpose of disseminating information to landowners and the general public.

The primary source of operating revenue is base funding from the El Dorado County General Fund, which is approved by the Board of Supervisors. Prior to Proposition 13, Division 9 of the Public Resources Code allowed districts to levy a tax not to exceed two cents (\$.02) on each one hundred dollars (\$100) of assessed valuation of land within the districts. After Proposition 13 was enacted, the El Dorado and Georgetown RCDs were requested by the then Board of Supervisors to relinquish this allocation and be funded through the County General Fund. The districts, at the persistence of the County, agreed to continue on this basis, rather than divert a share of property taxes after Proposition 13. As such, the districts have an agreement with the County which states that, “Each year the El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation Districts will have their annual budget increased by the percentage of increase in assessed value of the county.”

The County Treasury is the depository of all the funds of the EDCRCD and GDRCD and the Auditor-Controller’s Office serves as the accounts payable for the districts. The districts pay a nominal fee for each transaction performed by these County offices.

**Grants**

The majority of district expenditures are associated with grant (appropriated fund) expenditures. The majority of the monies received from grants go “on-the-ground” and are really a pass-through for the districts. An average of approximately 20-30% of grant project costs are spent on wages. With the amount of grant funding that the districts have been able to acquire, most wages are covered by grant funding. Without grant funding, the RCDs would not be able to maintain current staffing levels, which are small, due to limitations in base funding.

The process of applying for grants are generally referred to by the districts as “Program Development”. Many of the RCDs’ programs are grant funded, however, some programs, such as Conservation Planning and Technical Assistance to private landowners, are not grant-funded.

GDRCD and EDCRCD do not share grant funding specifically, however, when one district applies for a grant that requires a cash-match or in-kind contribution, the other district can provide or assist with the matching funds. The districts also have an MOU with one another that allows them to work in both jurisdictions, to conduct joint projects or to prepare joint strategic plans. Because each district is a separate entity with a separate budget, there are instances in which both districts are simultaneous applicants for a competitive grant. Strategically, this competition increases the chances that at least one of the districts will receive the funding.

From FY 2002-03 to FY 2005-06, the El Dorado County RCD and Georgetown Divide RCD received approximately \$463,643 and \$382,174, respectively, in grant funding.

**Budgets**

All monetary amounts cited in the following sections are rounded to nearest whole number and based on fiscal year (FY) 2005-06 budgetary information received from the County Auditor-Controller’s Office.

**Table 5: El Dorado County Resource Conservation District Budget Summary**

<b>FY 2005-06 Budget</b>		
<b>Cary-over from FY 2004-05</b>		<b>\$102,988</b>
<i>El Dorado County General Fund</i>	\$98,449 (83.7%)	
<i>Grant Funding</i>	\$10,933 (9.3%)	
<i>Interest Revenue</i>	\$4,592 (3.9%)	
<i>Charges for Services</i>	<u>\$3,654 (3.1%)</u>	
<b>Revenue</b>		<b>\$117,628</b>
<b>Total Available Budget</b>		<b>\$220,616</b>
<i>Salaries and Employee Benefits</i>	\$63,776 (67.6%)	
<i>Services and Supplies</i>	\$30,058 (31.9%)	
<i>Fixed Assets</i>	<u>\$477 (0.5%)</u>	
<b>Expenditures</b>		<b>(\$94,312)</b>
<b>Carry-over into FY 2006-07</b>		<b>\$126,304</b>

**Table 6: Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District Budget Summary**

<b>FY 2005-06 Budget</b>			
<b>Cary-over from FY 2004-05</b>			<b>\$75,107</b>
<i>El Dorado County General Fund</i>	\$71,586	(56.9%)	
<i>Grant Funding</i>	\$50,263	(40.0%)	
<i>Interest Revenue</i>	\$3,931	(3.1%)	
<b>Revenue</b>			<b>\$125,779</b>
<b>Total Available Budget</b>			<b>\$200,886</b>
<i>Salaries and Employee Benefits</i>	\$66,143	(74.5%)	
<i>Services and Supplies</i>	\$22,531	(25.4%)	
<i>Fixed Assets</i>	\$120	(1.4%)	
<b>Expenditures</b>			<b>(\$88,795)</b>
<b>Carry-over into FY 2006-07</b>			<b>\$112,091</b>

**Purpose**

The Georgetown Divide and El Dorado County RCDs were established to conserve, improve and properly use the soils, water, wildlife and plant resources for the benefit of all the people now and in the future. The RCDs are in the process of meeting their Strategic Plan, which focuses on four areas:

1. Organization: Develop the districts' capacity to plan and deliver conservation programs.
2. Fire: Significantly reduce the risk to life, property, and watershed health from wildfire through support of fuel management projects and public information programs.
3. Watershed: Coordinate and facilitate the development of a watershed scale resource management and restoration program for the South Fork of the American River, and for the Cosumnes River. Work with all interested stakeholders and agencies to address watershed scale problems and opportunities.
4. Education: Help to fill the training and resource management information needs of homeowners, landowners, and resource users.

**Cooperative Efforts**

The RCDs participate in a number of cooperative efforts with public, private, and volunteer organizations with respect to protecting and restoring natural resources in El Dorado County. The organizations the districts regularly work with include:

- El Dorado County
- United States Forest Service – Eldorado National Forest
- United States Bureau of Reclamation

- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire)
- Sierra Pacific Industries
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- National Associations of RCDs
- California Association of RCDs
- University of California Extension
- El Dorado County Noxious Weed Management Group
- County Department of Transportation
- El Dorado County Fish & Game Commission
- El Dorado County Agricultural Watershed Group
- Cosumnes, American, Bear, and Yuba River Watersheds Integrated Regional Water Management Planning Committee
- El Dorado Irrigation District
- El Dorado County Water Agency
- El Dorado County Farm Bureau
- El Dorado County Grape Growers Association
- Apple Hill Growers Association
- El Dorado County Fire Safe Council
- State Water Resources Control Board
- Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition
- South Fork American River Watershed Group

**Programs and Services**

The vision of the El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide RCDs is to enhance the quality of life for residents of El Dorado County by supporting the responsible management of natural resources. The RCDs' vision consists of three primary areas: to be an effective provider for on-the-ground conservation projects; to create long term relationships with conservation partners and the public; and to communicate with landowners about their natural resource concerns including watershed improvement, fuels and vegetation management, and erosion control. The districts are actively engaged in initiatives, programs, and projects that support this vision. The mission of the El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide RCDs is complementary to that of other public agencies in the County:

- EDCRCD addresses soil erosion control



- GDRCD addresses noxious weeds and forestry management
- Both EDCRCD and GDRCD have built demonstration gardens which provide the public with information on drought tolerant plants and water-saving landscape methods. These gardens are located at the El Dorado County Library, Cameron Park Library, Georgetown Divide Public Utilities District Office, and the El Dorado County Fairgrounds.

The El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide RCDs work closely with the NRCS, a federal agency that provides technical assistance to local districts. The NRCS is the leading federal agency charged with conserving natural resources on private lands and is part of the United States Department of Agriculture as a result of the initial Soil Conservation Service. The NRCS accomplishes its mission by through the local RCDs. The RCDs act as a liaison between the NRCS and private landowners to bring locally led conservation to the County. They also work to ensure that local conservation issues are addressed, while the NRCS seeks to balance specific local needs within the context of a national conservation effort.

