



Plumas County  
Public Health Agency  
Environmental Health Division

**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2006**

## Plumas County Environmental Health Services 2006 Annual Report

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH is a Division of the county's Public Health Agency. The Division consists of a director, two clerical staff, and five field staff. Our main office is in the Health and Human Services Center in Quincy, and we also maintain a satellite office in the Chester Civic Center.

PLUMAS COUNTY'S MISSION STATEMENT: We provide local public service to enhance communities and the lives of our citizens.

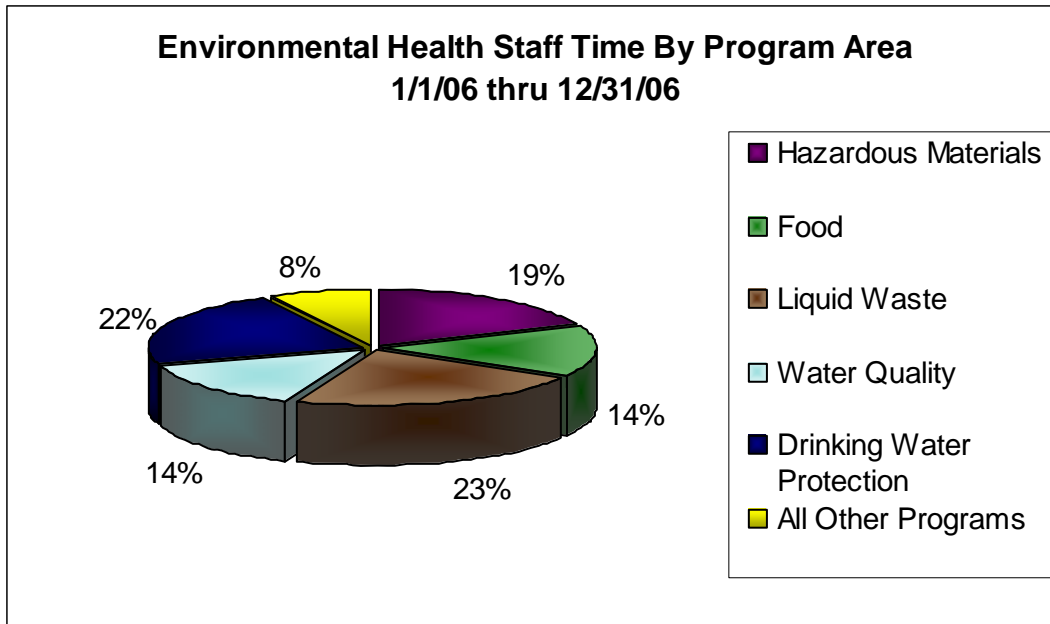
VISION: We will be the leader in County Government, through respect for our citizens, care for our resources through constant diligence and improvement of service to both.

### VALUES:

- Honesty
- Accountability
- Respect
- Efficiency

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH MISSION STATEMENT: is to preserve the environment and enhance public health through outreach, education, collaborative planning and sensible application of environmental health principles, laws and statutes.

WE CARRY OUT THIS MISSION by providing a variety of services in each of ten program areas. These program areas are primarily where people interact with their environment. The amount of time spent in each program area depends on a variety of risk factors as well as the service needs of the community. In Plumas County, core environmental health programs include: liquid waste management, drinking water protection, hazardous materials management, water quality assurance, and food safety. In 2006, staff time was allocated according to the chart below.

