

***Big Lagoon  
Community Services District  
Municipal Service Review***



*September 2008*

Prepared by:



For Updating the District Sphere of Influence Report

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# LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION AUTHORITY

## Latent Powers, Enabling Legislation and Empowered Services

The fundamental role of the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) is to implement the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act (The Act) consistent with local conditions and circumstances. The Act guides LAFCo's decisions. The major goals of LAFCo as established by The Act are to:

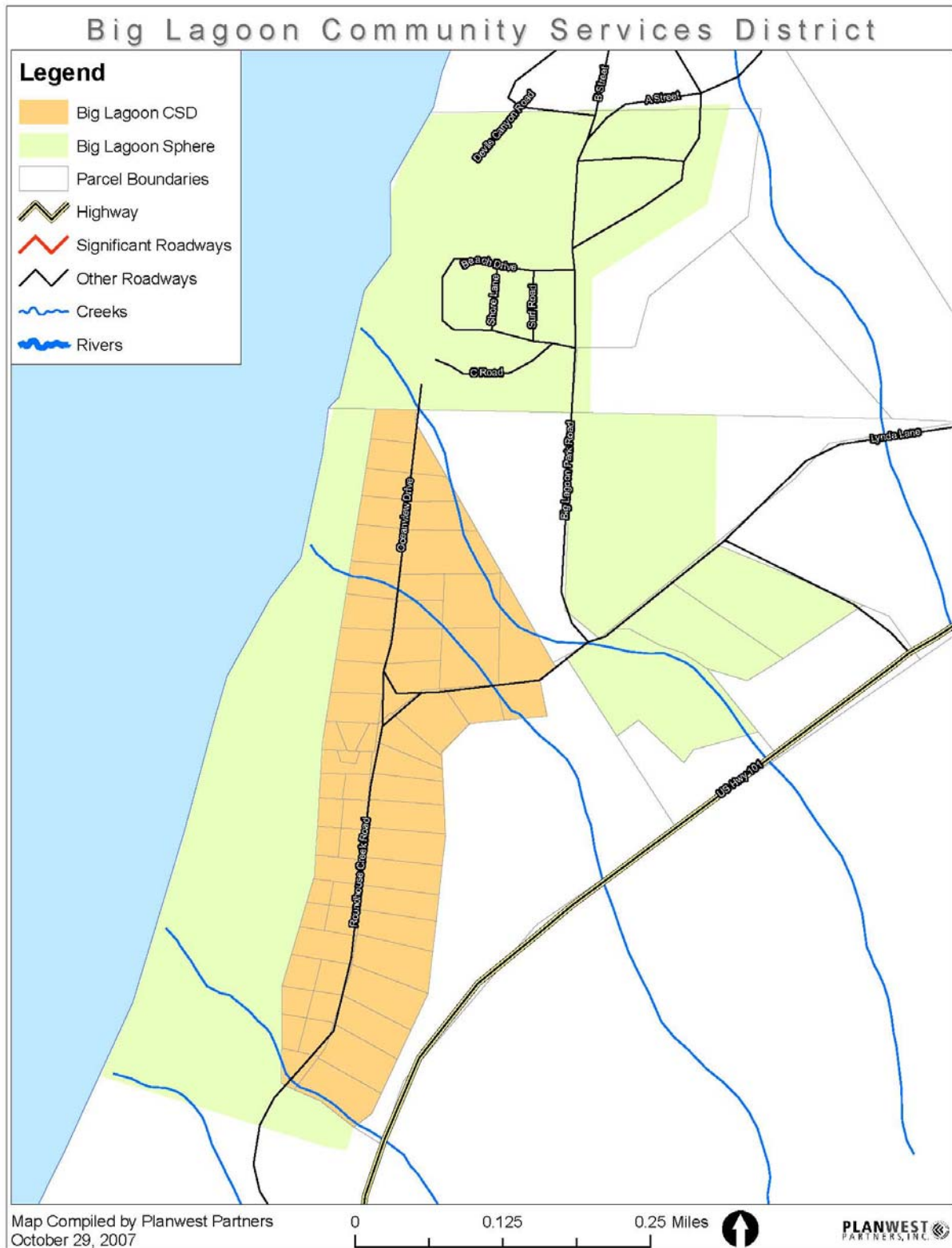
- Encourage orderly growth and development;
- Promote orderly development;
- Discourage urban sprawl;
- Preserve open-space and prime agricultural lands by guiding minimizing resource loss;
- Exercise its authority to ensure that affected populations receive efficient services;
- Promote logical formation and boundary modifications that direct the burdens and benefits of additional growth to those local agencies that are best suited to provide services;
- Make studies and obtain and furnish information which will contribute to the logical and reasonable development of local agencies to provide for present and future needs;
- Establish priorities by assessing and balancing community service needs with financial resources available to secure and provide community services and to encourage government structures that reflect local circumstances, conditions and financial resources;
- Determine whether new or existing agencies can feasibly provide needed services in a more efficient or accountable manner and, where deemed necessary,

