

**Municipal Service Review  
And  
Sphere of Influence Recommendation  
  
Birchim Community Services District  
Mono County, California**

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**Prepared By:**

**Mono County Local Agency Formation Commission  
P.O. Box 347  
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546  
phone (760) 924-1800; fax (760) 924-1801  
commdev@mono.ca.gov**

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## SUMMARY

### Municipal Service Review Determinations

#### 1. Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies

- BCSD has developed a long-term plan that identifies future infrastructure and service needs and identifies projects to meet those needs.

#### 2. Growth and Population Projections for the Affected Area

- Sunny Slopes has the potential to add approximately 21 single-family residences.
- The Mono County General Plan Land Use Element allows for significant additional growth in the other Long Valley communities.
- Growth is anticipated to occur primarily in and adjacent to existing developed areas and to be primarily single-family residential development with a mix of multi-family residential development and commercial uses in Crowley Lake.
- The residential population in Long Valley is projected to increase to 1,865 by 2,020 and 2,005 by 2,030, creating an increased demand for water and sewer services.
- In addition to the projected residential growth, Long Valley's population experiences significant seasonal increases due to tourism.

#### 3. Financing Constraints and Opportunities

- BCSD's future financing will continue to rely heavily on the annual water use fee that is collected with property tax.

#### 4. Cost Avoidance Opportunities

- Integrated planning, especially long-range planning, is an important part of cost avoidance. The district has a long-range plan that covers 2007-2017.
- The district participates in cost sharing through participation in the Rural Special Districts Services Association.
- There are a number of small service providers in Long Valley that have administrative costs associated with the overall management of those organizations. There could be some duplication of services among the service providers, particularly in areas such as personnel management, insurance, risk management, financial management services, fleet maintenance, etc. Further studies would be necessary to determine whether there are opportunities to reduce costs among the service providers.

#### 5. Opportunities for Rate Restructuring

- All funding mechanisms have inherent limitations that may prevent their implementation, use or restructure.
- Each BCSD customer pays an annual assessment for water use, based on the type of connection. The district periodically reviews and adjusts its charges in order to ensure that they are sufficient to cover operating costs.
- BCSD has applied for and received grant funding. The district continues to apply for all applicable grant funding.

**6. Opportunities for Shared Facilities and Resources**

- There are currently no opportunities for shared facilities, due to the limited facilities and equipment owned by BCSD and the distance between Sunny Slopes and other communities in Long Valley.
- The Long Valley area includes other special district service providers, as well as the County, that require facilities to support their services. In the future, there may be opportunities for shared facilities among the service providers in the area. Further studies would be necessary at that time to determine whether there would be opportunities to reduce costs by sharing facilities.

**7. Government Structure Options**

- Several special districts, along with the County and private service providers, provide public services within the Long Valley communities.
- To alleviate government overlap and fragmentation, LAFCO law and local LAFCO policies promote the consolidation of services under the authority of one multi-purpose agency. District boundaries overlap in Long Valley.
- As a Community Service District, the Birchim CSD is authorized to provide a variety of services including sewage collection and disposal, snow removal/road maintenance, mosquito abatement, water treatment and distribution, fire protection, parks and recreational services, street lighting, police protection, and library services. At the present time, the BCSD provides only water service and fire hydrants to the Sunny Slopes community.
- Ultimately, a regional CSD might be the best provider of a variety of services in the Long Valley area.

**8. Evaluation of Management Efficiencies**

- BCSD is managed by an elected Board of Directors.
- The district has a long-term plan that assesses future infrastructure and service needs and identifies projects to meet those needs.

**9. Local Accountability and Governance**

- BCSD complies with the minimum requirements for open meetings and public records.
- The district seeks to inform its customers of district activities and services.

## Sphere of Influence Findings

### 1. Present and Planned Land Uses

Present land uses in the area served by the Birchim CSD are primarily single-family residential uses. There are no commercial uses. The planned land uses for community areas throughout Long Valley, including Sunny Slopes, are similar to existing uses with future development concentrated primarily within and adjacent to existing development.

### 2. Present and Probable Need For Public Facilities and Services

The BCSD has an existing and continuing need for public facilities and services to serve the existing and planned development in the area.

### 3. Present Capacity of Public Facilities and Adequacy of Public Services

The BCSD currently provides an adequate level of service but has identified a need to improve its facilities in order to serve additional development and to improve services to existing development. As a Community Service District, the district is authorized to provide a wide array of services, including water treatment and distribution, fire protection, parks and recreational services, street lighting, police protection, and library services.

### 4. Social or Economic Communities of Interest

The Long Valley communities share social and economic interests with each other. These shared interests promote a coordinated approach to service provision in the Long Valley area.

## Sphere of Influence Recommendation

The Sphere of Influence for the Birchim Community Services District should remain as it is, including privately owned land within the community of Sunny Slopes and US Forest Service permittees at Pine Glades, Tom's Place, and Rock Creek Tract. The BCSD has no intention of expanding its service boundaries at this time.

## Reorganization Recommendation

Section 56001 of the California Government Code states that:

The Legislature also finds that, whether governmental services are proposed to be provided by a single-purpose agency, several agencies, or a multipurpose agency, responsibility should be given to the agency or agencies that can best provide government services.

Currently, the Birchim CSD provides adequate services within its boundaries. In the future, a regional water and sewer provider with separate service areas throughout the Long Valley communities might best provide sewer and water services for the region. At that time, a reorganization study should be conducted to determine what governmental structure would best

provide services for the region. Such a reorganization should occur only with the concurrence of the involved districts' Boards of Directors.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **Municipal Service Reviews**

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 requires Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCOs) to conduct comprehensive reviews of all municipal services in each county in California and to periodically update that information. The purpose of the municipal service reviews is to gather detailed information on public service capacities and issues.

