

## **5. GREENHORN CREEK COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT**

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Greenhorn Greek Community Services District (GCCSD) provides fire, water and contract road maintenance services. This is the first municipal service review (MSR) for Greenhorn Creek CSD.

### **AGENCY OVERVIEW**

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#### **Background**

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GCCSD was formed in 1971 as a dependent special district to provide water to the western portion of the Greenhorn Creek housing development known as Greenhorn II. In 1975, GCCSD was consolidated with Estray Creek Community Services District. The consolidation empowered GCCSD to provide domestic water for fire protection purposes and to collect, treat and dispose of sewage. In 1990, Greenhorn Creek Valley Volunteer Fire Department was formed, and in 1995, the fire department became a part of GCCSD. GCCSD took over the responsibilities of the Greenhorn Ranch Company in 1995 and began providing water to the eastern side of the development known as Greenhorn I, as well as Greenhorn Guest Ranch. In 2003, the citizens of Greenhorn Creek voted to become an independent special district. On April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013 LAFCo authorized GCCSD to start performing road maintenance services contingent upon the district approving a special tax or assessment to provide this service. Should the district not approve a special tax or assessment by April 8, 2014, LAFCo's approval will expire.

The principal act that governs the District is the State of California Community Services District Law.<sup>36</sup> CSDs may potentially provide a wide array of services, including water supply, wastewater, solid waste, police and fire protection, street lighting and landscaping, airport, recreation and parks, mosquito abatement, library services; street maintenance and drainage services, ambulance service, utility undergrounding, transportation, graffiti abatement, flood protection, weed abatement, hydroelectric power, among various other services. CSDs are required to gain LAFCo approval to provide those services permitted by the principal act but not performed by the end of 2005 (i.e., latent powers).<sup>37</sup>

GCCSD is located approximately 1.5 miles northeast of Spring Garden and SR 70 in Plumas County. Fire service providers within close proximity of GCCSD include Quincy FPD in the northwest and Long Valley CSD in the southeast.

#### ***Boundaries***

GCCSD is located entirely within Plumas County. The present bounds encompass approximately 0.4 square miles and include the communities of Greenhorn Creek and Estray Creek.

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<sup>36</sup> Government Code §61000-61226.5.

<sup>37</sup> Government Code §61106.

Since its formation, the District has undergone three boundary changes. In 1975, GCCSD consolidated with Estray Creek CSD. In 1995 the District acquired the area known as Greenhorn I and the Greenhorn Guest Ranch.

The most recent annexation, which was known as the Wilburn Annexation, took place in 2007 and included five parcels on Running Springs Lane. The lots are still vacant and no construction is anticipated in the near future.

### *Sphere of Influence*

The sphere of influence (SOI) for the District was first adopted in 1983. The SOI was last amended in 2013.<sup>38</sup> The District's SOI is 1.18 square miles in size compared to 0.4 square miles of boundary area. The SOI is coterminous with the District's boundaries on the western side and extends beyond its bounds in all other directions.

### *Extra-territorial Services*

GCCSD occasionally provides services outside of its bounds through mutual aid agreements with Quincy FPD and Long Valley CSD. The District is also in the process of establishing an automatic aid agreement with Long Valley CSD, based on which both districts will be dispatched simultaneously to the same incidents.

The District occasionally responds to wildland fires and gets reimbursed from the state or federal government.

Additionally, each fire provider in Plumas County has informally agreed to a service area that extends outside of their LAFCo-approved boundaries, in order to minimize those areas without a defined first responder. In the case of GCCSD, the District's service area is significantly larger than its boundary area and extends outside of its bounds in all directions. The service area encompasses 21 square miles. GCCSD, similar to other fire districts in the County, does not receive property tax revenue in the territory that lies outside of its bounds, and in effect is providing free services to these areas without reimbursement. Fire districts have the option to charge for service outside of their district.

### *Areas of Interest*

An area of interest for GCCSD is the territory served by the two road associations. Currently, the District provides road maintenance services to these road associations through a contract, with the long-term goal of a complete transfer of street maintenance services to GCCSD. To complete the process, the District must form an assessment district to finance the services. Although, in 2013, GCCSD was empowered by LAFCo to start providing street maintenance services directly, the transfer process was postponed indefinitely.

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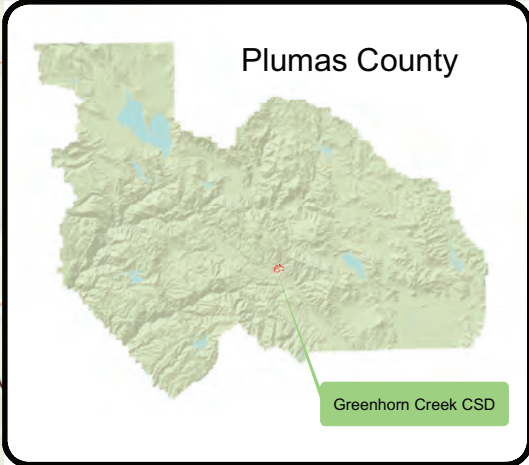
<sup>38</sup> LAFCo Resolution 2013-0001.

