

### Agency Profile

The El Dorado County Fire Protection District (ECF) is approximately 281 square miles and is the largest fire protection district in the county. It was created through the consolidation of four fire departments approved by LAFCO in 1991. It subsequently annexed two other fire districts later that year. Consequently, ECF extends to the Middle Fork of the American River to the north and to Camp Sacramento on the east. Mainly situated in the central and mid-western part of El Dorado County, ECF also reaches to the county's northwestern border. A small corridor of the district extends to the eastern portion of El Dorado County along highway 50 to the edge of Lake Valley Fire Protection District (refer to Maps C1, C2 and C3). ECF is not a single contiguous area. The southwesterly area of ECF is separated from the majority portion of the district by the Rescue and Diamond Springs/El Dorado County Fire Protection Districts. The district serves the City of Placerville and the communities of Camino, Coloma, Cool, Gold Hill, Kyburz, Lotus, Oak Hill, Pacific House, Pilot Hill, Pleasant Valley, Pollock Pines, Shingle Springs, Sierra Springs and Strawberry. All of the communities in ECF are major risk areas for wildland/urban interface.

### *Land Use Character*

ECF estimates a total of 25,732 parcels in the district, including 21,159 improved (residential, commercial/industrial), 4,361 vacant residential parcels and 212 vacant commercial/industrial lots. Because of its size, land use within ECF ranges from rural, to moderately-populated rural centers (Coloma, Cool, Kyburz, Lotus, Pilot Hill, Pleasant Valley and Strawberry) to urban (City of Placerville).

### *Level of Service*

ECF provides a moderate level of services to its residents district-wide. Its per capita district expenditure was \$109.92 in Fiscal Year 2003-2004. Its main funding mechanisms for these services are property taxes, assessments and development impact fees. Its 17 fire stations provide extensive coverage for the district; however, some of those stations are staffed seasonally.

### 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 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 75-77, "Services and Programs;" page 77-80, "Infrastructure and Facilities;" page 81-84, "Equipment and Vehicles;" pages 84-87, "Personnel and Staffing;" page 286, "Table 107 – Comparative Ratio of Firefighters to Population per Agency;" page 297-298, "El Dorado County FPD (ECF);" Map 7 – "West County Stations;" Map 8 – "North County Stations;" Map 9 – "South County Stations;" and Map 10 – "Tahoe Basin Stations."

**2. *Financial capabilities and costs of service***

Refer to pages 90-92 “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 72-73, “El Dorado County 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 73-74, “History-Growth;” and pages 307-312, “Growth and Population Projections for the Affected Area.”

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

El Dorado County FPD serves an eclectic mix of land uses, from the urban center of Placerville, to various low density towns interspersed throughout the county, to portions of the Eldorado National Forest and to a narrow band along Highway 50 in the east. The 2004 General Plan directs unincorporated growth to already existing population centers or “community regions.” Some of these, such as Cool, Pilot Hill and Shingle Springs are found within ECF’s service area and these will be developed to a medium or lesser density. In-between areas will remain low density rural residential if developed or remain in an agricultural or open space use.

However, the services provided by the district do not induce urban growth or the premature conversion of agricultural land to urban uses. In some measure, the district’s services protect farmland and the agriculture economy by responding to emergencies in undeveloped areas and minimizing the financial cost that a fire could cause to farmers.

**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 75-77, “Services and Programs;” page 77-80, “Infrastructure and Facilities;” page 81-84, “Equipment and Vehicles;” pages 84-87, “Personnel and Staffing;” page 286, “Table 107 – Comparative Ratio of Firefighters to Population per Agency;” page 297-298, “El Dorado County FPD (ECF);” Map 7 – “West County Stations;” Map 8 – “North County Stations;” Map 9 – “South County Stations;” 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 ECF:

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

Present land use in the ECF area varies depending on the location. On and around the City of Placerville the land use character is mostly urban (high density, commercial and industrial); however, in other areas (such as Cool or Pollock Pines), it is low to medium density residential and areas between city and community regions it is primarily agricultural and rural residential. In general, population centers tend to be mostly concentrated along arterials, such as Highways 50 and 193 or South Shingle Road. Future land uses are expected to remain relatively unchanged, with population growth consistent with the 2004 General Plan along already-established community regions.

Due to its large size, ECF has several pockets of areas not within a fire agency. Most of them are entirely surrounded by ECF. There are some areas, however, that lie between ECF and other fire agencies. Most notably are areas between ECF and Rescue FPD (RES) and between ECF and Garden Valley FPD (GRV). There are no plans to develop the parcels in either of these areas beyond the current General Plan designation. However, the RES, GRV and ECF chiefs recognize that these parcels are not within their respective fire protection agency. Since further discussions and analyses are necessary, they have requested that their spheres remain as they are currently drawn. All three chiefs have agreed to a collaborative effort to evaluate and reorganize the spheres and service areas, if necessary.

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

The 2004 General Plan has designated the areas within the ECF sphere as either agricultural, natural resources or rural residential. It is possible that in the future lands previously used exclusively for agricultural purposes may be converted to other uses or developed to a limited extent. If this were to occur, it would lead to an increase in service demand to the district. However, fire suppression and emergency medical services, in and of themselves, do not increase the likelihood of this type of activity and, therefore, induce urban growth or the premature conversion of agricultural, open space to other uses.

Parcels currently within the ECF district receive sufficient fire suppression and emergency response services as needed. If annexed, the areas described above would increase demand for these services, although it is expected that existing personnel and equipment would be adequate to meet the level of service required for the inclusion. In addition, funding, in the form of increased property taxes,

assessments and applicable development impact fees received would offset increased costs and ensure the sufficient provision of services to serve the area.

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

ECF appears to provide moderate fire suppression and emergency response services within and, in cases of mutual aid responses, outside its boundaries. The district's fire agency network is extensive; however, not all stations are staffed year-round. The district is compensated for these services primarily through property taxes, development impact fees 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.***

ECF serves the City of Placerville and the communities of Camino, Coloma, Cool, Gold Hill, Kyburz, Lotus, Oak Hill, Pacific House, Pilot Hill, Pleasant Valley, Pollock Pines, Shingle Springs, Sierra Springs and Strawberry, as well as the surrounding rural areas. Other than Greenwood, there are no social or economic communities of interest in the area that will be broken due to this sphere update, nor are there any areas that will require special consideration from the Commission in this matter.

Based upon the information contained in this document, it is recommended that the El Dorado County FPD Sphere of Influence be updated to affirm its original sphere, as shown in Maps C1, C2 and C3.