



Plumas County
Public Health Agency
Environmental Health Division

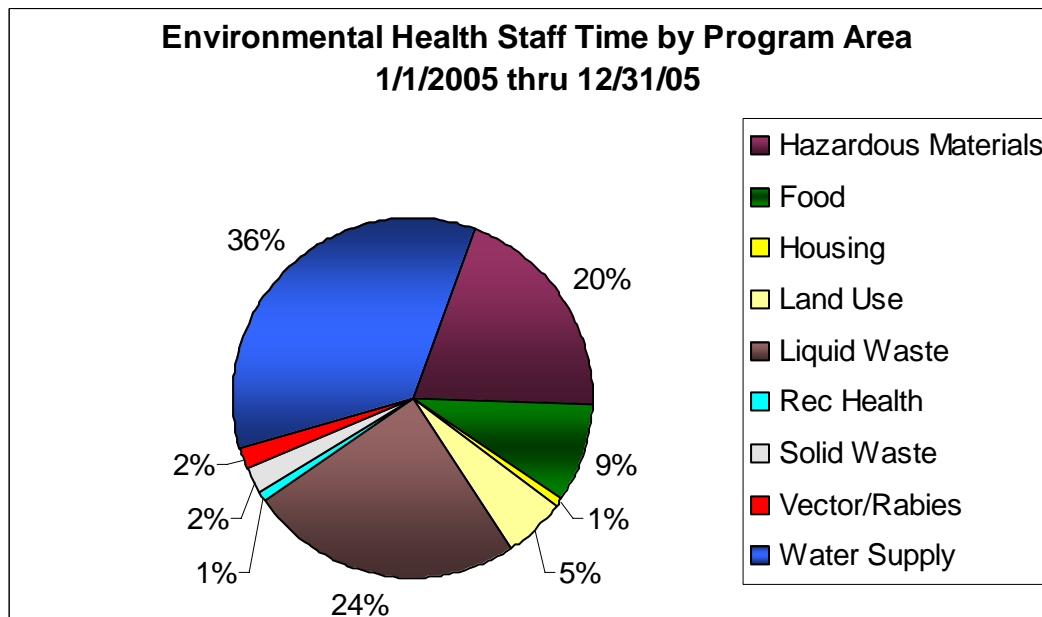
**ANNUAL REPORT
2005**

Plumas County Environmental Health Services 2005 Annual Report

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

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

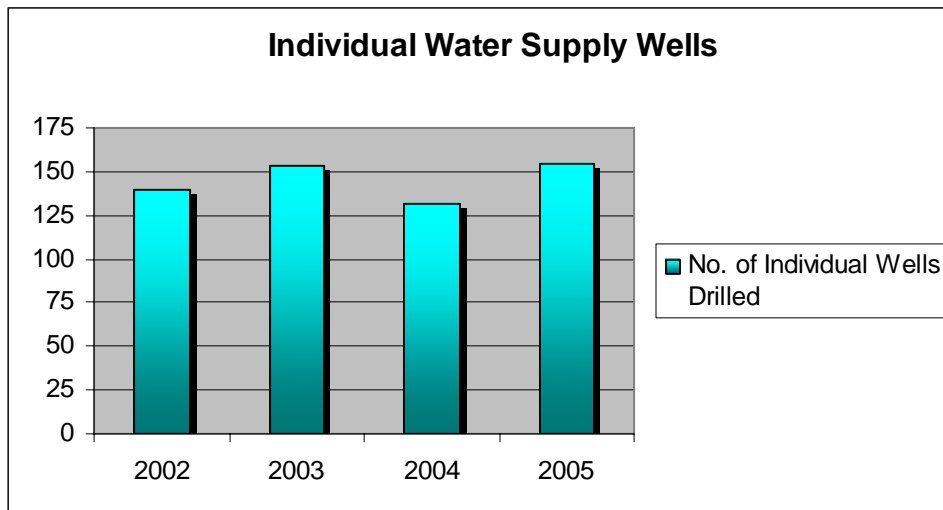
WE CARRY OUT THIS MISSION by providing a variety of services in each of nine program areas. These program areas are primarily where people interact with their environment. The amount of time spent in each program area depends on a variety of risk factors as well as the service needs of the community. In 2005, staff time was allocated according to the chart below.