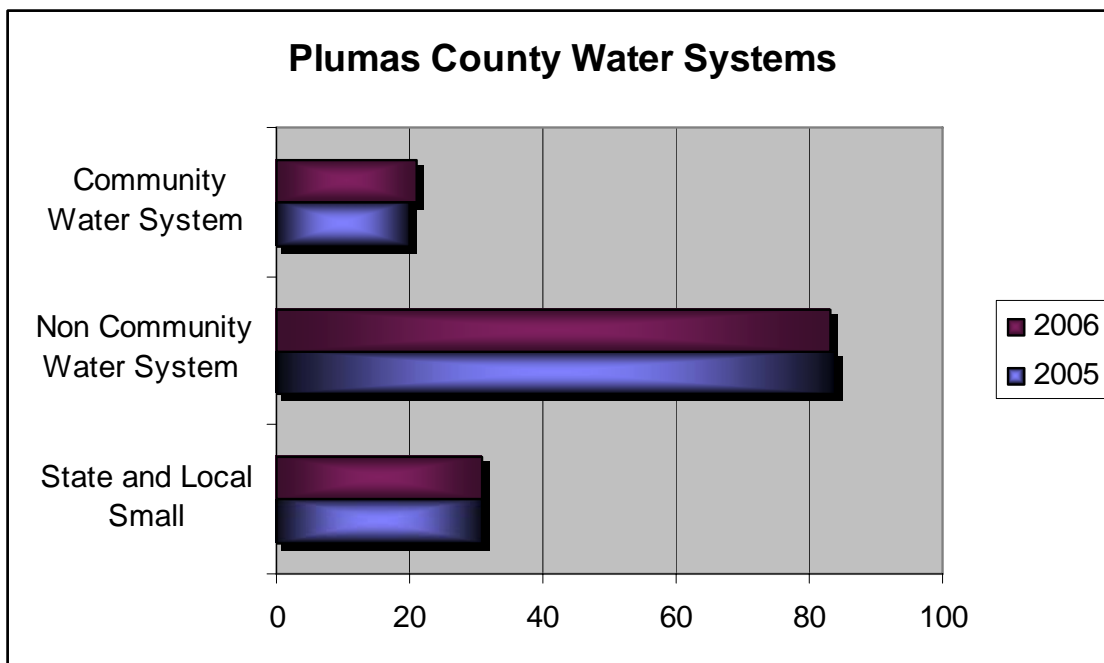


Notable activities in the primary program areas can be summarized as follows:

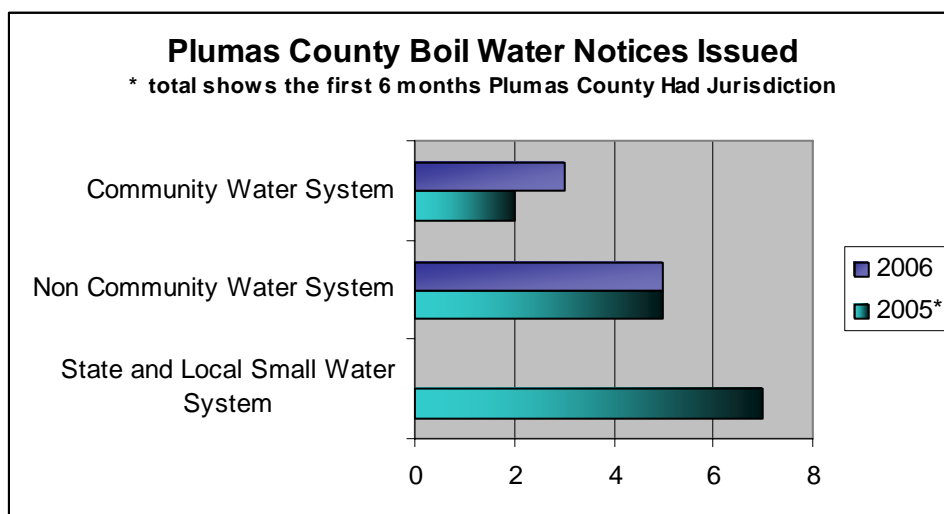
#### DRINKING WATER PROTECTION

Protecting drinking water supplies is a vital function of Environmental Health. In 2005, Environmental Health was designated as the Local Primacy Agency (LPA) by the California Department of Health Services (DHS). Under formal agreement with DHS, Environmental Health has full regulatory responsibility to ensure water supplied to small public and local water systems meets established standards.

