

# SOLANO COUNTY LAFCO RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

## MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW

---



**PREPARED BY**

PMC  
1590 DREW AVENUE STE 120  
DAVIS, CA 95616

**DECEMBER 2006**

---

# **SOLANO COUNTY LAFCO RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

## **MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW**

---

### **PREPARED FOR**

SOLANO LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION  
744 EMPIRE ST., SUITE 106  
FAIRFIELD, CA 94533

### **PREPARED BY**

PMC  
1590 DREW AVENUE STE 120  
DAVIS, CA 95616

**DECEMBER 2006**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Role and Responsibility of LAFCo ..... 1.0-1  
Purpose of the Municipal Service Review ..... 1.0-1  
Overview ..... 1.0-2

**2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Municipal Service Review Process ..... 2.0-1  
Topic Areas of Analysis ..... 2.0-1  
Summary of Determinations ..... 2.0-2

**2.1 DIXON RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

Summary of Service Provision ..... 2.1-1  
Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies ..... 2.1-1  
Financing and Rate Restructuring ..... 2.1-3  
Cost Avoidance and Facilities Sharing ..... 2.1-3  
Government Structure and Management Efficiencies ..... 2.1-5  
Local Accountability ..... 2.1-7

**2.2 SOLANO RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

Summary of Service Provision ..... 2.2-1  
Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies ..... 2.2-1  
Financing and Rate Restructuring ..... 2.2-2  
Cost Avoidance and Facilities Sharing ..... 2.2-3  
Government Structure and Management Efficiencies ..... 2.2-5  
Local Accountability ..... 2.2-6

**2.3 SUISUN RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

Summary of Service Provision ..... 2.3-1  
Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies ..... 2.3-1  
Financing and Rate Restructuring ..... 2.3-2

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

---

Cost Avoidance and Facilities Sharing ..... 2.3-3

Government Structure and Management Efficiencies..... 2.3-5

Local Accountability..... 2.3-7

**FIGURES**

Figure 1.1 Resource Conservation Districts ..... 1.0-5

Figure 2.1-1 Dixon Resource Conservation Districts..... 1.0-7

Figure 2.2-1 Solano Resource Conservation Districts..... 1.0-9

Figure 2.3-1 Suisun Resource Conservation Districts..... 1.0-11

## **ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF LAFCO**

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act (Government Code Section 56000 et seq.) requires all Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCOs), including the Solano LAFCo, to conduct a municipal service review (MSR) prior to updating the spheres of influence (SOI) of the various cities and special districts in the County (Government Code Section 56430). The fundamental role of a LAFCo is to implement to the CKH Act, providing for the logical, efficient, and most appropriate formation of local municipalities, service areas, and special districts. The focus of this MSR is to provide LAFCo with all necessary and relevant information related to services provided by the Dixon Resource Conservation District (Dixon RCD), Solano Resource Conservation District (Solano RCD), and Suisun Resource Conservation District (Suisun RCD).

## **PURPOSE OF THE MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW**

This MSR is intended to provide a comprehensive analysis of service provision by the resource conservation districts within Solano County. This MSR will provide Solano LAFCo with an informational document and make determinations in different areas of evaluation. This service review evaluates the ability of the Districts' to provide services within the County. The Dixon RCD's approximate boundary is shown in **Figure 2.1-1**, the Solano RCD's approximate boundary is shown in **Figure 2.2-1**, and the Susuin RCD's approximate boundary is shown in **Figure 2.3-1**. A map of Solano County and the three districts are shown in **Figure 1-1**.

This MSR evaluates the structure and operation of the Districts and discusses possible areas for improvement or coordination. Key sources for this study were agency-specific information gathered through research and surveys, as well as the Municipal Service Review Guidelines published by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR).

This report is divided up into six sections Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies, Growth, Cost Avoidance and Facilities Sharing, Financing and Rate Restructuring, Government Structure and Management Efficiencies, and Local Accountability.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS AND DEFICIENCIES**

This section analyzes whether sufficient infrastructure and capital are in place, and reviews capabilities for accommodating future growth in service demands.

## **GROWTH**

This section reviews projected growth within the existing service boundaries of the Districts and analyzes the Districts' plans to accommodate future growth.

## **COST AVOIDANCE AND FACILITIES SHARING**

This section evaluates factors affecting the financing of needed improvements, as well as opportunities for the Districts to share facilities.

## **FINANCING AND RATE RESTRUCTURING**

The Districts' fiscal history is evaluated to determine viability and ability to meet service demands. Rate structure is also examined as a means to eliminate unnecessary cost.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

---

### **GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCIES**

This section evaluates the ability of the Districts to meet its demands under its existing government structure, and considers the overall managerial practices.

### **LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

This section examines how well the Districts makes their processes transparent to the public and invites and encourages public participation.

### **OVERVIEW**

The provision of resource conservation services is customarily provided by special districts, cities, and counties within California. Resource conservation includes the protection of natural resources including water quality, wildlife habitat, open space, and special natural features of local or regional importance. There are three resource conservation districts within Solano County, The Dixon Resource Conservation District, the Solano Resource Conservation District, and the Suisun Resource Conservation District.

These three districts include significant portions of land within Solano County. Various parts of the County remain outside of the boundaries of any resource conservation district. These areas include the lands within and immediately surrounding the City of Fairfield, the City and areas west and north of the City of Rio Vista, and several small areas within the southern portion of the County. Extension of services to these unserved areas is a consideration of this Municipal Service Review.

### **THE DIXON RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

The Dixon RCD was formed in 1952 as a multi-county special district organized under Division 9 of the Public Resources Code. This act of the California Legislature enables the district to address a wide variety of conservation issues such as water and air quality, wildlife habitat, soil erosion control, and conservation education. The Dixon RCD was originally formed to construct, operate, and maintain the Dixon Drain to provide winter drainage and reduce flooding and ponding in portions of Solano and Yolo Counties.

### **THE SOLANO RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

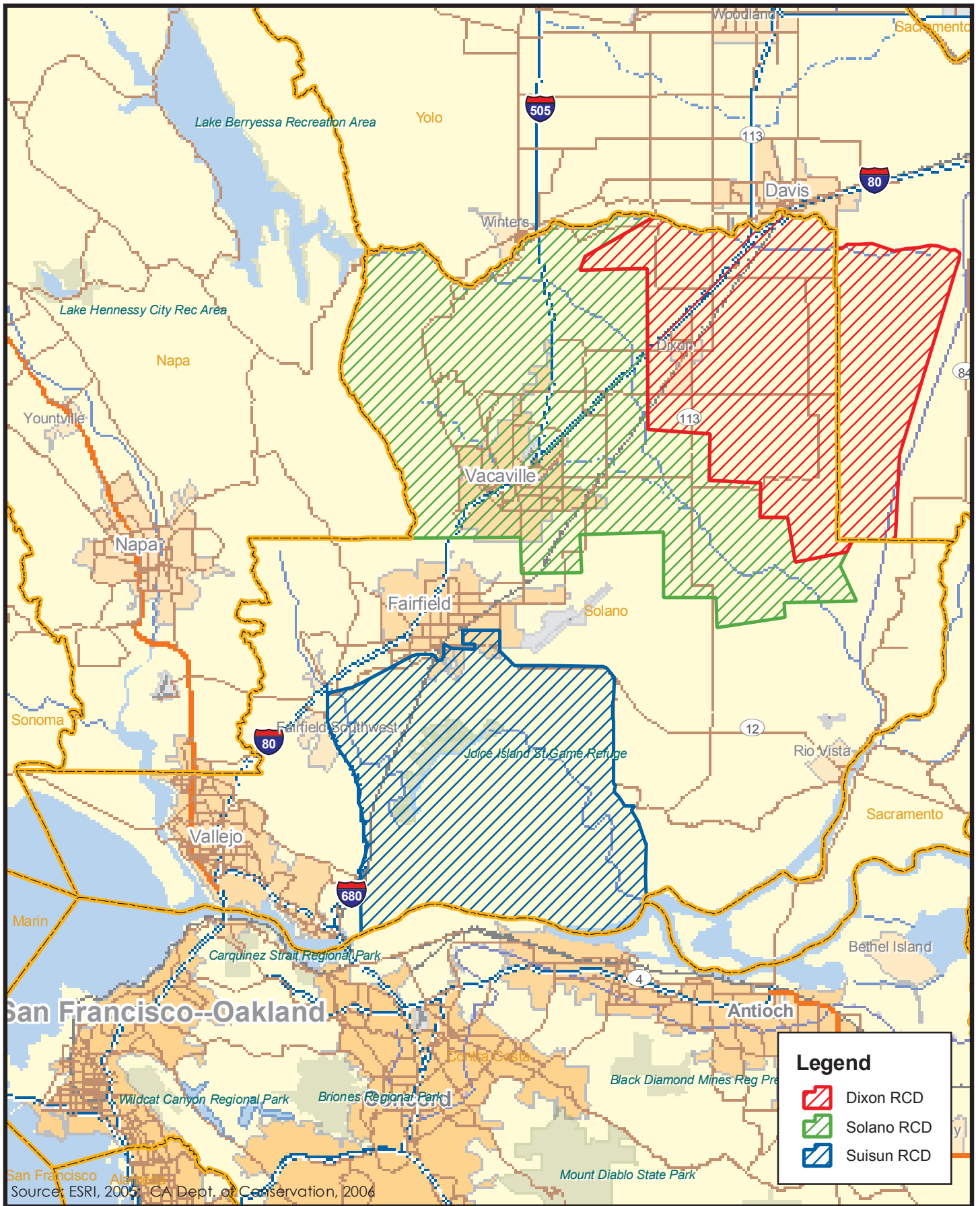
The Solano RCD was formed in 1956 as a special district organized under Division 9 of the Public Resources Code. This act of the California Legislature enables the district to address a wide variety of conservation issues such as water and air quality, wildlife habitat, soil erosion control, and conservation education. The District's focus is on water, conservation and wildlife habitat, and farmland preservation.

