

### 3.1 Introduction

This section provides the land use context for the General Plan by describing existing land use conditions, plans, and policies that have a bearing on land use in Lake County. The section begins with a description of the existing Lake County General Plan and existing land use diagram, zoning, and existing land use. It then summarizes existing community plans, the Commercial and Industrial Land Use Study, and the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. The section continues with a discussion of adjacent county plans and a summary of regional, state, and federal plans that may have a bearing on land use planning in Lake County.

### 3.2 Land Use

#### METHODS

Information presented in this section is based on the existing Lake County General Plan (1981), Zoning Ordinance, community area plans, Commercial and Industrial Land Use Study, Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. Other sources include the general plans for Sonoma, Napa, Mendocino, Glenn, Colusa, and Yolo counties and the Mendocino National Forest Land and Resources Management Plan.

#### KEY TERMS

**Density.** Density is a description of residential development intensity. Density is defined as the number of housing units per acre in a given area.

**Floor Area Ratio (FAR).** A floor area ratio is often used to describe the intensity of commercial, office, and industrial land usage. The FAR is a ratio created by dividing the total square footage of a building by the net square footage of the lot.

**Goal.** A goal is a direction setter. This is a future condition that the County wants to achieve.

**Policy.** A policy is a statement that guides a specific course of action for decision-makers to use to achieve a desired goal. A policy must be clear and unambiguous; it indicates a commitment of the local legislative body to a particular course of action.

## EXISTING LAKE COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

The existing Lake County General Plan was adopted November 1981. The County has approved some minor amendments since the General Plan's adoption in 1981. Major updates to the plan were done for the Housing Element (a part of the Community Development Plan section of the General Plan. A new Housing Element was adopted in 1992 and amended in 1995.

The Lake County General Plan is divided into eight sections and appendices. In addition to the Introduction and Overview (which provide introductory information), there are six topic sections. These six sections are named below and summarized in the following paragraphs.

- Countywide Goals
- Community Development Plan
- Resource Management and Conservation Plan
- Implementation
- Final Environmental Assessment

### Countywide Goals

The Countywide Goals chapter provides the principles that guide the County's future growth and development. These were developed based on an evaluation of the County's future challenges and opportunities. The goals are as follows:

- Growth shall be encouraged such that the location, timing, and intensity of future development respect the rural setting of the County and are consistent with the availability of services.
- A diverse community in terms of income, age, occupation, race, religion, and lifestyle shall be encouraged and small town appearance and sense of community shall be preserved and fostered.
- Opportunities for safe, decent housing in a satisfying living environment shall be offered to all segments of the community.
- Efforts to stimulate the local economy and attract new employment opportunities shall be promoted.
- The agricultural resources of the County shall be protected and efforts to preserve their continued productivity shall be promoted.
- A safe, efficient transportation system shall be provided that enables people and goods to move conveniently both within and to and from the County.
- Public services shall be provided to meet the needs for education, recreation, cultural entertainment, protection of public safety and health, and civic pride.

- The natural resources of the County shall be used for the benefit of the County residents and visitors in a manner that conserves these resources for future use.
- The health and well being of the community and physical safety of the property shall be ensured.

### **Community Development Plan**

The Community Development Plan includes discussion, analysis, and policies for land use, transportation, housing, public services, and public health and safety. The Community Development Plan addresses five of the seven elements of a general plan required by state law (land use, circulation, housing, noise, and safety). The Land Use chapter describes existing land uses, development constraints, policies, and proposed land use designations (detailed below under the section labeled “Land Use Diagram”). Proposed land uses are summarized for each community area in the County.

The Transportation chapter discusses streets and highways, transit, air transportation, non-motorized travel, pipelines and transmission lines, and navigable waterways, harbors and terminals. Objectives and policies are established for each of these issues. An implementation program for transportation is also included.

The Housing chapter has been superceded by three subsequent amendments to the Housing Element in 1987, 1992, and 1995. The current Housing Element is summarized below.

The Public Services chapter addresses water, wastewater treatment and disposal, solid waste disposal, fire protection, recreation, and schools. Existing facilities and future needs are discussed. Objectives and policies for water, sanitation, structural fires, parks and recreation and schools are included, along with a public services implementation program.

The Public Health and Safety chapter addresses noise, crime prevention, emergency planning, health care services and hazardous waste. Background information, objectives and policies are included for each subject. The noise analysis is particularly detailed and discusses noise sources such as traffic, aircraft, geothermal production, powerboats, and off-road vehicles. The chapter also includes a public health and safety implementation program.

### **Resource Management and Conservation Plan**

The Resource Management and Conservation Plan addresses a number of natural resources, including agricultural, timber, minerals, water, plants and animals, cultural and archaeological, and geothermal. The Plan also discusses geologic and seismic hazards, flood and fire hazards, air quality, scenic highways, and Clear Lake. The State general plan requirements for open space, conservation, and safety elements are addressed in this plan. For each

subject, the plan includes background information, analysis, objectives, policies, and implementation programs. The intent of the plan is to maximize preservation of the County's unique, non-renewal resources while at the same time accommodating projected population, housing, and employment growth.

### **Housing Element**

The current Housing Element was adopted in 1992 and amended in 1995. The Housing Element provides an assessment of current and projected needs for all segments of the community and all economic groups. It establishes County policies and actions for providing adequate housing. The Element includes five main sections. The first section provides background information on the housing market conditions in the county, including population growth, economic trends, household characteristics, and housing conditions. The second section summarizes housing needs for the County. The third section assesses housing development, including available land and governmental and other constraints on housing production. The next section discusses the progress made toward achieving housing goals in the County. Finally, the Element includes a five-year housing action program for Lake County.

### **Implementation**

This chapter of the Lake County General Plan provides a detailed, comprehensive implementation program designed to facilitate achievement of the goals, objectives, and policies included in the General Plan. The implementation program includes regulatory actions, review procedures, the housing program, an open space action program, and a financing program. The regulatory program includes zoning revisions to bring County zoning regulations into consistency with the General Plan land use diagram, subdivision ordinance modifications, and a land capacity/capability implementation study. New review procedures include changes to the EIR process, geothermal development review, special review for Clear Lake development proposals, and protection of cultural heritage resources. The housing program provides a full range of programs designed to assure adequate housing opportunities in the County. Finally, financing opportunities for General Plan implementation are described in detail.