Environmental Health monitors drinking water quality of over 130 drinking water systems throughout the county. These systems range from small seasonal campgrounds to large residential communities. All told, public water systems serve over eleven thousand residents and visitors to Plumas County annually. The number and type of regulated drinking water systems subject to county regulation is as follows:



Whenever drinking water quality does not meet established standards, the system operator must advise its customers. If there's an immediate risk to human health, the system operator must issue 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 Advisories issued the past two years is charted below:

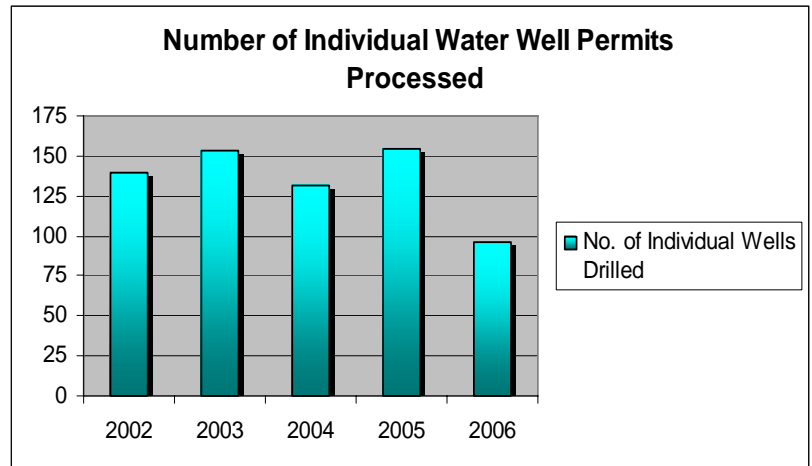


## WATER QUALITY ASSURANCE

Protecting the quality Plumas County's lakes, streams and groundwater supplies is another core function of Environmental Health. During the past year, the importance of this work has been highlighted by the California Department of Fish and Game's proposal to once again chemically treat Lake Davis to eradicate northern pike. Environmental Health staff have worked closely with the California Department of Fish and Game, the Department of Water Resources, the Department of Health Services and the Regional Water Quality Control Board to ensure the proposed project will not permanently impact groundwater quality. In addition to preparing for the new project, Environmental Health completed year 8 of the 10 year program to monitor 80 domestic wells annually as a result of the 1997 treatment of the lake.



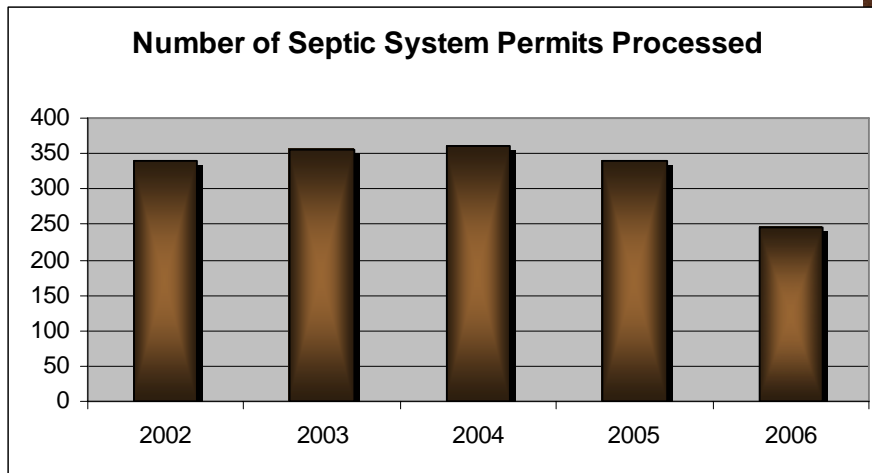
Another important part of water quality assurance is the well protection program. Plumas County is highly dependent upon groundwater for domestic, commercial and agricultural uses. Unless properly located and constructed, water supply wells can compromise the quality of this valuable resource. Through our permit and inspection process, we ensure all wells meet the appropriate state and local standards.



The number of individual wells drilled in Plumas County the past few years is shown on the chart below:

## LIQUID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Our liquid waste program ensures that wastes are properly handled, treated and disposed to protect public health and the environment. This includes preventing direct and indirect 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 number of permits issued annually over the past five years is tabulated below.



