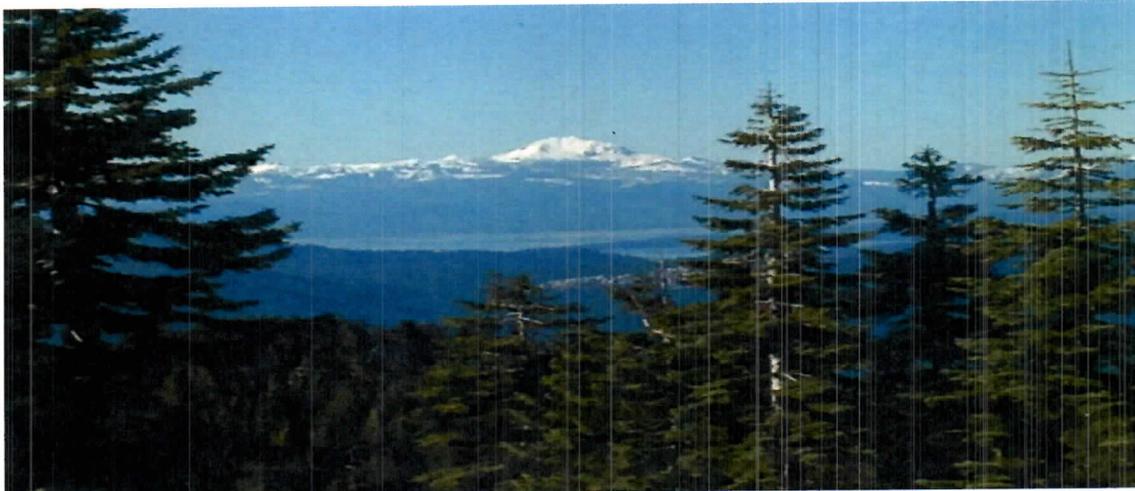


Plumas County Environmental Health 2014 Annual Report



View northwest from Mt Hough Lookout

OVERVIEW

Environmental Health is pleased to provide this report of activities for the calendar year 2014. While titled an annual report, this is the first time since 2010 that staffing and workload allowed completing such a report.

Environmental health can best be described as those aspects of human health and disease that are influenced by conditions in the environment. Chemical, physical and biological conditions are all important variables in determining human health. Promoting an environment that enhances human health and well-being is the foundation of environmental health.

Plumas County Environmental Health's Mission Statement is to preserve the environment and enhance public health through outreach, education, planning and sensible application of environmental health principles, laws and statutes. Our primary role is to implement programs and enforce regulations that protect human health and the environment.

STAFFING

In July 2014, the Board of Supervisors approved a new Administrative Assistant position for Environmental Health, bringing clerical staffing back to full-strength and 2009 levels. Staffing now includes a half-time director (shared with the Office of Emergency Services), two clerical, and four field staff. Field staff are Hazardous Materials Specialists and Registered Environmental Health Specialists, who have background, education, training and state certification in their field of practice.

Environmental Health's main office is in the Health and Human Services Center in Quincy. This office is generally staffed Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm but closed during lunch and holidays. We also maintain a field office in the Chester Civic

