

29. VOLCANO COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

Volcano Community Services District (VCSD) provides retail water delivery, street lighting, public parks, and cemetery services.

AGENCY OVERVIEW

Background

Volcano Community Services District (VCSD) was formed on June 17, 1966, as an independent special district.⁵⁶⁷ VCSD was formed to provide street lighting, recreation, fire protection, and domestic supply of water. In 1994, VCSD fire service was transferred to Amador Fire Protection District. In 1988, the District merged with Volcano Lighting Maintenance District.

The principal act that governs the District is the Community Services District Law.⁵⁶⁸ CSDs may potentially provide a wide array of services, including water supply, wastewater, solid waste, police and fire protection, street lighting and landscaping, airport, recreation and parks, mosquito abatement, library services; street maintenance and drainage services, ambulance service, utility undergrounding, transportation, abate graffiti, flood protection, weed abatement, hydroelectric power, among various other services. CSDs are required to gain LAFCO approval to provide those services permitted by the principal act but not already being performed by the end of 2005 (i.e., latent powers).⁵⁶⁹

Boundary

The VCSD boundary encompasses the community of Volcano, which is located in central Amador County, approximately three miles northeast of the community of Pine Grove. The boundary area extends from Main Street in the west, east along Charleston Grade Road, to the end of Clapboard Road in the north, and south of St. George Street. The District has a boundary area of approximately 47 acres.

There has been one annexation to VCSD since formation. In 1988, LAFCO approved the Clapboard Annexation, which added approximately 16.8 acres to the District.⁵⁷⁰

Sphere of Influence

In 2009, LAFCO updated VCSD's SOI as coterminous with its bounds, plus the parcels outside the boundaries that are currently receiving service or for which the District has previously made binding commitments to serve.⁵⁷¹

⁵⁶⁷ Formation date is from Board of Equalization records.

⁵⁶⁸ Government Code §61000-61226.5.

⁵⁶⁹ Government Code §61106.

⁵⁷⁰ LAFCO resolution 88-207.

⁵⁷¹ LAFCO resolution 2009-09.

The District’s historic SOI extended roughly one mile southeast and northeast of the VCSD boundary, to the west approximately one-third of a mile, and north approximately one-half mile. In the 2008 MSR, the District commented to LAFCO, “the 1980 Sphere of Influence is grossly outdated and should be reduced in scope.”

Local Accountability and Governance

Board members are to be elected at large. In the event of an uncontested election, or to fill a vacancy, board members are appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The most recent contested election was held in 2004.

Figure 29-1: VCSD Governing Body

Volcano Community Services District			
Governing Body			
	Name	Position	Term Ends
<i>Members</i>	Nancy Bailey	Chair	1/1/2016
	Meg Gottstein	Vice Chair	1/1/2014
	Terry Grillo	Director	1/1/2016
	Jane Norcross	Director	1/1/2014
	Gary Korematsu	Director	1/1/2014
<i>Manner of Selection</i>	Election at large		
<i>Length of Term</i>	Four years		
<i>Meetings</i>	1st Monday at 7pm, bi-monthly (Feb., April, June, Aug., Oct. & Dec.) at Armory Hall		
<i>Agenda Distribution</i>	Posted monthly at armory hall, post office, and outside general store		
<i>Minutes Distribution</i>	Posted monthly along with agenda		
Contact			
<i>Contact</i>	General Manager		
<i>Mailing Address</i>	P.O. Box 72, Volcano, CA 95689		
<i>Phone</i>	N/A		
<i>Email/Website</i>	volcanocsd@gmail.com		

The District informs constituents by posting agendas, minutes and notices in public, by direct mailing of letters, and by including special messages on the back of the water bill. The District previously had a website where certain public documents could be accessed; however, VCSD reported the district ceased having a website in June 2013. No explanation was provided as to why the website was cancelled.

With regard to customer service, complaints may be submitted to the general manager or a director via mail, phone, fax or email. The District reported that complaints most often relate to billing issues, and that it receives approximately two complaints on average per year.

The District reported that it had no Brown Act violations in recent history.

The District demonstrated accountability in its disclosure of information and cooperation with LAFCO. The agency responded to portions of LAFCO’s written questionnaires and cooperated with document requests.

Management

The principal act requires that districts appoint a general manager to implement board policies.⁵⁷² Accordingly, the District is managed by a part-time general manager who works approximately 35 hours per month. The general manager handles all daily operations of the District, including billing. The general manager reports directly to the board and gives updates on all financial, billing, and hall rental issues on a monthly basis.

The District's recent efforts to improve operational efficiency include an archiving project to increase access to historical records, the documenting and mapping of procedures and process, increased maintenance and regulatory procedures, and the designing of templates for rate increases. Future plans involve digitization of District records and more systematic back up through AWA.

In the 2008 MSR, the District reported that it does not conduct formal employee evaluations, although it does evaluate the performance of the general manager at monthly meetings. No other performance evaluation practices, such as tracking workload, monitoring productivity, or evaluating operations, were identified as necessary by the District. The District has made no changes to these practices over the last five years.