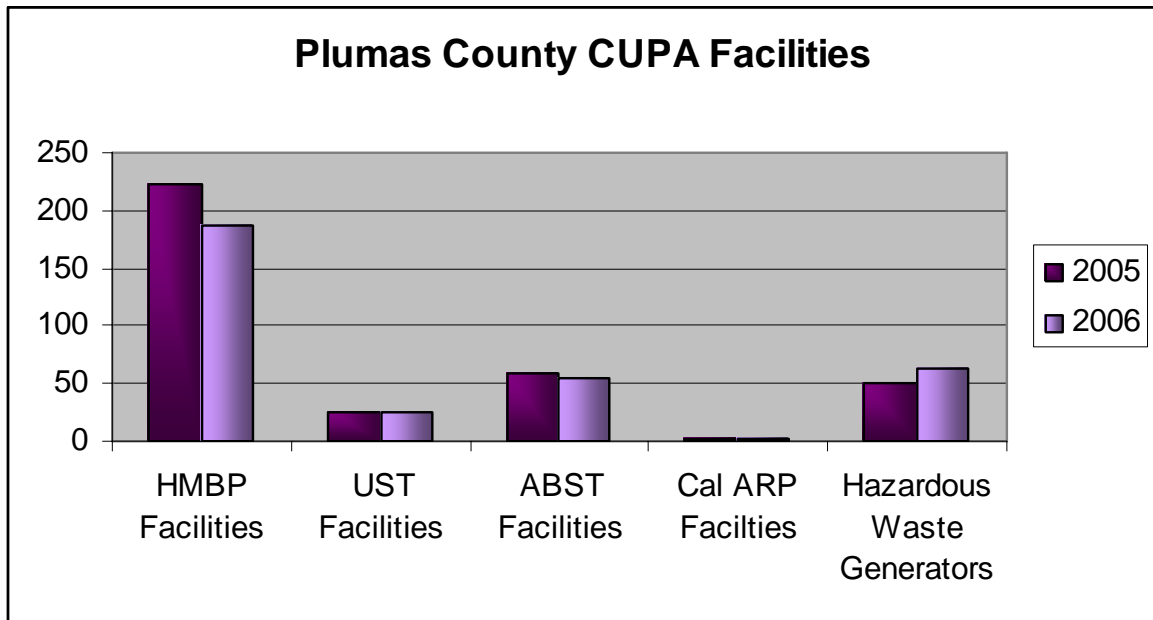
## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS MANAGEMENT

Our hazardous materials management program is designed to reduce the risk of exposure to chemicals or contamination. This comprehensive program (also referred to as the CUPA program or the Unified Program) includes elements related to the storage of chemicals in underground tanks, above ground tanks, wastes generated through industrial processes, and risk management planning. We also work closely with emergency response agencies to plan and prepare for accidental releases.

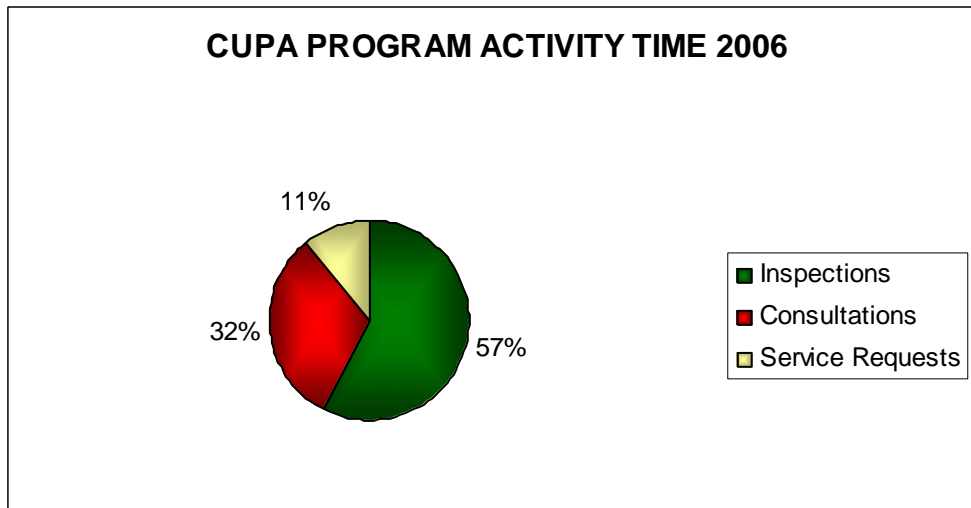


As the potential of a release or the consequences of a release increases, program requirements also increase. The chart below shows the number of