### **Relationship Between Municipal Service Reviews and Spheres of Influence**

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act requires LAFCOs to develop and determine the Sphere of Influence (SOI) for each applicable local governmental agency that provides services or facilities related to development. Government Code Section 56076 defines a SOI as “a plan for the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency.” Service reviews must be completed prior to the establishment or update of SOIs (§56430(a)). Spheres of influence must be reviewed and updated as necessary, but not less than once every five years (§56425).

The information and determinations contained in a Municipal Service Review are intended to guide and inform SOI decisions. Service reviews enable LAFCO to determine SOI boundaries and to establish the most efficient service provider for areas needing new service. They also function as the basis for other government reorganizations. Section 56430, as noted above, states that LAFCO can conduct these reviews “before, in conjunction with, but no later than the time it is considering an action to establish a SOI.”

The Birchim Community Services District Municipal Service Review is being conducted in response to, and in conjunction with, an update of the sphere of influence for the district.



## II. BIRCHIM COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

### DISTRICT OVERVIEW

#### Service Area

Birchim Community Services District (BCSD) was established in 1963 to provide domestic water services for Sunny Slopes. The BCSD boundaries include approximately 80 acres of land in the community of Sunny Slopes (see Figure 1), approximately 7 miles south of Crowley Lake.

Sunny Slopes borders US 395 at its junction with Owens Gorge Road, across from Tom's Place. Owens Gorge Road provides the primary access to Sunny Slopes. Topography in the area is rocky and hilly. Vegetation is primarily Jeffrey Pine and sagebrush scrub. Rock Creek is the only surface water in the immediate area. Sunny Slopes is predominantly single-family residential development.

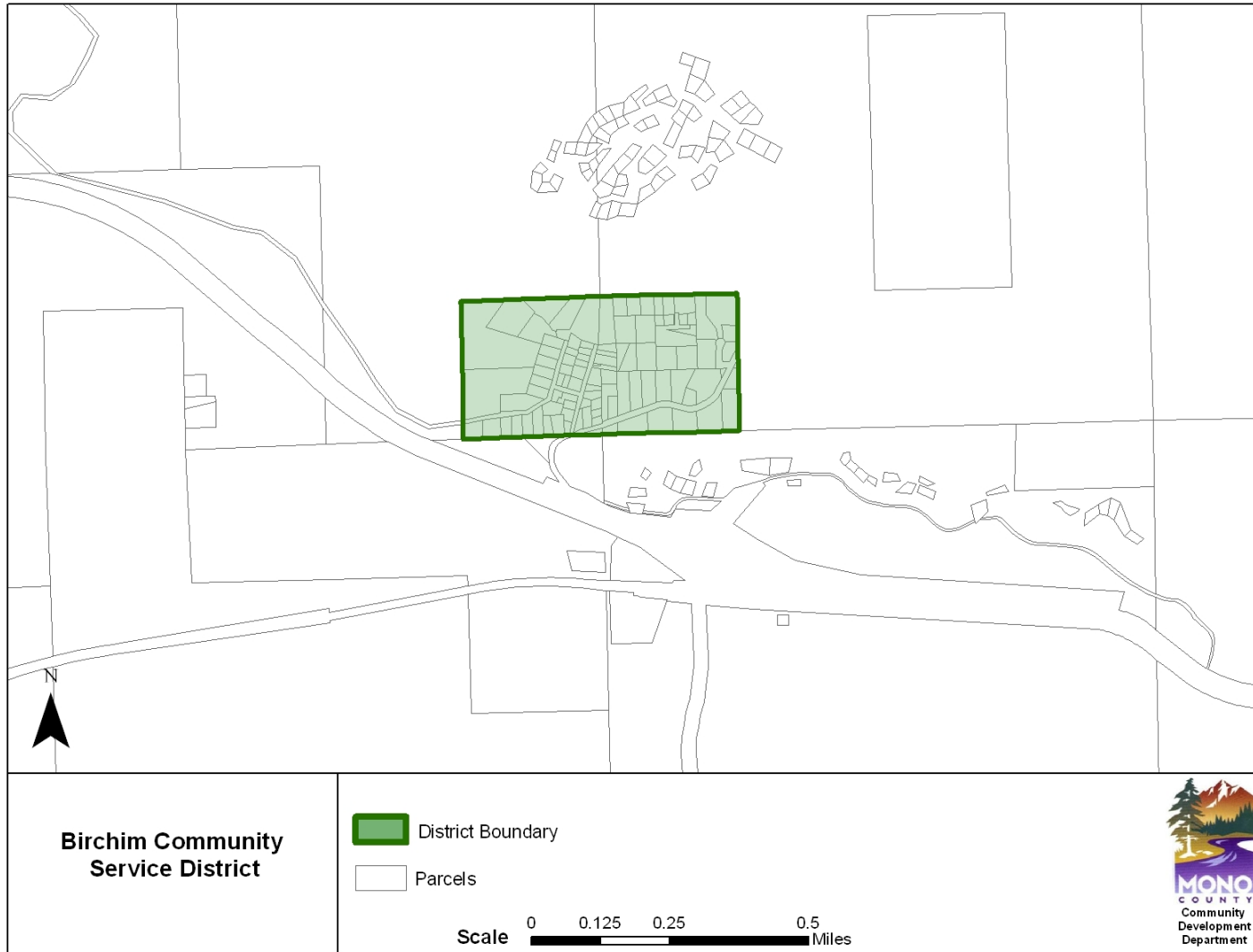
The community of Sunny Slopes is part of a larger area known as Long Valley. Long Valley includes developed areas on private lands at Long Valley, McGee Creek, Crowley Lake, Aspen Springs, and Sunny Slopes. The area also includes developed areas, under special use permits, on publicly owned land at Whiskey Tract, Tom's Place, Pine Glades, and Rock Creek Tract.