The District's planning efforts are minimal. The District does not have a master plan for its water system, and has not prepared a capital improvement plan. In the 2008 MSR it was reported that the District does prepare an annual list of capital improvement projects, however, no such list was provided to LAFCO for FY 12 or FY 13.

District financial planning efforts include annual preparation of budgets. The District reported that it conducts financial audits on an annual basis; however, the District also reported that the most recent audit was completed in FY 10. The District provided unaudited financial statements for FY 12 and FY 13.

Management practices include risk management. The District's insurance includes general liability and machinery insurance.

Service Demand and Growth

Existing land uses in the District's boundary are primarily suburban residential (i.e., five acres per unit on average) with commercial properties located in the southwest of the District, along Main Street.

Economic activity in the District's boundary area includes hospitality, retail, publishing, and governmental services. Employers include St. George Hotel, the Volcano General Store, Volcano Press, and the U.S. Postal Service.

The District serves 67 water connections, four of which are considered double meters due to the number of buildings on the property.⁵⁷³ Therefore, the District effectively serves 71 water connections, of which 14 supply commercial facilities and four supply residential customers outside district bounds. The estimated population within district bounds is 156,

⁵⁷² Government Codes §61040 and 61050.

⁵⁷³ Reported by Sharon Owens, VCS D General Manager, 11/13/13.

and within the water service area is 173.⁵⁷⁴ The District's population density is 2,136 per square mile, compared to the countywide density of 64.

The District reported that it has not officially approved any new connections since the 2008 MSR and therefore service demand has remained constant.⁵⁷⁵

The District has a waiting list of nine property owners for new water connections, of which one is located outside district bounds. The District reported that the property owners on this waitlist have not contacted VCSD to inquire about their position on the waitlist or continued desire to connect to the water system. There has reportedly been no communication for a few years between these property owners and the District.⁵⁷⁶ There are three inactive water connections located outside VCSD's bounds, and none within its bounds. There are approximately 14 developable lots within the District. There are no major proposed or planned development projects within the District.

The District is not a land use authority, and does not hold primary responsibility for implementing growth strategies.

Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities

LAFCO is required to evaluate disadvantaged unincorporated communities as part of this service review, including the location and characteristics of any such communities. A disadvantaged unincorporated community is defined as any area with 12 or more registered voters, or as determined by commission policy, where the median household income is less than 80 percent of the statewide annual median.⁵⁷⁷

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) has developed a mapping tool to assist in determining which communities meet the disadvantaged communities median household income definition.⁵⁷⁸ DWR identified nine disadvantaged communities within Amador County—three of which are cities and are therefore not considered unincorporated.⁵⁷⁹ None of the identified disadvantaged communities in the County are within or adjacent to VCSD.

However, DWR is not bound by the same law as LAFCO to define communities with a minimum threshold of 12 or more registered voters. Because income information is not available for this level of analysis, disadvantaged unincorporated communities that meet LAFCO's definition cannot be identified at this time.

⁵⁷⁴ The population estimate for the District is the product of the number of water connections within the boundary area and the average household size (2.3) in Amador County in according to the California Department of Finance 2010.

⁵⁷⁵ Reported by Sharon Owens, VCSD General Manager, 11/13/13.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁷ Government Code §56033.5.

⁵⁷⁸ Based on census data, the median household income in the State of California in 2010 was \$57,708, 80 percent of which is \$46,166.

⁵⁷⁹ DWR maps and GIS files are derived from the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) and are compiled for the five-year period 2006-2010.

Financing

VCSD reported that its current level of financing is sufficient to deliver services. In the 2008 MSR, the District reported that connection fees would need to be increased if the District planned to serve new connections. VCSD reported in 2013 that it has updated its connection fees; however, no new connections have been added.

The consultants noted a number of discrepancies in the actuals reported in the Profit and Loss statement and the actuals included in the district budget. For example, in the FY 13 Profit and Loss Statement water service income was \$55,249, while the FY 13 budget actuals reported water service income to be \$50,970. These irregularities were also identified in the 2008 MSR. Because VCSD has not completed an audit in recent years and the inconsistencies could not be accounted for, the financial assessment of the District's operations was completed using only VCSD's Profit and Loss Statement for FY 13. These discrepancies should be corrected in future financial documents to improve transparency of district operations.

Total revenue in FY 13 was \$72,926. Primary revenue sources are water rates (76 percent), property taxes (18 percent), armory hall rental fees (3 percent), and the remaining revenue was comprised of donations, park rental fees, interest income and miscellaneous income.

Total expenditures for FY 13 were \$73,535. Costs are primarily composed of utility operations and maintenance (62 percent), administrative expenses (26 percent), and electricity expenses (11 percent). LAFCO's review of the provided financial documents concluded that revenue from water services is covering all administration costs for the District.