businesses subject to each of the program areas, including basic inventory reporting (Hazardous Materials Business Plan or HMBP), underground storage tank monitoring (UST facilities), above ground storage tank monitoring (AST facilities), accidental release response planning for extremely hazardous materials (Cal ARP facilities), and hazardous waste generator reporting and management.

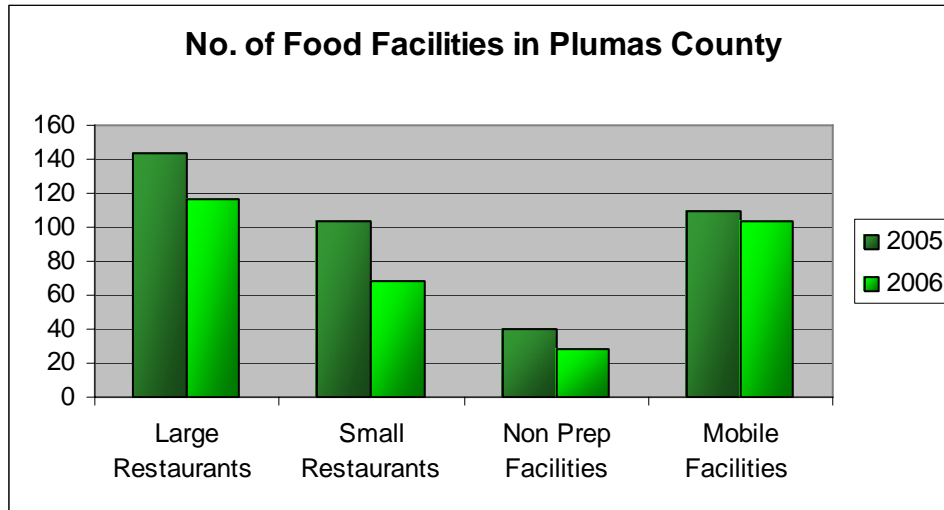


Environmental Health carries out this program under certification requirements specified in state law and administered by the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal EPA). Mandated services provided in this program are permit, inspection and complaint investigation activities, but we also spend a significant amount of time offering consultation, education and compliance assistance to regulated facilities.

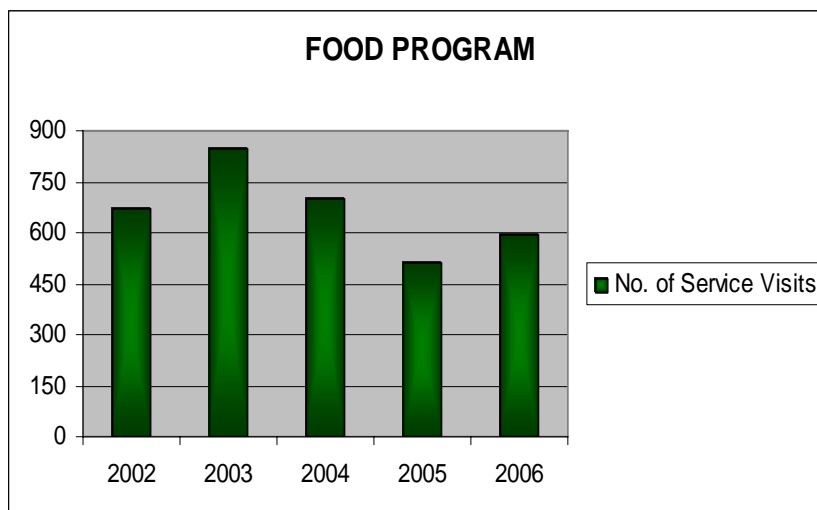


## FOOD SAFETY

Our food safety program helps to protect the public from food-borne illness. In Plumas County, the inventory of 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, and mobile or temporary facilities such as seen at community events and the county fair. The inventory of facilities operating in Plumas County in 2005 and 2006 is as follows:



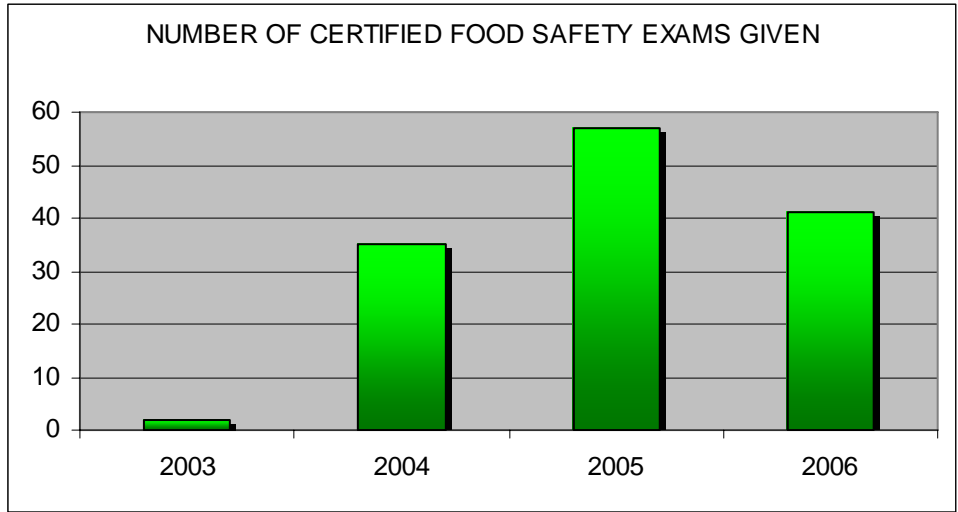
To successfully administer this program, we inspect all food facilities, respond to complaints, offer consultation services, and investigate reports of food-borne illness. Program service visits to permitted food facilities for the past five years is as follows:



For this program to be successful, we must work closely with restaurant operators to ensure food is safe and in compliance with minimum food safety

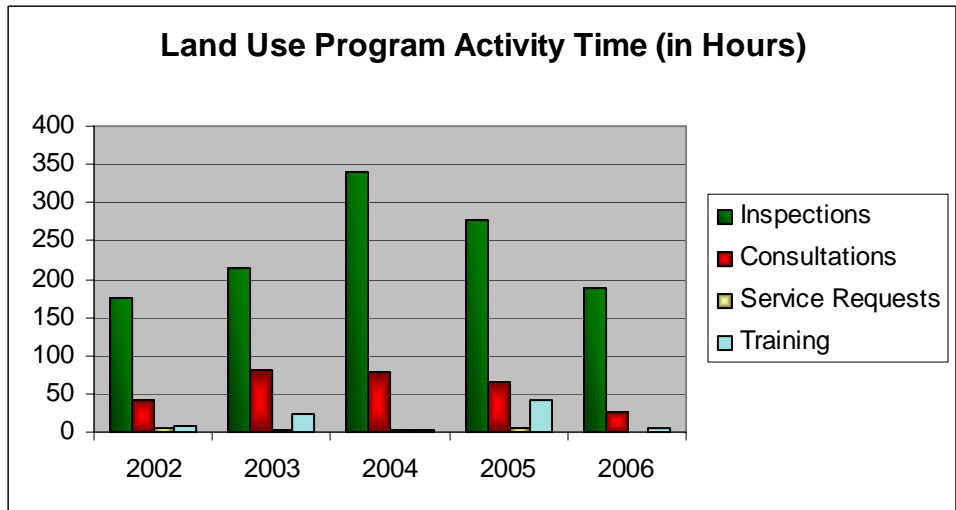


standards. To achieve this goal, we stress food safety training and education in all of our activities. Starting three years ago, we also began administering food safety certification exams for retail food handlers. Although this state-required certification is available from private providers, offering it locally provides advantages to the facility operator and demonstrates Environmental Health's commitment to food safety. The popularity of this service can be seen below.