# Greenhorn Creek Community Services District

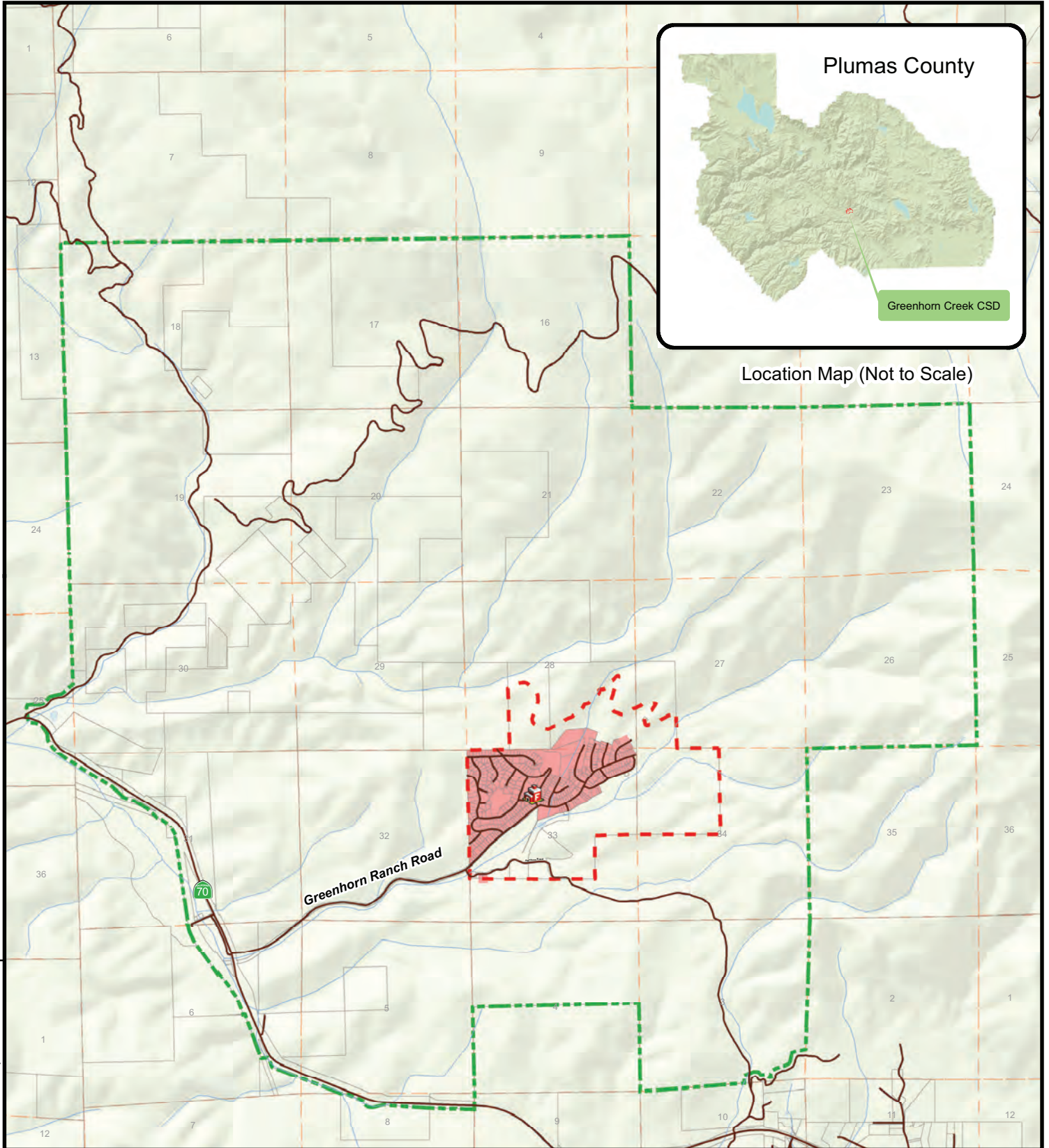
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Township 24 North

Township 23 North

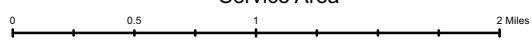
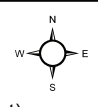


Location Map (Not to Scale)



## Legend

- Highways
- Major Roads
- Stream / River
- Waterbodies
- Parcels
- Sectional Grid (MDB&M)
- Fire Station
- Greenhorn Creek CSD
- Greenhorn Creek CSD Sphere of Influence (Current)
- Greenhorn Creek CSD Service Area



Greenhorn Creek CSD  
 Resolution:  
 Formed: 12/29/71

Greenhorn Creek CSD (SOI)  
 Resolution: 83-28  
 Adopted: 3/24/83

Source: Plumas LAFCo MapModified 9/30/2013

## Accountability and Governance

In 2003, the citizens of Greenhorn Creek voted to become an independent special district with a directly elected five-member Board of Directors. However, no candidates filed to run in the 2005 district election, and the Board of Supervisors continued to serve as the governing board of GCCSD. In 2007, the District started holding elections and is now governed by a five-member Board of Directors elected to four-year terms. There are presently two vacancies on the District's Board. Current board member names, positions, and term expiration dates are shown in Figure 5-2. The District did not provide the term expiration date for each board member nor the manner of selection of each member (i.e., elected or appointed).

The Board of Directors meets on the third Thursday of the month at 6:30 in the evening at the Greenhorn fire station located at 2049 Red Bluff Circle. Agendas are posted on the bulletin board by the subdivision mail boxes and on the GCCSD website. Minutes are provided at meetings and are posted on the website.

**Figure 5-2: Greenhorn Creek CSD Governing Body**

<b>Greenhorn Creek CSD</b>				
<i><b>District Contact Information</b></i>				
<b>Contact:</b>	Roy Carter, General Manager			
<b>Address:</b>	2049 Red Bluff Circle, Quincy, CA 95971			
<b>Telephone:</b>	530-283-4588			
<b>Email/website:</b>	<a href="mailto:roycarter@greenhorncsd.org">roycarter@greenhorncsd.org</a> / <a href="http://www.greenhorncsd.org/">http://www.greenhorncsd.org/</a>			
<i><b>Board of Directors</b></i>				
Member Name	Position	Term Expiration	Manner of Selection	Length of Term
Candy Miller	Secretary	December 2015	Elected	4 years
Zeke Awbrey	Director	December 2017	Elected	4 years
Gail Higgins	Director	December 2015	Appointed	4 years
Janice Bishop	Director	December 2017	Elected	4 years
Vacancy	Director	N/A	N/A	4 years
<i><b>Meetings</b></i>				
<b>Date:</b>	Third Thursday of the month at 6:00 p.m.			
<b>Location:</b>	Station 1 - 2049 Red Bluff Circle, Quincy, CA			
<b>Agenda Distribution:</b>	Posted at mail boxes, posted on auxiliary website, and emailed to list.			
<b>Minutes Distribution:</b>	Available upon request.			

In addition to the legally required agendas and minutes, to reach its constituents GCCSD sends out consumer confidence reports and updates in its water bills. Greenhorn fire department auxiliary hosts the website where it provides information about services provided by the District, district finances, and the Board of Directors. The website is not sponsored or controlled by GCCSD.

If a customer is dissatisfied with the District's services, complaints may be submitted by calling the general manager or the accountant. The general manager is responsible for handling complaints; in certain cases complaints come to the attention of the Board. Most of the recent complaints received by the District are regarding water meters and rates. The

District reported that it received seven complaints in 2011—one regarding taste and odor, one regarding color, four about pressure, and one referring to a leak.

GCCSD demonstrated partial accountability in its disclosure of information and cooperation with Plumas LAFCo. Although the District responded to the questionnaires and cooperated with the document requests, responses to service-specific questionnaires required multiple follow-up attempts. Ultimately, while the District provided a majority of the requested information, the District failed to provide some essential requested information, such as number of calls for service for each year between 2006 and 2011 and response times.