As reported in the 2008 MSR, water-related capital investments have been primarily funded by grants from State agencies over the years.⁵⁸⁰ The District funds its park operations and restrooms from donations, and relies on property taxes to fund its street lighting and trash collection expenses. VCSD financed the renovation of Volcano Armory Hall from part of the County's share of Proposition 40 per capita grant funds.⁵⁸¹

The District had no long-term debt at the end of FY 13.

The District does not have an adopted policy on its target level for financial reserves, but reported that it aims to increase its reserves by \$7,000 over the next three years (FYs 14, 15 and 16). VCSD had unrestricted net assets of \$88,242 at the close of FY 13.⁵⁸² The reserves amounted to 125 percent of annual expenditures, or approximately 14 months of working capital.

⁵⁸⁰ Correspondence from Department of Public Health Drinking Water Field Operations Branch to VCSD, December 4, 2000.

⁵⁸¹ The California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Act of 2002 was passed by California voters in 2002, when they approved Proposition 40.

⁵⁸² As reported by the District, not evident in FY 13 Profit and Loss Statement.

WATER SERVICES

This section describes the nature, extent and location of the water services provided as well as key infrastructure and water sources. The tables provide further information and indicators of the agency's water service supplies, demand, financing, service adequacy, and facilities.

Nature and Extent

VCSD provides groundwater extraction, water treatment, and water distribution services to the community of Volcano. An independent contractor provides routine maintenance and services. The District serves residential and commercial users.

The District does not produce or use recycled water.

Location

VCSD provides water services to a portion of its boundary area, and to some properties outside the bounds. VCSD served approximately 64 connections inside its bounds in 2013. There are unserved areas, including nine property owners on a waiting list to be connected. However, as previously noted there has not been avid interest by these property owners in acquiring water connections over the last few years.

VCSD also serves areas outside its bounds, including four active connections located on Main Street north of district bounds. Two of these properties were connected in the 1960s, and two were connected in the late 1990s. There are three inactive connections located outside VCSD bounds.

The District's primary water source and storage tanks are located outside its boundary.

Infrastructure

Key infrastructure includes the District's water supplies, a treatment facility, two wells, storage tanks, and 1.5 miles of distribution lines.

The water source is groundwater under the influence of surface water from the Cleveland Tunnel, an inactive mine tunnel, and the back-up water source is groundwater wells with relatively low yields.

The Cleveland Tunnel is considered groundwater under the influence of surface water. VCSD claimed rights to divert 57 gpd from the Cleveland Tunnel in 2002. The District believes its rights may be asserted as a pre-1914 appropriative water right. No water rights license or permit was available. The source yield is rated at 70 gpm in the District's permit, but only 43 gpm by the District's water supply study.⁵⁸³ The latter study cautions that yield has declined from historical flows, and the District should monitor precipitation and yield monthly to attempt to identify the relationship between the two. The quality of this water source is generally good with few inorganics and no iron or manganese,⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁸³ Shaw, J., *Final Water Supply Study—Volcano Water System*, November 8, 2006.

⁵⁸⁴ Interview with VCSD, January 2008.

although it does require treatment for bacteria. The tunnel is sealed with a locked door and weather proofing. The point of collection is behind a three-foot concrete dam; from here, it is piped to the treatment plant.

Groundwater is a back-up source. The area is extensively drained, with low permeability, and low water holding capacity.⁵⁸⁵ Two wells were drilled in 1992. The first initially yielded 40-45 gpm, and was adequate to supply the community. Well yield declined over time, and by 1997 was insufficient to supply Volcano water needs. In 1998, the first well was re-drilled, but did not yield enough supply. The wells have a combined yield of 6 gpm presently; by comparison, peak demand has reached 29 gpm. The water quality is good, but requires treatment for iron and manganese.

The District has a water treatment plant located 400 feet south of the Cleveland Tunnel.⁵⁸⁶ The treatment process consists of filtration through two banks of Rosedale cartridge filters.⁵⁸⁷ The flow is chlorinated and filtered to reduce iron and manganese. The plant's rated capacity is 40 gpm, although its 2006 supply study describes its capacity as 36 gpm, due to operational considerations. The plant's rated capacity could be increased by 10 gpm for about \$30,000.⁵⁸⁸

In the event of emergencies, VCSD would rely on stored water initially. The steel water tank and redwood tank have a capacity of 135,000 gallons, which would accommodate peak demand for 2.9 days. The District's back-up groundwater wells would supply about one-fifth of existing water demand. There are no interties or other back-up supplies for emergencies.

The District's emergency notification plan includes contact flow charts. A copy of the plan was not provided to LAFCO. The District plans to ring the town bell and knock on doors in the event of an emergency. The District has not provided copies of disaster response plans to its regulatory agency.

The distribution network consists of 1.5 miles of pipeline. There are 12 fire hydrants located throughout the District.

⁵⁸⁵ Amador County Environmental Health Department, *Domestic Water Supply Permit Report: Volcano Community Services District*, November 2002.