The El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide RCDs currently offer the following programs and services:

***Landowner Assistance:*** The El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide RCD staff provides assistance to private landowners with the following:

- Erosion and sediment control
- Agricultural development
- Forestry improvement
- Environmental compliance
- Wildlife improvement and restoration

The NRCS also offers many services including conservation planning assistance, soils information, advice on soil erosion control methods, engineering designs, how to manage forest land to reduce wildfire threat, and new agricultural techniques. The NRCS offers its services at no cost and in some cases, through NRCS conservation programs, may provide matching funds to implement practices that will protect El Dorado County's natural resources.

The partnership with the NRCS brings the Federal Farm Bill which offers voluntary conservation programs that promote agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goods. Through cost-share programs, farmers and ranchers may receive financial and technical help to install or implement structural and management conservation practices on eligible agricultural lands.

**Wildfire Protection and Community Assistance:** In cooperation with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire), the districts have administered over nine Community Assistance Grants under the Proposition 40 Community Assistance Grant Program (Prop 40). Prop 40 provides funding that reduces wildland vegetation in a 15-county area of the central Sierras. These projects are limited to State Responsibility Areas for fire protection and must demonstrate the potential for protection or enhancement of watershed values through the manipulation of vegetation. Over \$632,000 in State funding has been brought into the County under Proposition 40 Community Assistance Grants for on-the-ground vegetation management to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire.

**Forest Improvement and Fuels Management:** The Sierra Coordinated Resources Management Council (Council) consists of directors from the following RCDs: El Dorado County, Georgetown Divide, Nevada County, Amador County, and Placer County. The Council has agreed to accept Prop 40 funds to reduce wildland fuel loadings that pose a threat to watershed resources and water quality.

Specifically, the Georgetown Divide RCD provides a variety of Forestry and Vegetation Management Assistance services. In conjunction with Cal Fire, the district has begun implementation of a new fuels reduction effort funded by Proposition 40, the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection of 2002. The goal of this effort is to reduce wildland fuel loadings such as flammable shrubs and dense thickets of trees that pose a threat to watershed resources and water quality.

**Erosion Control:** The Subdivision Review Program has evolved to address water quality concerning potential impacts from accelerated erosion and sedimentation. At the request of the County and City of Placerville planning staffs or landowners, the RCDs review proposed projects prior to construction to determine whether site characteristics (i.e. runoff from off-site areas, soils, topography) are taken into account in the design. The RCDs also review projects during construction and provides on-site technical assistance with project designers, regulatory personnel, and landowners. As such, the RCDs serve as a liaison between landowners and regulatory agencies, simultaneously promoting development and sound resource conservation. Technical resources, including vegetation establishment guidelines, Best Management Practices (BMP) specifications, and soil mapping, are all available.

**Water Quality Monitoring:** With the support of the GDRCD, the Traverse Creek Stewardship (TraCks) was established to monitor water quality of the Traverse Creek Watershed and has been ongoing since March 2005. Volunteers commit to the last Sunday morning of each month, rain or shine, to collect information at five locations along the Watershed. By using protocols and information especially designed by various scientists

and agencies, sensitive and tolerant bugs can be identified and the results used to ascertain the health of the creek. All the data collected from both the water quality monitoring and the bug sampling is compiled and reported to the RCD. The first annual report was published in May 2006 and presented at the TraCks one year celebration.

The RCD's encourage and support programs that provide an opportunity for citizens to learn about their watersheds and provides the tools to better understand it's condition and function. Volunteer citizen monitoring builds advocacy for watershed planning activities by empowering citizens to become a part of the process. Through a coordinated effort, citizen monitors become trained to collect water quality and habitat information from their local streams and increase the amount of water quality information available to decision makers at all levels of government.

The goal is to promote a citizen water quality monitoring program that results in increased awareness of watershed conditions and trends by educating citizens about water issues through the South Fork of the American River (SFAR). The program trains and equips them to measure water quality conditions in priority areas, developing a database of citizen data, and empowering citizens to provide input on environmental policy by active participation and cooperation.

EDCRCD and GDRCD act as a central "hub" where monitoring equipment is stored and distributed to the various volunteer monitoring groups. Other resources provided include training, database management, preparation and regular updates of a directory of volunteer monitoring programs and Information on various management activities planned throughout the watershed.

Through a long-term commitment to sustain citizen water quality monitoring programs in the SFAR watershed the RCD's hope to encourage a sense of community and the responsibilities of stewardship.

The El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide RCDs sponsor ongoing citizen monitoring with additional support coming from other local government agencies such as the USFS – Eldorado National Forest, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the State Water Resources Control Board. Other contributors that have provided grant funding and program support include CALFED, Fish & Wildlife Service, Sierra Nevada Alliance, and the South Yuba River Citizens League.

***Public Outreach and Education:*** It is the objective of the RCDs to fill the training and resource management information needs of homeowners, landowners, and resource users.

According to the districts' Strategic Plans, the RCDs have a significant role to play in filling the resource management information and education needs of landowners and homeowners in the County, along with other agencies including the University Extension, Cal Fire, the County, and

water purveyors. The RCDs identifies instances where it has capabilities or interests with other agencies and coordinates efforts accordingly.

EDCRCD and GDRCD's educational strengths include: greater flexibility in staffing than other government agencies, the ability to obtain grants targeted to RCDs, skills in administering the grants, and a broad, countywide focus.

### **Summary of Determinations**

The following is an analysis of the resource conservation services provided by the El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation Districts. Because of the shared staff, coordination of programs and the close working relationship between the respective governing boards, the MSR determinations summarized below are for, and apply, to both agencies. Implementation of most of the recommendations contained in this section is at the discretion of the respective Board of Directors and its staff. However, LAFCO will utilize the contents of the analysis for determining the district's sphere of influence update.

### **Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies**

The El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide RCDs do not own or maintain infrastructure beyond geographic information system (GIS) files, and general office equipment such as computers, utilized for administrative functions. The districts operate in a consolidated office in Placerville, which is also shared with NRCS staff. Not only does this allow for greater efficiency in sharing resources, it is also a great money saver for the RCDs because of the districts' arrangement with the NRCS whereby the federal agency pays for all rent and maintenance costs to the building.

### **Growth and Population Projections for the Affected Area**

Although the EDCRCD and GDRCD service areas have not expanded since their respective formation, the districts have experienced an increased demand for their services due to growth in the County's population and an increased awareness of, and demand for, the districts' educational programs. This is, in part, due to increasing regulatory programs to comply with local and state regulations. As more development occurs on the western slope, discretionary permits will require that more resource conservation practices are implemented to minimize their effects on the local environment. Service levels in response to this growth are reaching the limit of the RCDs' available financial resources. Because of these trends, the districts are concerned that current funding levels may not keep up with the future demand.

Financing Constraints and Opportunities

As mentioned earlier, the El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide RCDs are funded primarily through a base-contribution from the County General Fund and by various grants awarded to the districts. Over the past five years, both districts have experienced a decrease in total funding: EDCRCD’s revenues are down by 57% and GDRCD’s by 29% (refer to Tables 7 and 8). During the same five-year period, EDCRCD decreased its expenditures by 63% and GDRCD did the same by 55%, while concurrently increasing the annual net amount to carry-over into the next fiscal year. This indicates that despite the decrease in new revenue, the districts have been able to continue normal operations on a smaller operating budget without significantly affecting their operations or services. However, it is unclear whether this is entirely due to managerial efficiencies; the re-prioritization of programs; or as a result of budgetary necessity to operate within limited means.

