

Agency Profile

The Meeks Bay Fire Protection District (MEK) was formed November 27, 1973 (refer to Map I). Under Health and Safety Code §13800, et seq., the district is empowered to provide fire protection and suppression, emergency medical and rescue services in the extreme northeastern portion of El Dorado County, 3 miles north of Emerald Bay. The district covers about 14 square miles including 2,100 parcels and encompasses subdivisions adjacent to Highway 89. Meeks Bay FPD has a large interface with Desolation Wilderness, state park lands and federal lands.

Land Use Character

Of the 2,139 total acres in the district, 841 are owned by the State of California and 1,244 are owned by USFS. Local communities served by MEK are Tahoma, Meeks Bay, Rubicon, Glenridge, Gold Coast and Tahoe Hills. In addition, the district serves Meeks Bay Resort and Meeks Bay Campgrounds, Sugar Pine/General Creek Campgrounds, and the Campgrounds in Bliss State Park, and Vikingsholm State Park. Principal land uses in the district include residential uses and typical recreation and tourism activities associated with Lake Tahoe, such as camping, hiking, mountain biking, fishing, winter snow sports and summer water sports. Residential areas within MEK typically follow Highway 89 around Lake Tahoe and include the communities of Meeks Bay and Tahoma.

Level of Service

MEK provides a moderate level of services to its residents district-wide. Its per capita district expenditure was \$1,002.37 in Fiscal Year 2003-2004. The primary funding mechanism for these services was property taxes, followed by district assessments, supplemental funding from the County and miscellaneous revenue generated through its successful applications for various grants. MEK currently has two fire stations that provide sufficient coverage for the district; in addition, a third station is expected to be completed by 2010.

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 fire suppression and emergency services addressed these requirements as noted below. All citations are from the Final Countywide Fire Suppression and Emergency Services Municipal Services Review, adopted by the Commission in August, 2006.

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

Refer to pages 168-169, "Services and Programs;" page 169-170, "Infrastructure and Facilities;" pages 170, "Equipment and Vehicles;" page 171-172, "Personnel and Staffing;" page 286, "Table 107 – Comparative Ratio of Firefighters to Population per Agency;" page 301, "Meeks Bay FPD (MEK);" and Map 10 – "Tahoe Basin Stations."

2. *Financial capabilities and costs of service*

Refer to pages 175-177 “Funding and Budget;” pages 319-321, “Agency Funding;” page 342, “Table 113 – Comparative Ratio of Fire Protection Expenditures to Population per Agency;” and page 343, “Table 114 – Comparative Personnel Cost Percentage of Total Budget per Agency.”

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

Refer to pages 165-167, “Meeks Bay Fire Protection District;” and page 309, “Table 111 – El Dorado County Land Use Forecasts.”

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 page 167, “Growth/Population;” and pages 307-312, “Growth and Population Projections for the Affected Area.”

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

Land use within MEK is regulated by the Tahoe Regional Planning Authority (TRPA), a federally created bi-state agency. Building within the district is severely restricted, as only approximately 116 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. Within MEK, an average of 20-30 permits are reviewed annually for remodeling projects and new homes; however, there are no pending land use development plans or proposed new subdivisions at this time.

The majority of the land south of MEK is in permanent open space status because it is either National Forest land or State Park land; however, some residential structures exist north of Emerald Bay and are occupied for at least part of the year. These pose a public safety risk because they are not currently within a fire protection district. Developed areas outside of a fire agency pose an issue of fiscal inequity to responding districts since any required emergency services would still need to be provided regardless if the land or structures are within a fire agency. MEK is currently seeking to correct this issue by annexing these parcels into its service boundaries.

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*

Refer to pages 168-169, “Services and Programs;” page 169-170, “Infrastructure and Facilities;” pages 170, “Equipment and Vehicles;” page 171-172, “Personnel and Staffing;” page 286, “Table 107 – Comparative Ratio of Firefighters to Population per Agency;” page 301, “Meeks Bay FPD (MEK);” and Map 10 – “Tahoe Basin Stations.”

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

Refer to pages 336-339, “Government Structure and Cost Effectiveness.”

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 MEK:

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

The present land use in the MEK area includes residential, recreational and tourist-related uses. Primary residential areas within MEK are concentrated along Highway 89 around the edge of Lake Tahoe. Growth and development potential is limited largely by TRPA regulations and there is not expected to be any substantial changes in the planned land use as a direct result of this review. There are approximately 21 existing residential structures south of the MEK boundaries that are not currently within a fire agency. These structures are occupied seasonally, which indicates a potentially greater demand for fire and emergency response services than the surrounding open space lands within Eldorado National Forest and Bliss State Park. This causes an issue of economic imbalance to the MEK because it would be the most likely agency to respond to a fire or medical emergency. The MEK Board of Directors and its fire chief are currently working with LAFCO to expand MEK's service boundary to include these parcels. In addition, there are 14 parcels that are owned by the State of California, United States Forest Service and the California Tahoe Conservancy that are proposed to be detached from the MEK sphere of influence and district boundaries. These parcels do not generate property tax revenue for the district and fire suppression and emergency services are provided largely by those State and Federal agencies.

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

Parcels currently within the MEK district receive sufficient fire suppression and emergency response services as needed. If annexed, the areas outside the agency described above would increase demand for these services; however, it is expected that MEK's existing personnel and equipment would be adequate to maintain its present level of service, both within the current boundaries and on those areas requested for inclusion. In addition, funding, in the form of increased property taxes and assessments received, will help offset the cost of the increased demand and ensure the adequate provision of services into the new area.

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

The MEK appears to provide adequate fire suppression and emergency response services within and, in cases of mutual aid responses, outside its boundaries. The district is compensated for these services primarily through property taxes, County Supplement Funds and district assessments.

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.

MEK serves the communities of Meeks Bay and Tahoma; however, they are already completely within the district boundaries and would not require further Commission consideration for this sphere update.

Based upon the information contained in this document, it is recommended that the Meeks Bay FPD Sphere of Influence be expanded to include, and concurrently detach, the areas describe above, as shown in Map I. The parcels proposed for inclusion are:

016-600-04	017-051-01	018-011-02	018-162-01
016-600-07	017-061-10	018-011-03	018-163-01
016-600-08	017-071-01	018-011-04	018-163-02
016-600-10	017-081-01	018-041-01	018-163-03
016-600-13	017-091-01	018-041-02	018-163-04
016-600-19	017-101-01	018-041-04	018-171-01
016-600-20	017-111-01	018-051-02	018-172-01
016-600-21	017-131-01	018-160-01	990-035-12
017-041-28	018-011-01	018-161-01	

The parcels proposed for detachment from the current service boundaries are:

014-021-01	014-021-08	014-031-02	016-121-08
014-021-02	014-021-09	016-071-11	016-121-11
014-021-06	014-021-10	016-071-12	
014-021-07	014-031-01	016-071-13	