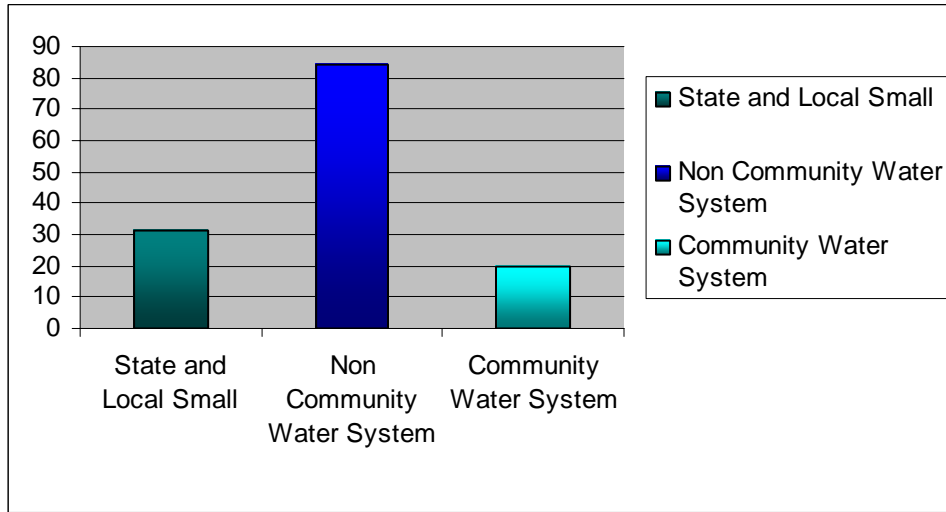
Notable activities in the primary program areas can be summarized as follows:

WATER SUPPLY PROTECTION

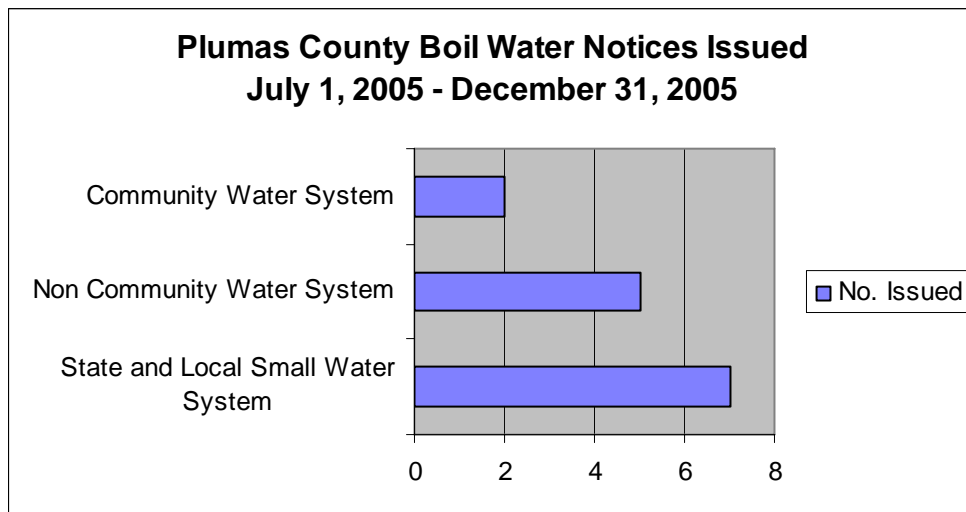
The residents of Plumas County are highly dependent upon groundwater for domestic, commercial and agricultural uses. Unless properly located and constructed, water supply wells can compromise the quality of this valuable resource. Through our permit and inspection process, we ensure all wells meet the appropriate state and local standards. The number of individual wells drilled in Plumas County the past few years is shown on the chart below:



Besides protecting the quality of the county's groundwater resources, Environmental Health is also responsible for ensuring drinking water quality meets established standards. Starting July 1, 2005, Environmental Health began monitoring drinking water quality of over 100 public drinking water systems throughout the county. These include small systems (such as a restaurant not connected to a community system), community systems and non community systems (such as campgrounds). Combined, these systems serve over nine thousand residents and visitors to Plumas County annually. Environmental Health works closely with the State Department of Health Services and carries out this program under a formal Local Primacy Agreement. The Department of Health Services retains responsibility for larger systems serving over 200 connections.

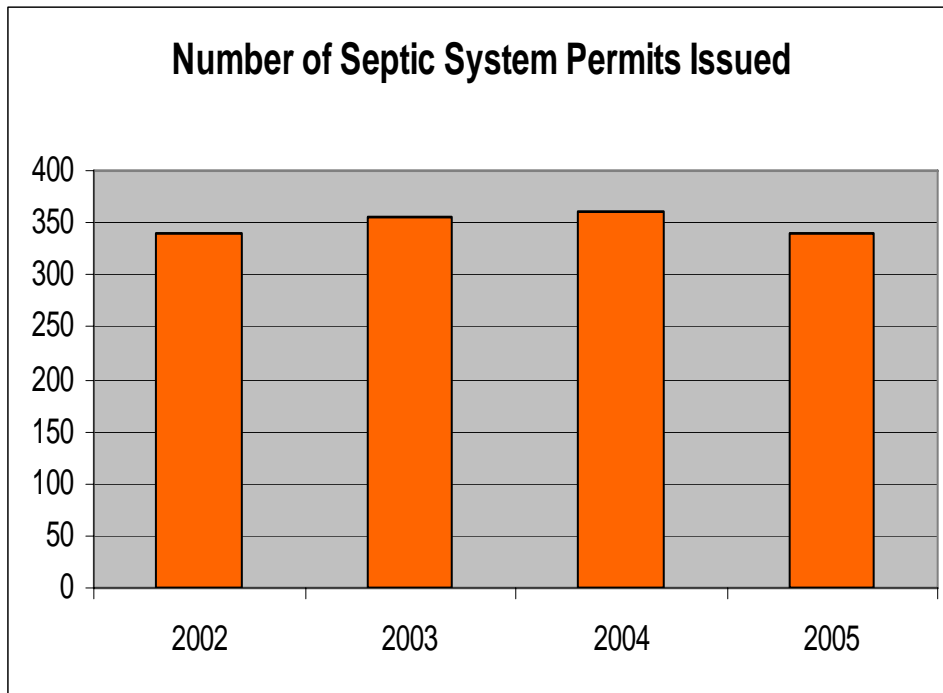


Whenever drinking water quality does not meet established standards, the system operator must advise its customers. The number of Boil Water Advisories issued is a good indicator of overall drinking water quality, and is one of the key parts of public health protection. Data for the first six months of Environmental Health's oversight of this program are shown below. This data suggest smallest systems may be the most vulnerable to potential contamination and may have the most difficulty complying with the state regulations.



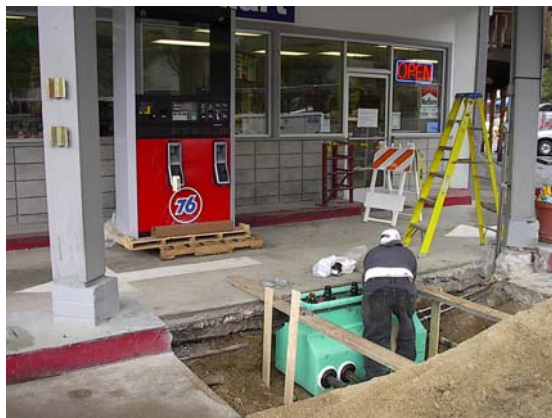
LIQUID WASTE

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 and contamination of surface or groundwater. We review the testing, design, construction, installation and repair of all on-site sewage disposal systems countywide through a permit and inspection program. The number of permits issued annually over the past four years is tabulated below.