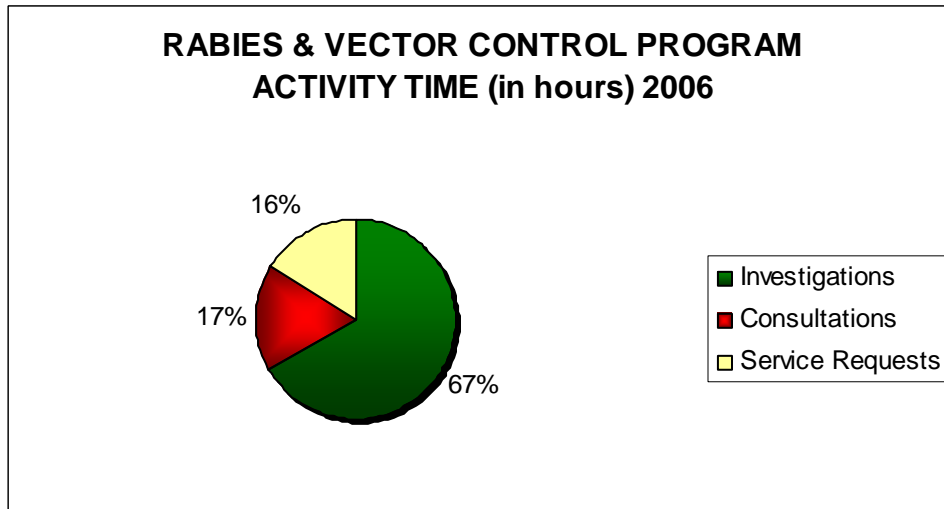
## LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Working in concert with Planning and Building Services, Engineering, Public Works, and other state and local agencies, we evaluate proposed planning and development projects and apply proper environmental health principles and standards. This helps ensure today's projects meet the environmental health needs of the community for years to come.

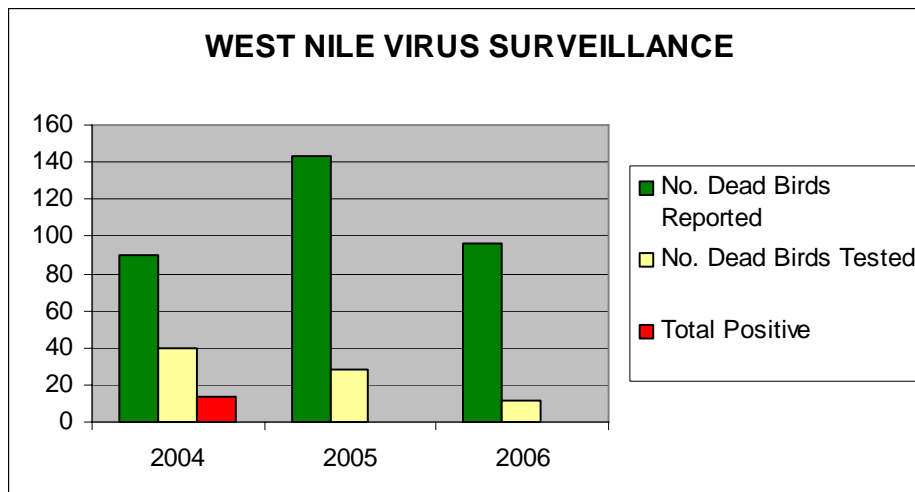


## RABIES AND VECTOR CONTROL

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 investigation, which is the primary program activity.



In 2006, Environmental Health continued West Nile Virus (WNV) surveillance activities. WNV was first confirmed in Plumas County in 2004. It is present within the bird population and can be passed to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. This past year, Plumas County residents reported almost 100 dead birds of which 12 were submitted to the State Department of Health Services Laboratory for testing. Environmental Health also performed mosquito surveys in various parts of the county to learn more about the risk of human infection. Fortunately, no human WNV was reported in 2006.