### **THE SUISUN RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

The Suisun RCD was formed as a special district organized under Division 9 of the Public Resources Code. Historically, the goals of the District were to achieve water supply of adequate quality to promote preferred waterfowl habitat and retain wetland resource values through appropriate management practices. Today, the District provides landowners technical assistance in permitting, water control, and habitat management to ensure the wetland and wildlife values of the Suisun Marsh are sustained and enhanced. In 1977, the California

Legislature passed Assembly Bill 1717 the Suisun Marsh Preservation Act. This legislation added provisions to the Public Resources Code related to Suisun RCD's responsibilities over water management practices in the marsh.

T:\GIS\Solano\_County\Mxd\Solano\_LAFCO\_MSRs\IRCDs.mxd



**FIGURE 1.1**  
**RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**



### **MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW PROCESS**

The Municipal Service Review (MSR) process is a comprehensive assessment of the ability of government agencies to effectively and efficiently provide services to residents and users. The form and content of the MSR is governed by requirements of the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reformation Act of 2000 (CKH Act) and the State of California's LAFCo MSR Guidelines (Guidelines), published in August 2003. This MSR considers the operations of resource conservation districts within Solano County.

The MSR contains analysis and conclusions, referred to in this document as determinations, regarding nine topic areas set forth in the CKH Act. These areas of analysis contain the essential operational and management aspects of each district, and together constitute a complete review of the ability of each provider to meet the service demands of the residents within their boundaries. The nine topic areas have been combined into the following six topic headings for analysis in this MSR:

- Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies
- Growth
- Cost Avoidance and Facilities Sharing
- Financing and Rate Restructuring
- Government Structure and Management Efficiencies
- Local Accountability

An explanation of the specific operational and management aspects of each district considered in each of these topic areas is provided below.

### **TOPIC AREAS OF ANALYSIS**

The MSR considers the nine areas of analysis required by CKH. For ease of use and clarity in reading, some of the topic areas have been combined in the body of the report. The following topics of review are provided in the MSR:

#### **INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS AND SHARING OF FACILITIES**

This section assesses the adequacy and quality of infrastructure at the Districts. Infrastructure refers to the physical facilities in use by each district. Occurrences of facilities sharing are listed and assessed for efficiency, and existing facilities sharing arrangements are discussed.

#### **GROWTH**

This section assesses the likely increase in service demand within the Districts. Changes in demand for services can be based on a variety of factors, including future changes in demographics and potential changes in land use.

#### **COST AVOIDANCE AND FACILITIES SHARING**

This section analyzes existing cost avoidance and facilities sharing measures currently being utilized by the Districts to reduce the cost associated with service operations.

## **2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

---

### FINANCING AND RATE RESTRUCTURING

This section analyzes the financial structure and viability of the Districts. Included in this analysis is the consideration of local rates, revenue and expenditure sources, and service operations.

### GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCIES

This section compares existing District goals with existing operations and analyzes the existing government structure for efficiency and effectiveness.

### LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY

This section includes an evaluation of the Districts' compliance with public meeting and public record laws, including the Ralph M. Brown Act.

## **SUMMARY OF DETERMINATIONS**

### THE DIXON RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

#### **Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies**

The Dixon Resource Conservation District is addressing outstanding infrastructure needs through various cooperative efforts with different governmental entities. The District's 2002-2007 Long Range Plan establishes priorities based on resource needs and problems. It, along with the Dixon RCD Annual Workplan serves as a practical guide for the planning and accomplishment of work by the Dixon RCD, its cooperators, and associated agencies. The District has appropriate maintenance and monitoring measures in place.

#### **Growth**

Dixon Resource Conservation District officials work with new customers to establish service expectations, and continually work to maintain a consistent level of service and improve where possible. As land is developed within the District boundaries, the District will receive increased revenues from an expanded tax base, which should assist in the District's ability to expand services to meet increasing needs.

#### **Financing and Rate Restructuring**

The Dixon Resource Conservation District appears to have resolved previous budgeting discrepancies and in FY 2004-05 will have sufficient revenue to cover expenses (see FY 2003/04 and FY 2004/05 audits).

#### **Cost Avoidance and Facilities Sharing**

The Dixon Resource Conservation District appears to utilize available cost reduction measures in its operations, as related to sharing of facilities, knowledge, and equipment. There are no outstanding opportunities identified to significantly reduce costs.

### **Government Structure and Management Efficiencies**

The Dixon Resource Conservation District has boundaries appropriate for the services offered and in relation to other service providers in portions of Solano and Yolo Counties.

The Dixon Resource Conservation District has an overall management structure that is sufficient to account for necessary services and maintain operations in an efficient and effective manner.

### **Local Accountability**

The Dixon Resource Conservation District maintains sufficient accountability in its governance, and public meetings appear to be held in compliance with Brown Act requirements. There are sufficient opportunities for local involvement in District activities, and information regarding the District is readily available to members of the public.

## **THE SOLANO RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

### **Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies**

The Solano Resource Conservation District's infrastructure is appropriate for existing services. District officials have noted that there are no existing plans to acquire or upgrade infrastructure, with the exception of the green house facility and developing handicap accessible features.

### **Growth**

To meet the needs of changing demographics, the Solano Resource Conservation District has developed the 2005-2010 Long Range Plan that identifies opportunities to increase public benefit, identify new funding sources, and increase District visibility.

### **Financing and Rate Restructuring**

Recent yearly expenditures have exceeded revenues. However, the District Board has recently implemented new revenue generating alternatives, which are projected to cover staffing and overhead costs.

### **Cost Avoidance and Facilities Sharing**

The Solano Resource Conservation District appears to utilize many available cost reduction measures in its operations, as related to sharing of facilities, knowledge, and equipment.

Other opportunities for cost avoidance include taking advantage of decreased costs associated with pooled insurance.

### **Government Structure and Management Efficiencies**

The Solano Resource Conservation District is discussing expanding services to areas currently receiving services on a fee-for-service basis.

The Solano Resource Conservation District has an overall management structure to account for all necessary services and maintain operations in an efficient and effective manner.

## **2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

---

### **Local Accountability**

The Solano Resource Conservation District maintains sufficient accountability in its governance, and public meetings appear to be held in compliance with Brown Act requirements. There are sufficient opportunities for local involvement in District activities, and information regarding the District is readily available to members of the public.

### **THE SUISUN RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

#### **Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies**

The Suisun Resource Conservation District has sufficient infrastructure in place to provide an adequate provision of service.

#### **Growth**

Due to existing land use restrictions, significant changes to growth and population will not occur in the near future within Suisun Resource Conservation District's boundaries.

As growth around the Suisun Resource Conservation District increases, there will be an increasing strain on the current District staff. New assistance programs will need to be developed, and there will be an increased need to provide landowner and habitat management support.

#### **Financing and Rate Restructuring**

It appears that the District is in good financial standing. Revenues exceed expenditures, and the District has consistently set aside substantial funding for improvements.

#### **Cost Avoidance and Facilities Sharing**

The Suisun Resource Conservation District appears to utilize available cost reduction measures in its operations including facilities sharing with the Department of Fish and Game, grant monies, and endowments and fees.

The SRCD takes advantage of decreased costs associated with pooled insurance by participating in a Rural Special Districts Insurance Policy.

#### **Government Structure and Management Efficiencies**

District boundaries are appropriate for the services offered; there are no other entities providing similar services within the District's boundaries.

The overall management structure of the District is sufficient to account for necessary services and maintain operations in an efficient and effective manner.

### **Local Accountability**

Suisun Resource Conservation District maintains sufficient accountability in its governance, and public meetings appear to be held in compliance with Brown Act requirements. There are sufficient opportunities for local involvement in District activities, and information regarding the District is readily available to members of the public.