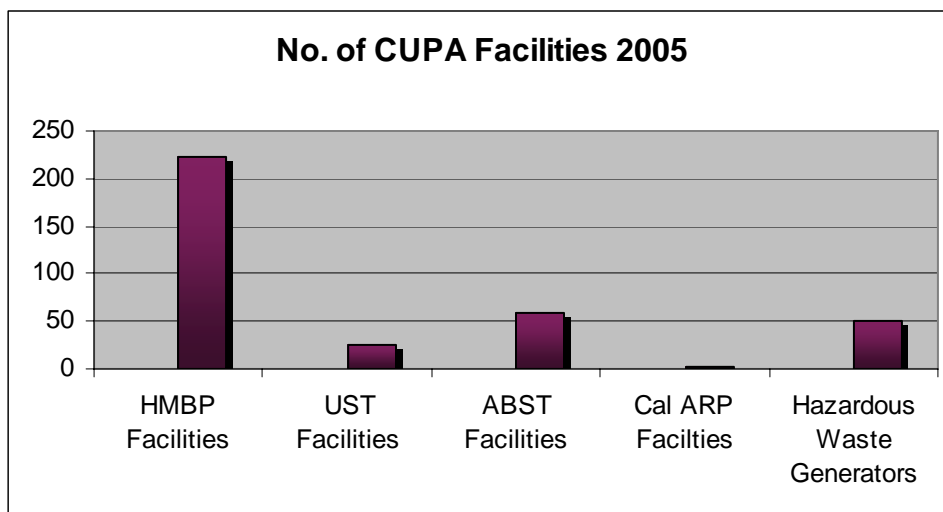


HAZARDOUS MATERIALS MANAGEMENT

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.

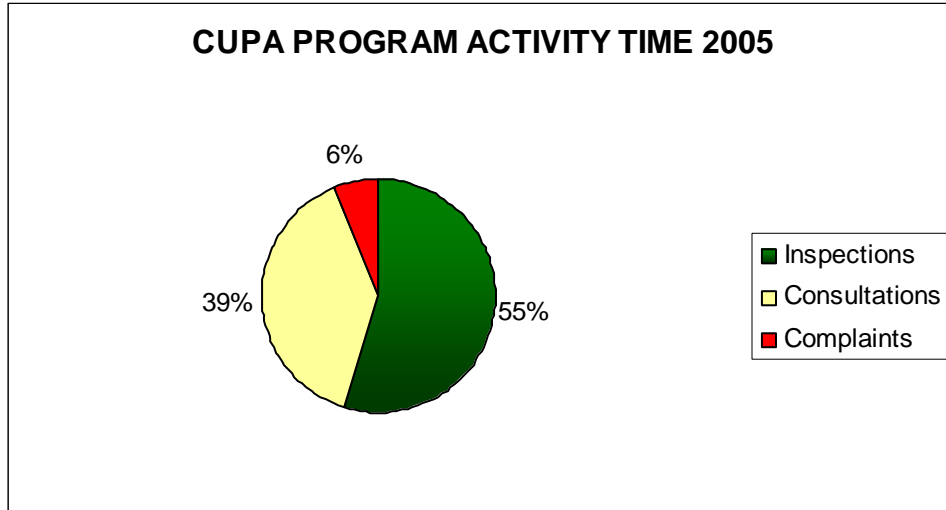


As the potential of a release or the consequences of a release increases, program requirements also increase. The chart below shows the number of businesses subject to each of the program areas, including basic inventory reporting (Hazardous Materials Business Plan or HMBP), underground storage tank 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.