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## Planning and Management Practices

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The District employs one part-time paid general manager, who also acts as the water operator and a fire captain. GCCSD retains an additional part-time paid water operator on staff. The fire chief is a volunteer as are the five firefighters.

The District does not perform regular employee evaluations. The general manager is occasionally evaluated by the Board of Directors; the most recent evaluation took place in 2011. None of the other personnel are evaluated.

GCCSD tracks its employee workload through timesheets filled out by paid personnel. Water operators fill out detailed timesheets that include lists of jobs and tasks. The general manager's hours are also tracked, in particular time spent on grant work.

Evaluations of the District as a whole are conducted through annual reports submitted to the County Public Health Agency. GCCSD also conducts annual meetings with the road associations to perform a review of services provided. The District, however, reported that joint meetings might not continue to take place in the future.

GCCSD adopted a mission, which states that the District aims to provide safe, affordable and reliable drinking water and responsive fire service.

The District's financial planning efforts include an annually adopted budget and annually audited financial statements. GCCSD adopted a Water System Master Plan, completed in 2005, which provided the GCCSD Board, staff and customers a comprehensive evaluation of the community water system for current and future uses. The Master Plan also includes capital improvement needs. It is recommended that the District periodically review capital improvement needs as economic and financial circumstances change. Additionally, GCCSD adopted the Greenhorn Creek Emergency Plan in 2007.

Government Code §53901 states that within 60 days after the beginning of the fiscal year each local agency must submit its budget to the county auditor. These budgets are to be filed and made available on request by the public at the county auditor's office. Additionally, all special districts are required to submit annual audits to the County within 12 months of the completion of the fiscal year, unless the Board of Supervisors has approved a biennial or five-year schedule.<sup>39</sup> The most recent audit for GCCSD was completed for FY 12-13. The District should ensure it is meeting the adopted audit

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<sup>39</sup> Government Code §26909.

requirements as determined by the Board of Supervisors and submitting budgets annually to the County as legally required.

Special districts must submit a report to the State Controller of all financial transactions of the district during the preceding fiscal year within 90 days after the close of each fiscal year, in the form required by the State Controller, pursuant to Government Code §53891. If filed in electronic format, the report must be submitted within 110 days after the end of the fiscal year. The District has complied with this requirement.

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## Existing Demand and Growth Projections

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Land uses within the District are mainly comprised of rural residential and low density suburban. There is one 6.26-acre area currently zoned for general commercial. Greenhorn Guest Ranch includes 26 guest rooms, a lodge, a saloon, and a kitchen.

The District's bounds encompass approximately 0.4 square miles.

### Population

The total population of GCCSD is 209 residents, based on GIS analysis. The District's population density is 523 people per square mile.

### Existing Demand

The District reported that it had observed no change in service demand in the last few years. Although, the most recent annexation in 2007 added five lots, the territory was and still is uninhabited.

At the time of formation, there were 438 residential lots zoned in the Greenhorn Creek CSD. However, some land owners combined adjacent lots to increase acreage for one residence. As of June 2013, there were 139 housing units constructed which consisted of and 214 unimproved lots within the District owned by private parties. In addition there were 39 unimproved lots owned by the Greenhorn Creek CSD. The District was unable to provide updated lot information for the area within its bounds.

The District reported that it did not notice a specific pattern regarding peak demand times for fire services. Calls for medical emergencies are consistently high in volume throughout the year, similar to other fire districts in the region. It could not be determined if there had been any change in demand for fire services over the last five years, as the District did not provide the total number of calls for each year.

Average day water use has been stable over time while water use varies significantly between summer (64 percent greater) and winter months, due to seasonal occupancy. Since 2007, GCCSD has added three new connections.

### Projected Growth and Development

The GCCSD 2005 Water System Master Plan projected a growth rate of at least 10 percent; however, this prediction was made before the housing bubble burst of 2008. GCCSD anticipates no growth in service demand within the District in the next few years. The District reported that there were no planned developments within the District's boundaries.

The District projects its future service demand through the Water Master Plan, which was adopted in 2005 and has not been updated since. Reportedly, GCCSD has sufficient capacity to provide water and road maintenance services. The District has recently added a new water storage tank and a new well. Marginal capacity is available to provide fire services to Greenhorn Creek residents. Although there is sufficient equipment, the District is in need of more firefighters.

The State Department of Finance (DOF) projects that the population of Plumas County will grow by four percent from 2010 to 2020. Thus, the average annual population growth in the County is anticipated to be approximately 0.4 percent. Based on these projections, the District's population would increase from 209 in 2010 to approximately 217 in 2020. It is anticipated that demand for service within the District will increase minimally based on the DOF population growth projections through 2020.

### Growth Strategies

The District is not a land use authority, and does not hold primary responsibility for implementing growth strategies. The land use authority for unincorporated areas is the County.

The County enforces the codes that it has enforcement power over, which does not encompass all State fire codes. The County ensures that new construction meets the requirements of the latest adopted edition of the California Building Standards. The County enforces the County codes that have been adopted in lieu of the California Fire Safe regulations. The County does not have authority to enforce PRC 4291, which requires defensible space around structures; however, the County does have some enforcement authority over vegetation removal around buildings that was adopted prior to PRC 4291. In addition, the Board of Supervisors, through the adoption of the General Plan and county codes, regulates development standards to be followed in processing subdivisions, including fire protection.

The proposals for new developments are sent for review to the appropriate fire provider, if a development is within district's boundaries. The County reported that as SOI maps have not been digitized, it has been challenging to ensure that proposals go to the appropriate district if a proposed development was within that district's SOI but outside its boundaries. The County and Plumas LAFCO are working on a process to ensure that all appropriate districts are contacted for review of proposed developments.

The County has several policies in the existing general plan, which impacts the fire providers of new developments.

- 1) Turnouts are now required in every new development.<sup>40</sup>
- 2) The County encourages development to be located adjacent to or within areas where fire services already exist or can be efficiently provided.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Plumas County Code of Ordinances, Title 9 Section 9-4.604 (k).

<sup>41</sup> Plumas County, *General Plan*, 1984, pp. 28 & 29.