### **Environmental Assessment**

The final chapter of the Lake County General Plan is the assessment of environmental impacts related to implementation of the General Plan. The required environmental impact report (EIR) for the General Plan has been integrated into the General Plan. This chapter identifies where the General Plan addresses each of the EIR requirements, summarizes the potential significant impacts, and identifies appropriate mitigation measures.

### Technical Appendices

The General Plan Technical Appendices include eleven sections that provide documentation and analytical support for the General Plan. Those sections include information about:

- Land use
- Public facilities and services
- Hazards
- Natural resources and areas
- Clear Lake
- Circulation and scenic highways
- Population
- Employment and housing
- Geothermal overview
- Alternative land uses
- The 1977 Seismic Safety Element
- The 1978 Noise Element.

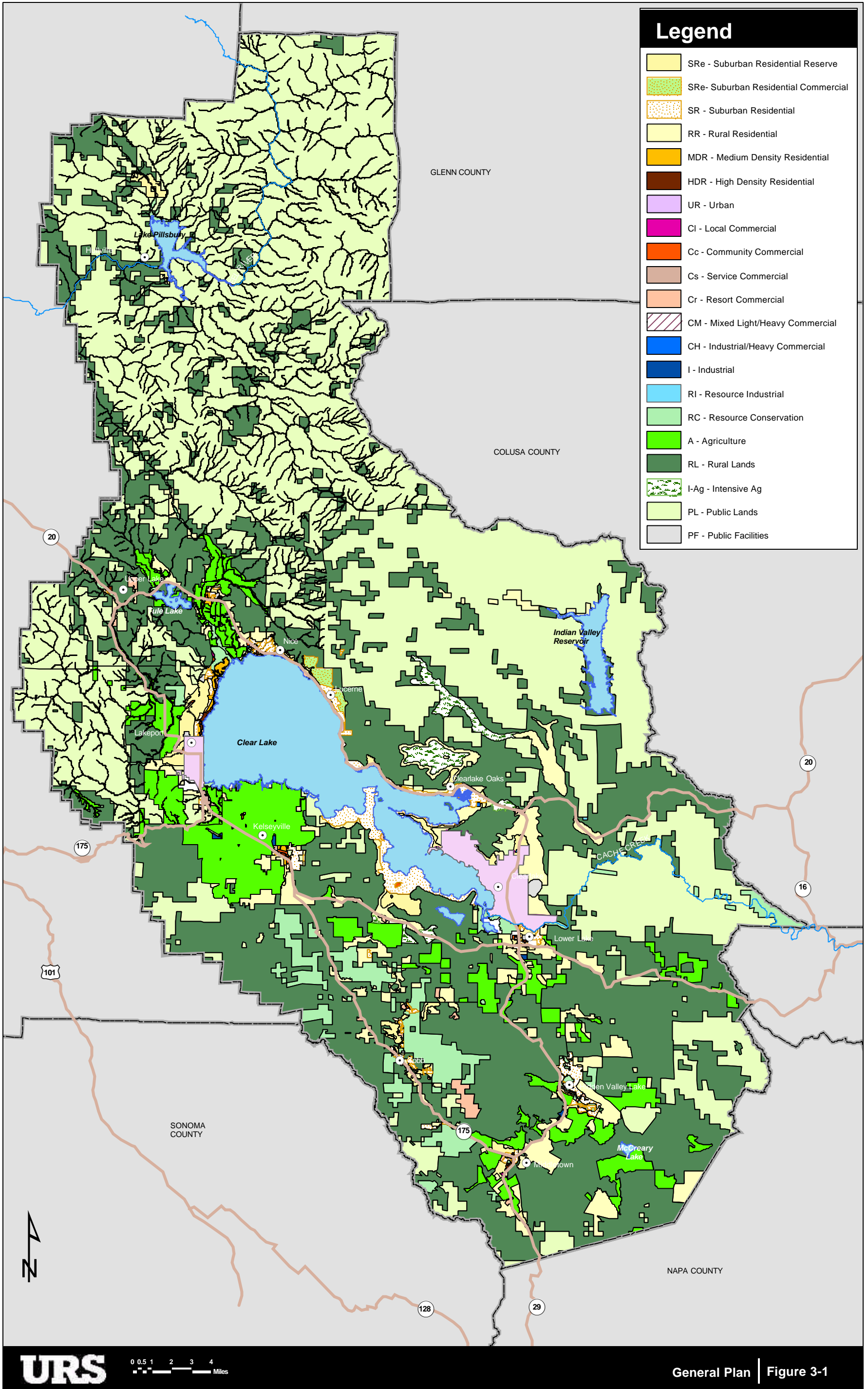
Each of the chapters provides important background and technical data that supports the General Plan objectives, policies, programs, and environmental assessment.

### LAND USE DIAGRAM

The Lake County General Plan includes a land use diagram showing the types and locations of development called for in the General Plan (Figure 3-1). The Community Development Plan chapter of the 1981 General Plan lists land use designations, definitions, and related development standards. These include six major land use categories that are subdivided into 16 land use designations. Table 3-1 provides a breakdown of the distribution of land use designations within the County. This table is then followed by a general description of the uses permitted under each designation.

