

## **8. HAMILTON BRANCH FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

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Hamilton Branch Fire Protection District (HBFPD) provides fire suppression, fire prevention, emergency medical services, hazardous material emergency response, water rescue, and fire investigation services.

This is the first municipal service review for HBFPD. The process to begin an MSR was previously initiated in 2008, but never completed.

### **AGENCY OVERVIEW**

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#### **Background**

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HBFPD was formed in 1965 as an independent special district.<sup>68</sup> The District was formed to provide structural fire and emergency medical services to the residents on the east shore of Lake Almanor. Since its formation, the District has added water rescue, hazardous material emergency response and fire investigation services.

The principal act that governs the District is the Fire Protection District Law of 1987.<sup>69</sup> The principal act empowers fire districts to provide fire protection, rescue, emergency medical, hazardous material response, ambulance, and any other services relating to the protection of lives and property.<sup>70</sup> Districts must apply and obtain LAFCo approval to exercise services authorized by the principal act but not already provided (i.e., latent powers) by the district at the end of 2000.

HBFPD is located in the northwestern corner of Plumas County, near the County's border with Lassen County. The District is situated on the eastern shore of Lake Almanor and encompasses the communities of Hamilton Branch and East Shore, and borders Peninsula FD in the west.

#### **Boundaries**

HBFPD's boundary is entirely within Plumas County. The present bounds encompass approximately 4.3 square miles.

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<sup>68</sup> SBOE records.

<sup>69</sup> Health and Safety Code §13800-13970.

<sup>70</sup> Health and Safety Code §13862.

Following formation, the District undertook two annexations. The latest boundary change occurred in 1998 and was classified as a boundary revision by the Board of Equalization. LAFCo and the District do not have records as to what this boundary revision entailed.

**Figure 8-1: HBFPD List of LAFCo Approved Border Changes**

<i>Project Name</i>	<i>Type of Action</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Recording Agency</i>
Hamilton Branch FPD	Formation	1965	SBOE
Portion of Peninsula FD	Annexation	1972	SBOE
Walker Ranch	Annexation	1997	SBOE, LAFCo
Unknown	Boundary Revision	1998	SBOE

*Sphere of Influence*

The Sphere of Influence for the District was first adopted on May 21, 1976.<sup>71</sup> The SOI was further revised on February 16, 1983.<sup>72</sup> The 2.5-mile line along the northern boundary of the District was reduced to conform to the southern boundary of the timber production zone (TPZ) lands. The eastern boundary was determined to be the Western Pacific Railroad tracks due to a lack of access and, therefore, very little development potential. The 2.5-mile limit on the south was extended to include the lands between the railroad and the lake and the private, non-timber lands of Canyon Dam and PG&E land to the west of Canyon Dam.

The current SOI is 3.1 square miles compared to about 4.3 square miles of boundary area. Figure 8-2 depicts HBFPD’s boundaries and SOI.

*Extra-territorial Services*

Through automatic aid and mutual aid agreements, HBFPD provides services outside of its bounds. HBFPD has a formal automatic aid agreement with Peninsula FD. HBFPD also maintains informal mutual aid agreements with all fire service providers in Plumas County.

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 HBFPD, the District’s service area extends to SR-36 in the north, the Plumas-Lassen county line in the east, and SR-89 in the south. The service area also includes the eastern portion of Lake Almanor and encompasses about 37.3 square miles. HBFPD 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.

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<sup>71</sup> LAFCo resolution 76-19.

<sup>72</sup> LAFCo resolution 83-11.

Areas of Interest

The Canyon Dam area is an area of interest for HBFPD. The area is included in the District's SOI, and HBFPD provides services there when needed as it lies within the District's first-responder service area.

In 1983, the community of Canyon Dam expressed interest in being annexed into HBFPD. The District agreed to consider annexing the community if it fulfills certain requirements, such as 1) installing a water supply system, with three or more hydrants, 2) acquiring a quick-attack fire pumper capable of all-weather travel in the Canyon Dam area, and 3) constructing a building capable of housing the truck and the firefighting equipment.

