

Blue Lake Fire Protection District

Municipal Service Review



January 2009

Prepared by:



For Updating the Sphere of Influence Report



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Agency Profile.....	4
Governance Structure and Administration.....	5
Growth and Population.....	6
Services Provided.....	7
Budget.....	7
Determinations.....	9
References.....	10

LIST of TABLES and FIGURES

Figure 1 District Map.....	2
Table 1 Agency Profile.....	3
Table 2-Board of Directors.....	4
Table 3 Growth and Population Summary.....	5
Table 4 Budget Summary.....	8

INTRODUCTION

This Municipal Service Review (MSR) was prepared as part of a mandated review of the spheres of influence (SOI) of all government entities in the County by the Humboldt Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo or the Commission). This report focuses on the Blue Lake Fire Protection District (FPD). The purpose of this study is to examine and evaluate local governmental services in order to improve overall understanding of local service conditions and to enhance these conditions through comprehensive review and analysis. This MSR presents for the Commission's consideration a discussion, analysis, and recommendations regarding services provided by the Blue Lake FPD. The SOI for the Blue Lake FPD was adopted in 2007 this MSR serves to update the relevant data on services provided within the Districts SOI. At this time, the SOI will not be amended.

Statutory Authority

The fundamental role of the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo, or the Commission) is to implement the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act (Act) consistent with local conditions and circumstances. The Act guides LAFCo's decisions. The major goals of LAFCo as established by the Act are to:

- Encourage orderly growth and development;
- Promote orderly development;
- Discourage urban sprawl;
- Preserve open-space and prime agricultural lands by guiding minimizing resource loss;
- Exercise its authority to ensure that affected populations receive efficient services;
- Promote logical formation and boundary modifications that direct the burdens and benefits of additional growth to those local agencies that are best suited to provide services;
- Make studies and obtain and furnish information which will contribute to the logical and reasonable development of local agencies to provide for present and future needs;
- Establish priorities by assessing and balancing community service needs with financial resources available to secure and provide community services and to encourage government structures that reflect local circumstances, conditions and financial resources;
- Determine whether new or existing agencies can feasibly provide needed services in a more efficient or accountable manner and, where deemed necessary,

As set forth in §56425(g) of the Act, on or before January 1, 2008, and every five years thereafter, Humboldt LAFCo shall review and update each Sphere of Influence (SOI). An MSR shall be conducted prior to, as a part of, or in conjunction with, the action to adopt, amend, or revise an SOI pursuant to the Act. Together, the SOI and MSR documents analyze the District's ability to serve existing and future residents.

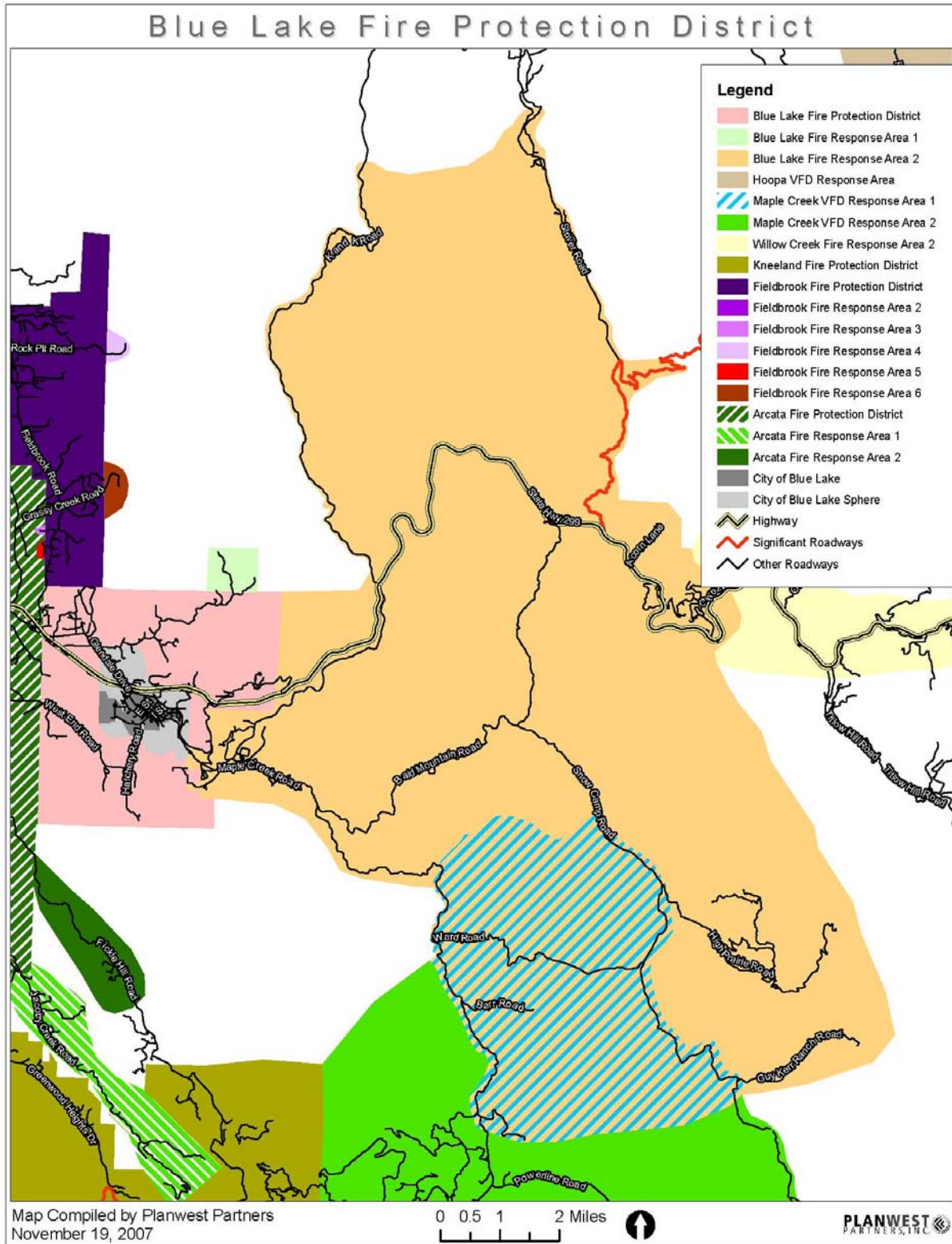
In accordance with §56430 of the Act, in preparation for adopting, amending, or revising an SOI, Humboldt LAFCo shall comprehensively review all services and public service providers within the designated geographic area. The Commission shall prepare a written statement of determinations on six subject areas as pursuant to state law; these determinations may be utilized in future decision-making about the provision of services, appropriate boundaries, changes of organizations, and need to revise or update SOIs. LAFCO is required to make written determinations on the following:

