

This meeting will be conducted in a hybrid format, with in-person and remote participation available. Commissioners will attend in-person in accordance with the Brown Act, unless remote participation is authorized and properly noticed pursuant to Government Code Section 54953. Instructions for remote public participation are provided below.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9589361913?pwd=I0DgcMKkR1nTkOs9dB8gTEXzYJC2SD.1&omn=87427898828>

Meeting ID: 958 936 1913

Passcode: 740955

Call in: 1 (669) 900-6833

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

A. Roll Call

2. PRESENTATIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS - None

3. CONSENT CALENDAR (Potential Action)

A. Approval of Minutes from February 24, 2026 Special Commission Meeting

4. PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY

This portion of the meeting provides an opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on matters not on the agenda, provided that the subject matter is within the jurisdiction of the Commission. No action may be taken on off-agenda items unless authorized by law. All statements that require a response will be referred to staff for reply in writing.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS (Potential Action)

A. Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027

The Commission will consider adopting Resolution 2026-01, approving the proposed budget for FY 2026-27.

6. BUSINESS (Potential Action)

A. Preview of Down River Fire Services MSR/SOI Update

The Commission will receive a report on the preparation of the Down River Fire Services MSR/SOI Update and review a preview of the Introduction section of the document.

7. EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT/CORRESPONDENCE (Information Only)

A. Form 700, Ethics, and Fiscal Training Requirements Reminder

B. CALAFCO Update

C. Expiring Commissioner Terms Update

8. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

9. ADJOURNMENT

Trinity LAFCo Agenda

The Commission may take action upon any item listed on the agenda. Unless otherwise noted, items may be taken up at any time during the meeting.

All persons are invited to provide public testimony and submit written comments to the Commission. All written materials received by staff before 12:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting will be distributed to the Commission. If you wish to submit written material at the meeting, please supply 10 copies.

Accessibility

The location of this meeting is wheelchair accessible. If other accommodations are required to assist a person with a disability to participate in the meeting, please contact the Executive Officer or Commission Clerk at least 24 hours before the meeting.

Disclosure & Disqualification Requirements

Government Code section 84308 ("Levine Act") establishes campaign contribution conflict of interest rules that apply to public agency proceedings involving certain contracts, licenses, permits and discretionary entitlements for use. LAFCo Commissioners may be disqualified and not able to participate in a proceeding covered by the Levine Act if, within the 12 months preceding the LAFCo decision in the proceeding, the Commissioner received more than \$500 in campaign contributions from the applicant, an agent of the applicant, or any financially interested participant who actively supports or opposes the LAFCo decision on the matter. Applicants or agents of applicants in a proceeding covered by the Levine Act who have made campaign contributions totaling more than \$500 to any LAFCo Commissioner in the past 12 months are required to disclose that fact for the official record of the proceeding, and financially interested participants or their agents are strongly encouraged to do so. Disclosures must include the amount and date of the contribution and the person or agent making the contribution, and may be made either in writing to the Clerk of the Commission prior to the hearing or by an oral declaration at the time of the hearing.

Late-Distributed Materials. Any material submitted to the Commission after this agenda is posted will be made available for public inspection as soon as possible on the LAFCo website trinitylafco.org.

Contact LAFCo Staff. For additional information please contact amber@trinitylafco.org

These minutes are not intended to be a verbatim transcription of the proceedings and discussion associated with the business on the Commission's agenda; rather, what follows is a summary of the order of business and general nature of testimony, Commission deliberation, and action taken. Votes are shown in abbreviated format when unanimous (Ayes-Noes-Abstain).

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

A. Roll Call

Chair Cox called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

Members Present: Commissioners Brownfield, Burke, Corbett, Cox, Grossman-Crist*, and Johnson; Alternate Commissioner Kasper

Members Absent: Commissioner Gogan; Alternate Commissioners Carpenter-Harris and Harper.