In 1984, Canyon Dam filed an application with LAFCo requesting formation of a community services district (CSD) to encompass the entire community of Canyon Dam, as well as nearby PG&E properties, and Federal lands in the Plumas National Forest, located adjoining SR 89 at the south end of Lake Almanor. The purpose of the CSD formation was to provide future structural fire protection services for the Canyon Dam community. The petition was denied by LAFCo. The Commission decided that although an actual need for organized structural fire protection services for the Canyon Dam community did exist, the formation of a CSD would necessitate the creation of another new local governing body without an assured means of fiscal stability.

The territory of Canyon Dam is not currently in a fire district. Hamilton Branch FPD reported it is not interested in annexing Canyon Dam at this time.

# Hamilton Branch Fire Protection District

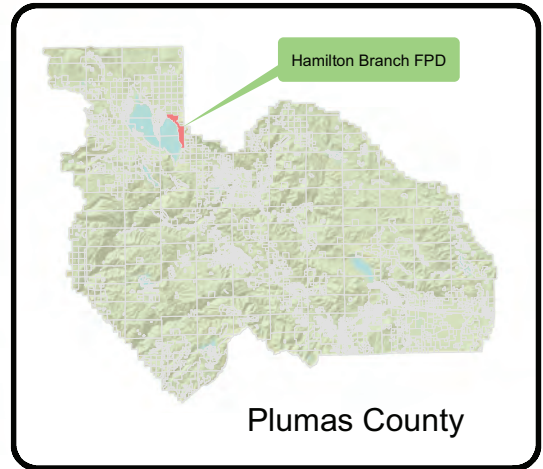
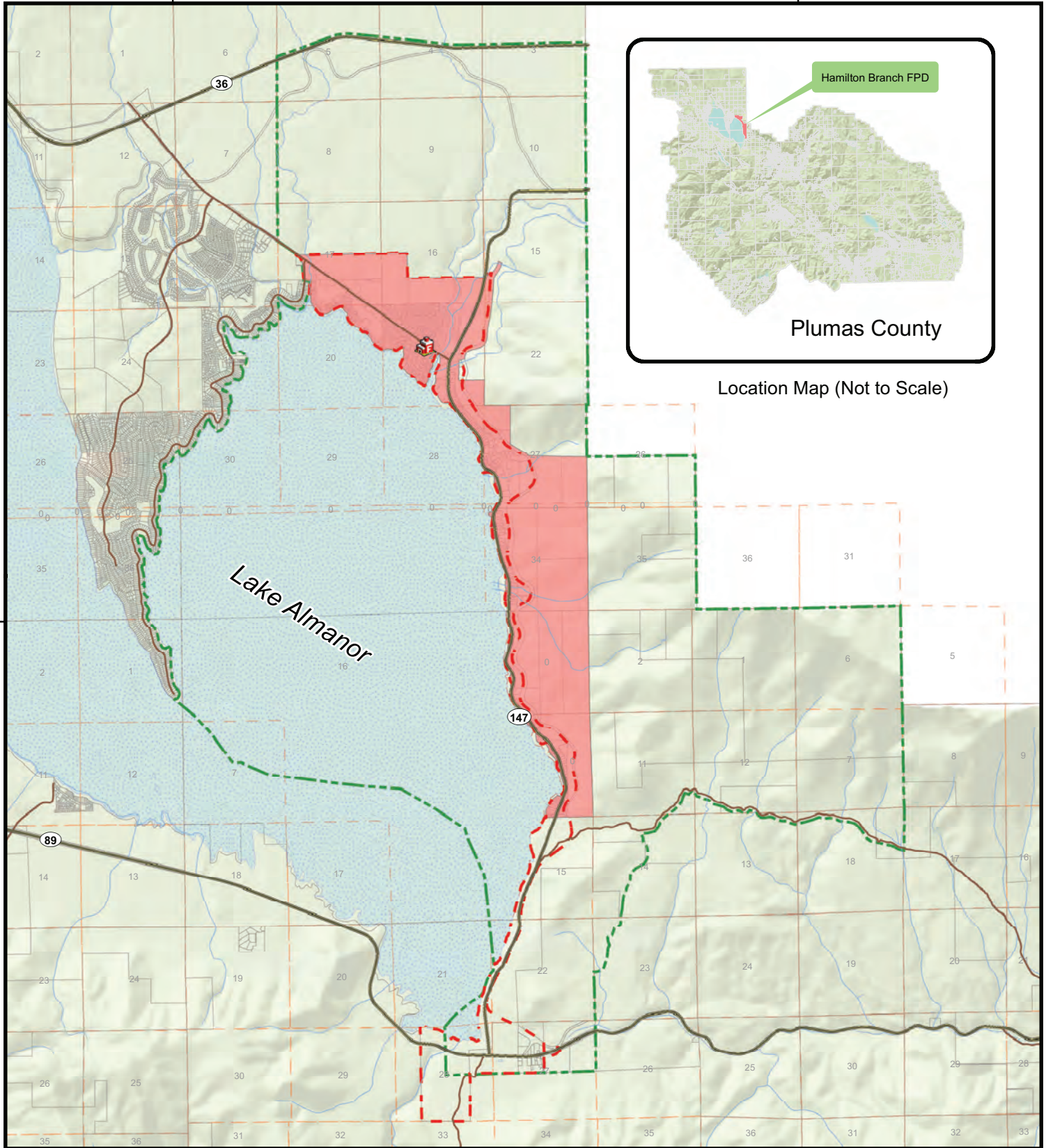
Range 7 East