**Table 3-1 General Plan Designations**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
<b>Residential</b>		
Urban Residential	205	0.03%
Medium Density Residential	772	0.10%
High Density Residential	367	0.05%
Suburban Residential	10,271	1.29%
Suburban Residential Reserve	10,428	1.31%
Rural Residential	33,558	4.21%
Rural Lands	272,310	34.15%
<b>Commercial</b>		
Local Commercial	95	0.01%
Community Commercial	599	0.08%
Service Commercial	460	0.06%
<b>Industrial</b>		
Industrial/Heavy Commercial	391	0.05%
<b>Conservation and Open Space</b>		
Resource Conservation	31,024	3.89%
Agriculture	52,817	6.62%
<b>Public Lands and Facilities</b>		
Public Lands	381,193	47.80%
Public Facilities	634	0.08%
<b>Special Use</b>		
Resorts	2,391	0.30%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>797,515</b>	<b>100%</b>
Source: Lake County GIS Database (August 2002)		



*Please see next page.*

## **Residential**

Residential land use is divided into seven specific designations. The densities are based on gross, rather than net, acreage. Urban, High Density, and Medium Density designations provide a full range of residential uses. The next two densities, Suburban Residential and Suburban Residential Reserve, are intended for single-family development. The remaining two residential designations (Rural Residential and Rural Lands) are intended for low-density rural areas served primarily by individual wells and septic systems.

**Urban Residential.** 1.0 to 20.0 dwelling units per gross acre. This designation is intended for intensive residential development and accessory uses. It allows a wide range of residential uses, including conventional single-family dwellings, mobilehomes, townhouses, and apartments. Allowable building intensity varies depending on location; with higher density uses more appropriate near parks, transit lines, and major activity centers. Proposed developments of 20 acres or more are subject to the planned development process. This designation is being replaced as the High Density Residential designation as area plans are adopted.

**Medium Density Residential.** 6.0 to 9.0 dwelling units per gross acre. This designation is intended for single-family residential developments on small lots, duplexes, triplexes, and mobile home parks. The designation is appropriate only where the level of development is compatible with the overall character of the neighborhood and adequate public services and facilities, such as water, sewage disposal, and roadways are available.

**High Density Residential.** 10.0 to 19.0 dwelling units per gross acre. This designation is intended to provide for areas of multi-family residential uses, including duplexes, townhouses, apartments, and mobile home parks. The designation is appropriate in community areas where a full range of urban services is readily available; including public water and sewer, adequate roadways, and the level of development is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

**Suburban Residential.** 1.0 to 5.0 dwelling units per gross acre minimum. This land use designation is intended to provide areas for single-family residences at relatively low densities. It is appropriate where the traditional neighborhood character of single-family units prevails and where the level of services does not justify higher densities.

**Suburban Residential Reserve.** 1.0 dwelling unit per 1 gross acre minimum. This land use designation serves as a transition designation between Suburban and Rural Residential land uses. Typically, due to soil and slope characteristics, lot sizes are typically larger than the one-acre minimum. In mountain areas, this designation would temporarily limit densities until adequate infrastructure is developed to support higher densities.

**Rural Residential.** 1 dwelling unit per 5 to 20 gross acres. This land use designation is intended to provide single-family residential development in a semi-rural setting, including large lot residential and small-scale agriculture activities. Rural Residential land uses serve as a buffer between urban/suburban development and agricultural areas. Densities less than one unit per 10 acres may be permitted in areas of less than 30% slope with low landslide hazard potential.

**Rural Lands.** 1 dwelling unit per 20 to 40 gross acres. This land use designation is intended to provide for rural development in areas that have limited agricultural potential and remain for the most part in a natural state. The designation includes areas that are remote or are characterized by steep slopes, wildland fire hazards, and limited access. Minimum parcel sizes are increased in areas further than 5 air miles from a designated community. Acreage minimums increase in excess of 40 acres if average slopes exceed 30%.

## Commercial

The land use chapter includes three commercial designations that permit a range of commercial activities in the County, as described below.

**Local Commercial.** 0.2 to 0.25 FAR. This land use designation is intended to establish areas for small, localized retail, recreational, and service businesses that provide merchandise to the immediate surrounding land uses.

**Community Commercial.** 0.2 to 1.2 FAR. The intent of this land use designation is to provide a full range of commercial retail and service establishments to communities. Typical uses include gasoline service stations, eating and drinking establishments, hardware stores, general merchandise stores, and professional offices.

**Service Commercial.** 0.5 to 1.0 FAR. The intent of this land use designation is to provide areas for heavier commercial uses around urban areas. Typical uses include automotive-related or heavy equipment sales and services, building maintenance services, construction sales and services, and warehousing.

## Industrial

The land use chapter includes one industrial land use designation.

**Industrial/Heavy Commercial.** 0.1 to 1.5 FAR. Minimum parcel size: 12,500 square feet with public sewer and water; 1 acre minimum with no access to public sewer and water. The intent of this land use designation is to provide areas for a range of manufacturing, natural resource processing, and “heavy” commercial activities. Specific siting criteria are provided in the General Plan to assure potential uses are compatible with the surrounding community and the environment.

### Conservation and Open Space

The land use chapter includes two resource and open space land use designations.

**Resource Conservation.** No specified minimum lot size, but generally intended for low intensity land uses. The intent of this land use designation is to assure the maintenance or sustained production of natural resources within the County. Areas designated as Resource Conservation include public or private land with significant plant or animal habitats, forest lands in Timber Preserve Zones, agricultural land under Williamson Act contract, watersheds, outdoor parks and recreation, and hazardous areas. Compatible uses may include single-family dwelling units, cultivation and harvesting of crops, grazing of livestock, recreation, and mineral extraction.

**Agriculture.** 40-acre minimum lot size. The intent of this land use designation is to protect the County's valuable agricultural resources and to prevent development that would preclude their use in agriculture. Lands within this designation are actively or potentially actively engaged in crop production, including horticulture, tree crops, and row and field crops. Wineries and the processing of local agricultural products such as pears and walnuts are encouraged within this designation.

### Public Lands and Facilities

The land use chapter includes two public land use designations.

**Public Lands.** This intent of this land use designation is to identify publicly-owned lands, including land administered by the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, the State of California, and Lake County.

**Public Facilities.** The intent of this land use designation is to identify areas suitable for services and facilities that are necessary for the welfare of the community. Typical uses include parks, schools, civic centers, hospitals, liquid and solid waste disposal sites, cemeteries, and public utility facilities.