## 2.1 DIXON RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

---

### SUMMARY OF SERVICE PROVISION

The Dixon Resource Conservation District (“Dixon RCD”) of Solano and Yolo Counties was organized on September 2, 1952, and operates under Division 9 of the Public Resources Code. The Dixon RCD was formed to construct, operate, and maintain the Dixon Drain; a seventy-mile long system of ditches designed to provide winter drainage, reduce duration of flooding, and diminish ponding of winter water on agricultural lands.

The Dixon RCD supports responsible resource use and planning by encouraging the controlled use of soil, water and related natural resources. Additionally, the Dixon RCD operates and maintains the present drainage system while researching ways to improve or expand the level of storm drainage. The Dixon RCD has also developed specific policies and programs to guide its involvement with regional growth, farmland preservation, water and soil conservation, and wildlife habitat establishment and improvement.

### INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS AND DEFICIENCIES

The District includes 114,400 acres, 74,700 acres in the northeastern portion of Solano County and 39,700 acres in the southern portion of Yolo County (the area know as the Yolo Bypass). Land use with in the Solano County portion of the District is predominately irrigated agriculture, while the land use in the Yolo County portion is nearly equally divided between irrigated agriculture, dry-land grazing and managed wetlands. The Dixon Drain System is comprised of four segments with three distinct watersheds. The Drainage service area serves 33,830 acres:

- 1) Putah Creek Watershed
  - a. Tremont #1: This segment begins approximately one-half mile east of Interstate 80, just north of Tremont Road and drains into Putah Creek, east of Mace Boulevard.
- 2) Yolo Bypass Watershed
  - a. Tremont #2: This system begins at Sikes road, just south of Tremont Road and drains east into the Yolo Bypass
- 3) Dixon-Dudley Creek Watershed
  - a. Tremont #3 drain: This segment begins at Robben Road just south of Tremont Road and drains southwest into Reclamation District 2068’s canal.
  - b. Dixon Main drain: This is a network of ditches, which drains the land within the Dixon RCD south of Dixon, emptying into the RD 2068 canal on Swan Road. Winter runoff from the City of Dixon is collected by the Dixon Main Drain system.

The Dixon Drain system has played an important role in bringing formerly non-arable land into production, and by reducing crop damage due to winter flooding. Increasing runoff from the City of Dixon has increased the load on the Dickson-Dudley Creek Watershed in recent years. As a result, the Dixon RCD, RD 2068, Marine Prairie Water District, and the City of Dixon in cooperation with the Solano Water Agency formed the Dixon Regional Watershed Joint Powers Authority (JPA). The JPA’s purpose is to study the regional drainage needs with the goal of reducing flooding by regaining the level of service originally constructed in the regional drainage facilities and increasing capacities where feasible. The JPA members have already made improvements to the Dixon Main Drain, Lateral 1. These improvements have expanded the City’s Pond A and increase capacity in Lateral 1. The JPA is planning future construction and substantial improvements to the Dixon RCD drainage systems, including new and enlarged

## 2.1 DIXON RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

---

channels to accommodate additional water from recent development and to reduce localized flooding. The JPA has received \$1.52 million to design and construct the New South Channel, in addition to other projects including a the Eastside Drain project, which will improve existing ditches and construct new ditches in the City's North East Quadrant. These improvements will accommodate additional water from recent and new development and reduce localized flooding.

District staff noted that the Putah Creek Watershed and Yolo Bypass Watershed are both stable, and receive on-going maintenance.

The Dixon RCD, the City of Dixon, and the Dixon Unified School District are currently cooperating to address regional drainage issues in specific areas. The improvements include replacing a portion of an existing Dixon RCD ditch with a ¾ mile pipeline and constructing a pond to regulate storm flows. These facilities will be completed in Fall 2007.

The District has developed the Dixon *Resource Conservation District Long Range Plan 2002-2007*, which includes the commitment to adopt an Annual Work Program to emphasize goals and objectives for completion each fiscal year. This includes plans for periodic evaluation of the infrastructure to determine the need for repairs and improvements.

Other District infrastructure includes a 1996 Ford 150 and miscellaneous office supplies and items necessary to maintain an adequate level of service to the District. The District's office facilities are shared with the Solano Resource Conservation District, and provided by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

### **Determination:**

The Dixon Resource Conservation District is addressing outstanding infrastructure needs through various cooperative efforts with different governmental entities. The District's 2002-2007 Long Range Plan establishes priorities based on resource needs and problems. It, along with the Dixon RCD Annual Workplan serves as a practical guide for the planning and accomplishment of work by the Dixon RCD, its cooperators, and associated agencies. The District has appropriate maintenance and monitoring measures in place.

### **GROWTH**

According to ABAG 2005 projections, Solano County will have the highest percentage increase in population of any county in the region between 2000 and 2030. Solano's population will increase by 47 percent, or approximately 187,300 residents, in this 30-year period.

The number of households in the city of Dixon is forecasted to increase by 68 percent between 2000 and 2030. The total population in the City is projected to increase from 16,103 in 2000 to 26,600 in 2030.

District customers include landowners in the Dixon RCD drainage project service area, all rural landowners, and/or farmers with property in the District.

Dixon RCD officials note that rural housing development is causing significant changes in demographics. Despite the changes in demographics, the District is working at maintaining a consistent level of service to all areas.

## 2.1 DIXON RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

---

The District notes that current residents continue to receive levels of service that the District has historically provided, and that new customers, within the drainage service area will be able to receive service at existing levels. District officials note that the District works to inform new customers regarding District activities and levels of service. As lands adjacent to the City of Dixon are urbanized, new or improved services are being provided in a manner consistent with the District's objectives and with the terms of the Dixon Watershed Joint Powers Authority. Internal District performance is measured by the total participation, flooding, system performance, and customer's comments and/or complaints.

The District usually receives a public notification of any new developments constructed in the County and the City of Dixon. These notifications are reviewed by staff to determine potential impacts to the District's drainage system and to landowners within the District. Any new development projects that may impact the District are reviewed at Board meetings to determine the projects impacts and how the impacts may be reduced. Smaller construction projects are often observed by one of the Board members or Dixon Service Center (DRCD, SRCD, NRCS & FSA) employees and may be discussed during monthly Board meetings, if the project warrants review.

### **Determination:**

Dixon Resource Conservation District officials work with new customers to establish service expectations, and continually work to maintain a consistent level of service and improve where possible. As land is developed within the District boundaries, the District will receive increased revenues from an expanded tax base, which should assist in the District's ability to expand services to meet increasing needs.

### FINANCING AND RATE RESTRUCTURING

Bi-annual independent auditor's reports and financial statements from fiscal year (FY) 2002-2003 and the 2004-2005 budget were reviewed to assess the fiscal status of the District, (see FY 2003/04 and 2004/05 audit).

The main sources of revenues in FY 2002-03 include charges for services (\$79,424) and taxes (\$50,519). Other sources of revenues include revenues from the use of money and property, grant revenue, and miscellaneous revenues. Total revenue in FY 2002-03 was \$135,273.

The District's primary sources of expenditures are supplies (\$80,133), employee services (\$60,220), and professional and specialized services (\$49,948). Other sources of expenditures include insurance, special district expense, transportation and travel, communication, property tax refunds, maintenance, and other miscellaneous expenses. Total expenditures in FY 2002-03 totaled \$202,885.

In FY 2002-03, the District's total expenses exceeded total revenues by \$67,612. The FY 2002-03 budget projected expenditures to exceed revenues by \$71,247.

Reserves from FY 2001-02 and 2002-03 decreased as a result of expenditures exceeding revenues. In FY 2001-02, the District's expenditures exceeded revenues by \$22,063.

The District's FY 2004-05 budget projected income total \$207,869; projected expenditures total \$193,909. The largest sources of projected income includes charges for services (ditch fees), which total \$76,485; and county tax revenue, \$64,462. The largest projected expenditures include salary/wages, \$79,518; and services and supplies, \$50,022.

## **2.1 DIXON RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

---

According to Article XIII B of the California Constitution provides exceptions for some special districts for establishing an appropriations limit. As per Article XIII B, the District is not subject to the appropriations limit because the District was in existence on January 1, 1978 and the District's ad valorem tax levy for fiscal year 1977/78 was below 12.5 cents per \$100 of assessed value.

### **Determination:**

The Dixon Resource Conservation District appears to have resolved previous budgeting discrepancies and in FY 2004-05 will have sufficient revenue to cover expenses (see FY 2003/04 and FY 2004/05 audits).

### **COST AVOIDANCE AND FACILITIES SHARING**

The Dixon RCD works closely with local governmental agencies and other related entities to ensure an efficient provision of services.

The District collaborates with United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in implementing NRCS's national conservation goal by advising them on local practices and providing input on proposed NRCS and landowner projects. As part of this partnership agreement, the NRCS provides office space, phones, information technology access, and shares the cost of office supplies. The Dixon RCD and the Solano RCD shares this office space, as well. This allows the Dixon RCD to reduce overhead costs and allows greater cooperation and coordination with the NRCS and the Solano RCD.