Range 8 East

Range 9 East

Township 28 North

Township 27 North



Plumas County

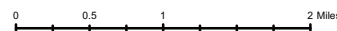
Location Map (Not to Scale)

## Legend

- Highways
- Major Roads
- Stream / River
- Waterbodies

- Parcels
- Sectional Grid (MDB&M)
- Fire Station

- Hamilton Branch FPD
- Hamilton Branch FPD (SOI)
- Fire Department Service Area



Hamilton Branch FPD  
Resolution: 64-1483  
Formed: December 28, 1971

Hamilton Branch FPD (SOI)  
Resolution: 83-20  
Adopted: February 16, 1983

Source: Plumas LAFCo Map Created 4/24/2012



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## Accountability and Governance

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The principal act orders that the board of directors of a fire protection district must have an odd number of members, with a minimum of three and a maximum of 11 members. Directors may be appointed or elected.<sup>73</sup> HBFPD is governed by a five-member board of directors elected by registered voters of the community to staggered four-year terms. All current members were elected; there is one vacancy. Current board member names, positions, and term expiration dates are shown in Figure 8-3.

The Board meets on the second Wednesday of every month at four in the afternoon at the District's fire station. Board meeting agendas are posted at the fire station, Hamilton Branch FPD office, and in the Chester Progressive newspaper. Minutes of every board meeting are available upon request.

**Figure: 8-3: HBFPD Governing Body**

<b>Hamilton Branch FPD</b>				
<b>District Contact Information</b>				
<b>Contact:</b>	Fire Chief, Gary Pini			
<b>Address:</b>	3791 Big Springs Road, Lake Almanor, CA			
<b>Telephone:</b>	(530)259-2306			
<b>Fax</b>	(530)259-3707			
<b>Email/website:</b>	<a href="mailto:penfire@frontiernet.net">penfire@frontiernet.net</a>			
<b>Board of Directors</b>				
Member Name	Position	Term Expiration	Manner of Selection	Length of Term
Norm Solid	President	December 2013	Elected	4 years
Norm Faulkner	Vice President	December 2013	Elected	4 years
Dennis Clark	Director	December 2011	Elected	4 year
Kathleen Boisen	Director	December 2011	Elected	4 years
Vacant	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Meetings</b>				
<b>Date:</b>	Second Wednesday of every month at 4pm.			
<b>Location:</b>	Meetings are held at the fire station.			
<b>Agenda Distribution:</b>	Posted at the fire station, Hamilton Branch CSD office and in Chester Progressive.			
<b>Minutes Distribution:</b>	Available upon request.			

In addition to the required agendas and minutes, the District tries to reach its constituents with flyers, during the regular pancake breakfast and through posting information on the bulletin board. Election notices are posted at the fire station and in the newspaper to encourage voter participation.

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<sup>73</sup> Health and Safety Code §13842.