### Special Use

The land use chapter includes one special use designation for resort uses.

**Resorts.** The intent of this land use designation is to identify areas where commercial and residential development are beneficially mixed, often near hot springs and lakes, and in mountain areas. Areas designated as Resorts have physical, geographic, resource, scenic, or economic attributes which need special consideration.

## Cluster Development Policy

The land use chapter includes a cluster development policy that guides the location and extent of cluster development in the County. Cluster development may be allowed by issuance of a special use permit, special overlay zones, or the planned development (PD) process. Cluster development is not permitted within Urban Residential, Industrial/Heavy Commercial, or Agriculture land use designations.

## ZONING

The County's Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 21 of the Lake County Ordinance Code) contains 20 basic zoning districts and 14 overlay or combining districts:

### Base Zones

O	Open Space
A	Agriculture
APZ	Agricultural Preserve
TPZ	Timber Preserve
RL	Rural Lands
RR	Rural Residential
SR	Suburban Reserve
R1	Single Family Residential
R2	Two Family Residential
R3	Multifamily Residential
PDR	Planned Development Residential
PDC	Planned Development Commercial
CH	Highway Commercial
CR	Resort Commercial
C1	Local Commercial
C2	Community Commercial
C3	Service Commercial
M1	Commercial Manufacturing
M2	Industrial/Heavy Commercial
MP	Industrial Park

### Overlay/Combining Districts

(SOS)	Sub-standard Older Subdivision Combining District
(B)	Special Lot Size/Density Combining District
(MH)	Mobilehome Combining District
(HP)	Historic Preservation Combining Site
(W)	Wetlands Combining District
(WW)	Waterway Combining District
(RD)	Residential Design Combining District
(DR)	Design Review Combining District
(SC)	Scenic Combining District

- (FW) Floodway Combining District
- (FF) Floodway Fringe Combining District
- (AA) Airport Approach Combining District
- (P) Parking Combining District
- (AI) Agricultural Industry Combining District

Based on the County's Geographic Information System (GIS), Table 3-2 shows the amount of land in each base zoning district.

**Table 3-2 Zoning Classifications**

Category		Acreage	Percent of Total
O	Open Space	390,314	48.65%
A	Agriculture	65,540	8.17%
APZ	Agricultural Preserve	48,758	6.08%
TPZ	Timber Preserve	23,989	2.99%
RL	Rural Lands	190,669	23.76%
RR	Rural Residential	40,499	5.05%
SR	Suburban Reserve	6,602	0.82%
R1	Single Family Residential	10,094	1.26%
R2	Two Family Residential	583	0.07%
R3	Multi-Family Residential	453	0.06%
PDR	Planned Development Residential	1,689	0.21%
PDC	Planned Development Commercial	3,865	0.48%
CH	Highway Commercial	180	0.02%
CR	Resort Commercial	2,548	0.32%
C1	Local Commercial	113	0.01%
C2	Community Commercial	470	0.06%
C3	Service Commercial	470	0.06%
M1	Commercial Manufacturing	67	0.01%
M2	Industrial/Heavy Commercial	94	0.01%
MP	Industrial Park	0	0.00%
PD <sup>1</sup>	Planned Development	1,544	0.19%
U	Unclassified	13,798	1.72%
<b>Total</b>		<b>802,339</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
Source: Lake County GIS Database (August 2002)			
<sup>1</sup> This category is a combination of planned development residential and planned development commercial.			

**EXISTING LAND USE**

Lake County is a predominately rural county. Based on the County's Geographic Information System (GIS), Table 3-3 has been prepared to summarize existing land uses. Over 75 percent of the County is open space or agriculture. About 15 percent is developed for residential uses, much of which is on larger lots in rural areas.

**Table 3-3 Generalized Existing Land Use**

Category	Acreage	Percent of Total
Agricultural	336,119	42.9%
Residential	115,944	14.8%
Commercial	17,588	2.2%
Industrial	3,449	0.4%
Government/Institutional	45,562	5.8%
Recreational	4,523	0.6%
Open Space	260,544	33.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>783,729</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Source: Lake County GIS Database (August 2002)		