Other local partnerships include an MOU and JPA between the Dixon RCD, RD 2068, the MPWD, and the City of Dixon to study and address regional drainage needs. The Dixon RCD provides administrative and secretarial services to the JPA, for which the District is reimbursed. This cooperation will continue to accomplish significant drainage improvements in next five to 10 years.

The Dixon RCD collaborates with the Solano RCD in variety of areas. In 2003, the two districts formed the Dixon/Solano RCD Water Quality Coalition to enroll landowners in the Regional Water Quality Control Board's Conditional Waiver for Irrigated Lands. During the first enrollment period, 85% of irrigated lands in Solano County's Region 5 enrolled in the program.

The Dixon and Solano RCD partner on Northern California Water Agency programs and are signatories to the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition (SVWQC). The SVWQC was formed in 2003 to enhance and improve water quality in the Sacramento River, while sustaining the economic viability of agriculture, functional values of managed wetlands, and sources of safe drinking water. As part of this partnership, both districts contribute local expertise, reporting, management, and local implementation of programs. This partnership allows the districts to obtain knowledge from experts throughout the region and achieve a large economy of scale that helps reduce burdens on individual landowners.

The Dixon RCD is also partnering with the Solano RCD and the Yolo County RCD to implement a water quality grant that funds implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs). These BMPs will be utilized on sites within the jurisdiction of all three districts, and will be monitored to determine their effectiveness in improving water quality.

The Dixon RCD has also partnered with the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and in 2004 entered in a Master Ground Lease Agreement with DFG to provide management, reporting, and recommendations for the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area's (YBWA) agricultural leases.



## 2.1 DIXON RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

---

Under the Agreement the Dixon RCD is responsible for determining the agricultural production capabilities and the optimal crop and grazing rotations on the leased premises that are most appropriate given DFG's objectives of flood control, management of habitat for ecological value and public use, and revenue creation. The Dixon RCD and the DFG hope to use this opportunity to highlight the mutual benefits between production agriculture, flood protection, and wildlife habitat as together they investigate ways that agriculture can be integrated into the long term management of the Wildlife Area. The lessons learned through this partnership will have increasing application as increased acreages of agricultural lands are protected by conservation easements and/or habitat preserves that include an active production component.

Within the District's boundaries the NRCS provides cost-sharing assistance for the implementation of conservation practices on agricultural lands. This overlap has presented an opportunity to foster a strong cooperative relationship between the national and the local levels of conservation. The Dixon RCD has worked in cooperation with the NRCS to assist with projects located on agricultural lands and managed wetlands.

The District staff serves on a number of different committees including the Solano County Water Agency's (SCWA) flood control advisory committee, on the Solano County Weed Management Area Committee, the Solano County Water Conservation Committee, the Solano County General Plan Update Technical Advisory Committee, and District Staff also participates in numerous official and ad-hoc committees and groups that are implementing conservation practices throughout the county.

### **Determination:**

The Dixon Resource Conservation District appears to utilize available cost reduction measures in its operations, as related to sharing of facilities, knowledge, and equipment. There are no outstanding opportunities identified to significantly reduce costs.

## **2.1 DIXON RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

---

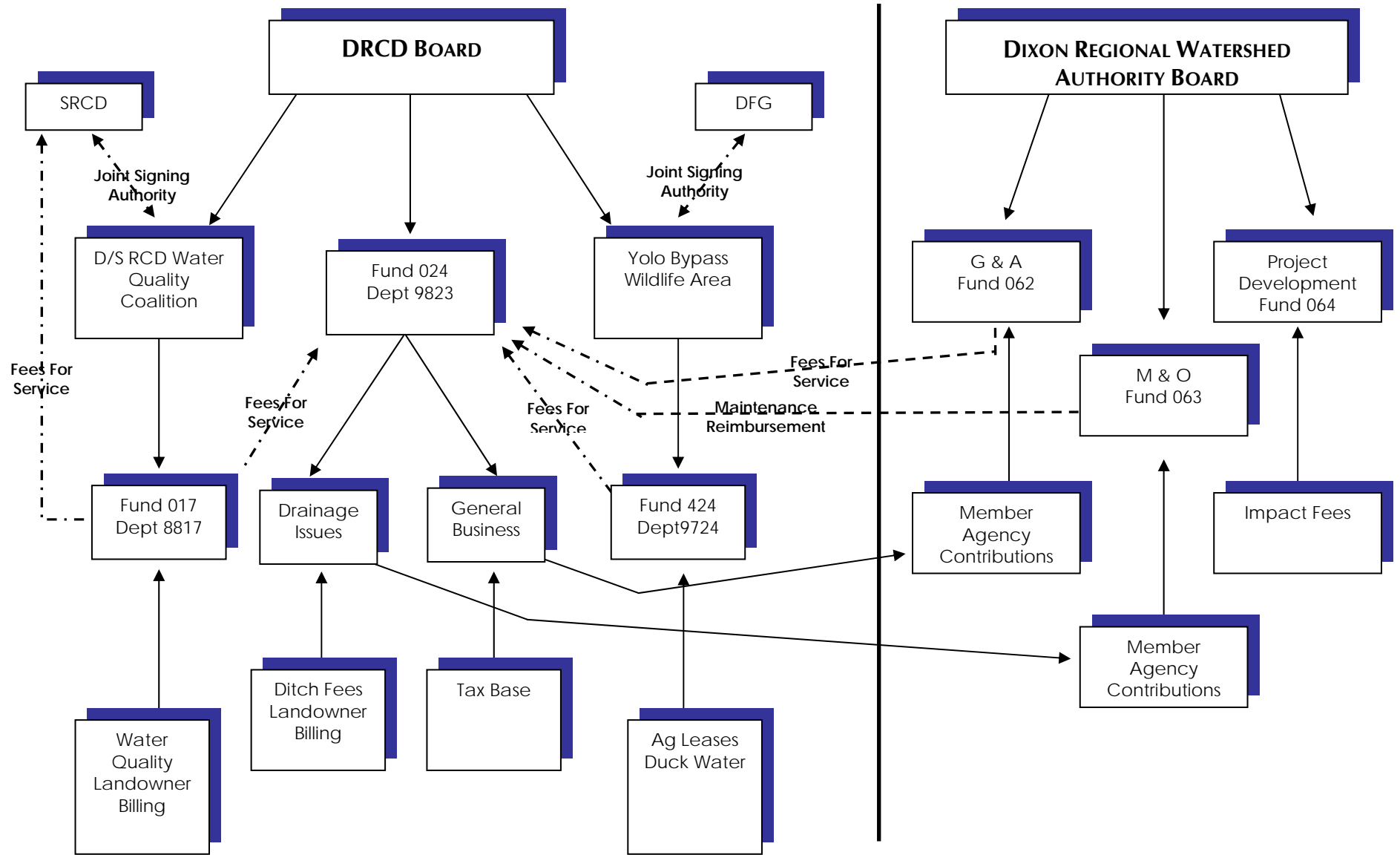
### **GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCIES**

The Dixon RCD was established in 1952 as a multi-county special district created by the State of California to help the state secure adoption of conservation practices “to save basic resources, soil, water, and air of the state from unreasonable and economically preventable waste and destruction.” This includes, but is not limited to “farm, range, open space, urban development, wildlife, recreation, watershed, water quality, and woodland.” Additional mandated responsibilities include helping landowners, groups, state, county, city and public district officials conserve soil and water, control runoff, prevent soil erosion, and stabilize soil on open land, agricultural, urban and recreational development, wildlife areas, and watershed. In addition, RCD’s help people protect water quality, reclaim water, develop storage facilities and distribution systems for water, and treat each acre of land according to its need. The only logical alternative to the existing governmental structure would be the consolidation of the Solano RCD and Dixon RCD. Despite information sharing, administrative building sharing, and cooperative efforts between the Dixon RCD and the Solano RCD, the nature of the programs lend themselves to functioning most efficiently as separate entities, which are able to form cooperatives to accomplish mutual goals, while maintaining autonomy to carry out the different purposes of each District. The Dixon RCD focus includes maintenance of Dixon Drain, working with interested agencies to reduce flooding problems, resource management, water quality protection, reduction of soil erosion, promoting viable agriculture, wildlife habitat management, and outreach. The Solano RCD focuses on water quality protection, reduction of soil erosion, promoting viable agriculture, wildlife habitat improvement, enhancement and preservation; invasive species control and weed management, promoting citizen-based land stewardship, and conservation education.

The District boundaries, which include the City of Dixon and the southern Yolo Bypass, were created to serve discrete watersheds within the northeastern portion of Solano County and the southern portion of Yolo County; these watersheds are consistent with the drainage services provided. Maine Prairie Water District, Reclamation District No. 2068 and Solano Irrigation District provide drainage services to lands within their jurisdictions, which compliment the District drainages.