Long Valley is bordered to the south by the Sierra Nevada Mountains, to the east by the Volcanic Tablelands, to the north by the Glass Mountains, and to the west by the Mammoth Lakes area. Highway 395 provides the major access through the area. Crowley Lake Drive provides secondary access to local communities. Surface waters in the area include Lake Crowley and a number of streams throughout the valley. Topography in the area is characterized by the relatively flat floor of the valley, gently sloping hills to the sides of the valley floor and steep slopes above the hills. Vegetation on the valley floor includes pastureland and wetlands. Vegetation on the surrounding hills includes sagebrush scrub, junipers, and pinon pines.

The communities in Long Valley, with the exception of Crowley Lake, include predominantly single-family residential development. Crowley Lake includes residential and commercial uses, a county park, community center and ball fields, county road facilities, and a water treatment facility. Tom's Place also includes limited commercial uses.

#### Population Characteristics

Mono County GIS estimates that there are 98 parcels in the BCSD, including 78 developed parcels (residential or commercial parcels valued at \$10,000 or more). BCSD estimates that it serves 150 residents. Population data from the 2000 US Census show the population of Sunny Slopes to be 156 in 2000 ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)). In 2000, there were 76 households in Sunny Slopes ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)).



**Figure 1 Birchim Community Services District Boundaries**

Population data from the 2000 US Census and California Department of Finance population estimates show the regional population of Long Valley to be 1,147 in 2000 and 1,170 in 2003 (Table 3, Mono County Housing Element). In 2000, there were 440 households in Long Valley (Table 12, Housing Element). Eighty-five percent of the households were owner-occupied and 15 percent were rented (Table 12, Housing Element).

### **Water Distribution**

The Birchim CSD provides water for domestic use and fireflow protection to district residents. Water is obtained from 3 wells on district owned land. Untreated well water is distributed to 71 dwelling units through a combination of 4-inch and 6-inch transite pipes.

### **Water Use**

Water usage varies by year. In 2008, BCSD's annual water demand was 16,990,539 gallons. BCSD implements water conservation measures, including restrictions on the timing of irrigation and a moratorium on lot splits (including the construction of mother-in-law units) within the district. The BCSD anticipates adding another 21 connections in the future. The BCSD distributes water conservation materials annually.

### **Other Services**

As a Community Service District, BCSD is authorized to provide a wide array of services, including water treatment and distribution, fire protection, mosquito abatement services, parks and recreational services, sewage collection and disposal, snow removal/road maintenance, street lighting, police protection, and library services.

### **Planned Land Uses**

The Mono County Land Use Element provides for substantial additional development in Long Valley, primarily in the communities along Crowley Lake Drive. The additional development allowed by the plan in community areas would be a mix of single-family residential uses, multiple-family residential uses, and commercial uses. Additional development allowed in Sunny Slopes would be single-family residential development and a fire station for the Long Valley Fire Protection District.

### **District Planning**

The BCSD has developed a long-term 10-Year Plan that assesses future infrastructure and service needs and identifies projects to meet those needs. A fee increase implemented in 2007 by BCSD was calculated to meet current loan obligations as well as anticipated infrastructure and service needs until 2017.

### **District Issues of Concern**

BCSD has indicated several concerns, including:

- The long-term availability of groundwater in the area.
- Regulatory requirements for small water systems that require the installation of individual water meters.
- Updating infrastructure—providing updated pipelines, a backup storage tank, shut-off

valves, and individual water meters.

### **District Personnel**

BCSD employs a district manager and a part-time secretary. The manager is certified as a water distribution operator.

### **District Finances**

BCSD's main source of revenue is an annual fee for water use. BCSD considers its fiscal health to be excellent, and plans to pay for future service upgrades or capital improvements as the annual revenue can support those upgrades. The BCSD's Balance Sheets for 2007-2008 are attached to this document as Appendix A.

BCSD participates in cost sharing as a member of the Rural Special District Services Association but does not utilize any shared facilities. BCSD has applied for and received grant funding in the past.

### III. SERVICE REVIEW ANALYSIS AND DETERMINATIONS

Government Code §56430 requires the analysis of nine factors when assessing the capabilities of public service agencies. Each of the required factors is discussed below as it pertains to community service districts in general and the Birchim Community Services District specifically.

#### 1. Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies

##### Overview

*Purpose: To evaluate the infrastructure needs and deficiencies of a district in terms of capacity, condition of facilities, service quality, and levels of service and its relationship to existing and planned service users.*

##### BCSD

BCSD has developed a long-term 10-Year Plan that assesses future infrastructure and service needs and identifies projects to meet those needs. A fee increase implemented in 2007 by the BCSD was calculated to meet current loan obligations as well as anticipated infrastructure and service needs until 2017. The BCSD has also identified several concerns that focus on service quality and infrastructure needs for future development in the area:

- Long-term sustainability of the water table.
- Regulatory requirements and associated impacts on the district's infrastructure (e.g. requirements for individual water meters).
- Financial constraints to meeting service needs require prioritizing infrastructure improvements.
- Specific infrastructure needs include updated pipelines, a second backup storage tank, shut-off valves, and water meters.

##### Determinations

- BCSD has developed a long-term plan that identifies future infrastructure and service needs and identifies projects to meet those needs.