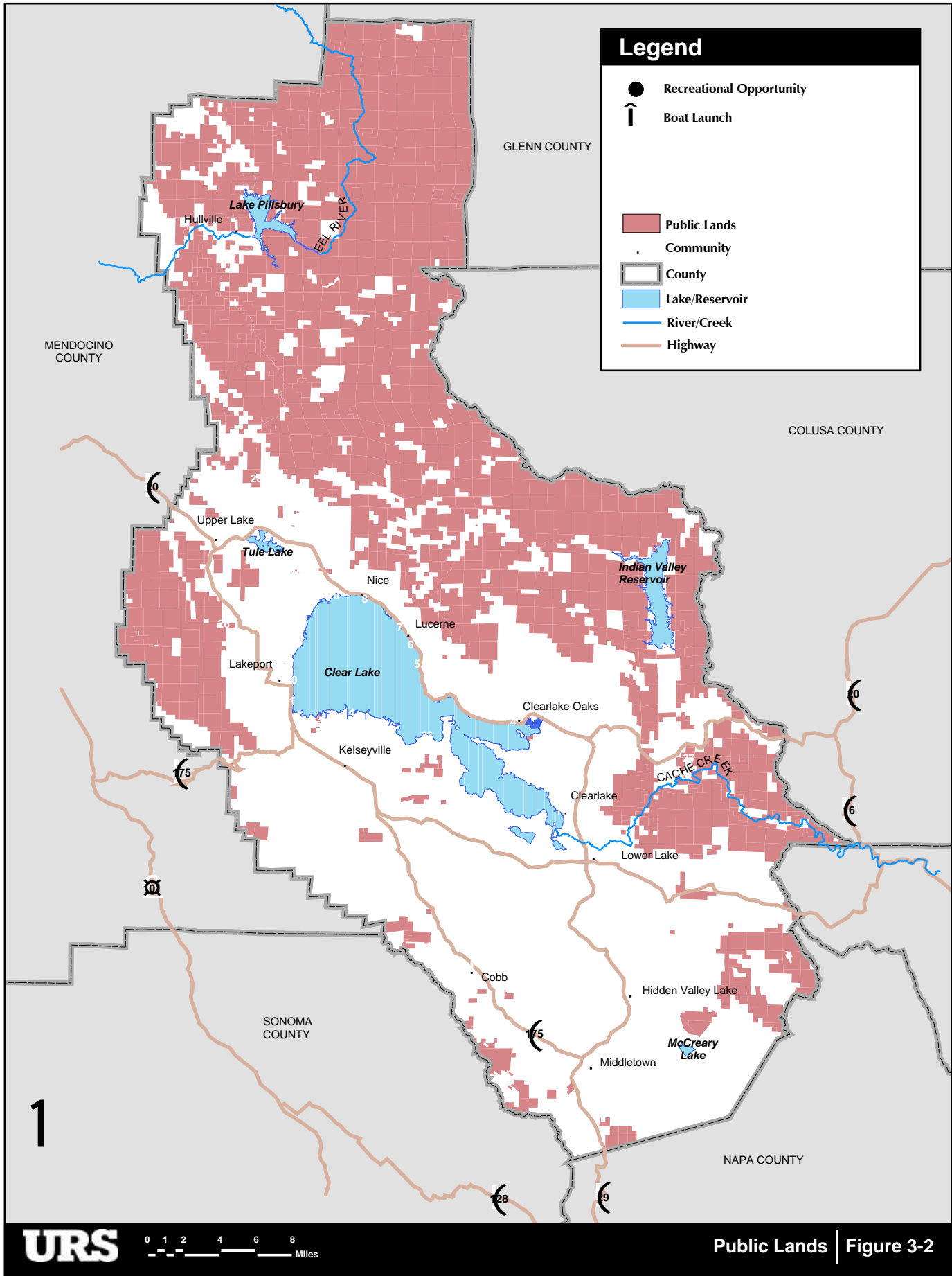
**LAND OWNERSHIP**

As Table 3-4 shows, approximately half of all land ownership in the County is publicly owned (see Figure 3-2). The Federal government manages the majority of the public lands in the County, primarily as part of the Medocino National Forest (378,613 acres). The State of California owns 16,336 acres, Lake County owns 4,894 acres, and Yolo County Flood Control and Water District owns 3,496 acres. Roughly 49 percent of the land in Lake County is held in private ownership.

**Table 3-4 Land Ownership in Lake County**

Land Ownership	Square Miles	Acres	Percentage of County Total
<b>Public Ownership</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>403,339</b>	<b>50.7</b>
Federal	591	378,613	47.6
State of California	25	16,336	2.1
Lake County (includes Lake Co. Sanitation, Lake Co. Flood Control)	7	4,894	0.6
Yolo County Flood Control and Water	5	3,496	0.4
<b>Private Ownership</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>391,039</b>	<b>49.3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,241</b>	<b>794,378</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Source: Lake County GIS Database (August 2002)			

For land areas held by federal and state agencies and the cities of Lakeport and Clearlake, the County does not have land use jurisdiction. Thus, the County does not directly control land use decisions on a large part of the County. In this situation, cooperation is needed to move the County forward towards a desired future condition.



## AREA PLANS

For planning purposes, the County is divided into eight community planning areas as shown on Figure 3-3). These community areas are:

- Upper Lake/Nice
- Lakeport
- Kelseyville
- Cobb Mountain
- Middletown
- Lower Lake
- Riveras
- Shoreline Communities

The policies of the General Plan call for more detailed area plans to be prepared for each of the community areas. The purpose of the area plans is to provide a more detailed level of planning and policies for each planning area. The General Plan and areas plans are mutually complementary and consistent. Policies in the area plans supplement General Plan policies, yet more precisely reflect the characteristics found in each area. The area plans are adopted as supplements to the General Plan. Plans for five of the eight sub-regions have been prepared and are summarized below.