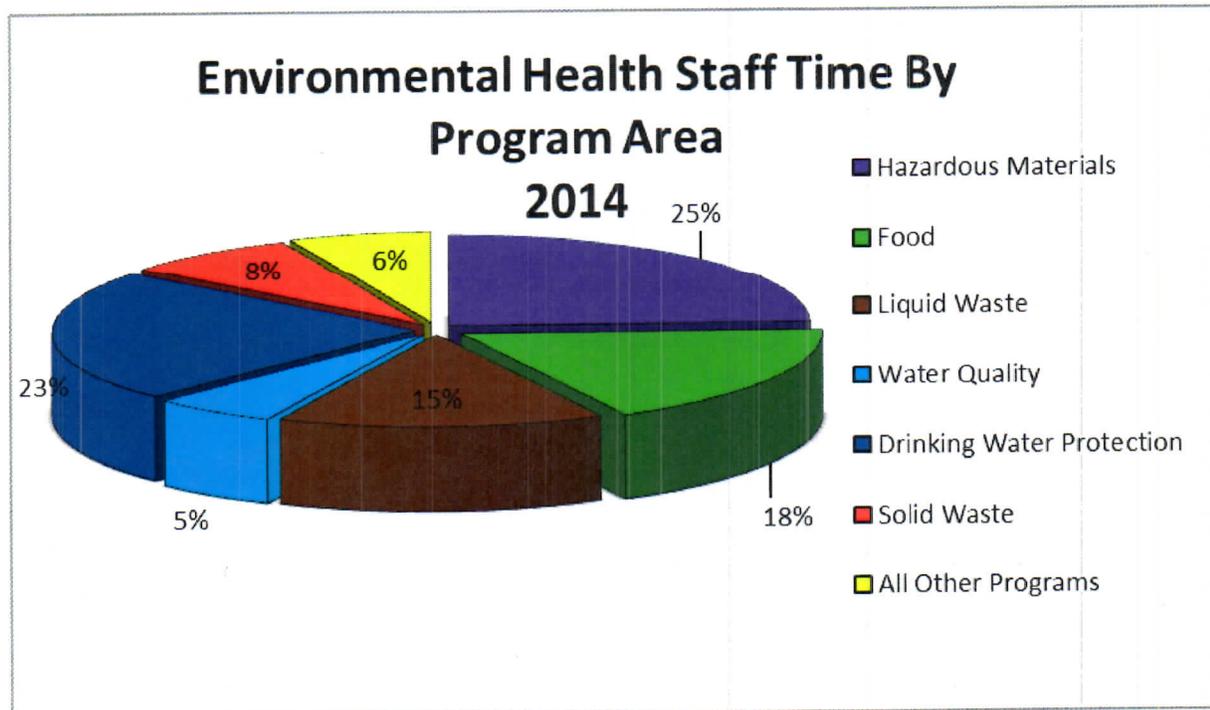
Center. This office is generally staffed and available to the public Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings or by appointment. Field staff can also be seen after business hours, often inspecting weekend community events or responding to hazardous materials incidents.

PROGRAMS

In Plumas County, Environmental Health services are generally grouped into one of ten core program areas. The amount of time spent in each program area depends on a variety of risk factors, state mandates, and the service needs of the community. In Plumas County these ten environmental health programs include:

- Drinking Water Protection
- Hazardous Materials Management
- Food Safety
- Liquid Waste Management
- Solid Waste Management
- Water Quality Protection
- Land Use and Development
- Rabies and Vector Control
- Recreational Health
- Housing and Institution Safety

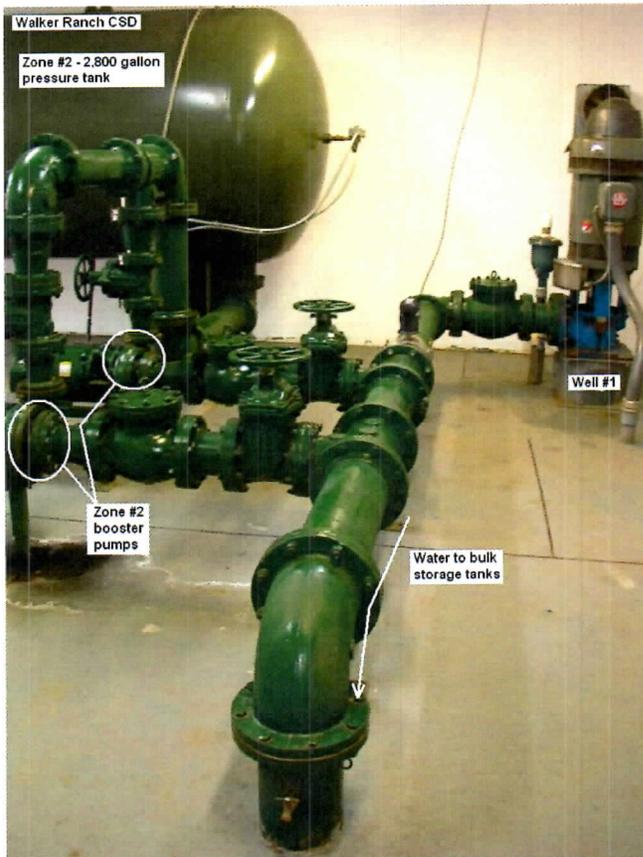
In 2014, staff time was allocated as shown in the following chart and some notable programs and activities are summarized below.