2.1 DIXON RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

DIXON RCD PROJECT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



### **Determinations:**

The Dixon Resource Conservation District has boundaries appropriate for the services offered and in relation to other service providers in portions of Solano and Yolo Counties/

The Dixon Resource Conservation District has an overall management structure that is sufficient to account for necessary services and maintain operations in an efficient and effective manner.

### LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The Dixon RCD Board of Directors is composed of five local property owners, who are elected to office, or appointed by the Solano County Board of Supervisors. Terms are four years and staggered to allow only two or three vacancies at election/appointment time. In the case of an uncontested election, where the number of candidates is equal or less than the number of vacancies, or in lieu of an election, the Solano County Board of Supervisors appoints the candidates to the RCD Board. The Board also employs a full time District Manager, a half time Administrative Assistant, and a quarter-time Project Technician. The Board Members do not receive compensation.

The Dixon RCD Board of Directors is responsible for all aspects of the activities required of Conservation Districts in Division 9 of the California Public Resources Code as well as programs established by the District. Notices for meetings are posted in the District's office window in public view. Meetings are held in the District office on the second Wednesday of the month unless modified by Board action. The District maintains an office at 1170 N. Lincoln, Suite 110 Dixon, CA 95620.

The District maintains a website (<http://www.carcd.org/wisp/dixon/index.htm>) that contains information on District Board meetings, contact information, major projects, and information on accessing long range and annual plans.

### **Determination:**

The Dixon Resource Conservation District maintains sufficient accountability in its governance, and public meetings appear to be held in compliance with Brown Act requirements. There are sufficient opportunities for local involvement in District activities, and information regarding the District is readily available to members of the public.

## 2.2 SOLANO RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

---

### SUMMARY OF SERVICE PROVISION

The Solano Resource Conservation District ("Solano RCD") was formed in 1956 under Division 9 of the California Public Resources Code. The mission of the District is to protect, promote and enhance the soil, water, wildlife, plant-life and air quality resources within Solano County. Solano RCD provides landowners and urban dwellers assistance by providing direct conservation planning services, through educational outreach, and modeling best management practices at demonstration sites throughout the county.

District goals include increasing its cooperative efforts with other agencies and groups, and improving water quality protection, enhancement and control. The District is committed to the reduction of soil erosion, promoting viable agriculture, wildlife habitat improvement, as well as wildlife enhancement and preservation. Additionally the District focuses on invasive species control, weed management, promoting citizen-based land stewardship, and conservation education.

An issue of concern relative to the provision of resource conservation services in Solano County is the existence of areas outside of any district boundary. Adjacent to the Solano Resource Conservation District are some of the areas currently unserved by any district. These areas are primarily located south of the District boundaries, including the majority of the cities of Rio Vista and Fairfield, as well as surrounding lands between the two cities. Extension of the Solano RCD boundaries or Sphere of Influence to cover these areas is a potential solution to providing service to these unserved areas, and is discussed within this analysis, as appropriate.

### INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS AND DEFICIENCIES

The main watershed in the District is the Ulatis Creek System. It is composed of many smaller creeks, including Barker Slough, Alamo, Ulatis, Horse, Gibson Canyon, Sweeney, and McCune Creeks. A second watershed located to the north, is Putah Creek, which includes Pleasants Creek, Miller Creek, Pleasants Valley Creek and Putah Creek.

The District owns a two-acre parcel with an office, barn, greenhouse, and lathhouse in rural Vacaville. The District uses this site to raise and sell native plants, and has a demonstration garden on the property. The District does not have any plans to acquire or upgrade infrastructure at this time although additional funds are being pursued to improve the greenhouse facilities and to make all buildings at the site handicap accessible.

The District's facilities are shared with the Dixon RCD, and provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). There are no limitations on service capabilities resulting from the facilities and infrastructure arrangements utilized by the District.

### **Determination:**

The Solano Resource Conservation District's infrastructure is appropriated to provide existing services. District officials have noted that there are no existing plans to acquire or upgrade infrastructure, with the exception of the green house facility and making all Solano Resource Conservation District facilities accessible to the handicapped.

## 2.2 SOLANO RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

---

### GROWTH

According to ABAG 2005 projections, Solano County will have the highest percentage increase in population of any county in the region between 2000 and 2030. Solano's population will increase by 47 percent, or approximately 187,300 residents, in this 30-year period.

The total population in the city of Vacaville is projected to increase from 89,304 in 2000 to 127,100 in 2030. Total households are expected to increase from 28,351 in 2000 to 41,350 in 2030.

Landowners within SRCD District boundaries are considered customers of the District. The demographics of most concern to the District include: changing ratios of rural, suburban, urban and agricultural landowners, and increases in the number of new landowners within the District's jurisdiction. As more landowners move to rural areas from more urban locations, the District will expand its outreach activities in an effort to educate new residents about local flood prevention, wildlife habitat, soil conservation, and water quality protection issues.

Service needs are established based on parameters that are regularly discussed and established at monthly board meetings. Parameters include: observations of demographic changes; observations of government program changes; concerns voiced by district landowners; and discussions with other service agencies in the region. The District provides direct conservation planning services to about thirty District landowners each year.

The District usually receives a public notification of any new developments constructed in the county. These notifications are reviewed at Board meetings and help the District plan for future service needs. Smaller construction projects are often observed by one of the Board members or Dixon Service Center (DRCD, SRCD, NRCS & FSA) employees and are discussed during monthly Board meetings.

The District has developed the *2005-2010 Long Range Plan*, which contains short and long term goals directed at planning for future service needs. These goals include: providing direct conservation planning assistance for more District landowners each year; creating more detailed conservation plans; assisting more landowners in the implementation of these plans; providing more follow-up assistance after the plan has been implemented; and connecting these landowners together to form cooperating watershed groups that create conservation corridors.

Growth projections do not consider the extension of District boundaries or Sphere of Influence to cover the unserved areas of the County. There are no existing proposals for changes in the District boundaries or SOI to include these territories, and inclusion of these areas in the growth planning of the District is not warranted prior to formal discussions of inclusion of the lands into the District.

### **Determination:**

To meet the needs of changing demographics, the Solano Resource Conservation District has developed the *2005-2010 Long Range Plan*, identifying opportunities to increase public benefit, identify new funding sources, and increase District visibility.

### FINANCING AND RATE RESTRUCTURING

Annual independent auditor's reports and financial statements from fiscal year (FY) 2003-2004 and the 2004-2005 budget were reviewed to assess the fiscal status of the District.

## 2.2 SOLANO RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

---

The Districts primary sources of revenues in FY 2003-04 were charges for services and property taxes. Other sources of revenue include intergovernmental revenue, revenues from the use of money and property, and miscellaneous revenues. Total revenue in 2003-04 totaled \$295,508.

The Districts primary sources of expenditures were employee services and supplies. Other expenditures included professional and specialized services, maintenance, special district expenses, utilities, insurance, transportation and travel, depreciation, communication, property tax refunds, and other miscellaneous expenses. Total expenditures in 2003-04 totaled \$308,864.

Expenditures exceeded revenues by \$13,356, and net assets decreased from \$140,626 to \$127,270. The FY 2003-04 budget projected an excess of revenues over expenditures at \$48,426. The largest discrepancy in comparing the budget with actual amounts is in intergovernmental revenues; the District projected \$344,012 in intergovernmental revenues, and actually received \$78,934. According to District officials, management during FY 2003-04 did not receive revenues when anticipated. Intergovernmental revenues awarded during FY 2003-04 had payments to be received through 2007, rather than full receipt in 2004, as budgeted. In response, the District Board tightened internal controls, which included hiring an independent CPA in November 2005 to conduct quarterly reviews, and implementing Quickbooks to track District finances.

The FY 2005-2006 budget shows approximately 30% of the District's funding from taxes and 70% from grants and contracts. The District's FY 2005-06 budget projects total revenue of \$566,400 and total expenditures of \$538,400. District officials note that the Board's budgetary policy is to maintain a minimum of breaking even, and to ensure that all staffing and overhead costs are met. The District Board recently voted to provide conservation planning services to non-district landowners at a minimum cost of \$35/hour per consultant. According to District staff, this will generate enough revenue to cover staff and overhead costs. The District Board also voted to open the Native Plant Nursery to the public to generate revenues from additional plant sales.

Article XIII B of the California Constitution provides exceptions for some special districts for establishing an appropriations limit. As per Article XIII B, the District is not subject to the appropriations limit because the District was in existence on January 1, 1978 and the District's tax levy for fiscal year 1977/78 was below 12.5 cents per \$100 of assessed value.