- 3) The County requires new developments within areas not currently served by a fire provider to be annexed into an existing fire district or create a funding mechanism, such as a CSD, to cover the costs of fire service provision.<sup>42</sup>
- 4) Sustainable timber and biomass production and harvesting as well as intensive forest management practices are encouraged to reduce the danger of catastrophic wildfires.<sup>43</sup>
- 5) There is a minimum requirement of two roadway access points, which are maintained on a year-round basis by the County or the State.<sup>44</sup>
- 6) Minimum public and private road standards: roads providing access to two or more lots have to conform to a two-lane standard of no less than 16-foot traveled way.<sup>45</sup>
- 7) Bridges are required to be designed for an 80,000 pound vehicle load.<sup>46</sup>
- 8) All access roads must be marked with an approved sign; and all lots must be identified by an address.<sup>47</sup>
- 9) All developments within boundaries of a structural fire service provider may be required to contribute to the maintenance of the structural service proportionate to the increase in demand for fire service resulting from the development.<sup>48</sup>
- 10) As a condition of development it is required to provide long-term maintenance of private roads to the standards of original improvements, including roadside vegetation management.<sup>49</sup>
- 11) The County encourages biomass thinning programs in high fire risk areas.<sup>50</sup>

The County is in the final stages of updating its general plan. The suggested new policies in the General Plan update that would impact fire service providers, but had not yet been adopted as of the drafting of this report, include:

- 12) The County shall review and update its Fire Safe ordinance to attain and maintain defensible space through conditioning of tentative maps and in new development at the final map or building permit stage.
- 13) The County will consult Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps during the review of all projects. The County will work with fire protection agencies to develop community fire plans and require appropriate building setbacks and fuel modification requirements within fire hazard zones.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p. 32.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Plumas County Code of Ordinances, Title 9 Section 9-4.601.

<sup>50</sup> Plumas County Code of Ordinances, Title 4 Section 4-2.101.



- 14) In order for the new development to be approved, the County must conclude that adequate emergency water flow, fire access and firefighters and equipment are available.
- 15) New developments have to show that they have adequate access for emergency vehicles to access the site and for private vehicles to evacuate the area.
- 16) New developments within high and very high fire hazard areas are required to designate fuel break zones that comply with fire safe requirements.
- 17) The County will work with Forest Service and fire districts in developing fire prevention programs, identifying opportunities for fuel breaks in zones of high and very high fire hazard and educating public.
- 18) Fire, law enforcement, EMS, resource management, and public health response partners are encouraged to conduct joint training exercises.<sup>51</sup>

The County has not adopted the new standards for development yet. The revised General Plan may be adopted in 2013. County zoning code will then go through a revision process in order for the zoning code to implement the General Plan.

Not all private property in Plumas County is located within a local structural fire protection district. This issue has been well-documented in Board of Supervisor reports and correspondence, newspaper articles, and former Grand Jury reports. Identifying and reducing the number of such parcels has been the task of local fire districts, county staff, the feasibility study group and volunteer groups who collectively have spent countless hours quantifying the problem, educating the public, and encouraging solutions.

Over the past few years, these efforts have been very successful. A summary of the activities and their impacts are listed to help solve this important problem:

- ❖ **Updated General Plan Policies:** The updated General Plan will require fire protection for any new development, preventing the number of parcels outside a fire district from increasing and encouraging annexations.
- ❖ **Building Permit Review:** Applications for new construction are reviewed by County staff to determine if the property is outside a district. Permit applicants are provided a resources and a handout on what it means to be outside a district.
- ❖ **GIS Website Update:** The Planning Department's GIS data on fire district boundaries is now available on the County's website, making it easy for fire districts and the public to determine whether a parcel is within a district.
- ❖ **District Sphere of Influence Updates:** The Local Agency Formation Commission continues work on updating fire districts' spheres of influence. These spheres indicate areas of likely district growth and serve as a blue print for possible future district annexations.
- ❖ **Fire Protection Communication Plan:** Completed in August 2012, the Fire Protection Communication Plan is a comprehensive tool to guide fire districts through the

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<sup>51</sup> Plumas County General Plan, *Draft Goals, Policies and Implementation Measures*, 2010.

process of educating the public and gaining support for service agreements or annexations.

- ❖ Close-of-Escrow Notification on Fire District Status: As directed at the October 2, 2012 Board of Supervisors meeting, County staff is investigating options for escrow notification of property buyers regarding fire district status.
- ❖ Firewise and Fire Safe Communities Development: The Plumas County Fire Prevention Specialist continues working throughout the County to encourage firewise and fire safe activities to reduce the risk and consequences from wildfire.

With regard to possible governance structure alternatives, the District reported that consolidation with another fire and/or water provider would be theoretically an option; however, there are limited options for consolidation due to the geographic isolation of GCCSD from other similar providers.

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## Financing

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The District reported that its current financing levels were adequate to deliver water and road maintenance services, but not sufficient to provide fire services.

The District's total operating revenue for FY 11-12 was \$151,263, of which \$14,974 was earmarked for governmental or fire-related activities and \$125,469 considered business-type revenue from water services. Total non-operating revenue, which consisted of interest income and property taxes, was \$532.

Operating water revenues included water sales (68 percent), standby assessments (13 percent), debit service fees (12 percent), facility fees (four percent), and other sources (three percent).

Water service rates are \$50.00 per month for water operations and \$9.20 per month to help fund the cost of the new water tank that was recently installed. In FY 11-12, the District installed water meters and read them over several months to collect information based on which it will be completing a water rate study. The District's water department also receives revenue from the water standby fees paid by unimproved lot owners at a rate of \$82.50 per lot per year (\$2.50 is a collection fee charged by the County). GCCSD collects \$4,320 per new connection as a facility fee. A facility fee is the new users' share of the cost of new infrastructure. A \$400 connection fee is charged for all new connections. This fee covers the cost of labor to meet with contractors, inspect the work, and input the new account data. Water rates were last updated in 2007.

Of the \$14,974 in fire-related revenue in FY 12, 40 percent came from property taxes, 58 percent from property assessments, and two percent of other sources.

The fire department is funded through a combination of property taxes and special tax. The District charges an special tax of \$50 per year for improved lots and \$35 per year for unimproved lots. GCCSD occasionally directs funding to fire services by dedicating the water department share of property taxes to the fire department. This practice is reviewed annually and a decision is made during the budget process. In FY 11-12, a majority of property tax revenue was dedicated to the fire department, which resulted in an increase in the fund balance for the fire department. The special tax on parcels was approved in 1990

with no adjustment for inflation and no sunset. The District is researching the possibility of increasing the special tax through an election.

In addition to the property tax and assessment revenue, the fire department receives donations. Greenhorn Fire Department Auxiliary is a private, volunteer organization that was established to raise private donations to support the Greenhorn fire department and to provide other volunteer assistance in support of the fire department.

GCCSD's operating expenditures in FY 11-12 amounted to \$128,722. Of this amount, \$10,637 was spent on governmental (fire) activities and \$118,085 on business-type activities. Non-operating expenditures in the form of interest expenses amounted to \$13,202.