DRINKING WATER PROTECTION

Ensuring safe and potable drinking water supplies is a vital function of Environmental Health. During 2014, almost one quarter of all EH staff time was spent in this program. Environmental Health maintains state certification as the

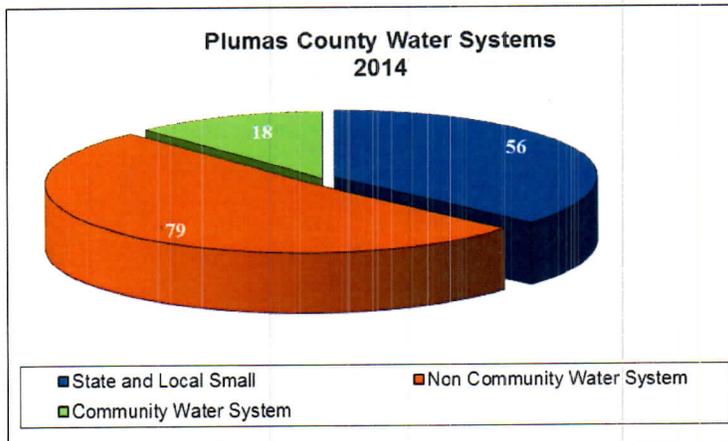
Local Primacy Agency (LPA). In July 2014, local oversight of the Drinking Water Program was transferred from the State Health Department to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB).



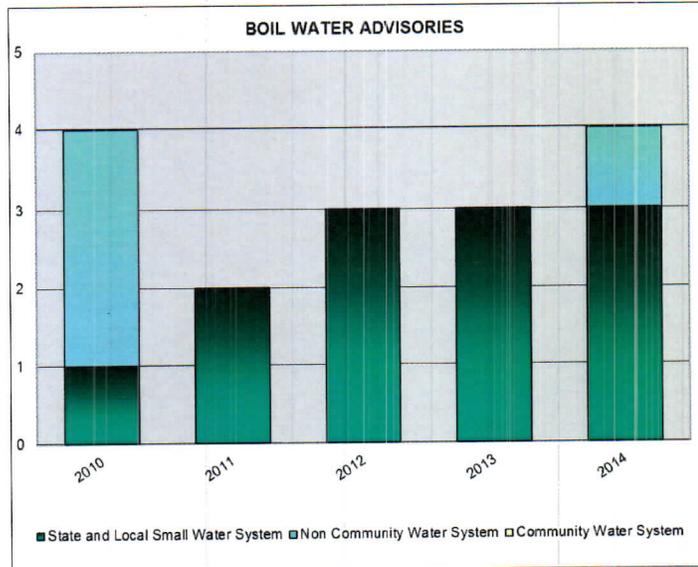
Drinking Water Plumbing for Walker Ranch CSD

Environmental Health is the regulatory authority for the operation and maintenance of non-community water systems such as resorts and campgrounds, small water systems serving less than 15 connections, and community systems with up to 200 connections. Combined, these systems serve drinking water to over twenty-two thousand residents and visitors to Plumas County each year. Regulation of the largest community systems is performed by SWRCB as required by law.

Environmental Health monitors the water quality of 153 public drinking water systems throughout the county. To ensure the water provided by these systems is safe to drink, we review and track nearly two thousand (2,000) bacteriological reports each year. In addition, we also track numerous chemical data for each system.



If there is an immediate risk to human health, the system operator is required to post a Boil Water Advisory. The number of Boil Water Advisories issued is a good indicator of overall drinking water quality, and is a key part of public health protection. Data on the number of Boil Water Advisory posted for each of the past five years is shown on the graph. In 2014, after reviewing almost 2000 bacteriologic data points, only four resulted in a Boil Water Advisory.



In 2014, the California Department of Public Health conducted a performance audit of our drinking water program. Environmental Health is pleased to report that our drinking water program continues to meet state and federal mandates for public health and safety. Equally important, Environmental Health staff conducted thirty on-site water system inspections in 2014 and continues to provide water system purveyors and operators a local contact and resource to ensure that our drinking water remains the highest quality possible.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS MANAGEMENT

The purpose of the hazardous materials management program is to help ensure the safe and proper handling of hazardous materials. Environmental Health staff permit and inspect hazardous materials at fixed facilities and provide technical assistance, planning and support for hazardous materials releases. This program is also referred to as the CUPA program or the Unified Program. In 2014, approximately one quarter of Environmental Health staff time was dedicated to hazardous materials management.



Rich Bar train derailment spilling corn into the Feather River, November 25, 2014

The infamous 'corn derailment' in November 2014 was a reminder of the dangers of transporting hazardous materials by rail, and especially the increasing potential posed by light crude oil. Transportation of light crude, originating from the Bakken

region near North Dakota, has increased dramatically through the Feather River Canyon in the past year. While the Office of Emergency Services is the primary agency to coordinate emergency planning, prevention and response to all countywide incidents, Environmental Health has important roles in hazardous materials data coordination, planning and response.