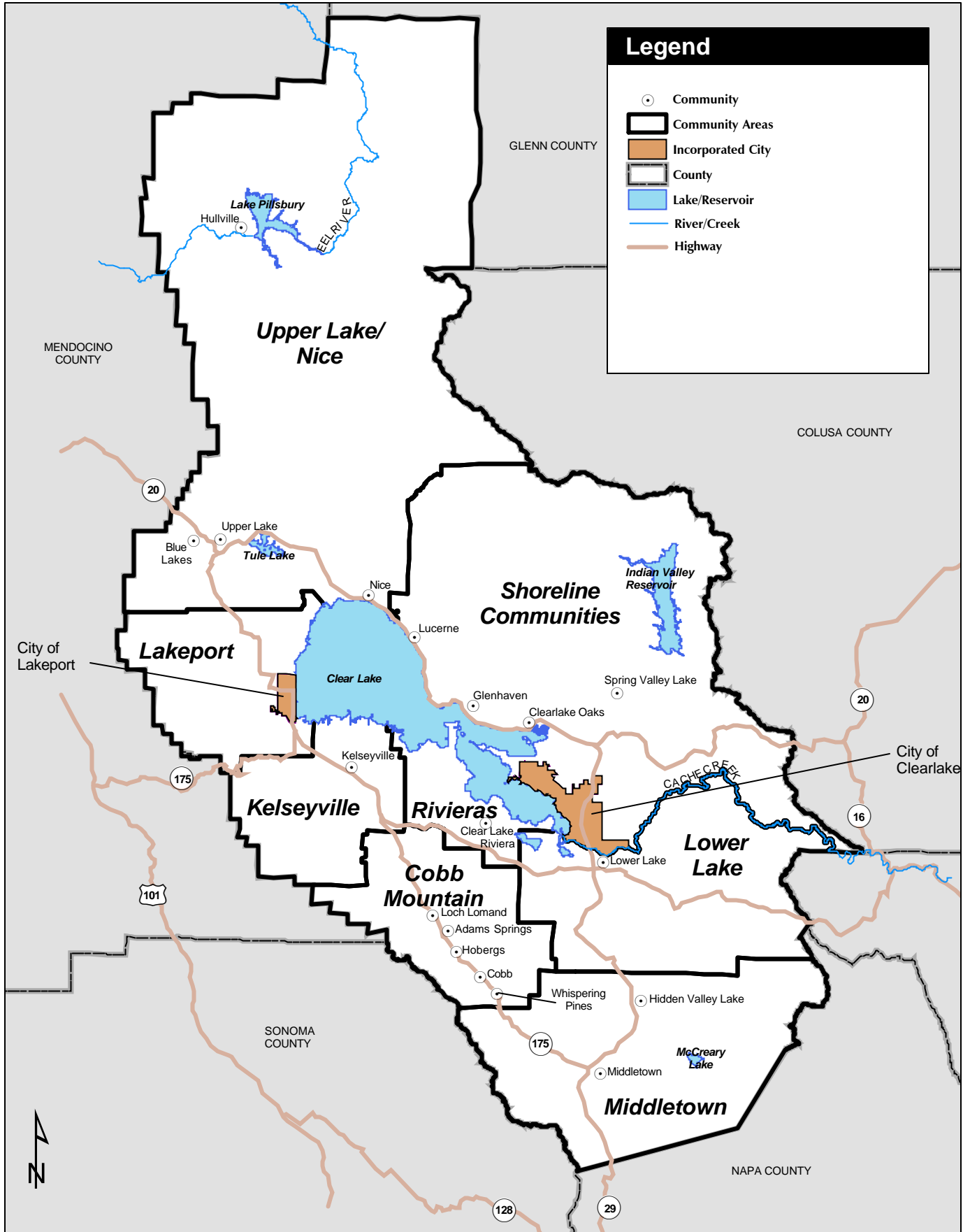
### Upper Lake-Nice Area Plan

The Upper Lake-Nice Area Plan, adopted in February 2002, covers approximately 468 square miles of Lake County north of Clear Lake. It includes the northern portion of Scotts Valley and most of the Mendocino National Forest within Lake County. The plan includes background discussions, objectives, and policies for natural resources, public facilities and services, the economy, housing, and land use. The plan also includes special studies for three areas: Upper Lake, Nice, and Blue Lakes.

The plan includes major recommendations for special study areas. In the Upper Lake Community Area, the plan recommends policies and actions to enhance the economic viability of the historic downtown, including a design review-combining district. In the Nice Community Area, land use designations and the Redevelopment Agency are recommended as methods to develop a town center. Other recommendations focus on economic development and increased resort-recreational uses.

### Lakeport Area Plan

The Lakeport Area Plan, adopted in 2000, covers approximately 72 square miles of Lake County north and west of Clear Lake. It includes the greater Lakeport area and Scotts Valley. The Plan includes background discussions, objectives, and policies for natural resources, public safety, and community development. The Plan also includes special studies for three areas: South Main Street-Soda Bay Road, North Lakeshore Boulevard, and Scotts Valley.

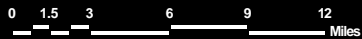


### Legend

- Community
- Community Areas
- Incorporated City
- County
- Lake/Reservoir
- River/Creek
- Highway



**URS**



Community Planning Areas | Figure 3-3

The Plan includes recommendations for special study areas. For the South Main Street/Soda Bay Road area, the Plan recommends upgrading design standards and unifying the design of commercial and light industrial development, undergrounding utilities for new development, and updating agreements between the City of Lakeport and the County regarding road improvements. For the North Lakeshore Boulevard area, the Plan recommends protection of lake views and natural areas. The Plan also recommends that Scotts Valley be protected for agricultural enterprises.

The Plan addresses a number of major planning issues for the Greater Lakeport Area. Natural Resource issues include the protection of the Clear Lake shoreline and other open space areas, long term water supply, and groundwater recharge in Scotts Valley. Agricultural issues include protection of the agricultural industry, conflicts between agricultural and adjacent non-agricultural uses, and housing for the seasonal labor force. The Plan also addresses issues related to public safety, circulation, housing, economic development, cultural resources, public safety, aesthetics, air quality, and noise.

### **Kelseyville Area Plan**

The Kelseyville Area Plan, adopted in August 1995, covers approximately 64 square miles of Lake County west of Clear Lake. It includes the communities of Kelseyville, Finley, and Big Valley. The plan is divided into three major sections: an introductory framework; planning elements and policies; and land use and zoning maps, along with implementation of the plan. The introduction identifies major issues and assumptions, as well as population projections that influence the text, policies, land use, and zoning. The planning elements and policies provide background and policies for the area's natural resources, public safety, and community development. The final section of the plan includes a detailed description of the land use and zoning maps and how they will be implemented.

A number of planning issues are identified in the plan. The issues include protection of the natural resources, protection of agriculture, the need to improve fire safety and flood control; improved traffic safety and roadways to serve new development; increased housing and employment opportunities; protection of scenic viewsheds; and retention of "small town" atmosphere in the community.

### **Middletown Area Plan**

The Middletown Area Plan, adopted in December 1989, covers approximately 148 square miles of the southern end of Lake County. It includes the communities of Middletown, Hidden Valley Lake, and Anderson Springs. Similar to other area plans, the Middletown plan is divided into three major sections: an introductory framework; planning elements and policies; and land use and zoning maps, along with implementation of the plan. The introduction identifies major issues and assumptions, as well as

population projections that influence the text, policies, land use, and zoning. The planning elements and policies provide background and policies for the area's natural resources, public safety, and community development. The final section of the plan includes a detailed description of the land use and zoning maps and how they will be implemented.

The plan addresses a number of planning issues facing the community area, including agricultural preservation; improved public safety, including localized flooding and fire protection; development of a sanitary sewer system; improved water quality and service; increased park and recreation opportunities; and improvement in the quality of development.