⁵⁸⁶ Correspondence with Doug Ketron, VCSD, April 24, 2008.

⁵⁸⁷ Correspondence with Doug Ketron, VCSD, April 24, 2008.

⁵⁸⁸ Shaw, J., *Final Water Supply Study—Volcano Water System*, November 8, 2006

Figure 29-2: VCSD Water Profile

Water Service Configuration & Infrastructure				
Water Service	Provider(s)	Water Service	Provider(s)	
Retail Water	Volcano CSD	Groundwater Recharge	None	
Wholesale Water	Volcano CSD	Groundwater Extraction	Volcano CSD	
Water Treatment	Volcano CSD	Recycled Water	None	
Service Area Description				
Retail Water	The CSD serves water within its boundary area, in addition to four connections located outside the boundary and inside the SOI.			
Wholesale Water	Same as retail area			
Recycled Water	NA			
Boundary Area	47 acres	Population (2012)	156	
System Overview				
Average Daily Demand	17,068 gallons	Peak Day Demand	41,787 gallons	
Supply	80 afa			
Major Facilities				
Facility Name	Type	Capacity	Condition	Yr Built
Treatment plant	Treatment	40 gpm	Excellent	2004
Storage tank (steel)	Storage	65,000 gal.	Good	1998
Storage tank (redwood)	Storage	70,000 gal.	Good	1986
Well 1	Well with pump	4 gpm	Good	1992
Well 2	Well with pump	2 gpm	Good	1998
Other Infrastructure				
Reservoirs	0	Storage Capacity (mg)	0.14	
Pump Stations	0	Pressure Zones	None	
Production Wells	2	Pipe Miles	1.5	
Other: storage tanks				
Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies				
<p>The District has been evaluating the safe yield of its water sources since 2008 to determine if there is adequate water supply to serve additional connections. A list of treatment plant needs will be developed after completion of the VCSD water supply study. There are several shut-off valves that need to be replaced, and more need to be added to isolate areas in need of repairs. There is potentially a need to upgrade the Rosedale system, although this potential need is under evaluation.</p>				
Facility-Sharing and Regional Collaboration				
Current Practices: VCSD contracts with an independent contractor.				
Opportunities: None identified.				
Notes:				
(1) NA means Not Applicable, NP means Not Provided, mg means millions of gallons, af means acre-feet.				

continued

Water Demand and Supply								
Service Connections		Total		Inside Bounds		Outside Bounds		
Total		74		67		7		
Irrigation/Landscape		0		0		0		
Domestic		57		53		4		
Commercial/Industrial/Institutional		14		14		0		
Recycled		0		0		0		
Inactive		3		0		3		
Average Annual Demand Information (Acre-Feet per Year)								
		2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Total		NP	23.2	29.0	NP	NP	NP	NP
Residential		NP	18.0	23.8	NP	NP	NP	NP
Commercial/Industrial		NP	3.0	3.0	NP	NP	NP	NP
Irrigation/Landscape		NP	2.3	2.3	NP	NP	NP	NP
Other		NP	0.0	0.0	NP	NP	NP	NP
Water Sources				Supply (Acre-Feet/Year)				
Source	Type	Average		Maximum		Safe/Firm		
Cleveland Tunnel	groundwater/surface influence	23		70		NP		
Groundwater wells	groundwater	NP		10		NP		
Supply Information (Acre-feet per Year)								
		2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Total		23	23	23	23	23	23	23
Imported		0	0	0	NP	NP	NP	NP
Groundwater		NP	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP
Cleveland Tunnel		23	23	23	23	23	23	23
Recycled		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Drought Supply and Plans								
Drought Supply (af) ¹	Year 1:	25		Year 2:	NP		Year 3:	NP
Significant Droughts	1976, 1977, 1988-94, 2007-8							
Storage Practices	The District's storage tank capacity would accommodate 2.9 days of existing peak demand.							
Drought Plan	The District has a water rationing plan that restricts consumption to no more than 300 gallons per day at each connection, and limits outdoor watering to occur at even street numbers on some days and odd street numbers on the other days.							
Water Conservation Practices								
CUWCC Signatory	No							
Metering	Domestic connections are metered.							
Conservation Pricing	Use charges are incorporated into water rates, with higher charges for those using more than 10,000 gallons per month.							
Other Practices	None identified.							
Notes:								
(1) Firm or safe water supply from the aquifer is unknown.								