The District would incur additional costs if it were to extend services to the unserved lands to the south and southeast of the existing District boundaries. The addition of these new lands to the District boundaries would require a property tax sharing arrangement with Solano County, to ensure that the cost of the additional services could be recouped by the District. Negotiations with the County on such an arrangement have not occurred, and the costs of providing service to these areas would likely exceed the potential tax revenues which could be secured by the District as part of the tax sharing agreement.

### **Determination:**

Recent yearly expenditures have exceeded revenues. However, the District Board has recently implemented new revenue generating alternatives, which are projected to cover staffing and overhead costs. Costs of extending service to areas currently outside District boundaries and SOI would likely result in costs exceeding potential revenues from the properties.

## **2.2 SOLANO RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

---

### **COST AVOIDANCE AND FACILITIES SHARING**

The District's main office is located in the USDA Dixon Service Center, which is provided by the NRCS and shared by the Dixon RCD. This allows the two Districts to not only save costs on facilities, but allows for greater cooperation and coordination.

Within the District's boundaries the NRCS provides cost-sharing assistance for the implementation of conservation practices on agricultural lands. This overlap has presented an opportunity to foster a strong cooperative relationship between the national and the local levels of conservation. In the past, the Solano RCD has worked in cooperation with the NRCS to assist with projects located on agricultural lands and to take the lead on projects that are located on rural residential properties.

The Solano RCD implements several educational programs at local schools, at elementary, junior high and high school age levels. The District also works occasionally with several Boy Scout troops in the region who volunteer to identify and implement conservation related service projects. The District actively uses other volunteers as needed to assist in the Conservation Education Center, at the District's spring and fall plant sales, and to help lead educational field trips.

The District Manager serves as the Solano County Weed Management Area coordinator. The District also serves in an advisory role on both the Flood Advisory Committee and the Water Conservation Committee. It is beneficial for the District to be integrally involved in these organizations as the District serves a high number of customers who are affected by flooding and flood control policies. Additionally, this is a catalyst for greater cooperation on both sides and provides additional opportunities for collaboration.

Other cooperative projects include:

Department of Conservation: Provide watershed coordination and meeting facilitation services, enhance cooperative efforts with other agencies and groups, secure additional funding resources, and promote citizen-based land stewardship within the watershed.

Regional Water Quality Control Board: Cooperate with the Dixon Resource Conservation District to implement the Conditional Waiver for Irrigated lands Program. Cooperate with the Yolo Resource Conservation District to install water quality best management practices such as sediment traps, filter strips and vegetated ditches on appropriate farms or ranches.

Environmental Protection Agency: Promote water quality protection at Lake Berryessa through education programs, outreach events and the development of a Source Water Protection Plan.

Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District: Coordinate and implement two educational programs within the Fairfield-Suisun School District boundaries. The first program teaches high school students about water quality stream ecology and habitat protection through a combination of in-class work and field trips. The second program teaches 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students about watersheds through the use of guided nature hikes and associated hands-on activities.

Farm and Ranch Clean-Up Grant: Coordinate the clean-up of illegal dump sites on farm lands, ranches, and in streams. Coordinate post clean-up habitat restoration and prevention efforts.

Fish and Game Fine Funds: Raise native plants for distribution at our Spring and Fall native plant sales. Build nesting boxes and sell them to landowners in suitable nesting areas.



## 2.2 SOLANO RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

---

Integrated Hardwood Range Management Program: Conduct research on cost-effective techniques to establish oaks on grazed rangelands while restoring riparian corridors on two actively grazed ranches within the county.

City of Vacaville: Remove weeds and restore native plants along Old Alamo Creek to improve wildlife habitat and water quality.

Vallejo Sanitation and Flood Control District: Use mitigation funds to restore native plants along Ridler Creek to improve wildlife habitat and water quality.

Solano County Water Agency: Coordinate and implement two outreach programs. The first program teaches 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students about watersheds, water quality and erosion using hands-on learning stations at Lake Solano. The second program provides flood awareness outreach to landowners living in flood-prone locations throughout the county.

The majority of the District's activities are funded by grants and contracts. The district bills grants and contracts after work has been completed. The District Manager and the contracted Watershed Coordinator are the two primary grant writers. Secured grants include:

- Department of Conservation-watershed coordination- \$208,000
- Environmental Protection Agency- watershed education- \$43,500
- California Integrated Waste Management- farm and ranch- \$204,000
- Fish & Game Fine Funds- native plant propagation- \$4,250
- Integrated Hardwood Range Management- oak research- \$115,000
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation- arundo removal- \$36,550

The District is exposed to various risks of loss related to torts; theft of, damage to, and destruction of assets, errors and omissions; and natural disasters. The District continues to carry commercial insurance for all risks of loss, including workers' compensation and employee health and accident insurance.

### **Determinations:**

The Solano Resource Conservation District appears to utilize many available cost reduction measures in its operations, as related to sharing of facilities, knowledge, and equipment.

Other opportunities for cost avoidance include taking advantage of decreased costs associated with pooled insurance.

### **GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCIES**

The County Board of Supervisors appoints a seven member Board of Trustees. The Board hires a District Manager to oversee one part time nursery technician, a full time Administrative Assistant, Watershed Protection Program Coordinator, and an Environmental Education Coordinator.

The boundaries of the district are the Vaca Mountains west of Vacaville to Cache Slough, approximately 15 miles southeast of Vacaville. Solano RCD contains approximately 132,000

## 2.2 SOLANO RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

---

acres and was originally formed to provide flood protection and drain the land within the Ulatis Creek Watershed. The District has actively pursued expanding its boundaries in the past and the Board is currently discussing whether if not it would be beneficial to pursue the unincorporated landowners in the County so that they would also be eligible to receive District services. Landowners in Montezuma Hills and Suisun Valley have expressed interest in becoming District cooperators. Currently the District is only able to provide services to these areas on a fee-for-service basis.

Extension of District boundaries or SOI to include these unserved properties would result in the addition of costs to the District which are unlikely to be fully recouped through a property tax sharing agreement with the County. The District is able to provide services to these properties on a fee-for-service basis, as allowed in State law. The District can continue to provide services to properties which are not within a resource conservation district via this mechanism. Extension of the District boundaries to include these properties would be subject to the establishment of a tax sharing agreement and formal application to LAFCo. Extension of the District SOI to include these already-served properties would formalize the District's desire to eventually annex the sites into the District.

There are no apparent structural problems with the District, as currently organized. The only logical alternative to the existing governmental structure would be the consolidation of the Solano RCD and Dixon RCD. Despite information sharing, administrative building sharing, and cooperative efforts between the Dixon RCD and the Solano RCD, the nature of the two programs lend themselves to functioning most efficiently as separate entities, which are able to form cooperatives to accomplish mutual goals, while maintaining autonomy to carry out the different purposes of each District. The Dixon RCD focus includes maintenance of Dixon Drain, working with interested agencies to reduce flooding problems, resource management, and outreach. The Solano RCD focuses on water quality protection, reduction of soil erosion, promoting viable agriculture, wildlife habitat improvement, enhancement and preservation; invasive species control and weed management, promoting citizen-based land stewardship, and conservation education.

The District does not have an organizational chart.

### **Determinations:**

The Solano Resource Conservation District is discussing expanding services to areas currently receiving services on a fee-for-service basis. Inclusion of these properties within the District Sphere of Influence is appropriate and logical.

The Solano Resource Conservation District has an overall management structure that is sufficient to account for all necessary services and maintain operations in an efficient and effective manner.

### LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The District is governed seven-member Board of Trustees. The County Board of Supervisors appoints members to a three-year term after being nominated by landowners within Solano County. Members have the opportunity to renew their position after serving for three years. The Board of Trustees holds meetings on the third Tuesday of the month in the District's main office. The District appears to comply with all Brown Act requirements, including posting meeting notices in the District office window.

## 2.2 SOLANO RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

---

The Board appoints the District Manager who oversees three full-time staff members: an Administrative Assistant, the Watershed Protection Program Coordinator, and the Environmental Education Coordinator. The District Manager also oversees one part-time employee; the Nursery Technician. There appear to be sufficient opportunity for local involvement through regularly scheduled meetings, and educational and community outreach programs organized by the District.

### **Determination:**

The Solano Resource Conservation District maintains sufficient accountability in its governance, and public meetings appear to be held in compliance with Brown Act requirements. There are sufficient opportunities for local involvement in District activities, and information regarding the District is readily available to members of the public.

## 2.3 SUISUN RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

---

### SUMMARY OF SERVICE PROVISION

The Suisun Resource Conservation District ("Suisun RCD") of Solano County was organized on June 6, 1963, and operates under Division 9 of the Public Resources Code, *Resource Conservation*. The District's primary purpose is to regulate and improve water management practices related to the wetlands and wildlife habitat in the Suisun Marsh. Suisun RCD performs both administrative and technical functions that include representing the interests of the landowners.