### **Cobb Mountain Area Plan**

The Cobb Mountain Area Plan, adopted in March 1989, covers approximately 73.5 square miles of the southwest portion of Lake County. It includes the communities of Cobb Mountain and Loch Lomond. The organization of the plan is similar to the other area plans, including an introductory framework, planning elements and policies, and land use and zoning maps. Some of the major planning issues are the preservation of open space and wildlife areas, watershed protection, utilization of conservation easements, development of geothermal resources, and control of erosion from poor road construction and maintenance practices.

### **Lower Lake Area Plan**

The Lower Lake Area Plan, adopted in March 1988, covers approximately 108 square miles of the southeast portion of Lake County. The organization of the plan is similar to the other area plans, including an introductory framework, planning elements and policies, and land use and zoning maps.

The major planning issues identified in the plan are agricultural land preservation; restoration of historic downtown Lower lake; installation of improved public services and facilities; coordination of new growth with the provision of public services; affordable housing for seniors; the need for multifamily housing and a housing rehabilitation program; and the planning and implementation of economic diversification in the Lower Lake area.

## **COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL LAND USE STUDY**

The Commercial and Industrial Land Use Study was published in May 1989. The objective of the study was to insure that enough suitable land was available for commercial and industrial development to accommodate future employment growth. The study includes existing and projected employment, estimates for commercial and industrial building space based on the employment projections, and an existing commercial and industrial land use inventory. The study concludes that sufficient commercially and industrially zoned land exists in the County.

## **AIRPORT LAND USE COMPATIBILITY PLAN**

The Lake County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan was published in September 1992. The Plan addresses land use compatibility, noise, and safety issues and policies for Lampson Field, Pierce Field, and the proposed Quakenbush Mountain Airport. The Plan discusses its relationship to city and county plans and policies, existing and future airport plans, land use policy and compatibility criteria, background data, and consistency with city and the county General Plans.



Additional information on airports in Lake County can be found in Section 6.5, "Aviation" and Section 7.4, "Man Made Hazards."

## **MENDOCINO NATIONAL FOREST LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Mendocino National Forest adopted a Land and Resource Management Plan in 1995. The Plan provides comprehensive strategy for managing the diverse resources of the Forest. The goal of the Plan is to provide a management program reflecting a mix of activities for the use and protection of the Forest. It establishes long-range goals and objectives for Forest management, specifies standards and timing for Plan implementation, and establishes a monitoring and evaluation program. Specific issues addressed in the Plan include: timber, mineral, and rangeland management; wilderness area protection; wild and scenic river designation and protection; watershed restoration; fire management programs; construction and maintenance of transportation facilities; wildlife habitat management and protection; and continued provision of public recreation opportunities.

## **PLANS FOR ADJACENT COUNTIES**

### **Napa County**

Napa County is adjacent to Lake County to the south and southeast. The Napa County General Plan was adopted in 1981 and updated in 1993. The Plan designates the land areas adjacent to Lake County as agricultural watershed and open space.

### **Sonoma County**

Sonoma County borders Lake County on the southwest. The two counties share the Mayacamas Mountains and the geysers thermal resource area. The Sonoma County General Plan was adopted in 1989 and updated several times, most recently in 1998. The county is currently in the process of updating their General Plan. The current General Plan includes policies that support the continued protection of natural resources in the area.

### **Mendocino County**

Mendocino County borders Lake County on the northwest. The Mendocino County General Plan was adopted in 1981, and amended several times through the years. A comprehensive update of the General Plan began in 2001, with an expected completion date in 2005 or 2006. This plan focuses on the protection of agricultural resources. Much of the portion of Mendocino County adjacent to Lake County is in the Mendocino National Forest.

### **Glenn County**

Glenn County borders Lake County on the northeast. The County's four volume General Plan was adopted in 1993. With the exception of considering a dairy element for the plan, no recent updates have been made. Much of the land in Glenn County adjacent to Lake County is part of the Mendocino National Forest. The limited amount of private land is designated open space and foothill agriculture/forestry.

### **Colusa County**

Colusa County borders Lake County on the east. This area is generally mountainous and rural in nature. The Colusa County General Plan, adopted in 1989, designates the area adjacent to Lake County as resource conservation and upland agriculture.

### **Yolo County**

A small fraction of Yolo County borders Lake County's southeast side. Yolo County is currently (2002) updating the Housing Element of its General Plan, but no comprehensive update has been made to the General Plan since its 1983 adoption. On the whole, the plan supports policies aimed at urban development and housing growth in cities and the preservation and conservation of agriculture in the county.

## **LAKE COUNTY LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION AND SPHERES OF INFLUENCE**

In 1985, the Cortese/Knox Local government Reorganization Act (Cortese/Knox Act) (Government Code section 56000 et. seq.) consolidated the various State laws regulating city and special district reorganization and annexations. The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Act of 2000 superceded the 1985 Cortese/Knox Act and its predecessors, which created local agency formation commissions (LAFCOs) in each county in California to regulate the organization of and extension of services provided by cities and special districts. The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act declares:

Among the purposes of the commission are discouraging urban sprawl, preserving open space and prime agricultural

lands, efficiently providing government services, and encouraging the orderly formation and development of local agencies based upon local circumstances. One of the objects of the commission is to make studies and to obtain and furnish information, which contribute to the logical and reasonable development of local agencies in each county so as to advantageously provide for the present and future needs of each county and its communities. When the formation of a new governmental entity is proposed, a commission shall make a determination as to whether existing agencies can feasibly provide the needed service or services in a more efficient and accountable manner. If a new single-purpose agency is deemed necessary, the commission shall consider reorganization with other single-purpose agencies that provide related services.

In addition to their regulatory responsibilities, LAFCOs are empowered to initiate and conduct studies of existing governmental agencies. These studies include, but are not limited to, inventories of local agencies and determination of their maximum service areas and service capabilities.

### **Lake County LAFCO**

LAFCO is an intra-local independent agency that was created by state legislation to ensure that changes in governmental organization occur in a manner which provides efficient and quality services and preserves open space land resources. The Legislature has charged Lake LAFCO with carrying out changes in governmental organization to promote specified legislative policies now codified in the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000. The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act commences with Section 56000 of the Government Code.