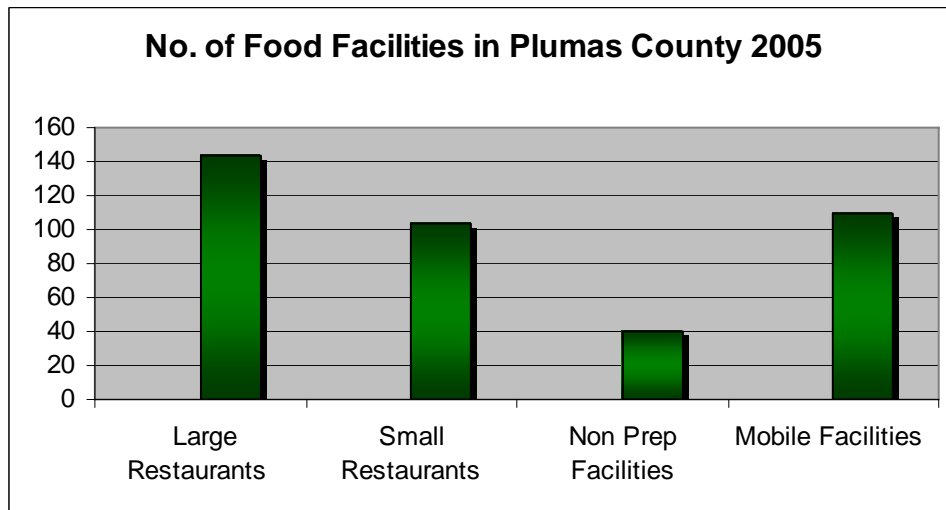
Environmental Health carries out this program under certification requirements specified in state law and administered by the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal EPA). Mandated services provided in this program are

permit, inspection and complaint investigation activities, but we also spend a significant amount of time offering consultation, education and compliance assistance to regulated facilities.