#### 2. Growth and Population Projections for the Affected Area

##### Overview

*Purpose: To evaluate service needs based on existing and anticipated growth patterns and population projections.*

##### *Existing and Anticipated Residential Growth Patterns in Sunny Slopes*

Sunny Slopes is a single-family residential community with a limited land base. The 2000 US Census counted 76 households and 156 people residing in Sunny Slopes. Mono County GIS estimates that there are 98 parcels in Sunny Slopes, including 78 developed parcels (residential

or commercial parcels valued at \$10,000 or more). There are 21 undeveloped lots in the community; the BCSD currently has a moratorium on lot splits (including the construction of mother-in-law units) within the district. Future residential growth would be limited to the 21 undeveloped lots.

***Existing and Anticipated Regional Residential Growth Patterns in Long Valley***

Future residential growth in Long Valley is anticipated to occur primarily in and adjacent to existing developed residential areas. Aside from development in Crowley Lake, most existing and planned development will be single-family residential development. Existing and planned development in Crowley Lake includes single-family and multi-family residential development, commercial uses, lodging, and public facilities. The Mono County General Plan Land Use Element provides for the following buildout in the Long Valley, subject to water availability:

**Table 1: Buildout Figures for Long Valley**

Land Use Designation	Density	Acres	Maximum Potential Dwelling Units
ER Estate Residential	1 du/acre	349	123 <sup>a</sup>
RR Rural Residential	1 du/acre	143	24 <sup>b &amp; d</sup>
SFR Single-Family Residential	5.8 du/acre	339	896 <sup>c</sup>
MFR-M Multiple-Family Residential – Moderate	15 du/acre	4	60
MFR-H Multiple-Family Residential – High	15 du/acre	9	135
MU Mixed Use	15 du/acre	37	555
C Commercial	15 du/acre	39	585
PF Public/Quasi-Public Facilities	---	34	---
AG Agriculture	1 du/2.5 ac.	3	1
SP Specific Plan	---	80	114 <sup>e</sup>
<b>Total Private Lands</b>		1,037	2,493
RM Resource Management – Federal/State	---	10,270	---
OS Open Space – LADWP	1 du/80 acres	8,625	107
<b>Total</b>		19,932	2,600

**Notes:** du = dwelling unit

- a. 10 acres designated ER 1.5 (1.5-acre min. lot size); 188 acres designated ER 3(3-acre min. lot size); 122 acres designated ER 5 (5-acre min. lot size).
- b. 71 acres designated RR 10 (10-acre min. lot size); 69 acres designated RR 5 (5-acre min. lot size).
- c. 6 acres designated SFR 10,000 (10,000 square feet min. lot size); 179 acres designated SFR 15,000 (15,000 square feet min. lot size); 80 acres designated SFR 0.5 (0.5-acre min. lot size); 50 acres designated SFR 1 (1 acre min. lot size); 24 acres designated SFR 7,500 (7,500 sq. ft. min. lot size).
- d. 58 acres in Long Valley covers an area impacted by avalanches which requires special studies for development. No development plan has been submitted for that area.
- e. 80 acres in Hilton Creek is the Lakeridge Ranch Specific Plan, which permits the development of 114 single-family residences.

### ***Seasonal Population***

In addition to the projected residential growth, Long Valley's population experiences significant seasonal increases due to tourism, and to a lesser degree to second homeowners. Long Valley and surrounding areas accommodate large numbers of recreational users and are a vacation destination for outdoor and wilderness activities such as fishing and hiking.

### ***Residential Population Projections***

Population data from the 2000 US Census and California Department of Finance population estimates show the residential population in Long Valley to be 1,467 in 2000 and 1,497 in 2003. In 2000, there were 440 households in Long Valley. The population in the Long Valley area is projected to increase to 1,865 by 2020 and 2,005 by 2030 (State Department of Finance Report P-3, Population Projections).

### **Determinations**

- Sunny Slopes has the potential to add approximately 21 single-family residences.
- The Mono County General Plan Land Use Element allows for significant additional growth in the other Long Valley communities.
- Growth is anticipated to occur primarily in and adjacent to existing developed areas and to be primarily single-family residential development with a mix of multi-family residential development and commercial uses in Crowley Lake.
- The residential population in Long Valley is projected to increase to 1,865 by 2,020 and 2,005 by 2,030, creating an increased demand for water and sewer services.
- In addition to the projected residential growth, Long Valley's population experiences significant seasonal increases due to tourism.

## **3. Financing Constraints and Opportunities**

### **Overview**

*Purpose: To evaluate factors that affect the financing of needed improvements.*

Expenses for special districts generally fall into one of three categories: (1) acquisition of facilities and major capital equipment, (2) employee expenses, and (3) ongoing operations and maintenance costs. The primary criteria that should be considered when evaluating adequacy of potential funding sources is availability, adequacy to meet the need, equity between existing and future residents, stability, and ability to cover on-going operating and maintenance costs.

### ***BCSD***

BCSD depends on an annual fee for water use as its main source of revenue. The BCSD reviews its fees on a regular basis to ensure that they are adequate. The last fee increase in 2007 was substantial and calculated to meet current loan obligations as well as anticipated infrastructure and service needs until 2017.

The BCSD has a financial strategic plan that was developed in cooperation with the USDA as part of a loan-grant package received in 2007 for the construction of a new well.

### Determinations

- BCSD's future financing will continue to rely heavily on the annual water use fee that is collected with property tax.