Of the water operating expenditures, 13 percent was spent on pumping, 26 percent on transmission and distribution, 12 percent on treatment, six percent on customer accounts, 35 percent on administration and general activities, and eight percent on depreciation.

Primary fire-related expenses included workers compensation insurance (21 percent), insurance (27 percent) and utilities (36 percent). The remainder was spent on administration, fuel, dues and subscriptions, office expenses, repairs and maintenance, small tools, travel, telephone, payroll expenses, supplies, training, and miscellaneous uses.

The District spends about \$70,000 annually on providing contractual road services to the road associations. The associations collect dues from community residents based on an annual budget adopted at each of the association's annual meetings. The adopted dues for FY 12-13 were \$150 per lot in Unit I and \$165 per lot in Unit II. In FY 11-12, Unit 1 paid the District \$32,019 and Unit 2 paid \$49,918. The District spent \$29,839 in the Unit 1 territory and \$36,682 in Unit 2. A breakdown of these expenditures by type was not provided by the District. In order for road maintenance services to be transferred from the road associations to GCCSD, the District must form an assessment district to fund the road services. The initial cost for assessment district formation was estimated to be \$30,000.

The District plans for its water system capital improvements in its water master plan. Fire department conducts capital improvements as needed.

The District has used loans in the past to fund water system improvements. These improvements were conducted in two phases. Phase I, which consisted of repair of existing infrastructure, replacement of existing controls, and installation of water meters, was mostly completed in FY 11-12. This project qualified for American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding of \$374,219. This amount is considered a loan with subsidization in the form of 100 percent debt forgiveness. The final closeout of the project occurred during FY 12-13. Phase II—installation of a new water storage tank, pressure reducing valve and a well pump—was completed in FY 11-12. A loan was secured from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to fund the project in the amount of \$250,000. At the end of FY 11-12, the District had a remaining loan balance of \$235,528. The loan has an interest rate of 4.25 percent, and payments are due annually in December.

While not a formal reserve policy, the District intends to accumulate equipment reserves for the fire department. Consequently, GCCSD has adopted a budget for FY 12-13 that utilizes property taxes in the fire department with the intention of directing a portion to the equipment reserves.

CCCSD maintains a reserve in its enterprise fund. At the end of FY 12-13, the District had \$191,000 in its water reserve and \$45,000 in fire department reserve. In addition, CCCSD has to maintain \$45,218 in a short-lived asset reserve to comply with the provisions of USDA loan.

The District does not participate in any joint powers authorities (JPAs).

## **FIRE AND EMS SERVICES**

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### **Service Overview**

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In the 1960s, the Greenhorn Creek community relied on Quincy FPD for fire services. In the early 1970s, a contractor working on road maintenance in the area gifted a 1942 Chevrolet water truck to Greenhorn Ranch. The truck was able to draft water from the pond and was used for dust control and for firefighting if needed. In the 1980s, two more fire trucks were obtained by the Ranch. In 1989, construction began on the fire station, and in 1990 Greenhorn Creek Valley Volunteer Fire Department was officially formed.

Currently, the District provides structure and wildland fire suppression, hazardous material response services, emergency medical services, and basic life support. The District may start providing advanced life support when GCCSD volunteer firefighters pass the EMT test in spring of 2014.

### ***Collaboration***

GCCSD has mutual aid agreements with Quincy FPD and Long Valley CSD (LVCSO) and an automatic aid agreement with LVCSO. The District is a member of the Plumas County Fire Chiefs' Association, Special District Association and the Community Services Districts Association.

### ***Dispatch and Communications***

The County Sheriff is the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP); consequently, most land line emergency calls (9-1-1 calls) are directed to the Sheriff. Most cell phone emergency calls (9-1-1 calls) are answered by the Sheriff's Office; however, some are answered by CHP and redirected to the Sheriff. The Sheriff provides dispatching for most fire providers in the County except for the ones in northern part of the County, which are served by the Susanville Interagency Fire Center. The Forest Service has its own dispatch. The Sheriff's dispatch center has a first responder map, which it uses to identify what provider to dispatch to an incident. All territory within the County has a determined first responder; although, many areas lie outside the LAFCO-approved boundary of the districts and lack an officially designated fire provider.

With regard to dispatch services, the District did not identify any areas in need of improvement.

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### **Staffing**

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GCCSD has six sworn personnel—one fire chief and five firefighters. None of the fire personnel are compensated. The median age of the firefighters is 30, with a range from 26 to 70.

The District reports that its staffing levels had decreased in the last few years. GCCSD attempts to recruit more volunteers through applying for recruitment grants with Quincy FPD and other Plumas County fire departments.

Currently, there are three certifications in the California firefighter series; Volunteer Firefighter, Firefighter I, and Firefighter II. While the Volunteer Firefighter focuses on skills

and tasks necessary to assure safety on the fire ground, Firefighter I & II prepares the fire fighter to perform essential and advanced fireground tasks as well as allowing entry into all tracks of the certification system. According to the California State Fire Marshal, all paid, volunteer and call firefighters must acquire Firefighter I certification; however, there is no time limit as to how long they may work before attaining certification. Firefighter I certification requires completion of the 259-hour Firefighter I course, which includes training on various fireground tasks, rescue operations, fire prevention and investigation techniques, and inspection and maintenance of equipment. In addition to this course, Firefighter I certification also requires that the applicant have a minimum of six months of volunteer or call experience in a California fire department as a firefighter performing suppression duties.<sup>52</sup> GCCSD has no Firefighter I and no EMT I certified personnel. The District has three firefighters who attended Quincy Fire Academy and two firefighters who are currently attending EMT training.

The District does not have training requirements for its firefighters. Volunteers rely on training courses offered by other agencies and generally train about four hours a month on average.

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## Facilities and Capacity

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GCCSD operates one fire station. Greenhorn Creek Station, which was reported to be in good condition, is located at 2049 Red Bluff Circle and was built in 1991. The station is not staffed.

Greenhorn Creek Station is used as a fire station and a town meeting hall for community and road association meetings and houses one Type 1 engine, one Type 3 engine and one chief's pickup truck.

The District's water reserves available for firefighting purposes consist of 90,000 gallons maintained in a newly constructed water storage tank.

Currently, the District has marginal capacity to provide adequate services within its boundary area. GCCSD reports lack of personnel as the primary capacity constraint.

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## Infrastructure Needs

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The District reported that there were no current infrastructure needs.

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## Challenges

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The primary challenge the District faces is lack of personnel and difficulties with recruitment.