continued

Water Rates and Financing			
Domestic Water Rates-Ongoing Charges FY 13¹			
	Rate Description	Avg. Monthly Charges	Consumption ²
Residential	\$42.25 base rate, \$2.35 per 1,000 gal. (up to 10,000 gal.), \$2.75 per 1,000 gal. (10,000 to 15,000), \$4.05 per 1,000 gal.	\$61.05	250 gal/day
Special Rates			
None			
Wholesale Water Rates			
None			
Rate-Setting Procedures			
Policy Description	VCSD evaluates costs and increases rates accordingly, as needed.		
Most Recent Rate Change	2010	Frequency of Rate Changes	Every 3 years
Water Development Fees and Requirements			
Connection Fee Approach	New connections pay \$9,100. Connections fees were updated following a participation fee study completed in 2008.		
Connection Fee Timing	The fee must be paid within two years of being allocated and prior to installation.		
Connection Fee Amount	\$9,100		
Land Dedication Requirements	NA		
Development Impact Fee	NA		
Water Enterprise Revenues, FY 13³			Expenditures, FY 13⁴
Source	Amount	%	Amount
Total	\$55,249	100%	Total ⁵ \$37,775
Rates & charges	NP	NP	Administration ⁶ \$9,905
Electricity	\$0	0%	O & M \$27,480
Grants	\$0	0%	Capital Depreciation ⁷ NP
Interest	NP	NP	Debt \$0
Connection Fees	\$0	0%	Purchased Water \$0
Other ⁸	\$550	0%	Capital Investments \$0
Notes:			
(1) Rates include water-related service charges and usage charges.			
(2) Water use assumptions were used to calculate average monthly bills. Assumed use levels are consistent countywide for comparison purposes.			
(3) Water revenue financials reported using FY 13 Profit & Loss Statement.			
(4) Water expenditure financials reported using FY 13 Profit & Loss Statement.			
(5) Total water expenses calculated as a portion of total district expenses that appear to be strictly attributed to water. Approximately 51 percent of total expenses were water related.			
(6) Water administration costs were calculated using the same 51 percent proportion attribution.			
(7) No update provided in 2013.			
(8) Backflow device installation.			

continued

Water Service Adequacy, Efficiency & Planning Indicators		
Water Planning	Description	Planning Horizon
Water Master Plan	None	NA
UWMP	NA - not required	NA
Capital Improvement Plan	None	NA
Emergency Response Plan	Notification plan	NA
Water Supply Study	Source and WTP capacity and projections	Include 3 committed connections
Service Challenges		
Inadequate water supply, increasing requirements for water quality testing, high costs associated with monitoring compliance, and aging infrastructure.		
Service Adequacy Indicators		
Connections/FTE	364	O&M Cost Ratio ¹ \$1,560,654
MGD Delivered/FTE	0.09	Distribution Loss Rate NP
Distribution Breaks & Leaks	3	Distribution Break Rate ² 50
Response Time Policy	ASAP	Response Time Actual 24-48 hours
Water Pressure	38 psi	Total Employees (FTEs) 0.2
Water Operator Certification		
Water treatment operator Grade 2 or higher, and water distribution operator Grade 1 or higher are required. VCSD's operator exceeds these requirements. VCSD contracts with AWA for certified operators.		
Drinking Water Quality Regulatory Information³		
	#	Description
Health Violations	1	Exceedance of coliform MCL (2010)
Monitoring Violations	0	
Regulatory Actions	1	2010 public notice, boil water order
DW Compliance Rate ⁴	100%	
Notes:		
(1) Operations and maintenance costs (exc. purchased water, debt, depreciation) per volume (mgd) delivered.		
(2) Distribution break rate is the number of leaks and pipeline breaks per 100 miles of distribution piping.		
(3) Violations were not clearly identifiable from records provided by Amador County Department of Environmental Health.		
(4) Drinking water compliance is percent of time in compliance with National Primary Drinking Water Regulations in 2012.		

ROADWAY SERVICES

Nature and Extent

Volcano CSD pays the PG&E electric utility bill for street lighting services in the community. PG&E owns and maintains the streetlights directly.

Location

Street lighting services are provided within the VCSD boundary area, and are not provided outside the District's bounds.

Infrastructure

There are 12 streetlights servicing the community; however, these are neither owned nor maintained by the District.

Service Adequacy

The District reported that street lighting services are adequate.

PARK AND RECREATION SERVICES

Nature and Extent

Volcano CSD provides park and recreation services. It owns and maintains two public parks. District volunteers perform park maintenance in the form of cleaning and mowing.

VCSD recreation programs include potlucks, "posadas," an antique car show, and a crab feed. Rehearsal space is available in the armory hall. The District is a member of the Amador County Recreation Agency (ACRA), which provides countywide recreation programming, including "Fit over 50," and facilitates collaborative planning efforts.

Location

Park facilities are located within district bounds. Parkland is clustered on the west side of the District, by Main Street. Armory Hall is on Consolation Street. The parks are open to residents and non-residents of the District at no charge. Memorial Park or Armory Hall are available to rent for a flat fee regardless of residence.

Infrastructure

The total park area in Volcano CSD is nine acres. It consists of a neighborhood park and two special use areas. Volcano Memorial Park is the largest park in the District and is in good condition. It contains a playground and a picnic area. Soldier Gulch Park is adjacent to Memorial Park and contains a memorial only. Armory Hall is used for various recreational programs. Armory Hall was renovated in 2011. Improvements included a new heating and air conditioning system, a new kitchen, two new bathrooms and a generator for power

back up. The Hall is now American Disability Act (ADA) compliant. The renovation was completed with grant funding through ACRA.