The creation of LAFCO was a legislative response to actions by local jurisdictions in the 1940's and 1950's. These agencies incorporated or annexed large, irregular portions of land in a manner, which resulted in irrational urban boundaries and isolated populations without efficient services or no services at all. In 1963, the Legislature established a Local Agency Formation Commission in each county and delegated to them its regulatory authority over local agency boundary changes.

Additional legislation in the 1960's extended LAFCO's authority. In the 1970's the Legislature recognized the connection between decisions concerning governmental organization and the issues of urban sprawl and loss of prime agricultural land. In response to these concerns, LAFCOs were charged with implementing changes in governmental organization in a manner, which would preserve agricultural and open space land resources and provide efficient delivery of services. Concerned that LAFCOs were responding reactively without concerning long-term regional issues, in 1972 the Legislature began requiring LAFCO to adopt a sphere of influence for

each agency in its jurisdiction. The sphere is the physical boundary and service area each local government agency is expected to serve and each proposal the Commission considers must be consistent with the sphere plan. The Legislature and the courts require LAFCOs to implement the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as it applies to LAFCO actions.

In 1985, the Cortese-Knox Local Government Reorganization Act consolidated all statutes relative to local government changes of organization. Later, in 1997, the Legislature assembled a Commission on Local Governance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century to examine governance issues with special attention to the Local Government Reorganization Act.

Many of the Commission on Local Governance's recommendations were incorporated into the Cortese Knox Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act, which was adopted by the Legislature in 2000, and became effective in 2001.

LAFCO has the specific authority to review and approve or disapprove:

- Annexations to, or detachments from, cities or districts.
- Formation or dissolution of districts
- Incorporation or disincorporation of cities.
- Consolidation or reorganization of cities or districts.
- The establishment of a subsidiary district(s).
- The development of, and amendments to, Spheres of Influence
- Extension of service beyond an agency's jurisdictional boundaries.
- Provision of new or different services by districts.
- Pursuant to Section 56434, the Commission may review and approve proposals that extend service into previously unserved territory in unincorporated areas.
- LAFCO is empowered to initiate and conduct Municipal Service Reviews for services within its jurisdiction.

In addition to its regulatory responsibilities, LAFCO of Lake County considers that an important part of its role is to encourage communication and collaborative planning and studies between public agencies.

#### **CLEAR LAKE**

Clear Lake is the largest natural freshwater lake within California, with a length of approximately 18 miles and a width of up to 8 miles. The lake has a surface area of 68.5 square miles and a shoreline of 71 miles. The lake is shallow, with an average depth of 26 feet and a maximum depth of 60 feet. The water temperature averages 61 degrees Fahrenheit and varies from 40 degrees in the winter to 76 degrees in the summer. Four sources of water replenish Clear Lake: direct precipitation, runoff from precipitation, subsurface inflow from ground water, and irrigation return flow.

Several governmental agencies have important roles in the regulation of the lake and its shoreline. The County of Lake, through a trust agreement with the State of California, manages the lake bottom, which is defined as all land zero and below on the Rumsey Gauge (the measuring gauge located at the Rumsey bridge that is used to measure flood height). The County and the cities of Clearlake and Lakeport regulate shoreline land use through their General Plans and Zoning Ordinances. Yolo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District is responsible for the operation of the dam, which controls the water level of the lake (which is maintained at between zero and 7.56 on the Rumsey Gauge). The California Department of Fish and Game is actively involved with the protection and management of the fish and wildlife in and adjacent to the lake. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regulates all fill projects in the lake below the high water mark and on adjacent wetlands.

Clear Lake is a unique natural resource. It functions as a reservoir, a wildlife habitat area, and a recreation area. Yolo County uses Clear Lake water primarily for irrigation purposes. In order for Lake County residents to use lake water, they must purchase the water from Yolo County or perfect their own riparian right.

Clear Lake is known as the Bass Capital of the West. It supports large populations of bass, crappie, bluegill, carp, and catfish. Two-thirds of the fish caught in Clear Lake are largemouth bass, with a record weight of 17.52 pounds. The shoreline area of the lake, including marshes and riparian lands, provides habitat for a large number of fish and wildlife. Due to urban and agricultural development, over 75 percent of the wetlands have been filled. Clear Lake continues to support excellent sport and commercial fishing. Sport fishing is one of the most important recreational activities in the County.

## **GEOHERMAL DEVELOPMENT**

Geothermal activity exists in the southwest portion of Lake County in an area known as "The Geysers", which extends westward into adjacent Sonoma County. Superheated steam is generated by a body of magma centered four to five miles beneath Mount Hannag. Modern development of "The Geysers" steam resources began in the late 1960s culminating with the completion in 1960 of PG&E's first plant, Unit 1, in Sonoma County. According to the Calpine Corporation, there are now approximately 100 wells in Lake County. There are six geothermal power plants in Lake County. The Bottle Rock Power Plant, currently in suspense, may be reactivated in the near future.

Geothermal resources, or steam rights, are considered mineral resources. As a consequence, the owners of land under which the geothermal resources are found may lease the mineral rights. In the case of Lake County, the property owners include the federal government, the State of California, as

well as private landowners. The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for the leasing of federal lands while the State Lands Commission is responsible for the leasing of State-owned lands. Most land within the known geothermal resource area (KGRA) has been leased. Lake County requires a special use permit for the exploration and development of geothermal resources.

In addition to power generation, and depending on the quality, temperature, and extent of the individual geothermal resource, use of proper materials and design can enable a variety of residential and commercial applications. The heating and cooling of homes and businesses, the drying of lumber, aggregate cement slabs and organic materials, and the heating of water for fish farming, food processing and mushroom growing all represent viable alternative uses of geothermal resources.

The steamfield has been considered to be in a state of decline. Less steam results in the generation of less energy and a decline in productivity. However, innovations in the injection of treated wastewater, improvements in power generation efficiency, and other geothermal resource management techniques have stabilized production from the steamfield.

*Please see the next page.*