As set forth in § 56425 (g) of The Act, on or before January 1, 2008, and every five years thereafter, Humboldt LAFCo shall review and update each Sphere of Influence (SOI). Additionally, an MSR shall be conducted with, or in conjunction with the action to establish or to update a SOI pursuant to The Act. Together, the SOI and MSR documents analyze the District's ability to serve existing and future residents.

In order to prepare and to update Spheres of Influence in accordance with § 56425, Humboldt LAFCo shall conduct a service review of the municipal services provided in the Big Lagoon Community Services District (District). The commission shall include in the designated for service review area any other geographic area as is appropriate for an analysis of the services to be reviewed, and shall prepare a written statement of determinations with respect to the following:

- (1) Growth and population projections for the affected area;
- (2) Present and planned capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services, including infrastructure needs or deficiencies;
- (3) Financing ability of agencies to provide services;
- (4) Status of and, opportunities for, shared facilities;
- (5) Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies;
- (6) Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery, as required by commission policy.

**Figure 1. Big Lagoon CSD Map - District Boundary and Sphere of Influence**



## **AGENCY PROFILE**

### **Formation**

The Big Lagoon Community Services District (District) was formed on July 1, 1998 as an independent special district, pursuant to the provisions of Title 6, Division 2 of the Government Code. A five-member Board of Directors oversees the business of the District. The Board members are elected by District residents and hold a four year term of office.

The District was formed for the purposes of supplying water to houses in the Big Lagoon subdivision and Big Lagoon School. It is important to note that the District was formed conditional upon a Local Coastal Plan amendment to expand the Urban Limit Line to include all District properties.

Figure 1 (above) shows the District boundary and sphere of influence (SOI). The District consists of approximately 43 acres and the District SOI consists of approximately 100 acres which is the Big Lagoon Park Company to the North. The District is located adjacent to the Pacific Ocean, north of Trinidad, in northern Humboldt County.

## **GROWTH AND POPULATION**

### **Demographics**

The population served by the District is approximately 140 persons. According to the most recent Census, the estimated 2008 Humboldt County population is 132,521 (State Department of Finance). The Building Communities Report for the Humboldt County General Plan Update includes a complete discussion of County Population Trends. The population was affected by significant storms and bluff erosion in 1998 and 1999. Big Lagoon Estates made national news when homes were damaged due to Pacific storm related bluff loss. Several homes were demolished and others moved inland as a result. Many of the bluff parcels are now considered unbuildable.

### **County General Plan Growth Projections**

As part of the Humboldt County General Plan Update, the County has defined Urban Study Areas (USA) and Water Study Areas (WSA) within districts in order to develop land use planning scenarios and to focus the analysis for timing and location of new facilities. Identification of these proposed areas will allow the County to work with the affected service providers to assess infrastructure capabilities and constraints, and to develop plans for the timing and financing of services. The Big Lagoon WSA is used for demographic information only.