The Amador County Regional Recreation Plan does not recommend improvements or changes to the parks. An anticipated development of a large park in Pine Grove could serve Volcano's facility needs as well.⁵⁸⁹

Service Adequacy

The District has a ratio of approximately 58 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. This is higher than the current countywide parkland ratio of 13.7 acres per 1,000 residents.

The District reported that it is able to maintain its current parks and that there are no new parks or facilities being planned. It shares its facilities with ACRA for the purpose of maximizing recreation opportunities. ACRA also maintains the park and hall bathrooms.

⁵⁸⁹ Amador County Recreation Agency, *Amador County Regional Recreation Plan*, 2006.

Figure 29-3: VCSD Park Profile

Park and Recreation Service Configuration			
Service Configuration			
Park Maintenance	Direct	Number of Parks Maintained	2
Recreation	Direct	Number of Recreation Centers	0
Service Adequacy FY 12			
Park Acres per 1,000 pop ¹	58.0		
Adopted Policy:	13.7 acres per 1,000 population, county wide ²		
Park Acreage			
Local Open Space	0.0	Neighborhood Parks	8.7
Special Use Areas	0.3	Community Parks	0.0
		Undeveloped	0.0
		Landscaped	0.0
Park Name	Location	Condition	Acres
Soldiers Gulch Park	Rams Horn Grade Road	Good	0.3
Volcano Memorial Park	Rams Horn Grade Road	Good	8.7
Armory Hall	Consolation Street	Excellent	NA
Amphitheatre	Rams Horn Grade Road	Good	0.2
Service Challenges			
The District did not identify any service challenges.			
Facility Needs/Deficiencies			
No facility needs or deficiencies were identified.			
Facility Sharing			
Armory Hall presents an opportunity for facility sharing.			
Developer Fees and Requirements			
Development Impact Fee	\$4,300/dwelling unit fee charged by Amador County.		
Land Dedication Requirement	Five acres per 1,000 residents		
In-Lieu Fees	None		
Notes:			
(1) Developed park acreage per 1,000 residents per the Department of Finance.			
(2) Amador County Recreation Agency Master Plan.			

CEMETERY SERVICE

Nature and Extent

The District owns the Volcano Cemetery, formerly known as the Volcano Methodist Cemetery. All maintenance of the landscaping is provided by the Volcano Cemetery Association (VCA), which was formed in 1952. Cemetery maintenance has been provided by the VCA since 1980 when the cemetery was deeded to the CSD. Amador County Board of Supervisors gives approximately \$1,800 to the VCA annually for maintenance activities, which are provided four times a year through a private contractor.⁵⁹⁰ The CSD also reimburses the Amador County Agricultural Commission for weed spraying. Mule Creek State Prison crews provide cleanup services.

Neither VCSD nor VCA sells plots, receives donations for plots, reserves plots, or performs burials, per the two agencies. The two agencies are unaware of how burials are occurring in the cemetery. There have been approximately two such burials since 1998.⁵⁹¹ No additional burials have been reported since the 2008 MSR.

Burials

There are approximately 307 plots occupied, of which 24 burials are listed as unmarked or not found. The oldest known tombstone dates back to 1850. Nineteenth century burials account for 44 percent of marked graves.

Plot Acquisition

Volcano Cemetery Committee reported that there were approximately 100 or fewer plots available for future burials, of which as many as 50 may be already reserved. Plots are not presently available for sale, as the CSD is not presently authorized to operate a cemetery by selling plots. VCSD has an adopted policy statement that residents be prioritized in receiving available plots.

History

The cemetery was originally a pioneer cemetery, with the earliest marked grave dated 1850.⁵⁹² The Volcano Methodist Church was established in 1852. The cemetery property was deeded to the trustees of the Volcano Methodist Church in 1871.⁵⁹³ The church stopped operating in the 1930s; the church building was dismantled and salvaged for construction of the Community Church in Pine Grove in the mid-1950s.⁵⁹⁴ In the interim, the cemetery was operated by community volunteers. Volunteers formed the Volcano Community Association (VCA) in 1952.⁵⁹⁵ A particularly active volunteer, Charlie Cook, passed away in 1972. The Methodist Church approached the VCA about taking responsibility more

⁵⁹⁰ Interview with Nancy Bailey, President, VCSD, March 28, 2008.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid.

⁵⁹² Volcano Community Services District, *Volcano Methodist Pioneer Cemetery: Inventory of Burials*, 1995/1997.

⁵⁹³ Correspondence from Western Land Title Company to Superior Court Judge Ralph McGee, April 21, 1966. The deed was issued in 1871, but was not recorded until 1981 when the cemetery transferred to the Volcano CSD.

⁵⁹⁴ "Cemetery Title Finally Recorded," *Amador Ledger-Dispatch*, September 10, 1980, pp. 1 and 6.