If a customer is dissatisfied with the District's services, complaints may be discussed with the chief or the Board of Directors. The chief is responsible for handling the complaints. The District reported that there were no complaints in 2011.

HBFPD demonstrated accountability in its disclosure of information and cooperation with Plumas LAFCo. The District responded to the questionnaires and cooperated with interview and document requests.

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## Planning and Management Practices

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Daily operations are managed by the fire chief, who is paid through a contract with Peninsula FD. There is one paid part-time secretary and 13 volunteers—one assistant chief, two captains and ten firefighters. Peninsula FD also provides for one paid employee—a firefighter EMT I—to be at the HBFPD fire station every day, so the station is staffed 24/7.

The two captains, firefighter EMT I from Peninsula FD and the secretary are accountable to the chief. Firefighters report to the captains who evaluate them. The captains and the secretary are evaluated by the chief. The chief is accountable to the Peninsula FD Board of Directors.

The District does not track the workload handled by its volunteers; HBFPD uses a drill roster for its volunteer firefighters and records when they go on calls. Workload handled by paid Peninsula FD staff is tracked through log books. Workload monitoring helps PFD provide contract services more efficiently by identifying whether there is any downtime and changing the schedule accordingly to eliminate wasted manpower.

HBFPD reported that it does not conduct evaluations for the District as a whole, such as benchmarking or annual reports.

The District's financial planning efforts include an annually adopted budget. The District's financial statements are audited every two years. HBFPD does not adopt any other planning documents. The District provided adopted budgets for FYs 10-11 and 11-12, audited financial statements for FY 09-10, and an unaudited balance sheet for FY 10-11. The District conducts capital improvement planning informally as needed and annually at board meetings. HBFPD is currently in the process of making improvements to its fire station.

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## Existing Demand and Growth Projections

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A majority of the land uses within the District are residential, commercial, rural, and timber production. The District's bounds encompass approximately 4.3 square miles.

### Population

There are approximately 398 residents within the District, based on census block population in the 2010 Census.<sup>74</sup>

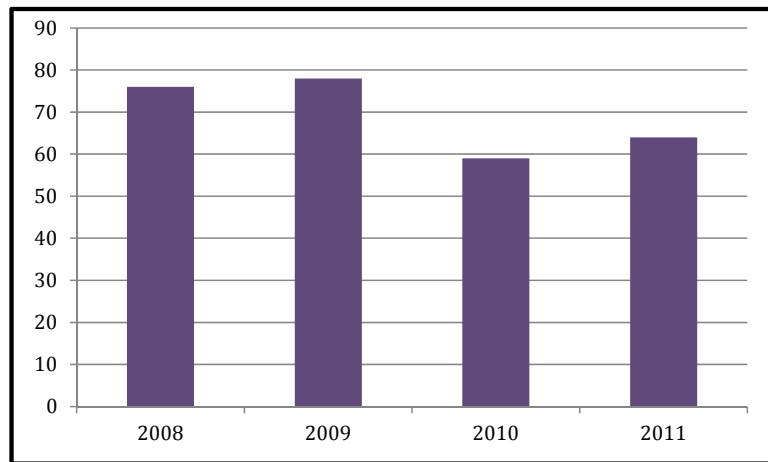
### Existing Demand

The peak demand times for the District are in the summer months when the area experiences an influx of tourists and seasonal residents. Calls for medical emergencies are consistently high in volume throughout the year, similar to other fire districts in the region.

**Figure 8-4: HBFPD Number of Calls by Year, 2008-2011**

The District reported that it had observed a slight decrease in service demand in the last few years.

The number of calls dropped in 2010 and slightly increased again in 2011, as shown in Figure 8-4. The District reported that demand dropped due to the recent economic recession which prompted residents to migrate out of the area.



### Projected Growth and Development

HBFPD anticipates minimal growth in population and similarly in service demand within the District in the next few years. However, no formal population projections have been made by the District. There are no planned developments within the District. There are currently about 40 acres of vacant lots within HBFPD's boundaries, with large portions located in the central part of the District, but there are no plans to develop these lots at this time. HBFPD does not forecast its service needs. It plans to hire a consultant and/or increase its staffing when the economy recovers and construction and growth resumes.