The WSA encompasses the Big Lagoon residential area, located in northern Humboldt County on the coast just north of Trinidad, CA. The Big Lagoon WSA has 159 total acres, of which 63 acres are underdeveloped and/or vacant parcels. Of this total acreage, 53 acres within the WSA are developable. With respect to development potential, the Big Lagoon WSA contains mostly vacant parcels with some underdeveloped parcels that could see further residential development. Big Lagoon is located within the Coastal Zone, and land use guidelines and development potential are addressed in the North Coastal Area Plan.

The County estimates there were 170 housing units within the Big Lagoon WSA in 2005. Based on the County's housing growth projections the high build-out estimate for total development potential, which takes into consideration WSA physical and zoning constraints, is 184, or 14 new units.

## **SERVICES**

Presently, the District maintains and operates a water system. These facilities provide water service to approximately 100% of the households in the District. Forty households and the Big Lagoon School were originally served by the water system. Following an El Nino event in 1998, several homes were lost due to a coastal bluff failure and the system now serves 34 households and the school. Because the County has had to purchase a number of lots in the area of coastal bluff failure, there are only 13 additional vacant lots that could potentially request service.

## **WATER**

### Water System Description:

The Big Lagoon CSD manages a water system that was installed for the Big Lagoon subdivision in 1962; the Big Lagoon CSD acquired the water system from a private owner in 1999. The water system now consists of two wells, a 20,000 gallon redwood storage tank, booster pumps and 3,000 gallon hydropneumatic tank with an air compressor. Chlorine is added continuously through a positive displacement diaphragm feeder. Supply issues have never been a problem, even in the driest of years. The maximum system delivery output totals approximately 70,000 gallons per day (gpd), well in excess of current maximum demands. The District's distribution system consists of approximately 1.6 miles of six-inch asbestos cement pipe.

Well production is estimated at 70,000 gpd. Given existing maximum day demands are estimated at 12,000 gpd, the system is operating at approximately 17% of source capacity. According to the 2007 Department of Health Services (DHS) annual inspection report, the District produced approximately 1.7 million gallons of drinking water in 2005. Average daily use is estimated at approximately 4,650 gpd, and peak daily use was reported as 11,650 gpd.

### Water System Condition Assessment:

The District's water system is in good condition. No major deficiencies exist with the system, aside from the storage capacity being undersized and the need to relocate a water main due to bluff erosion. Existing storage capacity is inadequate for fire suppression. The Big Lagoon WSA is expected to receive up to 14 new housing units before reaching build-out conditions. Big Lagoon will need to expand its water system infrastructure to serve this additional growth.

According to the 2007 DHS inspection report, the water system needs to perform the following:

- Install a check valve on the hydropneumatic tank well discharge and the yard well discharge line.
- Install new roof on redwood tank.
- Recoat interior and paint exterior of hydropneumatic tank.
- Repaint exterior of both pumps.
- Develop a cross-connection ordinance.
- Perform well source chemical tests and raw water testing for nitrate and Radium-288.

Aside from the above items requested by the DHS, the District also plans to immediately relocate water mains along North Oceanview Drive that are located in eroding coastal bluffs.

## **OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS**

### **Fire Protection Services**

County Service Area (CSA) No. 4 provides fire protection services, through the CAL FIRE Trinidad station, to the coastal communities (south of Orick) of Big Lagoon, Trinidad, Westhaven, and Cranell. CAL FIRE performs this service through a contract with Humboldt County. One engine is staffed year-round to provide service to CSA No. 4 and if this engine is detailed to a fire out of the area another engine is moved to serve the district, if available.

### **Big Lagoon Park Company & Big Lagoon Rancheria**

The Big Lagoon Park Company is a small community of homes using a private water system and septic tanks/ leach fields. The Park Company, or Big Lagoon Colony as referenced by the Humboldt County Film Commission, is comprised of the owners of approximately 76 cabins/cottages many used primarily as summertime retreats (the majority of the cabins are said to have originally been constructed in 1929). The Humboldt County Big Lagoon Park and campground is located adjacent to the Park Company. The Big Lagoon Rancheria is a small 20-acre Indian Reservation that is home to approximately 24 members of the tribe.