## 4. Cost Avoidance Opportunities

### Overview

*Purpose: To identify practices or opportunities that may aid in eliminating unnecessary costs.*

Cost avoidance opportunities are defined as actions to eliminate unnecessary costs derived from, but not limited to, duplication of service efforts, higher than necessary administration/operation cost ratios, use of outdated or deteriorating infrastructure and equipment, underutilized equipment or buildings or facilities, overlapping/inefficient service boundaries, inefficient purchasing or budgeting practices, and lack of economies of scale.

### BCSD

Generally, in Mono County each community area is a discrete geographic area and, as a result, there is no duplication of service efforts or overlapping or inefficient service boundaries. Long Valley is a discrete geographic area in the county, with a number of small residential areas. While these residential areas are physically separate from each other, they are often all located within the larger boundaries of local special districts. Sunny Slopes is within the boundaries of several special districts, i.e.: Birchim CSD, Long Valley Fire Protection District, County Service Area #1, Countywide Service Area, and the Southern Mono Healthcare District.

In addition, there are a number of small service providers operating within the Long Valley communities. The existence of several small service providers could result in the duplication of some services, particularly in such areas as personnel management, insurance, risk management, financial management services, fleet maintenance, purchasing/budgeting, economies of scale, etc. Further studies would be necessary to determine whether there are opportunities to reduce costs among the service providers.

The district has a long-term plan and participates in cost-sharing by purchasing insurance at a group rate through the Rural Special Districts Services Association.

### Determinations

- Integrated planning, especially long-range planning, is an important part of cost avoidance. The district has a long-range plan that covers 2007-2017.
- The district participates in cost sharing through participation in the Rural Special Districts Services Association.
- There are a number of small service providers in Long Valley that have administrative costs associated with the overall management of those organizations. There could be some duplication of services among the service providers, particularly in areas such as personnel management, insurance, risk management, financial management services, fleet maintenance, etc. Further studies would be necessary to determine whether there are opportunities to reduce costs among the service providers.



## 5. Opportunities for Rate Restructuring

### Overview

*Purpose: To identify opportunities to positively impact rates without decreasing service levels.*

As noted in the Financing Constraints and Opportunities Section, the district's funding includes connection fees, customer use/service charges, and grants. Each of these categories has inherent constraints that prevent an agency from restructuring them.

### BCSD

**Annual Water Fee Assessment** –Each district customer pays an annual flat rate water fee for water use that is based on the type of use (single family unit, multi-family unit, undeveloped lot). New construction is assessed a connection fee. The district periodically reviews and adjusts its charges in order to insure that the district is collecting sufficient funds to cover its operating costs. The county collects these fees together with its collection of property taxes.

**Grants** – Grant money is a one-time source that is useful in funding certain special projects but may be too unreliable or variable for ongoing expenses or recurring needs. The district has sought and obtained grant funding for its major capitol improvements. BCSD has also sought and received government funding under the Reimbursement of State Mandated Costs Program. BCSD applies for all grants that are relevant.

### Determinations

- All funding mechanisms have inherent limitations that may prevent their implementation, use or restructure.
- Each BCSD customer pays an annual assessment for water use, based on the type of connection. The district periodically reviews and adjusts its charges in order to ensure that they are sufficient to cover operating costs.
- BCSD has applied for and received grant funding. The district continues to apply for all applicable grant funding.

## 6. Opportunities for Shared Facilities

### Overview

*Purpose: To evaluate the opportunities for a jurisdiction to share facilities and resources to develop more efficient service delivery systems.*

Sharing facilities and resources can result in a more efficient and cost-effective delivery of resources.

### BCSD

Currently, the BCSD does not share any facilities. The only facilities BCSD owns are a water storage tank on federally leased land, three wells, and fire hydrants installed in Sunny Slopes. Due to the distance between Sunny Slopes and other communities in Long Valley, it would be impractical to share these facilities.

The Long Valley area includes other special district service providers, as well as the County, that require facilities to support their services. In the future, there may be opportunities for shared facilities among the service providers in the area. Further studies would be necessary at that time to determine whether there would be opportunities to reduce costs by sharing facilities.

### **Determinations**

- There are currently no opportunities for shared facilities, due to the limited facilities and equipment owned by BCSD and the distance between Sunny Slopes and other communities in Long Valley.
- The Long Valley area includes other special district service providers, as well as the County, that require facilities to support their services. In the future, there may be opportunities for shared facilities among the service providers in the area. Further studies would be necessary at that time to determine whether there would be opportunities to reduce costs by sharing facilities.

## **7. Government Structure Options**

### **Overview**

*Purpose: To consider the advantages and disadvantages of various government structures to provide service.*

Government Code §56001 declares that it is the policy of the State to encourage orderly growth and development essential to the social, fiscal, and economic well being of the State. The Code further states that “this policy should be effected by the logical formation and modification of the boundaries of local agencies, with a preference granted to accommodating additional growth within, or through the expansion of, the boundaries of those local agencies which can best accommodate and provide necessary governmental services.”

For local agency consolidations to occur there has to be significant (and popularly desired) cost savings or an increase in service

### **BCSD**

A number of local agencies provide services to the Long Valley communities, including:

- Hilton Creek Community Service District – Sewer services within Crowley Lake. Limited road maintenance and snow removal and mosquito abatement.
- Birchim Community Services District – Water services and fire hydrants within Sunny Slopes.
- Crowley Mutual Water Company and Mountain Meadows Water System – Water services within a portion of Crowley Lake.
- Long Valley Fire Protection District – Fire protection and emergency medical services for the Long Valley communities.
- County Service Area #1 – Television services for the Long Valley communities.

- Mono County – Regional services including Assessor, Clerk Recorder, Community Development, Courts, District Attorney, Law Enforcement, Parks and Recreation, Public Health, Probation, Public Works, Social Services, Treasurer/Tax Collector.
- Southern Mono Healthcare District – Medical services and acute care hospital services.