**Table 7: El Dorado County Resource Conservation District Recent History Budget Summary**

Budget Year	New Revenue	County Contribution	Grants	Expenditures	Carry-over into next FY
FY 2002-03	\$274,490	\$42,488 (15%)	\$226,274 (83%)	\$255,549	\$20,908
FY 2003-04	\$259,974	\$42,988 (17%)	\$200,826 (77%)	\$191,944	\$88,938
FY 2004-05	\$156,606	\$81,732 (52%)	\$25,100 (16%)	\$142,556	\$102,988
FY 2005-06	\$117,628	\$98,449 (84%)	\$10,933 (10%)	\$94,312	\$126,304

**Table 8: Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District Recent History Budget Summary**

Budget Year	New Revenue	County Contribution	Grants	Expenditures	Carry-over into next FY
FY 2002-03	\$176,170	\$42,488 (24%)	\$129,391 (73%)	\$196,355	-\$1,942
FY 2003-04	\$160,432	\$42,738 (27%)	\$112,111 (70%)	\$123,381	\$35,109
FY 2004-05	\$148,785	\$42,488 (29%)	\$90,409 (61%)	\$108,787	\$75,107
FY 2005-06	\$125,779	\$71,586 (57%)	\$50,263 (40%)	\$88,795	\$112,091

The above tables show that not only has new revenue decreased for both RCDs over the past few years, but the amount of grant funding has also significantly decreased as well. Although the districts’ staff is proficient in securing grants (the general manager estimates that the combined districts’ success rate for grants is 99%), this form of funding is not always a reliable form of income year after year. This has required the County to contribute a higher amount proportionally to the budgets. Given the relatively unstable nature of grant revenue, the districts have increasingly relied on the County General Fund for operating revenue in recent years.

### Cost Avoidance Opportunities and Shared Facilities

The El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide RCDs appear to be very adept at cost avoidance measures and sharing of facilities. The districts' use of the same staff allows them to minimize the duplication of administrative resources. In addition to sharing office space with the NRCS, the districts maintain a strong collaborative relationship with numerous local, state and federal agencies that are working toward a common goal of resource conservation within El Dorado County. By collectively pooling the distinctive resources and staff expertise of each agency, the districts are able to accomplish much more than they would working solely as an autonomous entities.

### Opportunities for Rate Restructuring

This section is not applicable to the El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide RCDs, as they do not have an established fee schedule and provide services and informational materials to the public at no charge.

### Government Structure Options

Although the El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide RCDs share staff, office space and resources, there is no recommendation for the two districts to merge into a single district at this time. Despite the numerous similarities that each district shares, consolidation would not be feasible because each district has separate missions based on the distinctively different needs of the two service areas. Consequently, their respective governing boards can focus on the primary mission of the service territory when prioritizing the goals of the district and when creating the RCD's respective strategic plan.

### Evaluation of Management Efficiencies

The collaboration between the El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide RCDs staff provides the cost-saving benefits of a consolidated district while retaining the ability to focus each district's resources on the unique land characteristics and specific needs of their respective service areas. The districts appear to be very efficiently operated with the current resources and staffing available. El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide RCDs share a full-time staff of four employees who implement the operations of the district under the guidance of a District Manager to provide locally based resource conservation services in the Western Slope of El Dorado County. The District Manager takes separate directions from both the El Dorado County RCD and Georgetown Divide RCD Board of Directors.

### Local Accountability and Governance

The districts share a website that provides an abundance of information and publications. In addition, staff is very receptive to public inquiries regarding the various programs and services that are available to landowners within the district.

## J. TAHOE RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

### **Formation**

The Tahoe RCD was formed by the California Legislature in 1974 under the provisions of Division 9 of the California Public Resources Code. At the heart of Division 9 is its authorization for the establishment of Resource Conservation Districts to be formed for the purpose of addressing local resource conservation needs, and in so doing, places particular emphasis on the conservation of soil and water resources. TRCD works for the general public interest and benefit by providing soil and water conservation, control of runoff, prevention and control of soil erosion and stabilization, protection of water quality and reclamation, and the development of storage and distribution of water and treatment. To fulfill its commitment and responsibilities, TRCD works closely with the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

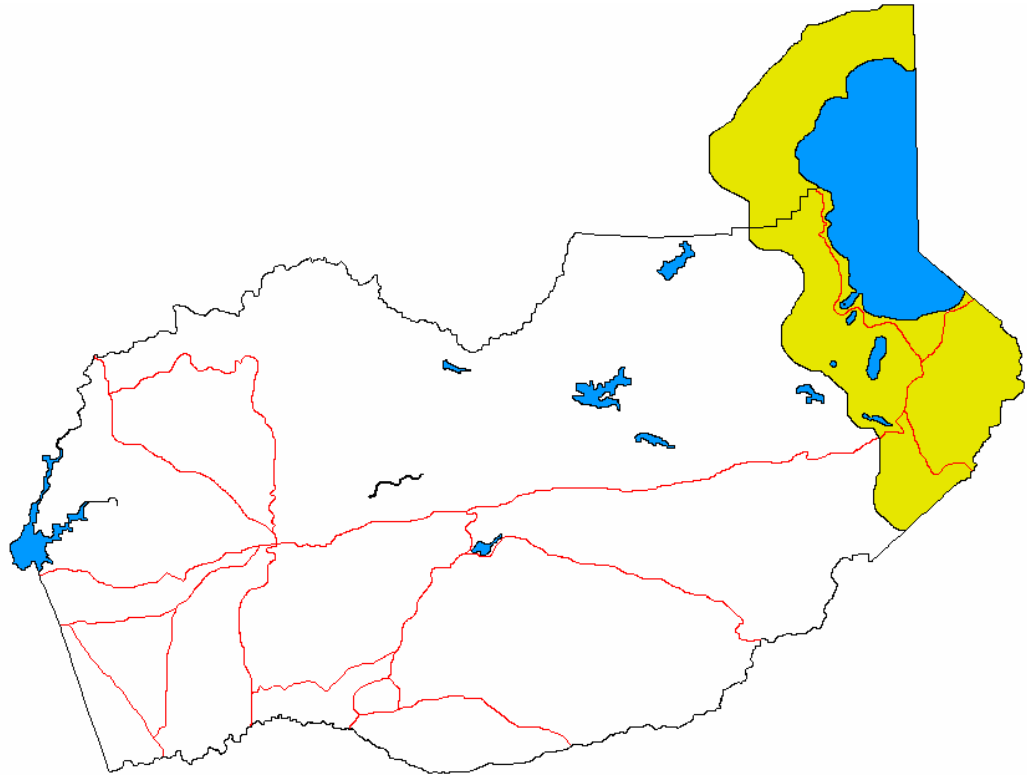
The District's mission is to promote the conservation and improvement of the Lake Tahoe Basin's soil, water, and related natural resources by providing leadership, information, programs, and technical assistance to all land managers, owners, organizations, and residents.

Current programs at TRCD focus on erosion control, runoff infiltration, invasive species control, and native landscaping. TRCD staff is also available for assistance with fire defensible space, water conservation, fertilizer management and wildlife habitat enhancement.

### **Service Area**

TRCD's service area includes all land on the California side of the Lake Tahoe Basin, within both El Dorado and Placer Counties. One of TRCD's partner agencies, the Nevada Tahoe Conservation District, works with properties on the Nevada side of the Basin. The district encompasses approximately 300,000 acres of land on the California side of the Tahoe Basin in El Dorado and Placer Counties.

## Map 4: Tahoe Resource Conservation District



Lake Tahoe lies in the crest of the Sierra Nevada at an elevation of 1,898 meters (6,229 feet), and is within both California and Nevada. The lake is located in a montane-subalpine watershed, dominated by coniferous vegetation and nutrient-poor soils. It is the world's twelfth deepest lake at 505 meters (1,645 feet) with a mean depth of 313 meters (989 feet).