Unit train of light crude oil, Keddie Wye Trestle
Photo by Jake Miille; jakemiillephotography.com

Environmental Health is the Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) for Plumas County and maintains state certification through the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA). CalEPA evaluates Environmental Health's program to ensure it complies with state program standards and performance. The five main elements of the program include the following:

Hazardous Materials Business Plan Program (HMBP)

- Tracking, permitting and inspecting sites having hazardous materials in reportable quantities (greater than 55 gallons, 500 pounds, 200 cubic feet gas).
- Collecting and reviewing hazardous materials business plans, inventories, and emergency response plans.
- Providing these plans to fire departments and other emergency response agencies.

Above Ground Storage Tank (AST) Program

- Tracking, permitting and inspecting AST facilities, operations and equipment.
- Reviewing and verifying Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure Plans (SPCC) for specified facilities.



Above Ground Storage Tank at Gansner Airport

Underground Storage Tank (UST) Program

- Tracking, permitting, and inspecting UST facilities and equipment.
- Ensuring underground tanks are properly operated, monitored and maintained to avoid risks of spills, leaks, or releases.
- Inspecting the construction, repair, upgrade and removal of underground tanks.
- Verifying that closed and removed tanks have not leaked and do not pose a risk to the environment.



Underground Tank Installation at Graeagle Chevron

California Accidental Release Program (Cal ARP)

- Tracking, permitting and inspecting facilities that handle certain quantities of acutely hazardous material (such as chlorine gas or anhydrous ammonia).
- Reviewing Risk Management Plans (RMP) that reduce the risk of accidental releases.



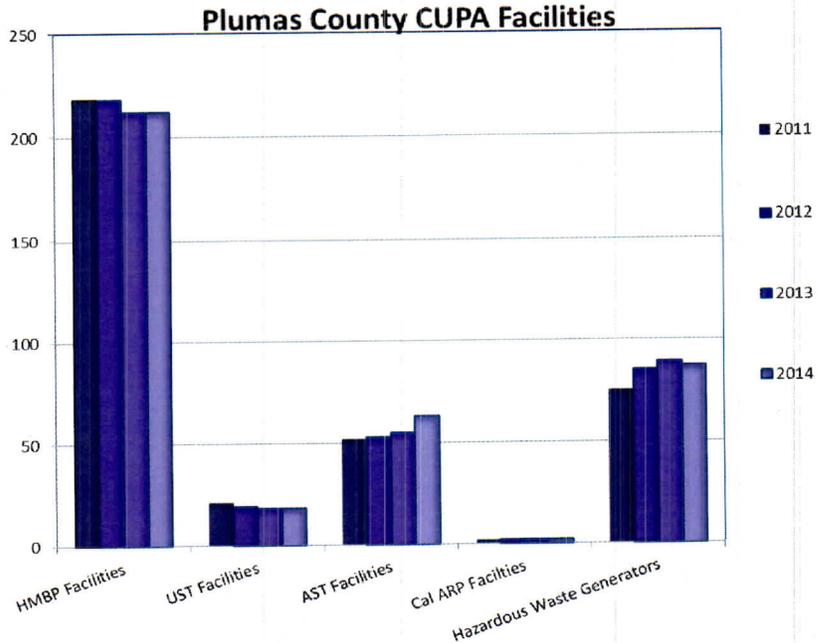
Anhydrous Ammonia Tanks at Sierra Pacific Industries

Hazardous Waste Generator Program

- Tracking, permitting, and inspecting facilities that generate hazardous wastes such as waste oil, solvents, and used chemicals.
- Ensuring the proper storage, management, handling and disposal of these wastes.

The chart below shows the number of businesses subject to each of the CUPA program elements. The number of regulated businesses shows only slight changes over the past few years.

Environmental Health carries out the state-mandated CUPA program through certification and oversight by the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal EPA). Mandated services are inspection-related activities, but we also spend time offering consultation, education and compliance assistance to regulated facilities. Plumas County also provides the full range of CUPA services to Sierra County under contract.