Several of the districts and private service providers in the area are small with limited physical and financial resources. LAFCO policy generally promotes the consolidation of districts where they overlap; however, districts in Long Valley overlap primarily in the community of Crowley Lake. The Birchim Community Services District, which provides a similar type of service to that provided by the Hilton Creek CSD, one that is often provided by the same entity, does not overlap with the Hilton Creek CSD at all. The two community water providers in Crowley Lake, whose boundaries overlap with those of the Hilton Creek CSD, are not special districts but private mutual water companies.

As more development occurs within the area, a regional water and sewer provider might best provide services to the area. In the future, a regional Community Service District with separate service areas throughout the Long Valley communities might best provide sewer and water services for the area. BCSD is currently opposed to these services being provided by a regional CSD.

#### **Determinations**

- Several special districts, along with the County and private service providers, provide public services within the Long Valley communities.
- To alleviate government overlap and fragmentation, LAFCO law and local LAFCO policies promote the consolidation of services under the authority of one multi-purpose agency. District boundaries overlap in Long Valley.
- As a Community Service District, the Birchim CSD is authorized to provide a variety of services including sewage collection and disposal, snow removal/road maintenance, mosquito abatement, water treatment and distribution, fire protection, parks and recreational services, street lighting, police protection, and library services. At the present time, the BCSD provides only water service and fire hydrants to the Sunny Slopes community.
- Ultimately, a regional CSD might be the best provider of a variety of services in the Long Valley area.

## **8. Evaluation of Management Efficiencies**

### **Overview**

*Purpose: To evaluate the quality of public services in comparison to cost.*

As defined by OPR, the term “management efficiency,” refers to the organized provision of the highest quality public services with the lowest necessary expenditure of public funds. An efficiently managed entity (1) promotes and demonstrates implementation of continuous improvement plans and strategies for budgeting, managing costs, training and utilizing personnel and customer service and involvement, (2) has the ability to provide service over the short and

long term, (3) has the resources (fiscal, manpower, equipment, adopted service or work plans) to provide adequate service, (4) meets or exceeds environmental and industry service standards, as feasible considering local conditions or circumstances, (5) and maintains adequate contingency reserves. "Management Efficiency" is generally seen as organizational efficiency including the potential for consolidation.

The purpose of management is to effectively carry out the principal function and purpose of an agency. Good management will ensure that the agency's mission is accomplished and that the agency's efforts are sustainable into the future. Unfortunately, "good management" is a relatively subjective issue, and one that is hard to quantify.

### ***BCSD***

The BCSD is managed by an unpaid elected Board of Directors. The district has an Annual Budget and a long-term 10-Year Plan that assesses future infrastructure and service needs and identifies projects to meet those needs. The Board of Directors regularly donates services to the district beyond their service as board members, such as emergency repairs, maintenance, and minor construction projects.

### **Determinations**

- BCSD is managed by an elected Board of Directors.
- The district has a budget and a long-term plan that assesses future infrastructure and service needs and identifies projects to meet those needs.

## **9. Local Accountability and Governance**

### **Overview**

*Purpose: To evaluate the accessibility and levels of public participation associated with an agency's decision-making and management processes.*

Special districts such as fire protection districts are required to adopt budgets at open public meetings and to file their budgets with the county auditor. They are required to have annual or biennial independent audits. Districts are subject to the Ralph M. Brown Act for meetings, agendas and minutes. They are also subject to the Public Records Act.

Complying with the minimum open meeting and information requirements is not sufficient to allow an adequate amount of visibility and accountability. Outreach efforts, including convenient meeting times, additional notice of meetings and dissemination of district information, are desirable.

### ***BCSD***

BCSD complies with the minimum open meetings and public information requirements. The district is governed by a 5-member Board of Directors that meets monthly. Meeting notices and agendas are posted locally. The district does not post minutes anywhere, nor does it have a website. The district uses inserts with the billing to disseminate information to its customers.

Specific information is also posted on the local bulletin board and notices are delivered to each residence when needed.

**Determinations**

- BCSD complies with the minimum requirements for open meetings and public records.
- The district seeks to inform its customers of district activities and services.

## IV. SPHERE OF INFLUENCE RECOMMENDATION

In determining the sphere of influence for each local agency, Government Code §56425 requires the Local Agency Formation Commission to consider and prepare a written statement of its determination with respect to four required findings. Each of the required findings is discussed below as it pertains to the Birchim Community Services District.

### 1. Present and Planned Land Uses

**Discussion:**

Present land uses in the area served by the Birchim CSD are primarily single-family residential uses. The Mono County GIS estimates that there are 98 parcels within the district and 78 developed parcels (residential or commercial parcels valued at \$10,000 or more). BCSD states that there are 100 parcels within the district’s boundaries and 21 lots are undeveloped. As a result, there is a limited amount of development potential in Sunny Slopes.