The District reported that it had sufficient capacity to serve the anticipated future growth. HBFPD did not identify any areas within its future growth area to which it would be difficult to provide an adequate level of service.

The State Department of Finance (DOF) projects that the population of Plumas County will grow by five percent in the next 10 years. Thus, the average annual population growth in the County is anticipated to be approximately 0.5 percent. Based on these projections,

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<sup>74</sup> Census Blocks 3151, 3189, 3192, 3201, 3202, 3193, 3204, 2012, 2010, 2288, 2031, 2025, 2028, 2030 within Tract 5.02 in Plumas County.

the District's population would increase from 398 in 2010 to approximately 418 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 together on a process to ensure that all appropriate districts are contacted for review of proposed developments. The County Board of Supervisors recently contracted with a fire prevention specialist; however, this position has no responsibility for code enforcement and building inspections.

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

19) Turnouts are now required in every new development.<sup>75</sup>

20) The County encourages development to be located adjacent to or within areas where fire services already exist or can be efficiently provided.<sup>76</sup>

21) 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>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Plumas County Code of Ordinances, Title 9 Section 9-4.604 (k).

<sup>76</sup> Plumas County, *General Plan*, 1984, pp. 28 & 29.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.



- 22) Sustainable timber and biomass production and harvesting as well as intensive forest management practices are encouraged to reduce the danger of catastrophic wildfires.<sup>78</sup>
- 23) 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>79</sup>
- 24) 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>80</sup>
- 25) Bridges are required to be designed for an 80,000 pound vehicle load.<sup>81</sup>
- 26) All access roads must be marked with an approved sign; and all lots must be identified by an address.<sup>82</sup>
- 27) 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>83</sup>
- 28) 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>84</sup>
- 29) The County encourages biomass thinning programs in high fire risk areas.<sup>85</sup>

The County is in the process 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:

- 30) 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.

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid, p. 32.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Plumas County Code of Ordinances, Title 9 Section 9-4.601.

<sup>85</sup> Plumas County Code of Ordinances, Title 4 Section 4-2.101.

- 31)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.
- 32)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.
- 33)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.
- 34)New developments within high and very high fire hazard areas are required to designate fuel break zones that comply with fire safe requirements.
- 35)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.
- 36)Fire, law enforcement, EMS, resource management, and public health response partners are encouraged to conduct joint training exercises.<sup>86</sup>

The County has not adopted the new standards for development yet. The revised General Plan may be adopted towards the end of 2012. The County zoning code will then go through a revision process in order for the zoning code to implement the General Plan.

In 2007, the Board of Supervisors formed the Emergency Services Feasibility Study Group to “evaluate the funding feasibility of providing uniform and comprehensive emergency services to all of Plumas County.” The Committee attempted to look for opportunities to increase funding for emergency services, but faced a considerable challenge in the difficult economic times. It has been working on mitigating efforts through building and development standards improvements and the General Plan update process, and encouraging local fire service providers to share resources and realize economies of scale in preparing grant applications, conducting training and engaging in other joint programs. Most recently, the Committee has focused on addressing properties that are located outside of a fire district boundaries and are not properly served, and hiring a fire prevention specialist who will develop strategies and plans to help resolve the out-of-district problem by working with the public, local fire districts, Fire Safe Council, Feasibility Group and the Board of Supervisors and by updating community wildfire protection plans and Firewise Community plans.

With regard to possible governance structure alternatives, the District reported that it may be interested in consolidation with PFD. However, presently the Boards of Directors of both districts are content with the current contract; and consolidation is not being formally

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<sup>86</sup> Plumas County General Plan, Draft Goals, Policies and Implementation Measures, 2010.

discussed. The HBFPD chief also expressed interest in the possibility of regional fire provider consolidation.

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## Financing

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The District reports that current financing levels are adequate to deliver services. However, the recent recession has a negative impact on the District's revenue streams, due to foreclosures, reappraisals, low growth in assessed values for property taxes, and nonpayment of property taxes. In addition, the uncertainty of federal and State funding can have a profound impact on the financial health of the District.

