

El Dorado County Resource Conservation District Sphere of Influence Update

District Profile

The El Dorado County Resource Conservation District (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 resource management problems and promote sound management of natural resources in El Dorado County. It works 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."

Land Use Character

EDCRCD encompasses a current total of 617,241 acres, over half of which 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, although these represent relatively small acreages. The remainder of the land in this area is owned by individual landowners or private lumber companies. The district is experiencing a rapid growth of residential areas with lots as small as one acre. Primary land uses within the district includes orchards, livestock, and some timber production. Recreational uses are increasing on these privately owned lands.

Level of Service

The EDCRCD seems to be very efficiently operated with the current resources and staffing available. The district's practice of sharing staff with the Georgetown Divide RCD allows both districts to minimize the duplication of administrative resources. In addition, EDCRCD maintains 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, EDCRCD is able to facilitate a broader level of programs and offer a greater variety of services than it would by working 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 13-14, "Service Area;" page 14, "Map 2: El Dorado County Resource Conservation District;" page 19, "Growth and Population;" pages 19-20, "Purpose;" page 20, "Cooperative Efforts;" pages 20-23, "Programs and Services;" page 23, "Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies;" page 24, "Growth and Population Projections for the Affected Area;" and page 25, "Local Accountability and Governance."

2. Financial capabilities and costs of service

Refer to pages 15-16, "Funding;" page 15, "Table 2: El Dorado County Resource Conservation District Budget Summary;" page 24, "Financing Constraints and Opportunities;" page 24, "Cost Avoidance Opportunities and Shared Facilities;" and page 24, "Opportunities for Rate Restructuring."

3. Topographic factors and areas of social and economic interdependencies

Refer to pages 13-14, "Service Area;" page 19, "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 13-14, "Service Area;" page 19, "Growth and Population;" and page 24, "Growth and Population Projections for the Affected Area."

5. Potential effects on agricultural and open space lands

The goal of EDCRCD is to promote the responsible stewardship of the natural resources within its service boundaries. This is accomplished, in part, by discouraging the premature conversion of agricultural, open space or forest land to urban uses. The services provided by the district protect farmland and the agriculture economy by assisting private landowners and local agencies in the efficient management of local natural resources and by assisting local agencies and landowners minimize the effect of urbanization on natural areas.

The 2004 General Plan directs unincorporated growth to already existing population centers or "community regions." Therefore, it is reasonable to expect areas such as El Dorado Hills, Cameron Park and Diamond Springs to be further developed to a medium or lesser density in the coming years. The "in-between" areas will most likely remain in an agricultural or open space use or be converted to low-density rural residential, if developed.

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 EDCRCD sphere of influence at this time. For information relating to the timing and method for funding expansion of facilities or services, refer to pages 13-14, "Service Area;" pages 15-16, "Funding;" page 19, "Growth and Population;" page 24, "Financing Constraints and Opportunities;" and page 24, "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 20, "Cooperative Efforts;" pages 20-23, "Programs and Services;" page 24, "Cost Avoidance Opportunities and Shared Facilities;" page 24, "Government Structure Options;" and pages 24-25, "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 EDCRCD area varies depending on the location, and includes low to high-density residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural related activities such as orchards, vineyards, livestock, and timber production. Primary residential areas within the district tend to follow along the major road arteries, with the heaviest concentration clustering in the City of Placerville, El Dorado Hills and Cameron Park areas. Areas between the City and community regions are primarily agricultural and rural residential. Over half of the land within EDCRCD, mostly on the eastern side, is publicly owned by the US Forest Service. Future land uses are expected to remain relatively unchanged, with population growth consistent with the 2004 General Plan within already-established community regions.

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

EDCRCD serves an estimated population of 125,293 people and has experienced an amplified demand for 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. As the county's population grows further, so will the demands on the district. In particular, EDCRCD 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 escalating demands and responsibilities on the district directors and staff.

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

EDCRCD appears to provide an above-average level of resource conservation services to district residents. Instead of receiving an increment of local property taxes, EDCRCD receives revenue to fund its programs through various grants, and an annual base-contribution from the El Dorado County General Fund. Although the majority of the revenue is only semi-stable due to the uncertain nature of grants and the informal funding agreement with the County, the district does not appear to have difficulties in financing its operations at this time.

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.*

EDCRCD serves multiple distinct communities including the City of Placerville, El Dorado Hills, Cameron Park, and Diamond Springs, which represent the primary concentrated, social or economic communities of interest within the district. Also included in the EDCRCD boundaries are the areas of Rescue, Latrobe, Coloma, Camino, Pleasant Valley and Fairplay.

Based upon the information contained in this document, it is recommended that the El Dorado County Resource Conservation District sphere of influence be updated to affirm the original sphere, as shown in the map attached to Resolution L-2007-46, which is coterminous with its current boundaries.