Numerous studies of Lake Tahoe's water quality over the last thirty years indicate a decrease in clarity at a rate of one foot per year. Development and the resulting destruction of marshes, meadows, and stream environment zones, all of which act as filters for sediment before storm water runoff reaches the Lake, and increased urban runoff are the main causes of lake degradation. Today there are over 30,000 full time residents in the Basin. These homes are served by a vast system of roadways which deliver eroded soil and sediments into the 67 streams, roadside ditches, and gullies that flow into Lake Tahoe.

### **Growth and Population**

The permanent population in the Tahoe area is heavily concentrated in certain vicinities, such as the Cities of South Lake Tahoe and Tahoe City, and the areas immediately surrounding Lake Tahoe and Highway 50, such as Meeks Bay, Meyers, North Shore and Echo Lakes. Beyond these population centers, the district is much less inhabited.

As of 2000, TRPA estimates the entire El Dorado County portion of the Tahoe Basin includes 31,514 inhabitants. Due to the high percentage of



vacation homes in the Tahoe Basin, the number of residents year-round is noticeably less than the seasonal population. Growth in the Tahoe area is heavily regulated by TRPA, allowing for only new building 200-300 permits per year. In 2002, TRPA estimated that the El Dorado County portion of the Tahoe Basin is expected to grow at a rate of 0.04% per year between 2000 and 2010, from 31,514 to 32,793 persons. If the growth rate remains steady through 2025, then the TRCD could serve 34,000 residents by that time.

Lake Tahoe's beauty, international fame, and close proximity to populated areas of California contribute to the high number of visitors to the Basin each year. TRCD indicates that increased development and recreational tourism at Tahoe is responsible for the negative impact on the surrounding natural environment.

**Purpose**

The TRCD assists with managing the following goals and concerns within its service area:

1. Best Management Practices Private Lands
2. Watershed Restoration of Upper Truckee River
3. Education Programs of Natural Resource Concerns
4. Forest Health/Fuel Load Reduction
5. Air Quality as it Affects Lake Tahoe Water Quality
6. Groundwater Quality
7. Soil Erosion – Public Lands

The District places particular importance on the quality and clarity of Lake Tahoe. The District indicates that the lake continues to be severely impacted by residential development. As a result, current TRPA regulations require all homes in the Tahoe Basin to be retrofit with Best Management Practices or BMPs. These practices include paved driveways and parking pads, infiltration trenches and dry wells, adequate vegetative cover and stabilized slopes. To this end, the Tahoe Resource Conservation District has implemented the Backyard Conservation Program in order to educate basin residents. The Backyard Conservation Program includes education and outreach activities on proper water and nutrient management, fire fuel load reduction, defensible space and forest health, proper revegetation techniques and plant selection; and erosion control and runoff management. The message has so far reached more than 5,000 basin residents; expansion of the program depends upon district resources. In the future, the TRCD will be seeking additional staff and amending the focus of education and outreach to getting physical conservation practices on the ground. District staff indicates that its goal is to work with its many partners, to retrofit all homes in the basin with the necessary Best Management Practices.

### **Cooperative Efforts**

The TRCD participates in a number of cooperative efforts with public, private, and volunteer organizations with respect to protecting and restoring natural resources in El Dorado and Placer Counties. The organizations TRCD regularly works with include:

- Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA)
- El Dorado County
- Placer County
- Nevada-Tahoe Resource Conservation District
- Tahoe Basin Fire Safe Council
- California Association of Resource Conservation Districts
- California Department of Conservation
- California Tahoe Conservancy
- City of South Lake Tahoe
- Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Lake Tahoe Environmental Education Coalition
- League to Save Lake Tahoe
- National Association of Conservation Districts
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Nevada Tahoe Conservation District
- South Tahoe Public Utility District
- State Water Resources Control Board
- Tahoe Basin AmeriCorps
- Tahoe Center for a Sustainable Future

### **Programs and Services**

The vision of the TRCD is to promote the conservation and improvement of the Lake Tahoe Basin's soil, water and related resources, by providing leadership, information, programs and technical assistance to all land managers, owners, organizations and residents. TRCD staff provides assistance to landowners with the following:

- Erosion Control
- Invasive Weeds Management and Eradication
- Fuels Management
- Forest Health

- Fire Defensible Space
- Wildlife Habitat Improvement
- Forestry Improvement

The TRCD currently offers the following programs and services:

### ***Backyard Conservation Program***

Implementation of the Backyard Conservation Program (BCP) is the primary focus of the TRCD. The BCP is a national program, developed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in cooperation with the National Association of Conservation Districts and the Wildlife Habitat Council, which focuses on solving natural resource problems all over the country. The BCP is designed to educate private homeowners about simple, inexpensive conservation measures they can put to work in their own backyards. TRCD accomplishes this by providing outreach and education through presentations and workshops for homeowners, community groups, contractors and students. Information on TRCD's BCP has been disseminated to thousands of property owners through such vehicles as utility district mailings, handouts, and informational door hangers.

The Best Management Practices Program and the Invasive Weed Program at TRCD both fall under the BCP umbrella. TRCD works with partner agencies to obtain grant funding and integrate all aspects of backyard conservation into programs, such as fire defensible space, water conservation, fertilizer management and wildlife habitat enhancement.

### ***Best Management Practices Retrofit Program***

#### *Description*

Best Management Practices (BMPs) are actions, required by law, to keep soil and other pollutants out of streams and lakes. BMPs are designed to protect water quality and eliminate or control pollution. In the Tahoe Basin, BMPs are required on all developed properties, with the goal of reducing the amount of sediment, nitrogen, and phosphorus that flows into Lake Tahoe and causes a decline in water clarity and ecosystem health. Some common BMPs include vegetating or mulching all bare, disturbed soil, infiltrating storm water from all impervious surfaces, paving dirt driveways, stabilizing steep, eroding slopes and installing gravel under raised decks.

#### *Background*

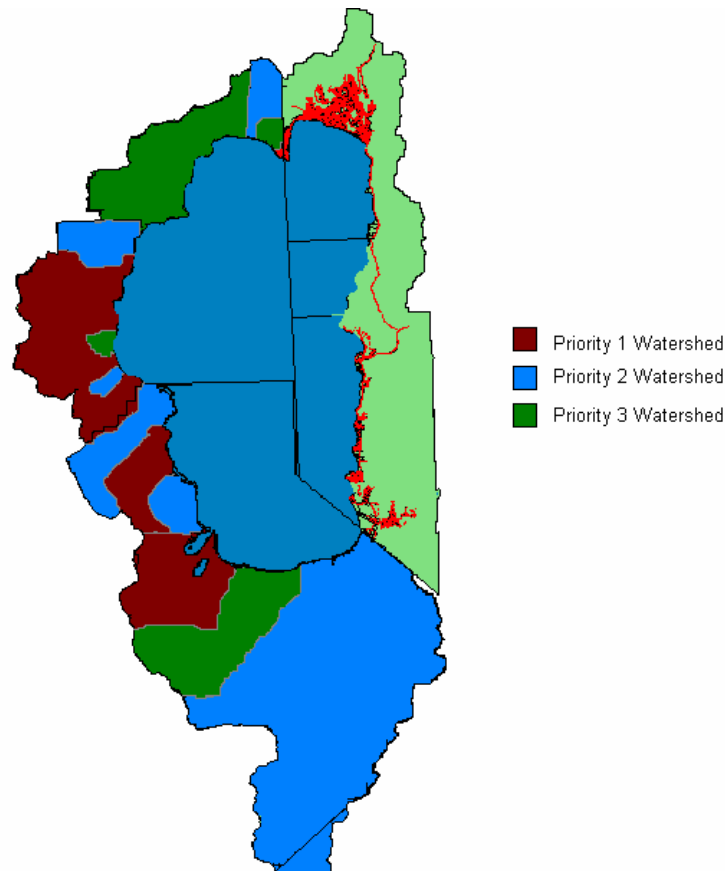
Due to increased sediment inputs into Lake Tahoe, clarity has been reduced by approximately 40 feet since the late 1960s. In response to this alarming rate of loss, TRPA adopted the BMP Retrofit Ordinance, which requires all homeowners to take necessary measures to control erosion and reduce runoff from leaving their property. The goal of this ordinance is to reduce concentrated flow of runoff before it reaches the Lake. Infiltrating runoff before it leaves private property reduces sediment and nutrients