An additional source of income that is being considered by the District is an increase in its special tax assessment.

The County keeps accounts for the District's finances and tracks revenues and expenditures. The District's total revenue for FY 10-11 was \$336,058. Revenue sources included property tax revenue (67 percent), special assessment (30 percent), use of money and properties (0.3 percent), state and federal aid (one percent), and other revenue (two percent). The majority of the District's income comes from one special tax assessment that was approved by the voters in 2008. Property owners pay \$106 per parcel with no expiration on the assessment. Revenue from the assessment is used for day to day operations. The District does not charge any fees.

HBFPD's expenditures were \$264,575 in FY 10-11. Of this amount, 14 percent was spent on salaries and benefits, 83 percent on services and supplies, and three percent on fixed assets and capital improvements.

The District performs capital improvement planning as needed, usually informally during Board meetings. Since the assessment was approved in 2008, HBFPD has been able to replace three vehicles. The District also just completed a \$60,000 upgrade to the outside of the fire station; the renovations inside are scheduled to begin in 2014. Another short-term improvement is the repaving of the parking lot. It was reported that after these scheduled upgrades are completed, the facilities and equipment would be in good shape.

The District's long term debt is represented by the Oshkosh Capital Lease dated February 2, 2008. The loan is payable in annual installments of \$43,599.77 including interest until 2023.<sup>87</sup> The purpose of this lease was to purchase two new fire engines.

The District has an adopted reserve policy for one reserve fund—the Vehicle Replacement Fund. The Vehicle Replacement Fund currently contains \$60,000, which is available for vehicle replacement. HBFPD does not maintain an emergency reserve fund.

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<sup>87</sup> HBFPD, Audited Financial Statements, FY 09-10, p. 21.

The District participates in two joint ventures under joint powers agreements (JPAs) with the Fire District Association of California - Fire Agency Self-Insurance System (FDAC-FASIS) and the Special District Risk Management Association (SDRMA).<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> HBFPD, Audited Financial Statements, FY 09-10, p. 19.

## FIRE AND EMS SERVICES

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### Service Overview

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HBFPD provides fire suppression, basic life support, emergency medical services, water rescue, hazardous material emergency response, fire prevention on parcels and for businesses, and initial fire investigation services. The fire prevention efforts of the District include fire education of the population through brochures, displays and other promotional materials. HBFPD occasionally responds to wildfires. Whether the District is reimbursed by the federal government depends on the location of the fire.

### Collaboration

HBFPD receives contract services from other agencies. The District has an Administrative Services Agreement with Peninsula FD, according to which PFD provides the time and expertise of its fire chief to manage the day-to-day operations of HBFPD and services of a firefighter EMT I, who is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The contract took full force in 2006, and is automatically renewed annually. In addition, PFD and HBFPD have a formal automatic aid agreement according to which they share resources and conduct joint trainings. Peninsula FD provides automatic aid of one advance life support ambulance to all emergency medical aid responses throughout HPFPD's service area.

HBFPD maintains informal mutual aid agreements with all fire service providers in Plumas County. HBFPD is a member of the Almanor Basin Fire Chiefs' Association, Plumas County Fire Chiefs' Association and Special District 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 CHP and redirected to the Sheriff. The Sheriff provides dispatching for most fire providers in the County except for those in the northern part of the County (including HBFPD), which are served by the Susanville Interagency Fire Center (SIFC). SIFC is an Emergency Operations Command Center composed of four cooperating agencies: the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. The Forest Service also has its own dispatch. SIFC 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 boundaries of the districts and lack an officially designated fire provider.

Radio frequencies are shared with other fire agencies; and communications are interoperable. The District did not identify any areas where dispatch and response coordination could be improved.



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## Staffing

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HBFPD has 15 sworn personnel—one fire chief, one assistant chief, one firefighter EMT I from PFD, two captains, and ten volunteer firefighters. The fire chief and firefighter EMT I are employed through a contract with Peninsula FD, and are the only paid sworn staff. The 13 other firefighters are not compensated.

The median age of the firefighters is 46, with a range from 31 to 66. Hamilton Branch FPD tries to recruit more volunteers through advertising.