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## Service Adequacy

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While there are several benchmarks that may define the level of fire service provided by an agency, indicators of service adequacy discussed here include ISO ratings, response times, and level of staffing and station resources for the service area.

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<sup>52</sup> State Fire Marshal, Course Information and Required Materials, 2007, p. 44

Fire services in the communities are classified by the Insurance Service Office (ISO), an advisory organization. This classification indicates the general adequacy of coverage, with classes ranking from 1 to 10. Communities with the best fire department facilities, systems for water distribution, fire alarms and communications, and equipment and personnel receive a rating of 1. GCCSD has an ISO rating of 7-9. The District was last evaluated in 2013.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has issued a performance standard for volunteer and combination fire departments (NFPA 1720). This standard, among other guidelines, identifies target response time performance for structure fires. The response time is measured from the completion of the dispatch notification to the arrival time of the first-responder at the scene. Though not a legal mandate, NFPA 1720 does provide a useful benchmark against which to measure fire department performance. NFPA 1720 recommends that the response times for structure fire be nine minutes in urban demand zones at least 90 percent of the time, 10 minutes in suburban zones at least 80 percent of the time and 14 minutes in rural zones at least 80 percent of the time. Response times in remote zones are directly dependent on travel distances.<sup>53</sup> GCCSD falls under the definition of a rural demand zone.

Emergency response time standards vary by level of urbanization of an area: the more urban an area, the faster a response has to be. The California EMS Agency established the following response time guidelines: five minutes in urban areas, 15 minutes in suburban or rural areas, and as quickly as possible in wildland areas. The District's response zones include rural and wilderness classifications. The District tracks its response times for each incident. The District reported an average response time of 5.3 minutes in 2013 to incidents within the District's boundaries.

The service area size<sup>54</sup> for each fire station varies between fire districts. The median fire station in Plumas County serves approximately eight square miles. A station in La Porte FPD services the most expansive area of 151 square miles. Densely populated areas tend to have smaller service areas. For example, the average service area for Quincy FPD's fire station is six square miles. By comparison, each fire station in GCCSD serves approximately 21 square miles.

The number of firefighters serving within a particular jurisdiction is another indicator of level of service; however, it is approximate. The providers' call firefighters may have differing availability and reliability. A district with more firefighters could have fewer resources if scheduling availability is restricted. Staffing levels in Plumas County vary from nine call firefighters per 1,000 residents in Quincy FPD service area to 231 in La Porte FPD. By comparison, GCCSD has approximately 29 firefighters per 1,000 residents.

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<sup>53</sup> Urban demand zone has population density of more than 1,000 people per square mile; suburban zone—between 500 and 1,000 people per square mile, rural zone—less than 500 people per square mile, and remote zone is identified by eight or more miles of travel distance to an incident.

<sup>54</sup> Service area refers to the area that the agency will respond to, based on a first responder map used by the Sherriff's office.

**Figure 5-4: Greenhorn Creek CSD Fire Service Profile**

<b>Fire Service</b>				
<b>Facilities</b>				
<b>Fire station</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Condition</b>	<b>Staff per Shift</b>	<b>Vehicles</b>
GCCSD Station	2045 Red Bluff Circle, Quincy, CA	Good	Unstaffed	3 Type 1 engines, 3 Type 3 engines and chief's pickup truck
<b>Facility Sharing</b>				
<b>Current Practices:</b> GCCSD station is used as a town meeting hall.				
<b>Future opportunities:</b> The District did not report any future opportunities to share facilities with other entities.				
<b>Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies</b>				
No infrastructure needs or deficiencies were reported.				
<b>District Resource Statistics</b>		<b>Service Configuration</b>		<b>Service Demand</b>
Staffing Base Year	2012	Configuration Base Year	2012	Statistical Base Year
Fire Stations in District	1	Fire Suppression	Direct	Total Service Calls
Stations Serving District	1	EMS	Direct	% EMS
Sq. Miles Served per Station <sup>1</sup>	21.0	Ambulance Transport	PHD	% Fire/Hazardous Materials
Total Staff <sup>2</sup>	6	Hazardous Materials	Direct	% False
Total Full-time Firefighters	0	Air Rescue/Ambulance Helicopter	Renown	% Misc. emergency
Total Call Firefighters	6	Fire Suppression Helicopter	USFS	% Non-emergency
Total Sworn Staff per Station <sup>3</sup>	6	Public Safety Answering Point	Sheriff	% Mutual Aid Calls
Total Sworn Staff per 1,000	29	Fire/EMS Dispatch	Sheriff	Calls per 1,000 people
<b>Service Adequacy</b>		<b>Service Challenges</b>		
Response Time Base Year	2013	Lack of sufficient personnel is the District's main challenge.		
Median Response Time (min)	5.3 (average)	<b>Training</b>		
90th Percentile Response Time (min)	NP	Firefighters train for four hours a month on average. The District does not have its own training program and relies on other agencies for training resources.		
ISO Rating	7-9 (2013)			
<b>Mutual &amp; Automatic Aid Agreements</b>				
GCCSD has mutual aid agreements with Quincy FPD and Long Valley CSD and automatic aid agreement with Long Valley CSD (LVCSD).				
Notes:				
1) Primary service area (square miles) per station.				
2) Total staff includes sworn and non-sworn personnel.				
3) Based on ratio of sworn full-time and call staff to the number of stations. Actual staffing levels of each station vary.				



## WATER SERVICES

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### Service Overview

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GCCSD provides retail water services to the residents and commercial establishments within the boundaries of the District. There are 137 service connections, of which 135 are residential and two are commercial (Greenhorn Guest Ranch). All residences and facilities within Greenhorn Creek Subdivision using water for human consumption are required to connect to the GCCSD water system.

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### Staffing

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The GCCSD water department has one part-time employee who is a licensed water distribution operator and acts as the district manager. There are 0.6 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff dedicated to water operations.

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### Facilities and Capacity

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The current water system includes four pumping stations (two groundwater wells with submersible pumps and two booster pump stations), two storage tanks, two pressure regulating stations, a transmission and distribution system, as well as appurtenances such as service meters and fire hydrants.

Well #1 is located at the southern end of Cold Springs Lane. It is the backup supply water source for GCCSD. The well was installed in July 1972. The well depth is 268 feet below ground surface (BGS). Well #1 is screened from 95 to 115 feet BGS and from 165 to 225 feet BGS. The depth to static water at time of well installation was 52 feet BGS. The well yield in 1972 was 200 gallons per minute (gpm) with 208 feet of drawdown after four hours. The well has an automatically operated submersible pump. The pump is primarily used to supply water to the 100,000-gallon tank. However, this well can be used to backup Well #2 when it is out of service. Well #1 produces water at approximately 125 gpm.