from directly entering Lake Tahoe, as well as stream bank erosion of the 63 creeks that flow into Lake Tahoe. TRCD's BCP was designed to educate homeowners about the BMPs, as required by this basin-wide ordinance.

Prioritization

All of the watersheds in the Tahoe Basin were prioritized for BMP implementation depending on various factors, including soil type, slope, ratio of development to undisturbed land, and relative inputs of nutrients and sediment from the watershed. Using this data, watersheds were determined to be Priority One, Two or Three, with installation deadlines of October 15, 2000, 2006, and 2008 respectively.

**Map 5: BMP Priority Watersheds in the Tahoe Resource Conservation District**



The goal of the BMP Retrofit Ordinance is to promote installation of BMPs, rather than collect fines for non-compliance. This does not mean that a landowner can ignore the ordinance since TRPA has the authority to impose fines for not being in compliance. However, when a landowner approaches TRCD for assistance in implementing these BMPs, they are placed on a waiting list, with assistance provided on a first-come, first-serve basis. The benefit of being on this list is that TRPA views it as a step towards fulfilling the requirements of the ordinance, and subsequently, will

generally not impose any fines for non-compliance, even if the BMPs are not completed before the mandated deadline.

Assistance

TRCD has a Memorandum of Understanding with TRPA to assist single-family homeowners with the design and installation of BMPs. Homeowners can voluntarily work with TRCD free of charge to obtain one-on-one assistance from a non-regulatory agency.

In order to assist landowners in implementing BMPs, TRCD offers free site evaluations to any single-family residential property on the California side of the Tahoe Basin to assess what BMPs, if any, are needed. A typical TRCD site evaluation includes a computer-generated site plan showing the location of proposed treatments, a Recommended Treatments Form detailing required dimensions of the treatments along with a written description, a *Home Landscaping Guide for Lake Tahoe and Vicinity* published by the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension and a packet of native wildflower seeds.

TRCD also offers technical assistance to interested homeowners who want to install their BMPs themselves in the form of “technical tip sheets” that help to explain the installation of specific treatments required for the subject property. TRCD staff is also available to answer questions over the phone or to conduct an on-site visit to assist with the installation process. For homeowners that would rather contract the job to a professional, TRCD has an updated list of local contractors who are familiar with BMP requirements and many who have attended the BMP Contractors' Workshop held each April. Also, upon request, TRCD staff will meet with contractors chosen by a homeowner prior to implementation.

Because of the high demand for the grant-funded services of TRCD, the district published a *Do-it-Yourself BMP Guide* to assist landowners in designing their own BMPs. This option benefits homeowners who wish to start the process immediately or want more control over the overall look of their landscape. Once a design has been created, homeowners can bring their design into the TRCD office prior to implementing the BMPs. TRCD staff can check the plans to ensure that they fully meet the TRPA ordinance.

After the BMPs are completed, a homeowner can request a final inspection from TRCD staff. If all BMPs are installed, functional and meet the requirements of the BMP Retrofit Ordinance, TRCD will request a BMP Certificate of Completion for the property from TRPA.

Although TRCD does not usually provide financial assistance, the district is able provide a rebate of \$500 to 80 homeowners annually, based on income criteria. However, this program is funded through various grants and is not a guarantee.

## ***Invasive Weed Program***

### **Description and Background**

The TRCD formed the Invasive Weed Program in 2005 as part of the Lake Tahoe Basin Weed Coordinating Group. This program is intended to assist property owners with technical assistance on terrestrial invasive weed identification and control. The goal is to coordinate a comprehensive Basin-wide weed management strategy to reduce the impact of non-native invasive plants in the Tahoe Basin. Invasive plants harm native communities by out-competing natural plants, and often cause major erosion due to their nonfibrous root systems.

TRCD is a member of the Lake Tahoe Basin Weed Coordinating Group (LTBWCG), which is a diverse group of agencies and community members dedicated to preventing and controlling invasive weed species in the Basin. The LTBWCG mission is to better share resources and information, standardize methods for treatment and data collection, perform coordinated education and outreach activities, obtain grants, and organize effective control efforts. The weed must pose a serious threat to the state's ecosystems, and there must be some hope of eventually controlling it in order for the weed to become listed as noxious.

### **Assistance**

The Invasive Weed Outreach Coordinator coordinates three to four community "weed pull" days each year. The weed pull days aim to get community groups, homeowners associations, and landowners involved in mechanically treating weeds of concern in the Basin, while raising their level of awareness about invasive plant threats in the Basin. Proposed weed pull days could include treatment of 1) sesbania in the Dry Creek watershed, 2) Dalmation Toadflax at the Gate Keeper Cabin in Sugar Pine State Park, and 3) perennial pepperweed in wetland areas throughout the Basin.

TRCD also participates in weed identification workshops, sponsored by the Watershed Management Areas. The Invasive Weed Outreach Coordinator assists in organizing, publicizing, and running these workshops. TRCD also assists in promoting continuous communication between groups conducting weed control and mapping efforts throughout the Basin. Such coordination is necessary to ensure that all weed locations are effectively treated and that overlap or duplication of weed control efforts in bordering jurisdictions does not occur. By having the Invasive Weed Coordinator act as a central person to further promote dialog throughout the busy spring and summer months, it ensures an effective and efficient overall weed management program. The coordinator also actively researches grant opportunities and submits proposals for the implementation of invasive weed projects and the continuation of the invasive weed program.

## ***Watershed Programs***

### **Upper Truckee River Watershed Improvement Projects**

In 2002, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation awarded a one and a half million dollar grant to TRCD for five watershed projects within the Upper Truckee River Watershed, which is the largest watershed within the Lake Tahoe Basin. The project descriptions are as follows:

#### ***Environmental Assessment for the Upper Truckee River, Upper Reach***

The objectives of the project grant are to provide a comprehensive overall environmental assessment, develop restoration alternatives for the river ecosystem, select the preferred alternative, and provide a preliminary design and conceptual plans for the preferred alternative for this reach of the Upper Truckee River.

#### ***Angora Creek Stream Environment Zone Restoration Project***

A portion of the funds from this grant will be designated for the construction of the El Dorado County, Angora Creek Stream Environment Zone Restoration Project. The planning and design for the project are already complete.

#### ***Residential Best Management Practices Implementation in the Upper Truckee River Watershed***

The BMP program promotes education and outreach programs in the Upper Truckee River Watershed. This project will be in addition to the current TRCD, BMP program.

#### ***Upper Truckee River Watershed Coordinator Education and Outreach Program***

The grant includes funding for the Watershed Coordinator's position, which is responsible for providing assistance in coordination and management of grants, wildlife habitat management, education/outreach, and monitoring.