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>89</sup> HBFPD has three firefighter I and three EMT I certified personnel.

The District conducts trainings twice a month. All volunteer firefighters are required to train for a total of four hours per month.

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## Facilities and Capacity

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Hamilton Branch FPD owns and operates one fire station known as Hamilton Branch Fire Protection District Station. The fire station, which was reported to be in poor condition, is located at 3791 Big Springs Road and was built in 1975. The station is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week with one firefighter EMT I employed through a contract with PFD.

Hamilton Branch Fire Protection District Station is used as a fire station and to house two type I fire engines, one water tender, one rescue mini pumper, and one utility vehicle.

The District's water reserves are represented by fire hydrants in part of the District and Lake Almanor, from which they can draft water when necessary.

Currently, the District has the capacity to provide adequate services within its boundary area and to planned developments. However, once construction resumes, HBFPD may have to assess its capacity to serve newly constructed homes.

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<sup>89</sup> State Fire Marshal, Course Information and Required Materials, 2007, p. 44

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## Infrastructure Needs

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The District requires facility upgrades on its fire station. The needs which are scheduled to be completed in the next two years include interior work and repaving of the parking lot. HBFPD has recently completed upgrades to the exterior of the station and replaced three vehicles.

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## Challenges

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The only challenge reported by the District is the present economic condition that has affected assessed property values and residents' personal incomes, and consequently, the District's income from property taxes.

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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.

Fire services in the communities are classified by the Insurance Service Office (ISO), an advisory organization. This classification indicates the general adequacy of coverage. Communities with the best fire department facilities, systems for water distribution, fire alarms and communications, and equipment and personnel receive a rating of 1. HBFPD has an ISO rating of 5 in parts of the District that have hydrants, and a rating of 8 in the areas without hydrants. The year when the District was last evaluated is unknown.

The guideline established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) for fire response times is six minutes at least 90 percent of the time, with response time measured from the 911-call time to the arrival time of the first-responder at the scene. The fire response time guideline established by the Center for Public Safety Excellence (formerly the Commission on Fire Accreditation International) is 5 minutes 50 seconds at least 90 percent of the time.<sup>90</sup>

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 includes the rural and wilderness classifications. CalFire tracks response times for each incident HBFPD is dispatched to within its boundaries. It was reported that the District's average response time in 2011 was 3.4 minutes. The percentage of response times under five minutes was 84. An area that HBFPD could improve upon is tracking and logging its

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<sup>90</sup> Commission on Fire Accreditation International, 2000.

response times for each incident and collaborating with CalFire on data exchange, which would allow for more structured response and enhanced efficiency and consistency.

The service area size<sup>91</sup> for each fire station varies between fire districts. The median fire station in Lake Almanor Area serves approximately 37 square miles. WACSD and PAFPD serve the most expansive area, with 99 square miles served per station on average. Densely populated areas tend to have smaller service areas. For example, the average service area for Peninsula FD is five square miles. By comparison, the one fire station in HBFPD serves approximately 37.3 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 Lake Almanor area vary from 31 call firefighters per 1,000 residents in PFD service area to 59 in WACSD and PAFPD. By comparison, HBFPD has approximately 37.5 firefighters per 1,000 residents.

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<sup>91</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 8-5: Hamilton Branch FPD Service Profile**