The Suisun RCD represents private landowners of the Suisun Marsh on a variety of issues at a Federal, State, and local levels. Historically, the goals of SRCD were to achieve water supply of adequate quality to promote preferred waterfowl habitat and retain wetland resource values through appropriate management practices. Today, the District provides the landowners technical assistance in permitting, water control, and habitat management to ensure the wetland and wildlife values of the Suisun Marsh are sustained and enhanced.

An issue of concern relative to the provision of resource conservation services in Solano County is the existence of areas outside of any district boundary. Adjacent to the Suisun Resource Conservation District are some of the areas currently unserved by any district. These areas are primarily located east of the District boundaries, including the majority of the cities of Rio Vista and Fairfield, as well as surrounding lands between the two cities. Extension of the Suisun RCD boundaries or Sphere of Influence to cover these areas is a potential solution to providing service to these unserved areas, and is discussed within this analysis, as appropriate.

### INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS AND DEFICIENCIES

The District includes 116,000 acres, consisting of approximately 52,000 acres of managed wetlands, 6,300 acres of unmanaged tidal wetlands, 30,000 acres of bays and sloughs, and 27,700 acres of upland grasslands.

The Suisun RCD offices are at the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) Grizzly Island Wildlife Area and are provided rent-free as a condition of the DFG contract for services, under the 1977 Suisun Marsh Preservation Act. The SRCD owns the 1,300-acre Lower Joice Island. This property was purchased with grant money and donations from previous landowners. All operating costs associated with this property are funded by an endowment and managed by the Suisun Conservation Fund (SCF), which is a 501(c) (3) foundation. District officials noted that there are no plans to acquire new infrastructure at this time.

The District has no plans to extend service or to annex new areas into the service area in the future. There are legal limits on the ability of property owners to develop land within the District. For these reasons there is no reason to believe that there will be a need for additional facilities in the near future. The lands to the east of the District not within the boundaries of any resource conservation district at present. The Solano RCD is providing services to some of these properties, on a fee-for-services basis. Extension of Suisun RCD infrastructure to serve these areas is not considered essential to the future servicing of these lands.

### Determination:

The Suisun Resource Conservation District has sufficient infrastructure in place to provide an adequate provision of service.

## 2.3 SUISUN RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

---

### GROWTH

According to ABAG 2005 projections, Solano County will have the highest percentage increase in population of any county in the region between 2000 and 2030. Solano's population will increase by 47 percent, or approximately 187,300 residents, in this 30-year period.

Despite County-wide population projections, the Suisun RCD does not expect size or the demographic of the Suisun Marsh landowners to change significantly. The Suisun Marsh is fully protected from development under the Suisun Marsh Preservation Act and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commissions (BCDC) and Solano Counties policies and regulations. These regulations and policies were developed to preserve and enhance the quality and diversity of the Suisun Marsh aquatic and wildlife habitats. Therefore the existing land use of managed wetlands for waterfowl hunting clubs, tidal wetlands, agricultural practices, and open spaces are the only significant future uses of the Suisun Marsh.

Additionally, the largest landowners in the marsh are public agencies such as DFG, Suisun RCD, and the Solano County Land Trust. The majority of the remainder of the privately owned lands is wetland areas, which are fully protected by both State and Federal wetland protection laws.

However, future conflicts may arise due to the increasing development and urbanization occurring around the District boundaries. Conflicts such as mosquito production adjacent to urban areas, smoke from wildlife habitat management burns, human disturbance of wildlife and pollution from developed areas entering the marsh could pose future problems for the District. District officials noted that mitigating these conflicts and developing new landowner assistance programs will take a toll on existing programs and may require additional staff to maintain existing levels of landowner and management support.

Growth projections do not consider the extension of District boundaries or Sphere of Influence to cover the unserved areas of the County. There are no existing proposals for changes in the District boundaries or SOI to include these territories, and inclusion of these areas in the growth planning of the District is not warranted prior to formal discussions of inclusion of the lands into the District.

### **Determinations:**

Due to existing land use restrictions, significant changes to growth and population will not occur in the near future within Suisun Resource Conservation District's boundaries.

As growth around the Suisun Resource Conservation District increases, there will be an increasing strain on the current District staff. New assistance programs will need to be developed, and there will be an increased need to provide landowner and habitat management support.

### FINANCING AND RATE RESTRUCTURING

Annual auditor's reports and financial statements from fiscal year (FY) 2003-04 and 2005-06 were Projected Budget were reviewed to determine the fiscal status of the District.

Based on information contained in the FY 2003-04 Annual auditor's report, the main source of Suisun RCD's funding is grant revenue and voluntary fees paid by Suisun Marsh landowners. Most of these grants are long-term agency obligations. Other grants are specific to different wetland

restoration projects, scientific studies, or the preparation of planning documents and individual landowners' management plans. Intergovernmental revenue in FY 2003-04 totaled \$529,350. Other sources of revenue included donations and contributions, licenses and permits, charges for services, revenues from the use of money and property, and property taxes. Total revenue for FY 2003-04 totaled \$966,141. This represents a 27.36% decrease from FY 2002-03, due to a reduction in grant monies received by the District.

The main source of District expenditures is employee services; in FY 2003-04, employee services totaled \$306,233. Other sources of expenditures include special district expenses, capital outlay, and professional and specialized services. FY 2003-04 expenditures totaled \$766,858 which represents a 27% decrease from the year prior. This decrease in expenditures is directly related to the decrease in grant revenues.

In FY 2003-04, revenues exceeded expenditures by \$199,283.

As of the end of FY 2003-04, the District had a total debt outstanding for its governmental activities of \$8,376. This amount is entirely backed by the full faith and credit of the District. The District entered into a lease agreement in August 2001 and April 2002 to purchase a postage machine and copiers, respectively. The District agreed to pay \$5,121 for the postage machine and \$12,218 for the copier over a period of 21 quarters, plus sales and use tax.

According to the Auditor's report completed for fiscal year ending June 30, 2004 The District's purchasing policy dated February 1986 is inadequate and outdated. The policy does not address contracts or agreements, code of standards, conflict of interest and bidding requirements for federal awards. The district responded stating that new policies have been in place, but not yet formalized. This process was targeted to be completed by June 30, 2005. This issue has been addressed; the Solano County Auditor's office stated in a memo in 2006 that the purchasing policy had been addressed adequately.

Article XIII B of the California Constitution provides exceptions for some special districts for establishing an appropriations limit. As per Article XIII B, the district is not subject to an appropriations limit because the District was in existence on January 1, 1978, and the district's tax level for fiscal year 1977/78 was below 12 ½ cents per \$100 of assessed valuation.

The District would incur additional costs if it were to extend services to the unserved lands to the east of the existing District boundaries. The addition of these new lands to the District boundaries would require a property tax sharing arrangement with Solano County, to ensure that the cost of the additional services could be recouped by the District. Negotiations with the County on such an arrangement have not occurred, and the costs of providing service to these areas would likely exceed the potential tax revenues which could be secured by the District as part of the tax sharing agreement.

### **Determination:**

It appears that the District is in good financial standing. Revenues exceed expenditures, and the District has consistently set aside substantial funding for improvements.

### **COST AVOIDANCE AND FACILITIES SHARING**

The District utilizes a variety of cost avoidance and facilities sharing measures in its operations.

## 2.3 SUISUN RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

The District's primary source of revenue is grants. Many of these grants are multi-year grants, with the majority of funding identified for specific wetland enhancement and restoration projects. The Suisun RCD often acts as a grant administrator, a pass through agency, or is reimbursed for actual staff costs associated with delivering required work products, studies, or compliance reports. Suisun RCD's executive director, staff biologists and water managers all participate in grant writing. Recent grants are shown below.

**TABLE 2.3-1  
RECENT GRANTS OBTAINED BY THE DISTRICT**

Type	Amount	Source
DFG Service Contract	\$81,350	DFG
Seed Program	\$2,500	Solano County Fines Committee
Mosquito Abatement	\$40,000	SRCD, Landowners, SCMAD
Invasive Species Control	\$45,000	Private Foundations, Ducks Unlimited, Private Landowners
Revised SMPA	\$577,284	DWR, USBR
USACE Permit Fees	\$147,000	Private landowners
Management Plan Update	\$214,943	CALFED
Coastal Assistance Grant	\$65,700	Federal Grant, Solano County pass through
Charter Development Grant	\$250,000	CALFED
SCF Endowment Contribution	\$16,000	SCF
NAWCA Grant Phase II	\$1,000,000	USFWS
Implementation Plan Development	\$310,000	DFG
DWR/USBR Service Grant	\$111,270	DWR, USBR

The District works with several different agencies in the provision of services. The Suisun RCD contracts with the DFG to carry out provisions of the Suisun Marsh Preservation Act of 1977, and the Suisun Marsh Protection Plan. Provisions of these documents include preserving, protecting and enhancing the fish, wildlife and plant communities within the primary management area of the Suisun Marsh. Suisun RCD is responsible for administering and amending the enforceable standards contained within the Suisun Resource Conservation District's Local Protection Plan. As part of this contract, the office facilities used by the District are provided, rent free by the DFG.

