

Tahoe Resource Conservation District Sphere of Influence Update

District Profile

The Tahoe RCD was formed by the California Legislature in 1974 under the provisions of Division 9 of the California Public Resources Code which authorizes the formation of resource conservation districts for the purpose of addressing local resource conservation needs. 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.

Land Use Character

TRCD's service area covers all land in California within the Lake Tahoe Basin, providing service to those parts of El Dorado and Placer Counties adjacent to Lake Tahoe. The district encompasses approximately 300,000 acres of land on the California side of the Tahoe Basin in El Dorado and Placer Counties.

Major land uses include recreation and tourism activities associated with Lake Tahoe, such as skiing, snowboarding, camping, hiking, mountain biking, fishing and summer water sports. The territory is heavily populated in certain vicinities, such as the City of South Lake Tahoe, and the areas immediately surrounding Lake Tahoe, Highway 50, Tahoe City/Meeks Bay, North Shore and Echo Lakes. Beyond these population centers, the district is less inhabited and primarily undeveloped wilderness.

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 Lake Tahoe, 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.

Level of Service

TRCD seems to be very efficiently operated with the current resources and staffing available. 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 operating solely as an autonomous entity.

Commission's Policies and Guidelines

LAFCO Policy 4.4 requires the Commission to review the following topics before making sphere of influence determinations. The Commission's recent review of resource conservation districts addressed these requirements as noted below. All citations are from the Final Resource Conservation District Municipal Services Review, which is scheduled to be considered and adopted by the Commission on December 5, 2007.

1. *Service capacity, level and types of services currently provided by the agency, and areas where these services are provided*

Refer to pages 25-26, "Service Area;" page 26, "Map 4: Tahoe Resource Conservation District;" pages 26-27, "Growth and Population;" pages 27-28, "Purpose;" page 28, "Cooperative Efforts;" pages 28-34, "Programs and Services;" page 38, "Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies;" page 28, "Growth and Population Projections for the Affected Area;" and page 39, "Local Accountability and Governance."

2. *Financial capabilities and costs of service*

Refer to pages 34-36, "Funding;" page 34, "Table 7: Tahoe Resource Conservation District Budget Summary;" page 38, "Financing Constraints and Opportunities;" page 38, "Cost Avoidance Opportunities and Shared Facilities;" and pages 38-39, "Opportunities for Rate Restructuring."

3. *Topographic factors and areas of social and economic interdependencies*

Refer to pages 25-26, "Service Area;" pages 26-27, "Growth and Population;" pages 42-43, "Environmental Justice;" and page 43, "Table 10: Study Area Population by Race."

4. *Existing and planned land uses, land use plans and policies, consistency with county and city general plans, and projected growth in the affected area*

Refer to pages 25-26, "Service Area;" pages 26-27, "Growth and Population;" and page 24, "Growth and Population Projections for the Affected Area."

5. *Potential effects on agricultural and open space lands*

Land use within TRCD is regulated by the Tahoe Regional Planning Authority (TRPA), which regulates growth in territory within the Lake Tahoe Basin area. The majority of this land is within the Lake Tahoe Basin land use zoning area, consisting primarily of the Tahoe Agricultural District. Within the Basin, TRPA has designated approximately 85-90% of land for conservation or recreation purposes. Building within the district is severely restricted, as only approximately 115 residential permits are issued within the entire Lake Tahoe Basin each year. Although TRPA

regulations mean that growth is strictly curtailed in the outlying areas in the Tahoe Basin, infill within existing communities does occur more frequently.

TRPA regulations require that all developed parcels within the Tahoe Basin install Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce the amount of surface runoff that enters the lake. Compliance with the BMP Ordinance is mandatory prior to specific priority area deadlines. TRCD works with landowners on behalf of the TRPA to identify and implement these BMPs to ensure that the properties are in compliance with this ordinance. TRCD services provided to homeowners in the area are complementary to TRPA goals and do not induce urban growth or the premature conversion of agricultural land to urban uses.

6. *A description of the services that will be provided to any areas which may be added to the sphere and the timing and method for funding expansion of facilities or services*

No additional areas are proposed to be added to the TRCD sphere of influence at this time. For information relating to the timing and method for funding expansion of facilities or services, refer to pages 25-26, "Service Area;" pages 34-36, "Funding;" pages 26-27, "Growth and Population;" page 38, "Financing Constraints and Opportunities;" and page 39, "Government Structure Options."

7. *An analysis of the effects of a proposed sphere of influence on other agencies and their service capabilities:*

Refer to page 28, "Cooperative Efforts;" pages 28-34, "Programs and Services;" page 38, "Cost Avoidance Opportunities and Shared Facilities;" page 39, "Government Structure Options;" and page 39, "Evaluation of Management Efficiencies."

DETERMINATIONS

In determining the sphere of influence for each local agency, Government Code §56425(e) requires the Commission to consider and prepare a written statement of determinations with respect to four factors. Staff recommends the following determinations for amending the sphere for EDCRCD:

1. *The present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open space lands.*

Present land use in the TRCD area includes residential, recreational, commercial and tourist-related uses. Primary residential areas within TRCD tend to follow the major highways and roads that bisect the district. Growth and development potential is limited largely by TRPA regulations. Consequently, no substantial changes in the planned land use are expected as a direct result of affirming the current TRCD sphere of influence.

2. *The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the 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.

3. *The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services that the agency provides or is authorized to provide.*

TRCD appears to provide a high level of resource conservation services to district residents. TRCD receives sufficient revenue to fund its programs through various grants, contributions from both El Dorado and Placer Counties and a relatively small increment of local property taxes. 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.

4. *The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the Commission determines that they are relevant to the agency.*

In addition to the City of South Lake Tahoe, TRCD serves multiple distinct communities including Meeks Bay/Tahoe City, Fallen Leaf Lake, Meyers, North Shore, Phillips and Tahoma. The City of South Lake Tahoe is the primary concentrated, social or economic community of interest that is within the district. Due to TRPA land use regulations, these communities' populations are expected to remain relatively stable.

Based upon the information contained in this document, it is recommended that the Tahoe Resource Conservation District sphere of influence be updated to affirm the original sphere, as shown in the map attached to Resolution L-2007-48, which is coterminous with its current boundaries.