#### ***City of South Lake Tahoe, Upper Truckee River Restoration Monitoring***

The City has been providing funding for water quality monitoring along the middle reach of the Upper Truckee River. The monitoring for this project is being implemented to determine the background levels of constituents and monitor the changes from the project site. During the course of this study, the City will be determining the background water quality at three different stations on the river to quantify inputs coming in above the study area monitoring and isolating three separate sections of channel to find out where the largest sources of pollutants are coming from within the project area.

### **Stream Habitat Restoration of the Middle Reach of the Upper Truckee River**

In 2003, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation awarded a nearly half-million dollar grant to TRCD for the preparation of an environmental review, design, plans, specifications, and agency approvals and permits for the Middle Reach of the Upper Truckee River. The need for this project is to improve fisheries and wildlife habitat and water quality. The effects of reclamation and urban development have reduced the floodplain area and modified natural hydrologic function. Areas in the proposed project area have been ditched and bermed to control irrigation on developed pastures. These changes, in combination with the reduced overbank flow and incision of the Upper Truckee River channel, have diminished the original and potential ecological values of the floodplain areas and the amount of filtration, a benefit to water quality.

#### ***Public Outreach and Education***

Local fire districts and regulatory agencies are currently conducting community education and assistance programs on a limited basis. The demand for these services has increased greatly as a result of recent wildfires and a basin-wide effort to complete a bi-state, multi-county fire plan for the Tahoe Basin. TRCD participates in an on-going process to continue public education to increase environmental awareness of issues within the Tahoe Basin. This includes:

- Participation in local environmental fairs and events
- Continuing environmental education at Lake Tahoe Basin schools
- Exploring funding opportunities and coordinating with partner agencies to implement education projects throughout the Basin
- Assist local and state fire agencies by addressing the problem of fire fuel load.
- Assist the California Water Quality Control Board, Lahontan Region, and the Clean Tahoe Program by addressing water quality and watershed restoration.
- TRCD has built a demonstration garden which offers many educational examples of practices that can be implemented at home, with native plantings, small-scale BMPs, and driveway paving options. The demonstration garden is located at Lake Tahoe Community College.

#### **Funding**

All monetary amounts cited in this section are rounded to nearest whole number and based on fiscal year (FY) 2005-06 budgetary information received from both the district and the County Auditor-Controller's Office. TRCD maintains its funds in the County Treasury and the Auditor-Controller's Office serves as the accounts payable for the district. TRCD



pays a nominal fee for each transaction performed by these County offices.

In addition, for reference and trend analysis purposes, the chart below contains the revenues, expenditures and net amounts for TRCD during the 2002-03, 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 fiscal years (FY). TRCD has been able to carryover approximately 16% to 20% of the operating budget in recent years.

**Table 9: Tahoe Resource Conservation District Budget Summary**

Budget Year	Balance Brought Forward	New Revenue	Expenditures	Net Amounts
FY 2002-03	\$104,507	\$1,173,040	\$1,021,949	\$255,598
FY 2003-04	\$255,598	\$1,281,218	\$1,281,488	\$255,328
FY 2004-05	\$255,328	\$1,561,332	\$1,523,460	\$293,200
FY 2005-06	\$293,200	\$2,288,433	\$2,122,017	\$459,616

TRCD has a current budget of approximately \$2.5 million. Although TRCD receives a modest share of the property tax increment from parcels within the district service area, it accounts for only a small percentage of the total incoming revenue. In FY 2005-06, property tax revenue was slightly over \$50,000. The primary source of revenue stems from awarded grants, which the district actively pursues. Grants are applied to annually and TRCD has a grant success rate of approximately 75%. The grants are awarded based on the scope of work TRCD plans to complete. During FY 2005-06, TRCD received over \$1.5 million in grant funds, which accounted for 69% of the district revenue for the year. The district received another \$660,000 in contributing funds from El Dorado and Placer Counties. TRCD's largest source of revenue is Proposition 40, which has awarded \$3-4 million accumulatively to the district, and possibly Proposition 50, which is expected to award \$12.5 million over a 5-year span (the application for this grant is in the process of review and has yet to be awarded).

TRCD provides services and informational materials at no charge. This approach is common among resource conservation districts, as they are resource agencies with a primary purpose of disseminating information to landowners and the general public.

TRCD's expenses consist of salaries and employee benefits and services and supplies. Employee benefits and salaries, which were near \$1 million in FY 2005-06, accounted for 46% of expenses; services and supplies, at \$1.1 million, accounted for the other 54%. TRCD supports a staff of 12 full-time employees, as well as seasonal crew to assist in site evaluations.

### **Grants**

TRCD has received nearly \$3.9 million since 2002 in grants and federal funds, including:

- \$1.5 million from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) for the five projects associated with the Upper Truckee River Watershed Improvement Projects; the California Water Quality Control Board awarded an additional \$10,000 for payment of expenses within the project proposal;
- \$910,000 from the USBR for the Angora Creek Stream Environment Zone Restoration Project;
- \$89,000 from the USBR for BMP implementation of the Upper Truckee River Watershed;
- \$42,000 from the City of South Lake Tahoe for monitoring water quality along the middle reach of the Upper Truckee River;
- \$440,700 from the USBR for the Stream Habitat Restoration Project of the Upper Truckee River;
- \$340,000 from the USBR to initiate comprehensive survey and removal of Eurasian Watermilfoil in Emerald Bay and Ski Run Marina;
- \$222,000 through the California Propositions 13 and 40 Partnership Grant to further expand terrestrial weed prevention and eradication efforts on the California side of the Tahoe Basin, and continue to fund a Lake Tahoe Basin Weed Coordinating Group Outreach Coordinator through 2008;
- \$42,000 from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation to enhance participation in the Backyard Conservation Program on the Nevada side of the Basin; and
- \$100,000 from the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act to enhance participation in the Backyard Conservation Program on the California side of the Basin, and support aquatic invasive weed outreach activities Basin-wide.

Such funding strengthens the District's ability to leverage its resources and to provide meaningful programs that directly relate to resource conservation issues within a larger watershed context.

The District is experiencing increased demand for its services due to growth in the County's population and an increased awareness of the District's educational programs, specifically the Residential Best Management Program and the Invasive Weeds Program. Service levels in response to this growth are reaching the limit of available financial resources. It is TRCD's hope to hire a Grant Administrator to free up field staff to complete these projects.

**Shared Facilities**

The TRCD avoids additional overhead costs by sharing office facilities with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) in South Lake Tahoe. As noted above, the two agencies collaborate on a number of projects, and their goals and objectives are highly complementary.