## RECREATIONAL HEALTH

Our recreational health program helps prevent the spread of disease by ensuring the safe and sanitary operation of public swimming places. Primarily this means public swimming pools and spas, but we also monitor the quality of popular natural bathing places such as freshwater ponds and beaches, and may post warnings or close certain areas to protect the public.

## HOUSING AND INSTITUTIONS

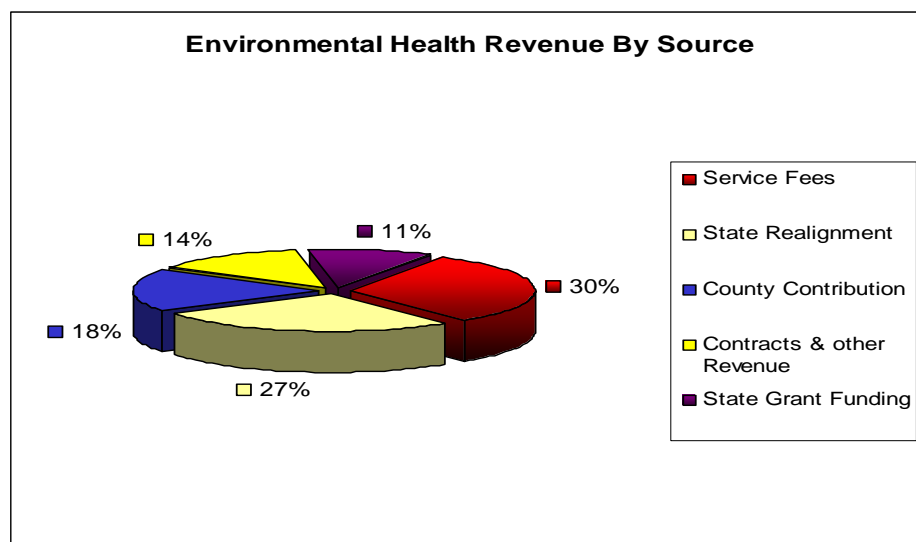
The housing and institutions program helps assure that rental housing, day camps, organized camps, and institutions (such as the jail) are maintained and operated in a safe and sanitary manner. Although this is a small program in terms of staff hours, it is important because the condition of our housing is a significant indicator of the health, social and mental well-being of county residents.

## SOLID WASTE

Environmental Health ensures the proper and safe handling of the county's solid waste. We inspect and permit county landfills, transfer sites, and investigate old or abandoned sites for hazards. We respond to complaints about litter and debris, and illegal dumping.

## BUDGET AND REVENUE

Revenue sources include Fees for Service, State Realignment, State Program Reimbursement Grants, Contracts for Services, and County Contribution. These funding sources are summarized below.



## LOOKING FORWARD

2007 promises to be another exciting year full of environmental health challenges. Noteworthy issues include:

- Proper treatment and disposal of sewage solids (commonly referred to as septage) has become a county and state-wide problem. Municipal wastewater treatment plants are finding it increasingly difficult to accept this waste and still meet state discharge standards. Further complicating this issue is the proposed State Water Resources regulations mandating septage pumping of individual septic systems every five years. Environmental Health continues supporting community-based solutions to wastewater management.
- California's new food safety laws take effect July 1, 2007. This significant change will make California's Food Code consistent with the Federal Food Code. Food facility owners, operators and EH staff will need training in the new Code.
- The Department of Fish and Game's proposed project at Lake Davis to eradicate northern pike is planned for the fall of 2007. Considerable Environmental Health staff resources are needed to ensure protection of public health and the environment throughout all phases of this project.

Although many of Environmental Health's programs and priorities are established by state legislation and regulations, collaborative planning continues to be a guiding principle of all our activities.

While we can't be sure which emerging environmental health threats will take hold and which may fade away, through partnership-building we maximize our resources and better fulfill our promise of service to the public.