Within the larger area of Long Valley, the Mono County GIS estimates that there are 1033 parcels in the district, including 504 developed parcels. Population data from the 2000 US Census and California Department of Finance population estimates show the population in Long Valley was approximately 1,467 in 2000 and 1,497 in 2003. In 2000, there were 440 households in Long Valley. The Mono County General Plan Land Use Element provides for the following buildout in Long Valley:

**Table 1: Buildout Figures for Long Valley**

Land Use Designation	Density	Acres	Maximum Potential Dwelling Units
ER Estate Residential	1 du/acre	349	123 <sup>a</sup>
RR Rural Residential	1 du/acre	143	24 <sup>b &amp; d</sup>
SFR Single-Family Residential	5.8 du/acre	339	896 <sup>c</sup>
MFR-M Multiple-Family Residential – Moderate	15 du/acre	4	60
MFR-H Multiple-Family Residential – High	15 du/acre	9	135
MU Mixed Use	15 du/acre	37	555
C Commercial	15 du/acre	39	585
PF Public/Quasi-Public Facilities	---	34	---
AG Agriculture	1 du/2.5 ac.	3	1
SP Specific Plan	---	80	114 <sup>e</sup>
<b>Total Private Lands</b>		1,037	2,493
RM Resource Management – Federal/State	---	10,270	---
OS Open Space – LADWP	1 du/80 acres	8,625	107
<b>Total</b>		19,932	2,600

**Notes:** du = dwelling unit

- a. 10 acres designated ER 1.5 (1.5-acre min. lot size); 188 acres designated ER 3(3-acre min. lot size); 122 acres designated ER 5 (5-acre min. lot size).
- b. 71 acres designated RR 10 (10-acre min. lot size); 69 acres designated RR 5 (5-acre min. lot size).
- c. 6 acres designated SFR 10,000 (10,000 square feet min. lot size); 179 acres designated SFR 15,000 (15,000 square feet min. lot size); 80 acres designated SFR 0.5 (0.5-acre min. lot size); 50 acres designated SFR 1 (1 acre min. lot size); 24 acres designated SFR 7,500 (7,500 sq. ft. min. lot size).
- d. 58 acres in Long Valley covers an area impacted by avalanches which requires special studies for development. No development plan has been submitted for that area.
- e. 80 acres in Hilton Creek is the Lakeridge Ranch Specific Plan, which permits the development of 114 single-family residences.

In addition to the projected growth, Long Valley's population experiences significant seasonal increases due to tourism, and to a lesser degree to second homeowners. Long Valley and surrounding areas accommodate large numbers of recreational users and are a vacation destination for outdoor and wilderness activities such as fishing and hiking.

***Finding:***

Present land uses in the area served by the Birchim CSD are primarily single-family residential uses. There are no commercial uses. The planned land uses for community areas throughout Long Valley, including Sunny Slopes, are similar to existing uses with future development concentrated primarily within and adjacent to existing development.

## **2. Present and Probable Need For Public Facilities and Services**

***Discussion:***

The BCSD area has a present need for water services for domestic and fireflow uses. Regulatory requirements for small water systems may create a need for additional infrastructure within the BCSD. The build-out allowed by the General Plan will create additional demand for water services in the future.

***Finding:***

The BCSD has an existing and continuing need for public facilities and services to serve the existing and planned development in the area.

## **3. Present Capacity of Public Facilities and Adequacy of Public Services**

***Discussion:***

As discussed in the "District Services" section of this report, the BCSD currently provides water for domestic use and fireflow protection to 71 dwelling units through a combination of 4-inch and 6-inch transite pipes. The district has indicated it anticipates adding 21 connections in the future. The district has also indicated a need to update its infrastructure to better provide for current and future users.

As a Community Service District, the district is authorized to provide a wide array of services,

including sewer treatment and collection, fire protection, parks and recreational services, street lighting, police protection, and library services.

***Finding:***

The BCSD currently provides an adequate level of service but has identified a need to improve its facilities in order to serve additional development and to improve services to existing development. As a Community Service District, the district is authorized to provide a wide array of services, including water treatment and distribution, fire protection, parks and recreational services, street lighting, police protection, and library services.

#### **4. Social or Economic Communities of Interest**

***Discussion:***

The Long Valley communities of Long Valley, McGee Creek, Crowley Lake, Aspen Springs, Tom's Place, and Sunny Slopes, along with US Forest Service lease areas adjacent to these communities, exhibit substantial social and economic communities of interest. They are predominantly small residential areas that act as bedroom communities for Mammoth Lakes and Bishop. Surrounding recreational lands attract tourists who support the local economy. Residents of these communities rely on Mammoth Lakes or Bishop for major shopping, employment, and a number of services.

Within the Long Valley communities, public services are provided by the county, several special districts, and private mutual water companies:

- Hilton Creek Community Service District – Sewer services within Crowley Lake. Limited road maintenance and snow removal and mosquito abatement.
- Birchim Community Services District – Water services and fire hydrants within Sunny Slopes.
- Crowley Mutual Water Company and Mountain Meadows Water System – Water services within a portion of Crowley Lake.
- Long Valley Fire Protection District – Fire protection and emergency medical services for the Long Valley communities.
- County Service Area #1 – Television services for the Long Valley communities.
- Mono County – Regional services including Assessor, Clerk Recorder, Community Development, Courts, District Attorney, Law Enforcement, Parks and Recreation, Public Health, Probation, Public Works, Social Services, Treasurer/Tax Collector.
- Southern Mono Healthcare District – Medical services and acute care hospital services.

Several of the districts and private service providers in the area are small with limited physical and financial resources. LAFCO policy generally promotes the consolidation of districts where they overlap; however, districts in Long Valley overlap primarily in the community of Crowley Lake. The Birchim Community Services District, which provides a similar type of service to that provided by the Hilton Creek CSD, one that is often provided by the same entity, does not overlap with the Hilton Creek CSD at all. The two community water providers in Crowley Lake,



whose boundaries overlap with those of the Hilton Creek CSD, are not special districts but private mutual water companies.

As more development occurs within the area, a regional water and sewer provider might best provide services to the area. In the future, a regional Community Service District with separate service areas throughout the Long Valley communities might best provide sewer and water services for the area.

***Finding:***

The Long Valley communities share social and economic interests with each other. These shared interests promote a coordinated approach to service provision in the Long Valley area.