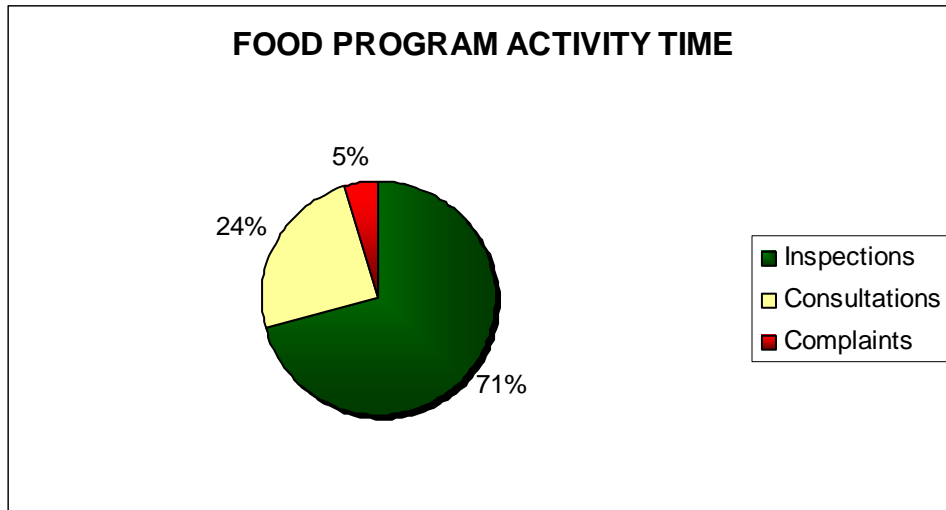


FOOD SAFETY

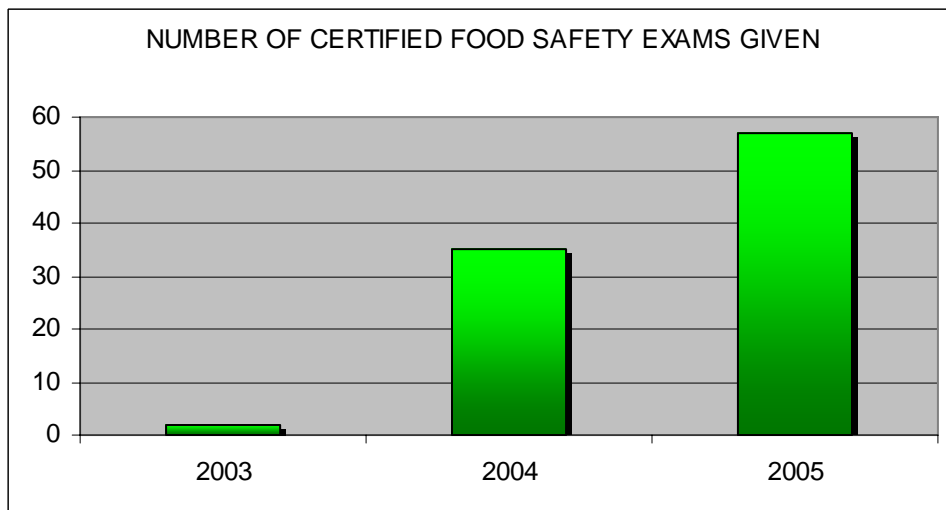
Our food safety program helps to protect the public from food-borne illness. In Plumas County, the inventory of food facilities includes large restaurants (with a seating capacity of more than 25 or food preparation area in excess of 500 square feet), small restaurants, non-prep facilities such as convenience markets, and mobile or temporary facilities such as seen at community events and the county fair. The inventory of facilities 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. Primary program activities include the following:

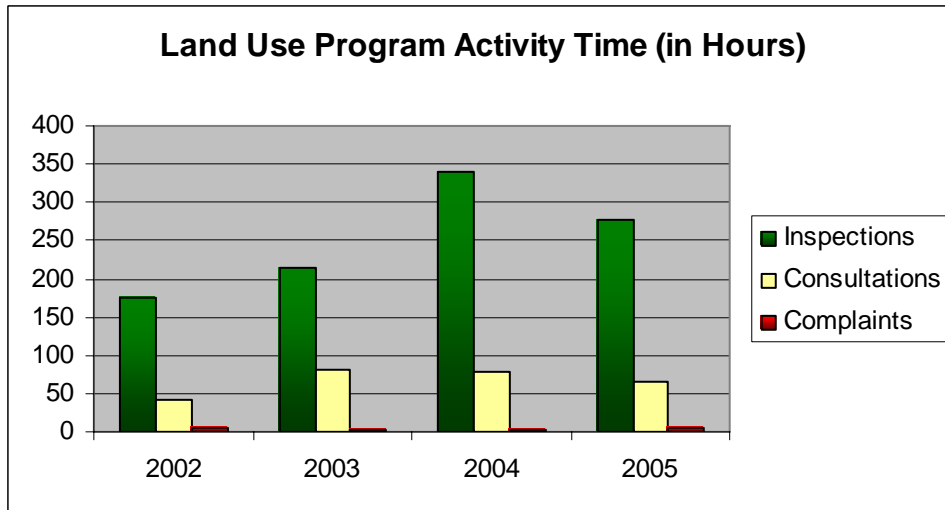


For this program to be successful, we must work closely with restaurant operators to ensure food is safe and in compliance with minimum food safety standards. To achieve this goal, we stress food safety training and education in all of our activities. Starting three years ago, we also began administering 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 growing popularity of this service can be seen below.