LIQUID WASTE MANAGEMENT

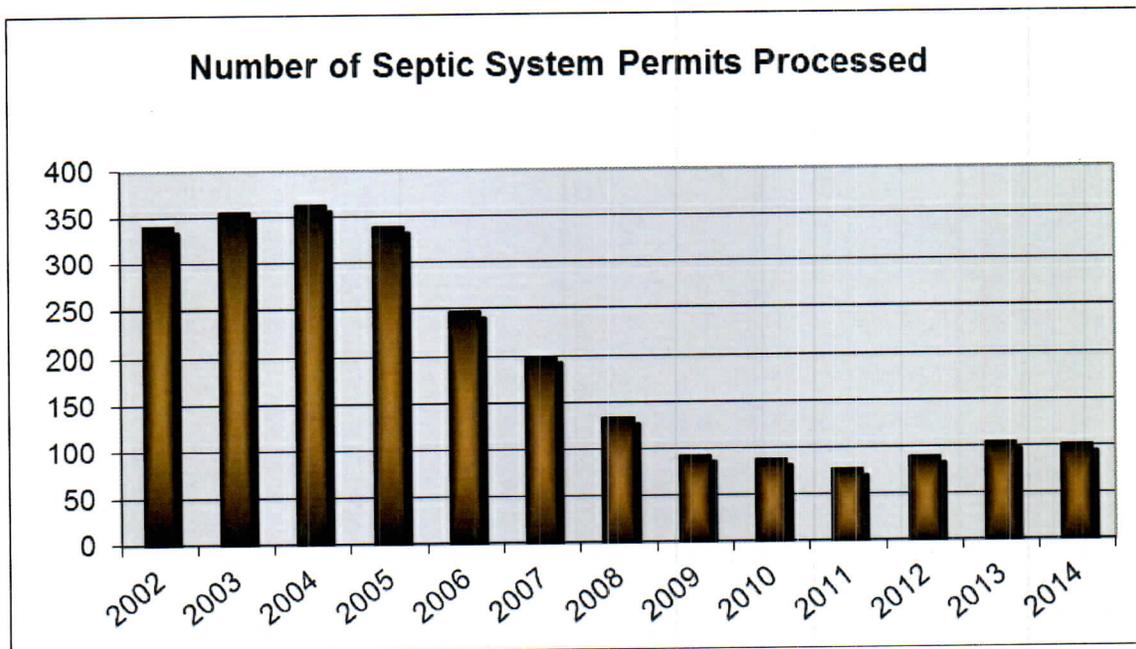
Our liquid waste program ensures that wastes are properly handled, treated and disposed to protect public health and the environment.



Gravel-less leachfield installation at North Fork Campground near Caribou

This includes preventing exposure to contaminated wastewater as well as preventing contamination of surface and groundwater. We review and approve the location, design, construction, installation and repair of all on-site sewage disposal systems through a permit and inspection program.

The following chart tracks the number of septic system permits Environmental Health has issued since 2002. The economic downturn is clearly reflected in these annual numbers, bottoming out in 2011 with only 75 permits processed. The numbers have rebounded somewhat with 103 and 100 permits issued in 2013 and 2014 respectively.



FOOD SAFETY

Our food safety program helps protect the public from food-borne illness. Food safety is achieved through education, outreach, and inspection of retail food facilities countywide. Facilities are evaluated for compliance with the California Retail Food Code. Registered Environmental Health Specialists are authorized to

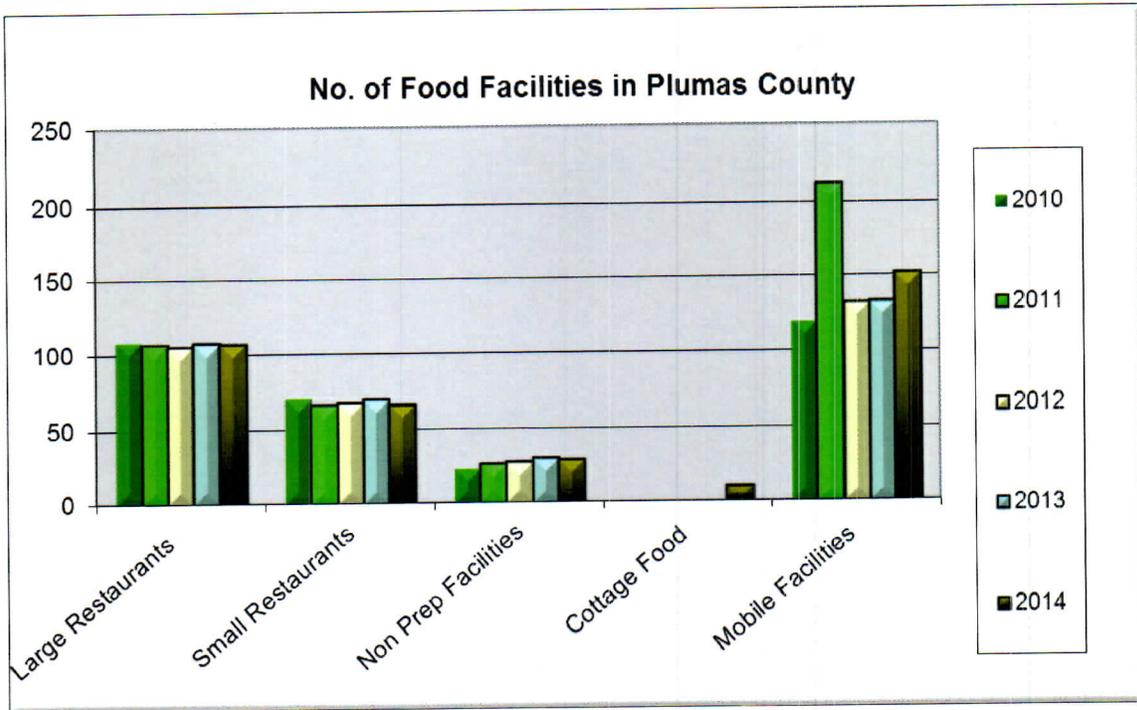
inspect, record and correct violations of safe food handling practices, and even close the facility if necessary to protect public health.