1. Growth and population projections for the affected area;
2. Present and planned capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services, including infrastructure needs or deficiencies;
3. Financing ability of agencies to provide services;
4. Status of and, opportunities for, shared facilities;
5. Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies;
6. Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery, as required by commission policy.

Review Methods

This MSR was prepared by LAFCo staff during the final quarter of 2008. The Blue Lake FPD completed an agency profile questionnaire, which provided LAFCo with the current status of District operations. The Infrastructure and Services Report that was compiled as part of the Humboldt County General Plan was also referenced for regional population and housing projections, as well as detailed descriptions of existing infrastructure. The draft report was sent to the District staff for review and clarification. All information gathered for this report is filed by Humboldt LAFCo for future reference.

Figure 1. Blue Lake Fire Protection District Boundary and Sphere of Influence



AGENCY PROFILE

The Blue Lake Fire Protection District (FPD) encompasses the City of Blue Lake, the communities of Glendale and Korbel, and adjacent areas located along State Route 299 east of its junction with Highway 101. The Mad River flows northwest through the district. The Blue Lake FPD is approximately three miles northeast of the City of Arcata and forty miles west of the community of Willow Creek. The district boundary includes the City of Blue Lake, the Blue Lake Rancheria, the community of Glendale, the West End Road / Hatchery Road area, and the southern portion of the community of Fieldbrook.

The Blue Lake FPD provides fire protection services through the Blue Lake Volunteer Fire Department. The district boundary covers 13.6 square miles, which is significantly smaller than its total response area of 121.1 square miles. The response area extends east along Highway 299 on Lord Ellis Summit and the Redwood Creek area and includes the community of Korbel. Large facilities protected by the district include the Blue Lake Casino, the Ultra Power Biomass Generator, a mill in Glendale, and two industrial areas. Figure 1 (on page 4) shows the district boundary and response areas, as well as its proximity to the Arcata and Fieldbrook Fire Protection Districts.

Table 1: Blue Lake FPD Profile

Agency Name	Date of Formation	Enabling Legislation
Blue Lake Fire Protection District	1911	HSC 14001-14017
Contact Person	Contact Title	Email/Website
Raymond Stonebarger	Chief	blchief@suddenlinkmail.com
Mailing Address	Physical Address	Phone/Fax
P.O. Box 245 Blue Lake, CA 95525	111 1 st Avenue Blue Lake, CA 95525	Phone: (707) 668-5765 Fax: (707) 668-5844

Governance Structure and Administration

The Blue Lake FPD was formed under the State of California Health and Safety Code, Section 14001. A Certificate of Existence was issued by the State of California on March 10, 1968 pursuant to the provisions of the Local Fire District Law under Section 14017 of the Health and Safety Code. The District was reorganized under the Fire Protection District Law of 1961 as the Blue Lake FPD.