⁵⁹⁵ California Secretary of State, *Corporation Number: C0266933*, date filed September 25, 1952.

formally around this time, but community members were not willing to accept responsibility then. The VCA later consulted with a local judge, and asked the Methodist Church to transfer the deed and responsibility.⁵⁹⁶ The church accepted the VCA offer in 1975, subject to VCA preparing the paperwork.⁵⁹⁷ Transfer to the VCA was complicated by the fact that the deed to the Methodist Church had never been officially recorded.

Volcano CSD offered in 1979 to accept title to the cemetery from the Methodist Church, with the CSD accepting title and operation and maintenance responsibility, and VCA performing fundraising and certain physical labor.⁵⁹⁸ The cemetery title was officially transferred to the CSD in 1980. No funds were transferred from the Methodist Church for endowment care.

Burials continued to occur at the cemetery after it was transferred to VCSD in 1980 with donations made at the time of burial to VCA for interment and maintenance costs.

In 1991, the cemetery manager informed VCSD and VCA that the Board of Supervisors (BOS) had jurisdiction over the cemetery and appointment of its manager.⁵⁹⁹ The CSD requested that the BOS expand the CSD powers to include cemetery services.⁶⁰⁰ County Counsel determined the CSD's powers could not be expanded to include cemetery service at that time, because the principal act did not authorize CSDs to operate cemeteries.⁶⁰¹ County Counsel notified VCSD that it could not lawfully operate the cemetery and, as a public entity, could not restrict interments on the basis of religious affiliation. Since then, there have been at least four burials at the cemetery.⁶⁰²

VCSD resolved to operate the cemetery "as a public park" and historical site.⁶⁰³ It notified the public that it was closing the cemetery and solicited written statements from the public regarding any existing arrangements for future burials.⁶⁰⁴ VCSD received correspondence indicating commitments had been previously made to living community members for approximately 40 plots. A survey of the cemetery was conducted around 1995 to determine the remaining capacity. The VCSD board determined that all remaining spaces would be offered first to residents.⁶⁰⁵

The Amador County Grand Jury evaluated the matter, and found that VCSD could not legally operate the cemetery and that plot sales to the public could not commence until

⁵⁹⁶ Correspondence from Jack Thebaut, Volcano Community Association, to California Nevada Conference, United Methodist Church, January 27, 1975.

⁵⁹⁷ Correspondence from Harry E. Shaner, California Nevada Conference, United Methodist Church to Jack Thebaut, Volcano Community Association, July 7, 1975.

⁵⁹⁸ Correspondence from Volcano VSD President Douglas Ketron to Rev. David Thompson, March 13, 1979.

⁵⁹⁹ Correspondence from Jack M. Thebaut, Volcano Community Association, to VCSD, August 27, 1991.

⁶⁰⁰ Correspondence from Jack M. Thebaut, Volcano Community Association, to VCA, July 10, 1991. Correspondence from Jack M. Thebaut, Volcano Community Association, to VCSD, August 5, 1991.

⁶⁰¹ Correspondence from County Counsel John Hahn to VCSD, September 17, 1991.

⁶⁰² VCSD, *Volcano Methodist Pioneer Cemetery: Inventory of Burials, 1995/1997*.

⁶⁰³ VCSD Resolution No. 4, May 5, 1992.

⁶⁰⁴ VCSD notice, March 11, 1993.

⁶⁰⁵ Correspondence from VCSD Director Sara Gillick to Charles Marotz, December 16, 1995.

cemetery mapping was complete.⁶⁰⁶ The Grand Jury recommended that a legal solution be adopted, and that procedures for purchase of available plots be established.⁶⁰⁷ The VCSD cemetery committee response recommended that VCSD initiate formation of a cemetery district.⁶⁰⁸ The VCSD board adopted a motion to initiate or ask the BOS to initiate formation of a cemetery district.⁶⁰⁹ The District's CPA recommended in 2000 that the District move the issue forward.⁶¹⁰ In 2003, VCSD notified the community that cemetery district formation had not occurred due to lack of community interest, and requested that volunteers step forward to form a cemetery district.⁶¹¹ Once again, in 2007, County Counsel recommended that the District obtain legal counsel to guide it through the formation of a cemetery district and appointment of the VCSD Board as its Board of Trustees.⁶¹²

Legislation adopted in 2005 expanded CSD powers to include "own, operate, improve, and maintain cemeteries and provide interment services, in the same manner as a public cemetery district."⁶¹³ In order to exercise latent powers, a CSD must apply and receive authorization from LAFCO. It appears that this authorization was granted in January of 2006. In 2009, LAFCO again authorized VCSD to own, operate, improve, and maintain cemeteries and provide interment services.⁶¹⁴

Location

The Cemetery is located within VCSD bounds, on Emigrant Road.

Infrastructure

VCSD's key infrastructure consists of one cemetery. The cemetery encompasses 1.88 acres. The cemetery appears to be adequately maintained according to LAFCO. The District described the cemetery to be in good condition. The CSD identified a need for structural improvements to some sunken graves.