A big part of our food safety program includes public education and outreach. As part of that effort, all fixed food facility inspection reports are available to the public through Environmental Health's Food Facility Inspection page on the county's website at www.plumascounty.us On-line access to these inspection reports continues

to be very popular.

In Plumas County, the inventory of retail food facilities includes large restaurants (with a seating capacity of more than 25 or food preparation area in excess of 500 square feet), small restaurants, non-prep facilities such as convenience markets, mobile or temporary facilities serving community events and the county fair, and cottage food facilities. The inventory of facilities operating in Plumas County since 2010 is as follows:

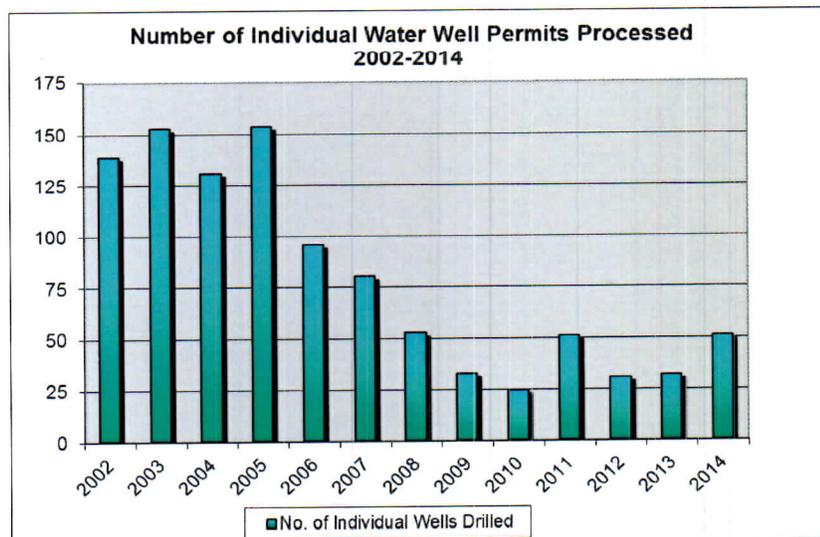


The numbers of large and small restaurants and non prep facilities are relatively stable over the past few years. The variation in mobile facilities may reflect the number and variety of community events held throughout the county. Cottage food facilities include operators preparing certain low-risk foods in a home kitchen. State law authorized these facilities starting in January 2014.

WATER QUALITY ASSURANCE

Protecting the quality of Plumas County's lakes, streams and groundwater supplies is a core function of Environmental Health. An important part of this program is the well permit process. Improperly located or constructed wells can compromise groundwater quality. Through our permit and inspection process, we ensure all wells meet the appropriate state and local standards.

In 2014, Environmental Health began closely tracking the number of drought-impacted wells. A few older, shallow domestic



wells had water quality and water shortage problems, but these were typically widespread and not isolated to a specific area of the county. Owner's response to these conditions also varied widely, with some choosing to drill a new well while others reduced water consumption and hoped for a good winter recharge. Ag producers also were impacted by the drought, typically through reduced surface water allocations and the need to make up the difference with groundwater. Of the 51 new wells drilled in 2014, 11 were for agricultural uses such as field irrigation or stock watering. Applicants reported that 28% of the new wells drilled last year were drought-related.

SOLID WASTE

Designated as the Local Enforcement Agency or LEA by CalRecycle, Environmental Health is responsible for ensuring the proper, safe, and sanitary handling of the county's solid waste. We inspect and permit county landfills, transfer sites, and investigate old or abandoned sites for hazards. Environmental Health staff also investigates complaints about litter, debris, and illegal dumping.