The Blue Lake FPD is governed by a five-member Board of Directors that is elected by District residents. Table 2, below, shows the current Board composition. The Board holds five meetings per year on the third Monday of January, March, May, September, and November. The meetings are open to the public and are held at the Blue Lake Volunteer Fire Department at 111 1st Street in Blue Lake. Notice of the meetings is posted at the Fire Department, Blue Lake City Hall, and the Blue Lake Post Office.

Table 2: Blue Lake FPD Board of Directors.

Board Member	Title	Term Expiration
James Thacker	Director	December 2011
Mike Harvey	Director	December 2009
Kert Kernan	Director	December 2009
Richard Harnden	Director	December 2011
Patrick Lynch	Director	December 2011

Growth and Population

County Population and Growth

Humboldt County has an estimated 2008 population of 132,821ⁱ. The County grew at an overall rate of 0.6% during 2007ⁱⁱ. Assuming this growth continues, the population of Humboldt County will have a 2025 population of approximately 147,000.

District Population and Housing Projections

The District currently has a population of approximately 3,000. Using the County's overall growth rate of 0.6%, this would result in a 2025 population of 3,322.

A Community Infrastructure and Services Report was prepared as part of the Humboldt County General Plan Update. The report identified Urban Study Areas (USA) and Water Study Areas (WSA) within special districts in order to develop land use planning scenarios and to focus the analysis for timing and location of new facilitiesⁱⁱⁱ.

The report identifies a Blue Lake USA and a Blue Lake WSA; the two areas combined have essentially the same boundary as the City of Blue Lake. According to the County's estimates, the Blue Lake USA and WSA had a total of 450 housing units in 2005. The high build out estimate for total development potential within the Blue Lake USA and WSA by the year 2025 is 161 additional units.

The report also identifies a Glendale USA and a Glendale WSA, which also fall's within the Blue Lake FPD boundary. According to the County's estimates, the Glendale USA and WSA had a total of 264 housing units in 2005. The high build out estimate for total development potential within the Glendale USA and WSA by the year 2025 is 1,190 additional units^[2].

Table 3: Growth and Population Summary Table(s)

Blue Lake Fire Protection District	
Total Land Area (Acres)	8,700
Current Population	3,000
Annual Population Growth Rate	0.6%
Housing Projections	Number of Residential Units
Total Number Residential Units	450
High Build Out Estimate-Blue Lake USA & WSA	161
High Build Out Estimate-Glendale USA & WSA	1,190
High Build Out Estimate-District Total	1351

Services

The Blue Lake FPD is an independent single-purpose special district. The district provides structural fire protection and suppression, rescue, and emergency medical services to residents within its boundary and service area. The district provides service support to the Blue Lake Rancheria, the California Redwood Company, and Green Diamond Resource Company.

The Blue Lake FPD has one full time employee, one part time employee, and twenty-four volunteers. The district has one facility that is located at 111 1st Street in Blue Lake.

Fire Protection Services

The District received 136 calls in 2006 and has an average response time of 3-5 minutes. Based on an Insurance Services Office (ISO) audit, the Blue Lake FPD has a Public Protection Classification (PPC) rating of 5 for areas in the district that are within 1,000 feet of a hydrant, and a PPC rating of 8B in areas in the district that are more than 1,000 feet from a hydrant. The following two paragraphs explain the relevance of this rating.

ISO Rating. The ISO establishes fire insurance ratings for communities throughout the United States. One of ISO's more well known services is to evaluate the fire suppression delivery systems of fire departments and districts. The result of those reviews is an individual PPC rating number assigned to the community that the respective fire department protects. The ratings are presented in a rating class structure that ranges from 1 to 10. Class 1 is the highest rating, representing excellent fire protection and Class 10 is the lowest, meaning the community's fire department did not meet the minimum requirements of the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule and is not recognized by ISO. The PPC is commonly used by insurance providers to establish home and business fire insurance rates.

The Fire Suppression Rating Schedule is used by ISO to rate the response capabilities within a community. Fifty percent of the grade is based on the fire department (equipment, staffing, training, and geographic distribution of fire companies), 40 percent is based on the water supply (condition and maintenance of hydrants, and a careful evaluation of the amount of available water compared with the amount needed to suppress fires), and ten percent is based on fire alarm and communications systems (telephone systems, telephone lines, staffing, and dispatching system).

Infrastructure

The District has one facility, the Blue Lake Volunteer Fire Department, which is located at 111 1st Street in the City of Blue Lake. The District owns the following fire suppression equipment:

- three Type-1 Engines,
- two Water Tenders,
- one Type-4 Rescue Quick Response, and
- two Command Units.

The District also owns and operates other basic fire protection and rescue equipment including radios, Self Contained Breathing Apparatuses (SCBA), High Pressure Air Bags, protective clothing, and numerous other tools and firefighting equipment. All riding positions on Fire Apparatus are equipped with radios and SBCAs and all firefighters are equipped with protective clothing.

Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies

The Blue Lake FPD needs a Type-3 Engine for responding to wildland / urban interface areas. This engine is smaller and provides better access to areas with narrow roads. There is also a water supply deficiency in the Glendale, Liscomb Hill, and West End Road areas.

Planned Improvements

The District plans to replace its Light Rescue Truck in 2011 and purchase a Type-3 Engine when the funding is available. The District also has tentative plans to build a second facility in Glendale if growth continues, as expected, in that area.

Other Service Providers

The Blue Lake FPD is involved in a county-wide mutual aid agreement for fire protection. The District has an Automatic Aid Agreement with the Arcata FPD to jointly cover areas that border their boundary lines. Some areas within the district are State Responsibility Areas covered by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE).

The Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District (HBMWD) provides water to all areas within the District. The City of Blue Lake and the Fieldbrook Community Service District (CSD) have installed and maintain fire hydrants where water lines are available. Humboldt County and the City of Blue Lake provide general governmental services and law enforcement to the district.

Budget

The Blue Lake FPD's total projected revenue for the fiscal year 2008-2009 is \$220,695. The district's primary sources of revenue are Blue Lake Rancheria funding (39%), property taxes (39%), and measure M special taxes (19%); other sources include interest payments and grant funding. The district's projected expenditures for the fiscal year 2008-2009 are \$206,471. Primary expenditures are employee salaries/benefits (47%), services and supplies (27%), and debt repayment (12%).

The district has a total outstanding debt of \$60,000 that will be retired by 2011 with the current repayment schedule.

Table 4: Budget Summary

Service	Revenues	Expenditures	Total Reserves	Balance
Fire	\$220,695	\$206,471	\$220,077	\$220,077

MSR DETERMINATIONS

Growth and population projections for the affected area

The Blue Lake FPD has an estimated 2008 population of 3,000 within its boundary. The County's high build out estimate for total development potential within the Blue Lake USA and WSA by the year 2025 is 161 additional units. The County's high build out estimate within the Glendale USA and WSA by the year 2025 is 1,190 additional units. The total additional gain, according to the high build out estimate, is 1,351 dwelling units. Commercial and industrial development within the district is also anticipated during the same time period.

Present and planned capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services, including infrastructure needs or deficiencies

As mentioned above, the high build out estimate for the district is 1,351 additional dwelling units. This type of growth would require extensive infrastructure upgrades, additional facilities, and personnel. The district should review County growth projections to determine the type and extent of additional infrastructure and services that will be required. The district should track growth in the Glendale area and schedule new station construction when service demand warrants.

Financing ability of agencies to provide services

The district currently has the financing ability to provide adequate fire protection services. The district's primary sources of income are revenue from the Blue Lake Rancheria and property / special taxes. The Blue Lake FPD should periodically review assessments for properties both in the City of Blue Lake and the County, plus the services necessary for the Blue Lake Rancheria, and adjust as necessary.

Status of and, opportunities for, shared facilities

The district has one facility in the City of Blue Lake. There are currently no opportunities for shared facilities. Should a Glendale facility be constructed in the future, the aid agreements with Fieldbrook and Arcata should be reviewed.

Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies

The Blue Lake FPD is governed by a five-member Board of Directors that is elected by District residents. The Board holds public meetings at the Blue Lake Fire Department on the third Monday of January, March, May, September, and November. Notice of the meetings is posted at the Fire Department, Blue Lake City Hall, and the Blue Lake Post Office.

The District office is open and staffed Monday through Friday from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. The Blue Lake Fire Chief can also be reached by phone and email.

Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery, as required by commission policy

The Blue Lake FPD has indicated a need for improved water service in the Glendale, Liscomb Hill, and West End Road areas. Water infrastructure and delivery are not services that fall under the jurisdiction of the Blue Lake FPD. LAFCo staff recommends consultation with the Fieldbrook Community Services District regarding this deficiency to determine available options for improvement.

SOI STATUS

It is concluded that the Blue Lake FPD's current SOI is sufficient for future growth, according to projections used for this report, which are anticipated for the next 5 years. However, given the overall growth throughout Humboldt County, it is possible that by the 2013 SOI update, the district may need to consider SOI amendments. Based on the results of this MSR, no amendments to the district's SOI are necessary at this time.

REFERENCES.

ⁱ State of California; Department of Finance. 2008. *Population Estimates with Annual Percentage Change*. www.dof.ca.gov/research/demographic/reports/estimates/e-1_2006-07/documents/E-1table.xls.

ⁱⁱ ibid

ⁱⁱⁱ Humboldt County General Plan Update: Community Infrastructure and Services Technical Report. July 2008. <http://co.humboldt.ca.us/planning/gp>.