**Governing Board**

Back when the district was formed the initial Board of Directors consisted of five members, appointed by each of the following agencies: one by TRPA, one by the City of South Lake Tahoe, one by the Board of Supervisors of El Dorado County and two appointed by the Board of Supervisors of Placer County. However, presently, all five board members are appointed by the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors. Director terms are staggered with two to expire in 2008 and three to expire in 2010. The TRCD Board of Directors meets the second Tuesday of every month. Current Board members include:

**Table 10: Tahoe Resource Conservation District Board of Directors**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Appointed</b>	<b>Original</b>	<b>Expiration</b>
Robert Anderson	President	1/9/2007	11/26/2002	11/01/2010
Barbara Childs	Vice President / Treasurer	1/9/2007	11/30/2004	11/01/2010
Blackstone, Joyce	Director	12/5/2000	11/26/1996	12/01/2008
David C. Antonucci	Director	11/30/2004	11/26/2002	11/01/2008
Heather Segale	Director	1/9/2007	6/28/2005	11/01/2010

**Table 11: Tahoe Resource Conservation District Staff**

Position	Wage per Hour	Full Time / Seasonal	Benefits
District Manager			
Accountant			
Administrative Services Coordinator	\$17.20 - \$20.90	Full Time	Yes
Resource Conservationist (Backyard Conservation Program)	\$20.78 - \$25.26	Full Time	Yes
Resource Conservationist (Invasive Weed Program)	\$20.78 - \$25.26	Full Time	Yes
Engineering Technician (2)	\$17.51 - \$21.28	Full Time	Yes
Conservation Assistant I (3)	\$14.45 - \$17.56	Full Time	Yes
Conservation Planner (Vacant)	\$17.51 - \$21.28	Full Time	Yes
Assistant Conservation Planner	\$14.45 - \$17.56	Full Time	Yes
<b>Through an Agreement with the California Tahoe Conservancy:</b>			
Conservation Assistant II (2)	\$14.45 - \$17.56	Seasonal	No
Conservation Technician IIA	\$12.04 - \$13.28	Full Time	Yes
Conservation Technician III	\$13.81 - \$15.23	Full Time	Yes
Conservation Technician IV	\$12.04 - \$16.95	Full Time	Yes
Conservation Technician I or II (10 – 20)	\$10.50 - \$13.28	Seasonal	No

**Summary of Determinations**

The following is an analysis of the resource conservation services provided by the Tahoe Resource Conservation District. Implementation of most of the recommendations contained in this section is at the discretion of the Board of Directors and its staff. However, LAFCO will utilize the contents of the analysis for determining the district’s sphere of influence update.

**Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies**

The Tahoe RCD does not own or maintain infrastructure beyond general office equipment utilized for administrative functions. TRCD benefits from an arrangement with the NRCS, which allows the district to share its South Lake Tahoe office with the federal agency at no cost. The NRCS pays for all rent and building maintenance costs.

### Growth and Population Projections for the Affected Area

Projections by TRPA estimate that there are currently approximately 31,500 people in the TRCD service area with an expected growth rate of 0.04% per year between 2000 and 2010. Due to the high percentage of vacation homes in the Tahoe Basin, the number of residents year-round is noticeably less than the seasonal population. However, the seasonal population contributes almost equally to the demand on TRCD services, because of the large percentage of home ownership.

Since the passing of TRPA's BMP Retrofit Ordinance requiring the installation of BMPs on all developed properties within the Tahoe Basin and the establishment of installation deadlines, TRCD has seen a significant increase in demand for its services from homeowners. Although the BMP compliance deadlines for all three Priority Areas have passed, the majority of developed private lands are still working toward BMP conformity. This indicates that TRCD services, such as site evaluations and technical assistance will not lessen until these properties are brought up to TRPA's standards.

### Financing Constraints and Opportunities

TRCD appears to receive sufficient revenue to fund its programs through various grants, contributions from both El Dorado and Placer Counties and a relatively small increment of the property tax collected. Although the majority of the funding is only semi-stable due to the uncertain nature of grants, the district does not appear to have difficulties in financing its operations, in part, because it provides service to such a high-profile area that receives an abundance of attention and funding at the national and state level.

### Cost Avoidance Opportunities and Shared Facilities

The TRCD appears to be very adept at cost avoidance measures and sharing of facilities. In addition to sharing office space with the NRCS, TRCD maintains a strong collaborative relationship with numerous local, state and federal agencies that are working toward a common goal of resource conservation in the Tahoe Basin. By collectively pooling the distinctive resources and staff expertise of each agency, TRCD is able to facilitate a broader level of programs and offer a greater variety of services than it would working solely as an autonomous entity.

### Opportunities for Rate Restructuring

This section is not applicable to the TRCD, as it does not have an established fee schedule and provides services and informational materials to the public at no charge.

Government Structure Options

The area that the TRCD serves within the Tahoe Basin is relatively isolated from the Western Slope of El Dorado County and from other parts of Placer County. It is reasonable to conclude that the TRCD is competently serving the areas under its jurisdiction and there is no recommendation for restructuring of any kind.

Evaluation of Management Efficiencies

TRCD seems to be very efficiently operated with the current resources and staffing available. The district has a full-time staff of approximately ten employees who implement the operations of the district under the guidance of a District Manager to provide locally based resource conservation services in the Tahoe Basin. The district recently filled the vacancy for the District Manager position. The District Manager takes direction from the five-member Board of Directors.

Local Accountability and Governance

TRCD maintains a website that provides an abundance of information and publications. In addition, the staff is very receptive to public inquiries regarding the various programs and services that are available to landowners within the district.

## **VI DESCRIPTION OF PRIOR LAFCO STUDIES**

Prior to this report, El Dorado LAFCO had not prepared a comprehensive MSR on resource conservation districts, nor has LAFCO adopted, amended or updated the SOIs for the districts since their original creation. This is in-part because the El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide RCDs pre-date the formation of LAFCO (1940 and 1953, respectively) and the Tahoe RCD was created by the Legislature in 1974, bypassing the LAFCO process. Although LAFCO has not studied these agencies or adopted SOIs for them, it is assumed that the districts' spheres are coterminous with their service boundaries. In addition, because the entire county is within an RCDs, LAFCO staff is not aware of any annexations or detachments to the El Dorado County Resource Conservation District, Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District or Tahoe Resource Conservation District since their respective formations.

## **VII ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, Public Resources Code §21000 et seq.) requires public agencies to evaluate the potential environmental effects of their actions. OPR's Service Review Guidelines Chapter 7, *Integrating Municipal Service Reviews with the California Environmental Quality Act*, advises that "no two municipal service reviews will be exactly alike and each needs to be evaluated on its specific merits and characteristics." The environmental review for El Dorado LAFCO's service review of resource conservation districts is specific to this study and may differ from the environmental review of other service reviews and other LAFCOs.

Service reviews are intended to support sphere of influence updates, including the creation and amendment of SOI boundaries, as well as other government reorganization proposals. Such activities could influence future growth patterns, and as such are considered discretionary projects under CEQA. LAFCO has the principal responsibility for carrying out and approving this service review and therefore the principal responsibility for preparing CEQA documents as lead agency.

### **Exemption**

This service review qualifies for a Class 6 categorical exemption as outlined in Public Resources Code §15306. This exemption "consists of basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. These may be strictly for information gathering purposes, or as part of a study leading to an action which a public agency has not yet approved, adopted, or funded" (CEQA Guidelines §15306). This service review may lead to actions such as government reorganizations and SOI updates that could potentially affect the environment. However, as these actions have not yet been approved, adopted, or funded by LAFCO, the Class 6 exemption is applicable. A notice of exemption is attached as "Attachment A." Any future projects that make use of this service review and the information contained herein will be subject to separate environmental review under CEQA.



## VIII ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

State Law defines environmental justice as “the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies” (Government Code §65040.12(e)). OPR explains that “as the primary agency with responsibility for approving changes in boundaries, LAFCOs play an important role in coordinating growth and ensuring that proposed changes are consistent with environmental justice obligations.” Changes of organization must be consistent with spheres of influence, and the information contained in this service review will guide future updates to agency spheres of influence.

OPR identifies several uses for data obtained in the service review process:

1. Improving the community participation process.
2. Identifying low-income/minority neighborhoods under-served by public facilities and services that enhance the quality of life.
3. Considering the equitable distribution of public facilities and services.
4. Considering infrastructure and housing needs.
5. Identifying low-income/minority neighborhoods where facilities and uses that pose a significant hazard to human health and safety may be over-concentrated.
6. Screening of issues for potential environmental justice implications.