Service Adequacy

Presently, cemetery services are not adequate, as there continues to be no procedure in place for sale of remaining cemetery plots. A \$1,000 endowment care fund is maintained by the Volcano Community Association. A more formalized financing mechanism—an endowment care fund with legally identified minimum fees per plot—is required by law for CSDs and cemetery districts.

⁶⁰⁶ Cemetery mapping was completed in 1997.

⁶⁰⁷ Amador County Grand Jury, *FY 1996-97 Annual Report*, 1997, pp. 48-49.

⁶⁰⁸ Correspondence from Volcano Methodist Cemetery Committee to Amador County Grand Jury, August 4, 1997.

⁶⁰⁹ VCSD minutes, August 18, 1997.

⁶¹⁰ Correspondence from Daniel Ayala to VCSD Board, November 2, 2000.

⁶¹¹ VCSD, *Notice to Community and Interested Parties regarding Status of Volcano Cemetery*, 2003.

⁶¹² Letter from Evelyn Spirou, Amador Deputy County Counsel, March 21, 2007.

⁶¹³ Government Code §61100(ab).

⁶¹⁴ LAFCO Resolution 2009-09.

SUMMARY OF DETERMINATIONS

Growth and population projections

- ❖ There has been no growth in recent years, and service demand for water services has remained constant.
- ❖ Future growth is expected to be modest. There are 14 developable lots within district bounds; however, there are no planned or proposed developments.
- ❖ There is a waiting list of property owners for new water connections; however, these property owners have not expressed immediate interest in connecting to VCSD's system for the past few years.

The Location and Characteristics of Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities Within or Contiguous to the Agency's SOI

- ❖ There are no disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or adjacent to the District's service area, based upon mapping information provided by the State of California Department of Water Resources. However, given the large size of the defined community in the census data used, it cannot be discounted that a smaller community that meets the required income definition and has 12 or more registered voters may exist within or adjacent to the District.

Present and planned capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services, including infrastructure needs and deficiencies

- ❖ Until completion of a water supply study, the District and LAFCO cannot ascertain the adequacy and capacity of water services. The District's primary water source yield has declined over the years, and groundwater wells in the area have low yields. The District reported they have been conducting an evaluation of safe yield of its water sources since 2008.
- ❖ There are potentially water treatment plant needs, including upgrade of the filtration system, to be addressed upon completion of the water supply study. Shut-off valves need to be replaced and added.
- ❖ The District appears to have made improvements in delivering adequate water services. There was one regulatory violation since the 2008 MSR.
- ❖ District water planning efforts are inadequate, and do not meet state standards for technical, managerial and financial ability. Until completion of a water supply study, the District and LAFCO cannot ascertain the adequacy and capacity of water services. The District could make improvements by completing a water capacity evaluation, and by preparing a capital improvement plan or prioritized list of infrastructure needs.

- ❖ Until the District standardizes a fee schedule and system for interments the adequacy and capacity of cemetery services the District and LAFCO are unable to ascertain the adequacy and capacity of services. The District has outstanding commitments for cemetery services and needs to standardize a fee schedule and system for interments.
- ❖ The cemetery lacks adequate capacity for burial of existing and future residents. Although approximately 50 plots may be available, the District is not selling plots presently. District policy is to prioritize allocations to residents of remaining plots.
- ❖ Until the District completes an inventory of remaining plot space in the cemetery it is not capable of offering plot sales or burial services..

Financial ability of agencies to provide services

- ❖ VCSD reports that financing is sufficient to deliver the current service level; however, districts expenditures exceeded revenues in FY 13. Funding appears insufficient to complete the necessary work for cemetery services and water planning
- ❖ The District has increased its connection fee since the 2008 MSR; however, no new properties have connected to the system since the fee increase.
- ❖ In the absence of the legally required endowment care fund and a fee structure for plot sales, cemetery services are compromised. The District states it does not sell cemetery plots, and could better provide for future maintenance by establishing fees for plot sales. Additionally, in order to care for the cemetery in perpetuity an endowment care fund is essential.

Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities

- ❖ The District contracts with an independent contractor for water maintenance services.

Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies

- ❖ Inconsistency of the District's various financial documents was noted by LAFCO in 2008 and again in 2013. In order to enhance transparency of VCSD's financial records. the District should conduct periodic audits and ensure consistency of financials across documents.
- ❖ LAFCO strongly encourages annexation of existing service connections outside District boundaries. . The District provides water outside its bounds to four connections on Main Street, has commitments to serve three inactive connections outside bounds. Annexation of these areas would ensure that citizens inside the boundaries are not underwriting any portion of the cost of service to customers outside the boundaries. In addition, customers outside would have the same rights and benefits as citizens within the district and would provide for more logical boundaries.

- ❖ The District would benefit from joining the Cemetery Districts Association, and networking with cemetery district managers or board members in neighboring counties, to further its knowledge of requirements and best practices.