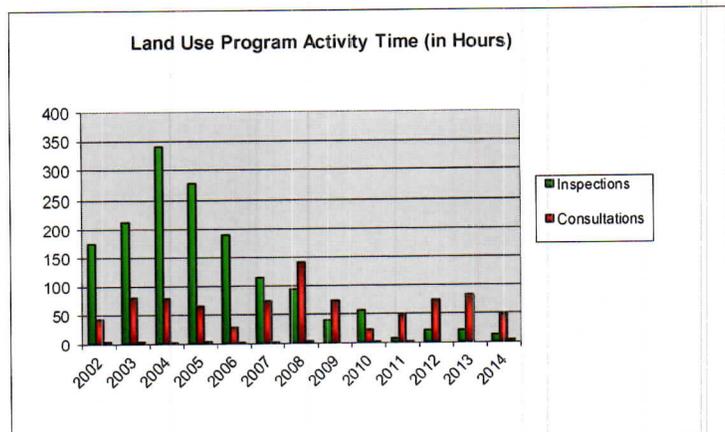


East Quincy Transfer Station

In 2014, Environmental Health staff completed 72 inspections of county transfer sites, 20 inspections of landfills, and 23 inspections of closed facilities. Results of these inspections are available on line at the facilities link on the CalRecycle website at <http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/SWFacilities/Directory/> In 2014 we also successfully completed CalRecycle's program audit which confirms the local inspection and enforcement program complies with state standards. We also completed LEA responsibilities associated with the closure of the Portola landfill.

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Working in concert with Planning and Building Services, Engineering, Public Works, and other state and local agencies, we evaluate proposed planning and development projects for compliance with environmental health standards, practices and regulations. Land use inspections



are typically associated with a development project or special use permit application while consultations include optional and prospective development projects. As noted on the chart, land use projects with Environmental Health involvement have not rebounded after the recent economic downturn of the mid 2000s.

RABIES AND VECTOR CONTROL

Our rabies and vector control program protects the public from exposure to vector-borne diseases such as rabies, Hantavirus, plague and West Nile Virus. We closely coordinate with state, federal and local partners while performing exposure investigations, environmental surveillance, consultation and other activities.

The last plague investigation occurred in 2010 when a dead squirrel collected from the Plumas-Eureka State Park was found to be infected with plague. Plague can be transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected flea. If untreated, plague can cause serious illness or death.



Checking rodents for plague, Plumas Eureka State Park

Rabies/Vector Program Animal Investigations



In 2014, Environmental Health tracked and investigated over 76 animal bite cases for potential rabies exposure. Preventing rabies through the timely investigation, testing and risk assessment is a critical function for Environmental Health. Although no animals tested positive for rabies in 2014, the rabies virus is considered active and present in wild animal populations such as bats, skunks and raccoons. Monitoring this

disease in domestic animals to prevent human illness is an essential role for Environmental Health.

RECREATIONAL HEALTH

Our recreational health program helps protect bather safety and prevent disease by ensuring the safe and sanitary operation of public swimming places. Environmental Health provides routine permitting and inspections for the 29 existing pools countywide. We also spend time working with prospective pool owners to ensure the proposed construction and operation of proposed pools meets the minimum standards of the new and changing California pool code.