The District also contracts with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) for technical support on the activities related to the implementation of the Suisun Marsh Plan of Protection prepared by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the SWR in response to the State Water Resource Control Board's Water Rights Decision 1485 and 1641. Additionally the SRCD also contracts with DFG, DWR, and USBR to implement certain actions under the 2005 Revised Suisun marsh preservation Agreement.

All operating costs associated with the District owned Lower Joice Island, are funded by an endowment. Additionally cost recovery is accomplished by collecting voluntary fees for services, which are paid by the Marsh landowners.

The District is exposed to various risks of loss related to torts; theft of, damage to, and destruction of assets; errors and omissions; and natural disasters. The District continues to carry commercial insurance for all risks of loss, including workers' compensation and employee health and accident insurance.

### **Determinations:**

The Suisun Resource Conservation District appears to utilize available cost reduction measures in its operations including facilities sharing with the Department of Fish and Game, grant monies, and endowments and fees.

The SRCD takes advantage of decreased costs associated with pooled insurance by participating in a Rural Special Districts Insurance Policy.

### **GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCIES**

The District is governed by an appointed Board of Directors consisting of seven members, each serving four-year terms. The Board of Supervisors of Solano County approves the appointment of each board member. The appointments are an alternative to a formal election and are supported by a Suisun RCD Resolution and a Solano County Ordinance. The Suisun RCD Board of Directors receives no compensation. The Board of Directors oversees four related committees: finance, personnel, legal, and agency relations. The Board of Director appoints an Executive Director, who oversees seven full-time employees including two biologists, three water managers, the Lower Joice Island Caretaker, and a Secretary. The District also employs part-time accounts clerk.

The mission of the District is to represent the Suisun Marsh private landowners on a variety of issues at a Federal, State, and local level. To meet its mission, the Suisun RCD actively works with the following agencies: Department of Fish and Game, the Department of Water Resources, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the California Bay Delta Authority, Ducks Unlimited, California Waterfowl, Solano Land Trust, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, Solano County, Solano County Mosquito Abatement District, the US Environmental Protection Agency, Packard Foundation, Dean Witter Foundation, Harvey Sorenson Foundation, Suisun Conservation Fund, Solano County Water Agency, and the US Army Corps of Engineers. Additionally, Suisun RCD actively participates in numerous technical and advisory committees such as Suisun Marsh charter meetings, Suisun Marsh Plan Writing Group meetings, SMPA Environmental Coordination Advisory Team, and the Solano County Water Agency- Flood Control Advisory Committee.

The boundaries of the District are appropriate and specific to the special legislation and sections of the Public Resource Code. The Suisun RCD is not considering expanding the current boundaries. There is no other agency available to provide adequate guidance on water management practices and assistance in complying with the Suisun Resource Conservation District's Local Protection Plan and individual properties certified management plan.



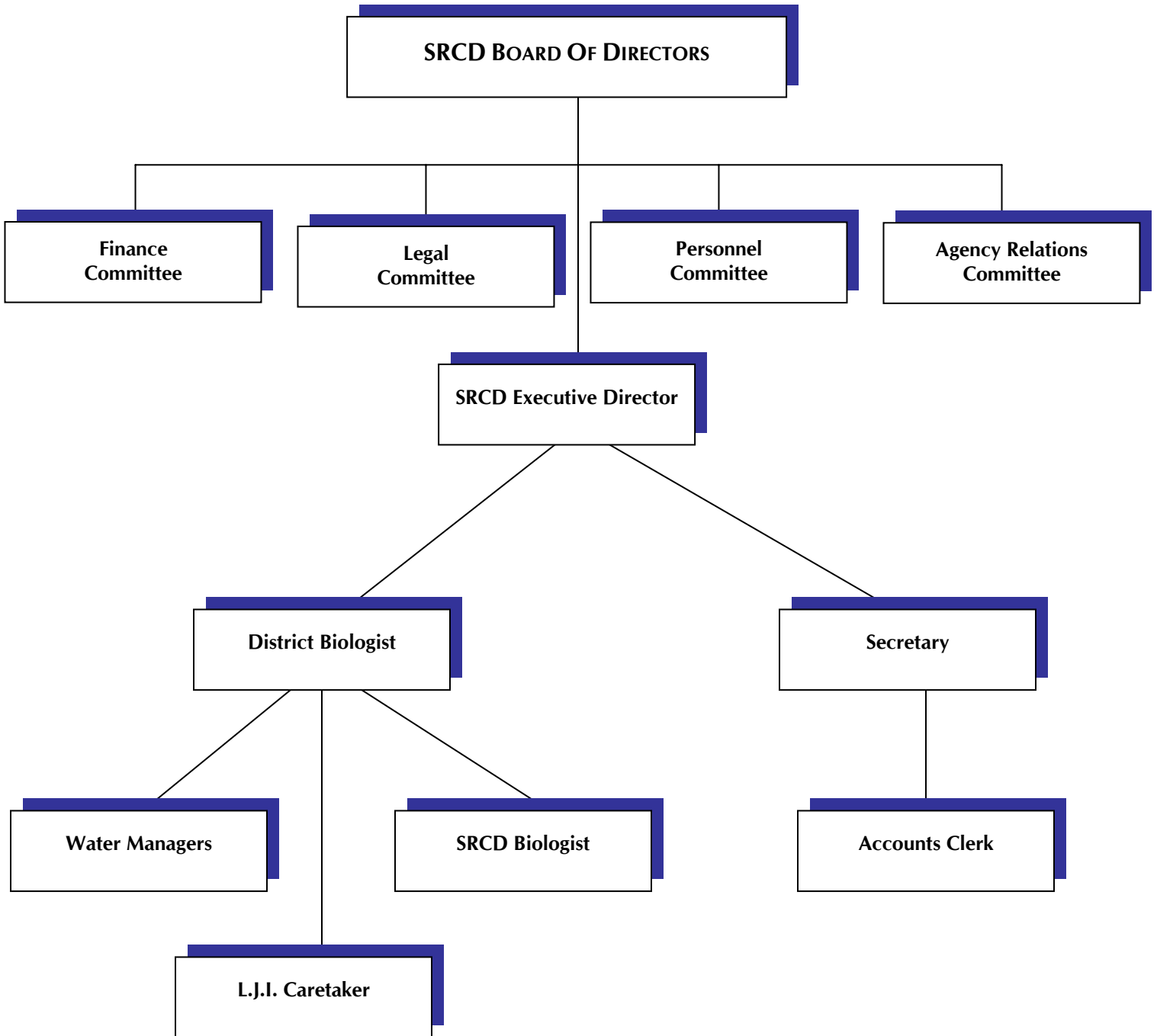
## **2.3 SUISUN RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

---

Extension of the District's boundaries or SOI to include the undesignated properties to the east of the District is a potential option to providing these properties with services currently enjoyed by the remainder of the County. The Solano RCD is providing services to some of these areas at present, through a fee-for-service arrangement. With Solano RCD indicating an interest and ability to serve these undesignated properties, existing Suisun RCD boundaries and SOI appear appropriate and logical.

There are no apparent structural problems with the District, as currently organized. With good financial and operational health, there do not appear to be any necessary governmental structure changes necessary to ensure the long-term continuation of service provision by the Suisun RCD.

Suisun Resource Conservation Districts Organizational Chart



## 2.3 SUISUN RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

---

### **Determinations:**

District boundaries are appropriate for the services offered; there are no other entities providing similar services within the District's boundaries.

The overall management structure of the District is sufficient to account for necessary services and maintain operations in an efficient and effective manner.

### LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The District is governed by a five-member Board of Directors, each serving four-year terms. The Board of Supervisors of Solano County approves the appointment of each Director. The appointments are an alternative to a formal election and are supported by a Suisun RCD Resolution and a Solano County Ordinance. The Suisun RCD Board of Directors receives no compensation. Under the Board of Directors there are four committees: finance, personnel, legal, and agency relations.

The Board meetings every second Wednesday of the month, in the Solano County Board of Supervisors chambers. Meeting announcements are posted by the County Clerk at 675 Texas Street Fairfield, CA.

District performance is evaluated at monthly Board Meetings, at the annual landowner workshop, and at public events such as the Suisun Marsh Field day where Suisun RCD obtains public feedback. Additionally the District produces a quarterly newsletter, "The Land of the West Wind," which is sent to landowners and agencies. Internal service standards are gauged by the number of landowners who actively participate in Suisun RCD programs, grants, and scientific studies and welcome staff on their property.

### **Determination:**

The Suisun Resource Conservation District maintains sufficient accountability in its governance, and public meetings appear to be held in compliance with Brown Act requirements. There are sufficient opportunities for local involvement in District activities, and information regarding the District is readily available to members of the public.