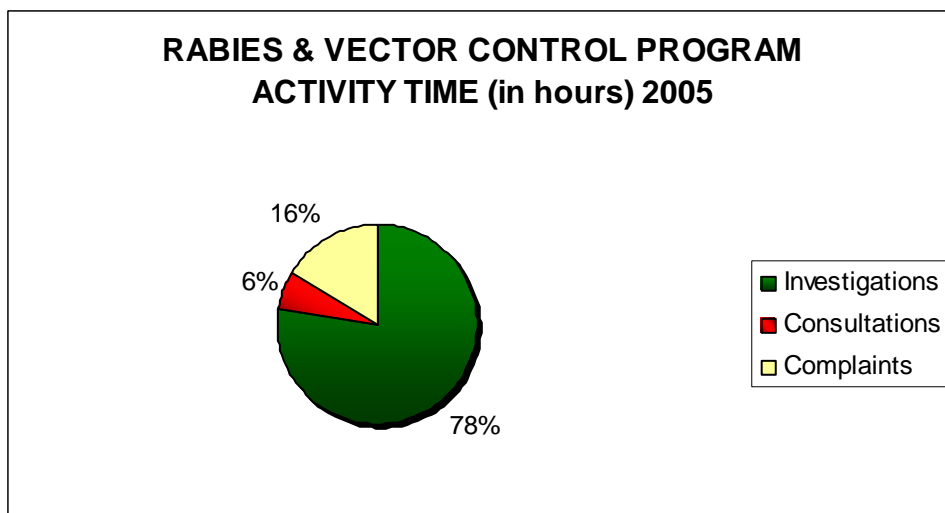
LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

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.



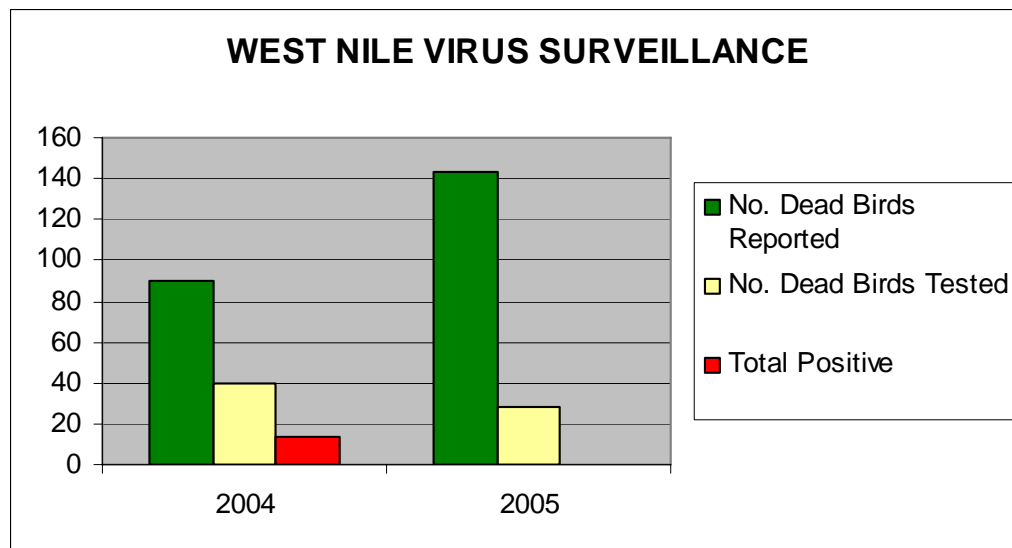
RABIES AND VECTOR CONTROL

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 2005, Environmental Health sharply increased program activities in West Nile Virus (WNV) surveillance. 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, Environmental Health processed 26 dead birds for testing at the State Department of Health Services Laboratory, and we also performed mosquito surveys in various parts of the county to learn more about the risk of human infection. Although no birds tested positive for WNV in 2005, Plumas County reported the first positive equine case in 2005 in California and a resident of Plumas County was also confirmed to have contracted the disease in September 2005.

Primary West Nile Virus surveillance activities for the past two years are summarized on the chart below.