Well #2 is located on the west side of Greenhorn Creek Road across from the Greenhorn Guest Ranch. It is the lead supply water source for the Greenhorn Creek CSD. This well was installed in July 1972. The well depth is screened from 232 to 382 feet BGS. The depth to static water at time of well installation was 51 feet BGS. The well yield in 1972 was 150 gpm with 199 feet of drawdown after six hours.

Well #2 has an automatically operated submersible pump. Well operation is level controlled via sensors in the 8,000 gallon storage tank. Water from Well #2 enters the distribution system on Greenhorn Road and then turns north on Red Bluff Trail en route to the 8,000 gallon storage tank. There are two booster pumps in a wood framed structure below this 8,000 gallon tank which distribute the water into the rest of the distribution system and also supply water to Tank #1 (the upper 100,000 gallon storage tank).

There is also a third groundwater well, which is a standby well and is not currently operational due to vulnerability to contamination.

The main Red Bluff pumping station is located on the northern end of Red Bluff Trail. It is comprised of two booster pumps with 7.5 horsepower motors. These two pumps operate

alternatively with each other. The pumping station moves water from the 8,000 gallon tank into the distribution system and fills the 100,000-gallon tank if excess water is available.

The Fern Ridge pump station is located northwest of the end of Fern Ridge Drive. This station has two centrifugal pumps with 10 horsepower motors and a variable speed pump controller. The station is located adjacent to the 100,000-gallon storage tank.

The existing GCCSD water system utilizes three storage tanks, including one 8,000-gallon tank and two 100,000-gallon tanks. All customers receive their water from the 100,000-gallon tanks except for the residences on Red Bluff Trail. Currently, the distribution system is such that the 8,000-gallon tank supplies water to the Red Bluff pump station and the residences along Red Bluff Trail. There is a pressure-reducing valve located at the Red Bluff Pumping Station that provides water to the residents on Red Bluff Trail if the 8,000-gallon tank is empty and/or the wells are not operable.

The distribution and transmission system contains over five miles of pipe, which varies in pressure class and diameter. The distribution system pipe is comprised of two types of pipe materials, including asbestos cement (transite) and polyvinyl chloride (PVC). Most of the pipes in the GCCSD distribution system have been in the ground for nearly 40 years. The pipes are brittle and breakage occurs when new service connections are installed.

There are currently three operations PRV's within the District. The maximum pressure in the system is about 160 pounds per square inch (psi). The highest pressures are located at the lowest elevations on the western end of Greenhorn Road. The lowest pressures are located on Fern Ridge and Shooting Star Lane. The typical pressure desired in a domestic water system ranges from 40 to 80 psi. Currently, some of the pressures throughout the Greenhorn Creek CSD water system exceed this range. Therefore, many homes have PRVs at their service connections. The homeowner is responsible for maintenance of these individual home PRVs. The fire protection water system has to be designed so that the maximum pressure at any single hydrant would not exceed 150 psi. There is one fire hydrant within GCCSD that currently exceed this maximum pressure.

Currently, all of the District's pumps possess enough pumping capacity.

GCCSD's water system does not have adequate storage facilities to meet operational storage (15 percent of the maximum day demand), fire storage (as dictated by the fire authority) and emergency storage (one average day demand). The District was unable to provide the amount of storage that would be necessary to comply to these requirements.

The 2005 Water System Master Plan indicated that storage at the existing Fern Ridge tank site was inadequate to meet the projected build-out of the GCCSD area and that a new 100,000 gallon tank was needed. The Plumas County Public Health Agency noted in its 2012 report that the 100,000-gallon tank had been installed at Summit Trail. The storage capacity at the existing Red Bluff tank site is 8,000 gallons. This volume is sufficient to provide water to the booster pump station. If there is a fire on Red Bluff Trail, additional water capacity would need to be provided by a PRV fed from Tank #1. GCCSD reports that its water system does presently have adequate storage facilities to meet operational storage (15 percent of maximum day demand), fire storage (60,000 gallons), and emergency storage (one average day of demand). Based on these calculations, the District should maintain at least 202,539 gallons of water storage. The District presently maintains 208,000 gallons of storage.

Water is provided entirely from the Middle Fork Feather River Groundwater Basin and is considered to have high quality water that does not require treatment. The District reported that the maximum annually available water supply was 161 acre feet from Well #1 and 129 acre feet from Well #2. Water demand was reported to be 72 acre feet a year in 2009 and 59.9 acre feet in 2012. The District's peak day demand was reported to be 0.211 million gallons per day (mgd). The 0.211 figure was based on a day when Well No.1 had been shut down the day before, and the pump had to provide two days worth of water. The actual day demand is closer to 0.12 mgd. The District's water reserves for working, fire and emergency purposes are 500 gallons per minute (gpm) for two hours. A minimum maintained water pressure by GCCSD is 50 psi.

The District reportedly has some surface water rights; however, does not use surface water in its water service provision.

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## Infrastructure Needs

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GCCSD planned its infrastructure needs in two phases. The purpose of Phase I was to replace the pressure reducing valves, install air vacuum releases, replace control systems, replace well-house piping, and install water meters. The total cost of the project was estimated to be at \$400,000. In September 2009, a funding agreement between GCCSD and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was signed for a 100 percent forgivable \$374,219 loan. In October 2010, the contractor defaulted on the project. The District hired a new general contractor to complete the project. GCCSD recovered \$75,285 from the Surety Company. At the end of FY 12, project work in progress amounted to \$365,858.

For the Phase II project, in January 2009, the District entered into an agreement with USDA for a loan of \$250,000 for the installation of the new water tank. The total cost of the project was expected to be \$362,250. The new water tanker was completed in 2012 for a final cost of \$388,281.

No other infrastructure needs or plans for improvements were identified by the District.

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## Challenges

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No challenges to providing adequate water services were identified by the District.

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## Service Adequacy

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This section reviews indicators of service adequacy, including the Plumas County Environmental Health Agency system evaluation, drinking water quality, and distribution system integrity.

The County Environmental Health Agency is responsible for the enforcement of the federal and California Safe Drinking Water Acts, and the operational permitting and regulatory oversight of public water systems of 199 connections or less. These systems are subject to inspections by the County Environmental Health Agency. During the Agency's most recent inspection in 2012, the Agency noted that GCCSD's system appeared to be well managed; however, there were a few infrastructure needs identified, including repairs to both active wells, sealing or destroying the inactive well, repairs to the 8,000-gallon tank,

updating the biological sampling site plan, improvements to hoses used to fill the chlorine solution containers, and installing flushing valves.