### **Other Local Service Providers**

The County of Humboldt provides general governmental services and law enforcement services throughout the territory of the District.

## **FINANCING CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

According to District records, they operate their water system on an annual budget of approximately \$23,000. The majority of this income is from service interest revenues and monthly service rates. Replacement or depreciation funds are not accumulated through revenues. The District has not developed a Capital Improvement Plan to date, and they currently do not have built up reserves. The District is currently operating at a budget surplus, with revenues exceeding expenses.

### **Service rates**

The Big Lagoon CSD currently assesses a monthly service rate of approximately \$20.00 to provide water services to 35 households.

## LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY

### Contact Information

Big Lagoon Community Services District	
Contact:	Ilijana Asara
Mailing Address:	P.O. Box 847, Trinidad, CA 95570
Site Address:	416 Roundhouse Creek Road, Trinidad
Phone Number:	(707) 677-0952
Email/ Website:	
Types of Services:	Water
Population Served:	140
Size of Service Area (Acres):	43 acres
Date of Formation:	July 1, 1998
Number of Staff	Nine volunteers

### Board Meetings

Fourth Thursday of each month, at 7:00 p.m.  
416 Roundhouse Creek Road, Trinidad

## MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW DETERMINATIONS

### Written Determinations

56430. (a) In order to prepare and to update SOI in accordance with Section 56425, the commission shall conduct a service review of the municipal services provided in the county or other appropriate area designated by the commission. The commission shall include in the area designated for service review the county, the region, the subregion, or any other geographic area as is appropriate for an analysis of the service or services to be reviewed, and shall prepare a written statement of its determinations with respect to each of the following:

#### **(1) Growth and population projections for the affected area.**

The District currently serves a population of approximately 140 persons and 34 water system connections. The US Census identified a -10.3% decrease for the North Coast Division CCD: (Census County District). Population within this CCD decreased from 4,988 in 1980 to 4,474 in 2000. However, because the CCD encompasses a much larger area than the Big Lagoon CSD, and the North Coast Area LCP does not permit further subdivision development in this area, there will be no significant growth within the District.

#### **(2) Present and planned capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services, including infrastructure needs or deficiencies.**

District wells provide customers with good water quality. Given existing maximum day demands, the system is operating at approximately 17% of source capacity. No major deficiencies exist with the system, aside from the storage capacity being undersized and the need



to relocate a water main due to bluff erosion. The system needs additional storage capacity for fire flows and approximately 0.6 miles of distribution system piping will need to be replaced due to coastal bluff erosion.

**(3) Financial ability of agencies to provide services.**

The majority of the District's income comes from service charges, but funding also comes from property taxes, interest revenue, connection fees, and other smaller sources. These should be periodically reviewed and adjusted as necessary. Considering the relatively low operating expenses and debt load, the District is not facing major financial constraints.

**(4) Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities.**

The District is adjacent to the Big Lagoon Park Company, which maintains a private water system. The Big Lagoon Estates (the area covered by the District, was served by a private water company prior to forming a District in 1998. There may be opportunities to combine these water systems for increased efficiencies and cost avoidance opportunities to the District. The Big Lagoon Rancheria is also located in the vicinity, and from time to time considers more development. This could also provide an opportunity for shared services, if amenable to all parties.

**(5) Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies.**

A five-member Board of Directors oversees the business of the District. The Board members are elected by District residents and hold a four year term of office.

**(6) Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery, as required by commission policy.**

In conducting a service review, the commission shall comprehensively review all of the agencies that provide the identified service or services within the designated geographic area. The commission shall conduct a service review before, or in conjunction with, but no later than the time it is considering an action to establish a sphere of influence in accordance with Section 56425 or Section 56426.5 or to update a sphere of influence pursuant to Section 56425.

No other matters have been identified for this District.

## REFERENCES

Humboldt County General Plan Update. Community Infrastructure and Services Technical Report, Preliminary Draft, October 2007. <http://co.humboldt.ca.us/planning/gp/gpdemo/GPU-TOC-Demo3.htm#ch7>