Consideration of the issues listed above will assist LAFCO and other public agencies in identifying, preventing, and reversing historical problems of procedural and geographic inequity. In undertaking this service review and making the nine determinations, LAFCO used an open public participation process to screen for and identify environmental justice issues.

Demographic data for the study area is limited and generally does not clearly distinguish between population groups of different races, cultures, and incomes. The most recent data available, from the 2000 Census, shows the following racial populations in the census communities. The census area boundaries do not correspond to agency boundaries or General Plan Community Region boundaries, but the data provides a demographic framework for the evaluation of environmental justice issues. Statistically significant populations of Hispanic/Latino (of any race) are located in the cities of Placerville (12.6%) and South Lake Tahoe (26.7%).

Data is available from the El Dorado County Office of Education regarding ethnicity of student populations. These statistics are based on school attendance areas and school districts. For school areas generally, the data confirms that minority populations tend to be small and dispersed throughout the county. The largest ethnic minority population listed is Hispanic/Latino in low percentages (4-9%) in the unincorporated areas and statistically significant Hispanic/Latino populations in the two cities (e.g. approximately 32% in Lake Tahoe Unified

School District and approximately 13% in the Placerville Union School District).

The El Dorado Community Foundation recently conducted a study of the needs of Latino populations in the county. The Foundation estimated that the Latino population of El Dorado County might be about 24.7% of the total county population. Census data above notes 14,566 Hispanic or Latino persons in the county population, about 9.3%. Spanish-speaking volunteers conducted a home-based survey in areas where clusters of Latinos live near one another in Placerville-Pollock Pines and Cameron Park. Their analysis was more anecdotal and identified only small clusters of Latinos population groups.

The demographic data from the census suggests that the unincorporated county is relatively homogenous with low numbers of racial or ethnic minorities counted. Income data available from the census does not suggest that there are low income population concentrations in the countywide study area. While service levels vary greatly within the county, no specific ethnic or economic neighborhoods could be identified by LAFCO staff that are underserved by public facilities. Infrastructure and housing distribution is relatively even throughout the developed areas of the county with much lower levels of infrastructure and housing in the more outlying communities. No low income/minority neighborhoods were identified where facilities and uses pose a significant hazard to human health and safety.

The 2004 County General Plan does not address environmental justice directly. Although the Environmentally Constrained Alternative did contain related land use and housing policies, the 1996 Alternative and the 2004 General Plan do not contain those sections. The 2004 General Plan Housing Element includes Goal HO: "To provide housing that meets the needs of existing and future residents in all income categories." The housing element also discusses the following special needs groups: people with disabilities, seniors, agricultural employees, female heads of households, homeless persons, and large families and households.

**Table 12: Study Area Population by Race**

Area	Total	RACE							Hispanic or Latino (Of Any Race)
		White	Black or African American	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	Some Other Race	Two or More Races	
El Dorado County	156,299	140,209 (89.7%)	813 (0.5%)	1,566 (1.0%)	3,328 (2.1%)	209 (0.1%)	5,547 (3.5%)	4,627 (3.0%)	14,566 (9.3%)

Source: 2000 Census  
 Percentages may not add due to rounding

## **IX REFERENCES AND SOURCES**

### **El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation Districts**

- El Dorado County Board of Supervisors Resolution, Adopted February 20, 1956, Ratifying the Formation and Organization of the Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District
- El Dorado County Board of Supervisors Resolution, Adopted July 2, 1940, Ratifying the Formation and Organization of the El Dorado County Resource Conservation District
- El Dorado County Resource Conservation District Annual Plan, Fiscal Year 2005-06
- El Dorado County Resource Conservation District Final Budgets, Fiscal Years 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07
- El Dorado County Resource Conservation District Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2006-2010
- Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District Annual Plan, Fiscal Year 2005-06
- Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District Final Budgets, Fiscal Years 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07
- Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District Staff Report on Potential Consolidation, September 1997
- Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2006-2010
- Interview, Mark Egbert, District Manager and Lucille Toutjian, Office Coordinator, August 2007
- LAFCO Resolution L-84-23, Adoption of the El Dorado County Resource Conservation District Sphere of Influence
- LAFCO Resolution L-84-24, Adoption of the Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District Sphere of Influence
- South Fork American River Watershed Stewardship Strategy: Watershed Assessment, 2003
- Telephone Conversations, Mark Egbert, EDCRCD and GDRCD District Manager, August 2007 – October 2007

Written Comments regarding Draft Resource Conservation District MSR, submitted by Mark Egbert, EDCRCD and GDRCD District Manager, October 2007

**Tahoe Resource Conservation District**

El Dorado County Board of Supervisors "Commissions" webpage: Tahoe Resource Conservation District, [www.co.el-dorado.ca.us/bos/commissions/master.asp](http://www.co.el-dorado.ca.us/bos/commissions/master.asp)

Interview, Holly Nattress, Assistant to the Board, August 2007

Tahoe Resource Conservation District Annual / Long-Range Work Plan 2005-2010

Tahoe Resource Conservation District Annual Report 2005-2006

Tahoe Resource Conservation District Do-It-Yourself Guide for Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Telephone Conversations, Holly Nattress, TRCD Assistant to the Board, August 2007 – October 2007

Written Comments regarding Draft Resource Conservation District MSR, submitted by Holly Nattress, TRCD Assistant to the Board, September 2007

**General Background Information**

2004 El Dorado County General Plan: A Plan for Managed Growth and Open Roads; a Plan for Quality Neighborhoods and Traffic Relief, adopted July 19, 2004

California Public Resources Code, Division 9 (Sections 9001-9778)

California Revenue and Taxation Code, Division 1 (Section 99.02)

Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000, prepared by Assembly Committee on Local Government, last updated December 2006

LAFCO Procedures Guide, 2006 Edition, San Diego County LAFCO

Local Agency Formation Commission Municipal Service Review Guidelines, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, August 2003

State of California Office of the Attorney General Opinion No. 05-809, February 9, 2006

# EL DORADO LAFCO

## LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

### Notice of Exemption

TO: \_\_\_\_\_ Office of Planning and Research  
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121  
Sacramento, CA 95814

FROM: (Public Agency)  
El Dorado LAFCO  
550 Main Street, Suite E  
Placerville, CA 95667

County Clerk  
County of El Dorado

**Project Title:** Municipal Services Review of Resource Conservation Districts; LAFCO Project No. 2007-06

**Project Location - Specific:** El Dorado County boundaries – Countywide review

**Project Location - City:** N/A **Project Location - County:** El Dorado

**Description of Project:** Informational study on and analyses of the service provision capabilities of three resource conservation districts in El Dorado County.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** El Dorado LAFCO

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying out Project:** El Dorado LAFCO

**Exempt Status:** (check one)


- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1);15268);  
 Declared Emergency (Sec.21080(b)(3);15269(a));  
 Categorical Exemption. State type and selection number: Class 6, Section 15306  
 Statutory Exemptions. State code number: \_\_\_\_\_

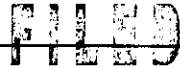
**Reasons why project is exempt:** Informational study leading to actions the lead agency has not yet approved, adopted or funded.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** José C. Henríquez (530) 295-2707

**If filed by applicant:**

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a notice of exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project?  Yes  No

Signature:  Date: December 6, 2007 Title: Executive Officer

Signed by Lead Agency Date received for filing at OPR:   
 Signed by Applicant

DEC 06 2007