Drinking water quality is also determined by a combination of historical violations reported by the EPA since 2000 and the percent of time that the District was in compliance with Primary Drinking Water Regulations in 2012. Since 2000, the District has had eight health and two monitoring violations. The eight violations occurred between 2002 and 2006 and were related to coliform. The first monitoring violation was received for coliform in 2002 and the second one for lead and copper in 2003. The District was in compliance with drinking water regulations 100 percent of the time in 2012. According to the District, the water quality is of excellent quality. It is clean and safe to drink. The water is treated with a small amount of chlorine as a disinfectant. The water is disinfected as a precautionary measure. The water is tested monthly for bacteria by a laboratory, and chlorine samples are taken daily.

Indicators of distribution system integrity are the number of breaks and leaks in 2011 and 2012 and the rate of unaccounted for distribution loss. The District reported that 10 breaks and leaks occurred in 2011 and eight in 2012. It was reported that the distribution loss rate was unknown.

## STREET MAINTENANCE SERVICES

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### Service Overview

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As was previously mentioned, in 2013, the District was authorized to provide road services directly contingent upon the district approving a special tax or assessment to provide this service. This authorization will expire on April 8, 2014 if no such funding mechanism is in place. GCCSD currently provides road services indirectly through a contract to two road associations within the District's boundaries. Through LAFCo Resolution 2013-0002, the District gained power to acquire, construct, improve, and maintain streets, roads, right-of-ways, bridges, culverts, drains, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and any incidental works within the District conditioned upon the district approving a special tax or assessment. LAFCo approval to transfer the responsibility for road services from the road associations to GCCSD is contingent upon formation of an assessment district in the amount appropriate to fund the services currently estimated to be \$70,000 per year. The District must provide LAFCo with proof of formation of the assessment district prior to issuance of a Certificate of Completion by LAFCo. The associations will disband upon transfer of all responsibilities. The District recently reported that it would not be pursuing service transfer in the near future.

Current contract services provided by GCCSD include annual road repair including culvert maintenance, road grading and dust abatement, watering roads as needed for dust abatement, and snow removal and plowing.

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### Staffing

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The information on the number and type of staff that provides contract street maintenance services to the road associations was not provided by the District.

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### Facilities and Capacity

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There are approximately four miles of dirt roads within the District where GCCSD provides contract services. There are no signalized intersections. The condition of the roads was reported to be fair.

A challenge identified by GCCSD was that some of the roads were very steep and required special maintenance.

The road associations own a 1962 Austin Western road grader with attached snowplow, a 1975 International Dump Truck with attached snowplow and a 1975 Kenworth 3,000-gallon water truck. All equipment was reported to be in fair condition.

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### Infrastructure Needs

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The District reported that in FY 11-12, about 0.5 miles of roads were rehabilitated. There are approximately two more miles of roads that are in need of rehabilitation.

## **GREENHORN CREEK COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT DETERMINATIONS**

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### **Growth and Population Projections**

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- ❖ Greenhorn Creek Community Services District (GCCSD) had a population of approximately 209 residents as of 2010.
- ❖ The District reported that it had observed no change in service demand in the last few years.
- ❖ GCCSD anticipates no growth in service demand within the District in the next few years. The District reported that there were no planned developments within its boundaries.

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### **The Location and Characteristics of Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities Within or Contiguous to the Agency's SOI**

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- ❖ The population threshold by which Plumas LAFCo will define a community is yet to be determined. Specific disadvantaged unincorporated communities and characteristics of the communities will be identified when appropriate as other areas are to be annexed to the District.

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### **Present and Planned Capacity of Public Facilities and Adequacy of Public Services, Including Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies**

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- ❖ GCCSD appear to generally have sufficient capacity to provide water and road maintenance services. The District has recently added a new water storage tank and a new well.
- ❖ Marginal capacity is available to provide fire services to Greenhorn Creek residents. Although there is sufficient equipment, the District is in need of additional firefighters.
- ❖ The District planned its water infrastructure needs in its master plan, which was adopted in 2005 and has not been updated since. It is recommended that the District periodically review capital improvement needs as economic and financial circumstances change.
- ❖ GCCSD does not plan for its capital improvements related to fire protection facilities and equipment. The District should consider adopting a capital improvement plan for the fire department to identify future financing needs and sources for these needs.
- ❖ No current infrastructure needs were reported for the GCCSD fire department.
- ❖ No further water infrastructure needs were identified by the District.

- ❖ There are approximately two miles of roads within the District that are in need of rehabilitation.

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### Financial Ability of Agencies to Provide Services

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- ❖ The District reported that its current financing levels were adequate to deliver water and road maintenance services, but not sufficient to provide fire services.
- ❖ Water services are primarily financed through water sales and standby assessments. Water rates were last updated in 2007.
- ❖ Fire services are financed through property taxes and special assessments. To improve the fire department's financing and build up a capital reserve, the District has been allocating a large portion of its property taxes to the fire department.
- ❖ The District spends about \$70,000 annually on providing contractual road services to two road associations. The associations collect dues from community residents based on an annual budget adopted at each association's annual meetings.
- ❖ GCCSD has a financial reserve in its enterprise fund. The informal goal of the District is to have about \$100,000 for contingencies.

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### Status of, and Opportunities for, Shared Facilities

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- ❖ Greenhorn Creek Station is used as a fire station and a town meeting hall for community and road association meetings.
- ❖ GCCSD has mutual aid agreements with Quincy FPD and Long Valley CSD and automatic aid agreement with Long Valley CSD.
- ❖ The District is a member of the Plumas County Fire Chiefs' Association, Special District Association and the Community Services Districts Association.
- ❖ GCCSD collaborates with Quincy FPD and other fire departments in Plumas County in its attempt to obtain a grant that would finance recruitment efforts.

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### Accountability for Community Service Needs, Including Governmental Structure and Operational Efficiencies

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- ❖ GCCSD demonstrated partial accountability in its disclosure of information and cooperation with Plumas LAFCO. Although the District responded to the questionnaires and cooperated with the document requests, responses to service-specific questionnaires required multiple follow-up attempts.
- ❖ GCCSD practices outreach efforts and has a website where some district information is made available to the public.
- ❖ With regard to possible governance structure alternatives, the District reported that consolidation with another fire and/or water provider would be theoretically an option; however, other providers are generally not in close proximity to GCCSD, which limits opportunities for reorganization.