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

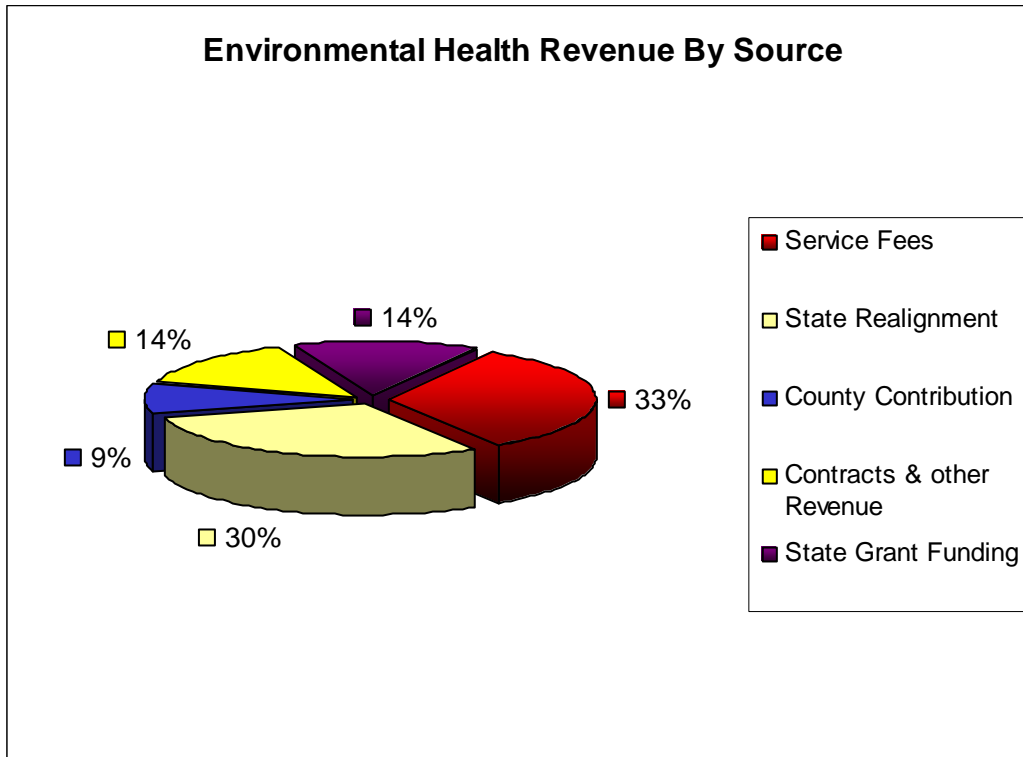
The housing and institutions program helps assure that rental housing, day camps, organized camps, and institutions (such as the jail) are maintained and operated in a safe and sanitary manner. Although this is a small program in terms of staff hours, it is important because the condition of our housing 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 this year, we also successfully obtained a grant to assist a property owner clean up and properly dispose a pile of abandoned tires.

BUDGET AND REVENUE

Environmental Health's budget for fiscal year 2004-05 was \$690,811. 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

2006 promises to be another exciting year full of environmental health challenges. Noteworthy issues include:

- State Water Resources is developing regulations for standardized wastewater design, construction and installation statewide.
- Legislation is pending to make California's food safety laws consistent with the Federal Food Code.
- The Department of Fish and Game is evaluating options for a project at Lake Davis to eradicate northern pike.
- The EPA and Department of Health Services continue developing regulations to increase the safety of drinking water supplied from surface water sources.

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. The 2005 activities related to West Nile Virus are a good example. Environmental Health partnered with other state and local agencies to establish a local West Nile Virus Task Force. This group coordinated efforts and met the public's need for information and engagement through the following: public education, personal protection information, dead bird reporting and testing, mosquito surveys, equine vaccination outreach, and mosquito control information and resources to name just a few.

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.