**Sphere of Influence Recommendation**

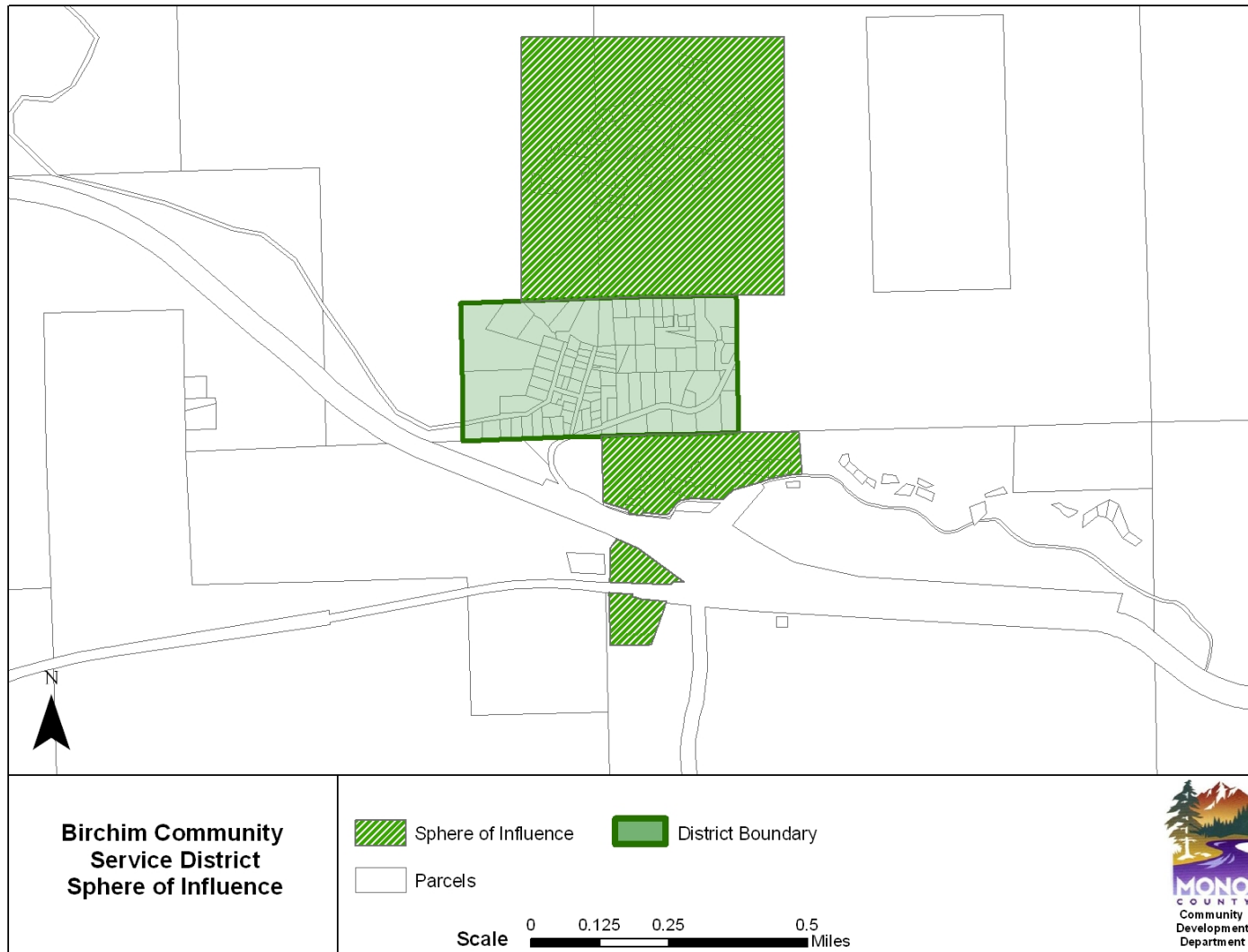
The Sphere of Influence for the Birchim Community Services District should remain as it is, including privately owned land within the community of Sunny Slopes and US Forest Service permittees at Pine Glades, Tom's Place, and Rock Creek Tract (see Figure 2). The BCSD has no intention of expanding its service boundaries at this time.

**Reorganization Recommendation**

Section 56001 of the California Government Code states that:

The Legislature also finds that, whether governmental services are proposed to be provided by a single-purpose agency, several agencies, or a multipurpose agency, responsibility should be given to the agency or agencies that can best provide government services.

Currently, the Birchim CSD provides adequate services within its boundaries. In the future, a regional water and sewer provider with separate service areas throughout the Long Valley communities might best provide sewer and water services for the region. At that time, a reorganization study should be conducted to determine what governmental structure would best provide services for the region. Such a reorganization should occur only with the concurrence of the involved districts' Boards of Directors.



**Figure 2 Birchim Community Services District Sphere of Influence**

## V. REFERENCES

### References Consulted

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California State Department of Finance

**Demographic Research Unit, population and housing estimates and projections**

California Governor's Office of Planning and Research

**Cortese-Knox Act**

**Guidelines on Municipal Service Reviews**

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**Mono County Master Environmental Assessment.** 2001.

Team Engineering and Management, Inc.

**Surface Water and Groundwater Availability Assessment Crowley Area, Mono County, California.** 2006.

### Persons Consulted

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Birchim Community Services District

Scott Wing-Hartlein, Water Distribution Operator

Stephen Toups, President, Board of Directors (Comment letter, 12/26/2008)

Holly Gallagher, Vice-President, Board of Directors (Comment letter, 12/26/2008)

## **APPENDIX A**