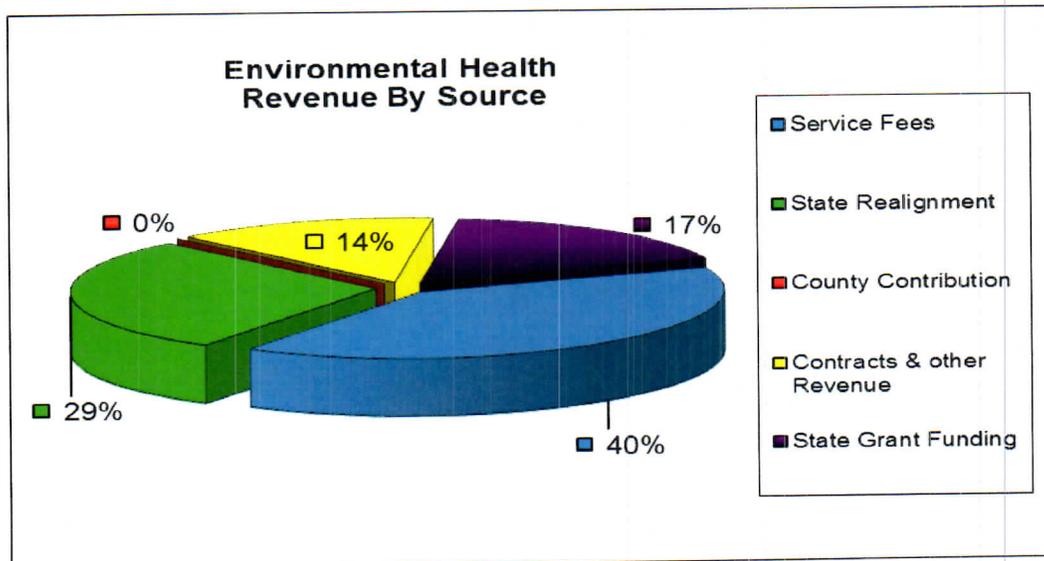
Greenhorn Ranch Swimming Pool

HOUSING AND INSTITUTIONS

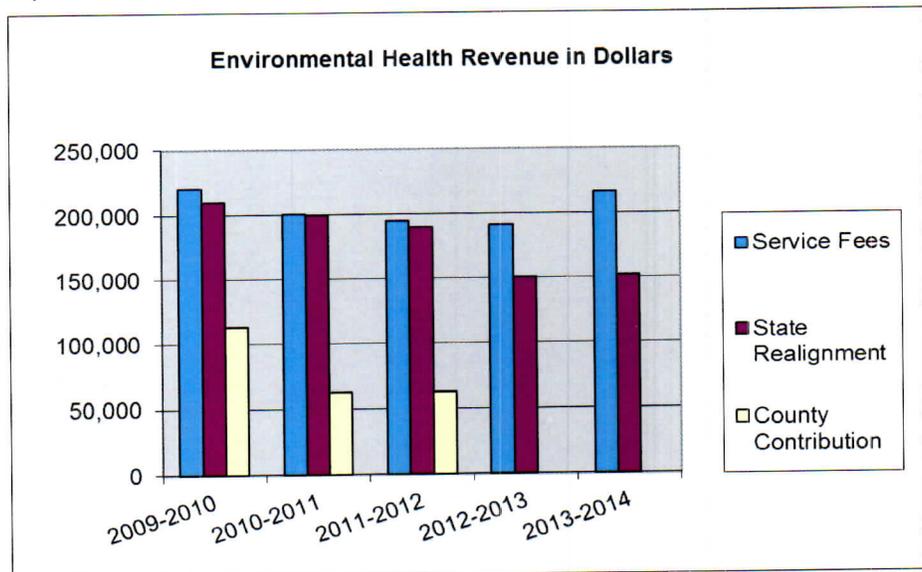
The housing and institutions program helps assure that day camps, organized camps, and institutions (such as the jail) are maintained and operated in a safe and sanitary manner. This is a small yet important Environmental Health program.

BUDGET AND REVENUE

Environmental Health revenue sources include Fees for Service, State Realignment, State Program Grants (CUPA, Solid Waste and Emergency Preparedness), and Contracts for Services (Sierra County CUPA and LEA services). The 2014 funding sources are summarized below.



Fees for service and Realignment funds have long been the primary revenue sources for Environmental Health. Since fiscal year 2012-13, Environmental Health has not received a county contribution to its operating budget.



LOOKING FORWARD

As Environmental Health becomes more fee-supported, activities and workloads must match the purpose of those fees. Where no fees are charged for a specific activity and no state or special funding is available, (as in complaint investigations, for instance) those activities are given a lesser priority. Providing quality service to those who pay fees for service remains a top priority, but this may mean some tasks and projects will not be completed as quickly as we would like.

In addition to continuing our routine work, Environmental Health is gearing up for two important projects in 2015.

The first project is upgrading our data management system. This system is used to track facility inventories, provide billing and accounting records, track staff time, and upload mandated reports to state agencies. Since 2005, Environmental Health has used a data system called Envision for Windows but this system is dependent on local servers, it limits staff and public access to data, and it is no longer supported by the software vendor. Upgrading to the similar but online version called Envision Connect has been postponed for over two years due to staffing shortages. Now at full clerical staffing, we are developing data policies, procedures and training for this

much-needed project. Hopefully we will be finished with this transition by the end of the calendar year.

The other important project is complying with the statewide onsite wastewater regulations. AB 885 is the law requiring State Water Resources to adopt statewide onsite wastewater regulations. After several failed attempts and considerable public outcry, State Water Resources recently adopted tiered regulations based on risk to public health and water quality. These regulations offer some local flexibility and, under certain conditions, continuing use of existing local wastewater codes and ordinances. By May 2016, Plumas County must review its existing wastewater policies and ordinances, devise a plan for monitoring groundwater for impacts due to septic systems, and develop a local agency management plan to implement the program. State Water Resources will review this plan and determine compliance with state law, with final adoption and implementation expected in 2018. Work on this important and challenging project is anticipated to begin this spring.

Fortunately, Environmental Health has a hardworking and capable workforce. Thanks to our dedicated staff, we look forward to moving ahead in 2015.



Jerry Sipe, Director
Plumas County Environmental Health