Fire Service				
<b>Facilities</b>				
<b>Fire station</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Condition</b>	<b>Staff per Shift</b>	<b>Vehicles</b>
HBFPD Station	3791 Big Springs Road, Lake Almanor, CA	Poor	Staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by one PFD firefighter	2 type I fire engines, 1 water tender, 1 rescue mini pumper, 1 utility vehicle
<b>Facility Sharing</b>				
<b>Current Practices:</b> The District has an automatic aid agreement with PFD. The two agencies share resources and conduct joint trainings.				
<b>Future opportunities:</b> The District does not see any opportunities to share facilities with other agencies.				
<b>Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies</b>				
The fire station is in poor condition and requires upgrades.				
<b>District Resource Statistics</b>		<b>Service Configuration</b>		<b>Service Demand</b>
Staffing Base Year	2011	Configuration Base Year	2011	Statistical Base Year
Fire Stations in District	1	Fire Suppression	Direct	Total Service Calls <sup>5</sup>
Stations Serving District	1	EMS	Direct	% EMS
Sq. Miles Served per Station <sup>1</sup>	37.3	Ambulance Transport	PFD	% Fire/Hazardous Material
Total Staff <sup>2</sup>	16	Hazardous Materials	Direct	% False
Total Full-time Firefighters	0	Air Rescue/Ambulance Helicopter	Enloe, PHI	% Misc. emergency
Total Call Firefighters	13	Fire Suppression Helicopter	USFS, CalFire	% Non-emergency
Total Sworn Staff per Station <sup>3</sup>	7.5	Public Safety Answering Point	Sheriff	% Mutual Aid Calls
Total Sworn Staff per 1,000	37.5	Fire/EMS Dispatch	SIFC	Calls per 1,000 people
<b>Service Adequacy</b>			<b>Service Challenges</b>	
Response Time Base Year	2011	Tough economic conditions is the only challenge reported by the District.		
Average Response Time (min) <sup>4</sup>	3.4	<b>Training</b>		
Percentage of response times under 5 min	84%	Volunteers train twice a month for a total of four hours per month.		
ISO Rating	5 and 8 (date unknown)			
<b>Mutual &amp; Automatic Aid Agreements</b>				
The District has automatic aid agreement with PFD and mutual aid agreements with all fire providers in the County.				
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.				
4) Response time are provided for incidents responded to by the District within its boundaries.				
5) HBFPD had 64 calls, as reported by the District. According to CalFire, HBFPD responded to 36 service calls.				

## HAMILTON BRANCH FIRE DISTRICT DETERMINATIONS

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### Growth and Population Projections

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- ❖ There are approximately 398 residents within Hamilton Branch Fire Protection District (HBFPD).
- ❖ Over the past few years, the District has experienced a slight decline in demand for services.
- ❖ HBFPD anticipates minimal growth in population and similarly in service demand within the District in the next few years.
- ❖ There are currently about 40 acres of vacant lots within HBFPD's boundaries, with large portions located in the central part of the District, but there are no plans to develop these lots at this time.

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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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- ❖ The District's existing facilities have the capacity to adequately serve current demand and anticipated future growth.
- ❖ Infrastructure needs include upgrades to the District's fire station.
- ❖ The needs which are scheduled to be completed in the next two years include interior work and repaving of the parking lot.
- ❖ It is recommended that the County Sheriff's Office work with the fire districts to update the ESN map that is used for dispatching, in order to adequately address any communication concerns and recent boundary changes.
- ❖ The District conducts capital improvement planning informally as needed and annually at board meetings. HBFPD should consider adopting a capital improvement plan to identify long-term financing needs and sources for these needs.



- ❖ An area that WACSD could improve upon is tracking response times for each incident and collaborating with CalFire on information exchange.

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### Financial Ability of Agencies to Provide Services

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- ❖ The District reports that current financing levels are adequate to deliver services and accommodate anticipated growth.
- ❖ The recent recession had a negative impact on the District's revenue streams, due to foreclosures, reappraisals, low growth in assessed values for property taxes, nonpayment of property taxes, as well as uncertainty of state and federal funding.
- ❖ An additional source of income that is being considered by the District is an increase in its special tax assessment.
- ❖ The District has an adopted reserve policy for one reserve fund—the Vehicle Replacement Fund.

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

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- ❖ HBFPD collaborates with other fire providers in Plumas County through informal mutual aid agreements and common trainings, and with PFD through an automatic aid agreement. HBFPD maintains informal mutual aid agreements with all fire service providers in Plumas County.
- ❖ HBFPD is a member of the Almanor Basin Fire Chiefs' Association, Plumas County Fire Chiefs' Association and Special District Association.
- ❖ The District did not identify any additional opportunities to share its facilities with other agencies in the future.

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

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- ❖ HBFPD demonstrated accountability and transparency by disclosing financial and service related information in response to LAFCo requests.
- ❖ A governmental structure option is consolidation with Peninsula FD. Consolidation with other fire districts offers opportunities for shared resources and finances.