Staff Present: Colette Santsche, Executive Officer (EO), and Amber Chung, Clerk/Analyst

* Attended via Zoom and was seated as a voting member due to "just clause" provision

2. PRESENTATIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Presentation of Case Study by Kristin Dobbin on Lewiston Community Services District's Consolidation of Lewiston Park Mutual Water Company

Kristin Dobbin, Assistant Cooperative Extension Specialist with UC Berkeley, provided a presentation to the Commission on the consolidation of Lewiston Park Mutual Water Company and Lewiston Community Services District (CSD), formally completed in 2018. She provided a background of her work, explaining she recently conducted 10-12 case studies on water system consolidations across the state to assess outcomes and analyze how consolidation can advance local and state goals pertaining to the provision of drinking water. Commissioners asked various questions, including: 1) whether any efficiencies have been identified to make consolidation efforts less intensive and costly on rural, volunteer-run water system providers; 2) what proximity systems would need to be in relation to each other in order for consolidation to be feasible; 3) what drew Kristin to study the Lewiston area; and 4) if, looking back, Kristin had any recommendations or interventions that would've made the Lewiston consolidation easier, more effective, or less costly.

Representatives from Lewiston CSD including Board President Mary Nixon and Board Secretary Dorothy Pelton were in attendance. Mary provided comment on her personal experiences during the consolidation process, noting that the project would not have been possible without the state funding and the hard work of retired District General Manager, Mel Deardorff. Her takeaway from the project was that it was necessary and effective, but now the District is left without the ability to staff the updated water system since it requires a Grade 3 Wastewater Operator, whose salary they can't afford to pay. She expressed that consolidation with Weaverville's system should be considered, and that the state should put money into larger consolidation projects like this.

The Commission thanked Ms. Dobbin for the presentation. No action necessary or taken.

3. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. Approval of Minutes from November 4, 2025 Special Commission Meeting

No Commissioner comments or questions.

Motion to approve the consent calendar by Alternate Commissioner Kasper, seconded by Commissioner Burke, and deemed invalid by LAFCo staff since Alternate Commissioner Kasper was not seated as a voting member.

Motion to approve the consent calendar by Commissioner Burke, seconded by Commissioner Grossman-Crist, and passed by 6-0-0 roll call vote.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY

No public comment was provided.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS - None

6. BUSINESS

A. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair for 2026

EO Santsche introduced the staff report and noted that Chair Cox had expressed interest in continuing to be chair for the 2026 calendar year.

Motion to nominate Commissioner Cox as Chair for 2026 by Commissioner Corbett, seconded by Commissioner Burke, and passed by a 6-0-0 roll call vote.

Motion to nominate Commissioner Johnson as Vice-Chair for 2026 by Commissioner Burke, seconded by Commissioner Corbett, and passed by a 6-0-0 roll call vote.

B. Mid-Year Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2025-26

EO Santsche introduced the staff report and explained that nearly all apportionments from member contributions have been received and that no applications are anticipated for the rest of the fiscal year.

No Commissioner questions. No action necessary or taken.

C. Summary of Down River Regional Fire Service Provider Meeting

EO Santsche introduced the staff report and provided the highlights from a recent meeting held with Willow Creek Fire Protection District (located in Humboldt County), Junction City FPD, Salyer CSD, Hawkins Bar Volunteer Fire Department (VFD), and Down River VFD. EO Santsche explained the shared challenges of providing fire services in this region, particularly centered around providing services along the SR 299 corridor. She noted that Willow Creek FPD is spearheading coordination with state representatives, state and federal agencies, and local governments/departments providing services along the 299 corridor, from Lord Ellis to Junction City. No action necessary or taken.

D. Commercial Timberlands Report

EO Santsche introduced the staff report and outlined recent legislative and stakeholder coordination efforts focused on addressing the statutory treatment of commercial timberlands located in State Responsibility Areas within fire protection districts. Commissioners expressed appreciation for EO Santsche's work on this topic and asked clarifying questions about the magnitude of impact of this issue on Trinity County. EO Santsche stated that at this time, there does not appear to be a fiscal impact on fire districts within the County, but that this topic could become an issue during future annexation or district formation proceedings as there is no clear definition of what constitutes "commercial forest lands which are timbered lands" in Fire Protection District law.

Commissioners and EO Santsche discussed and clarified the process of funding fire services in Trinity County via property and special taxes. No action necessary or taken.

E. LAFCo Code of Conduct Policy Update

EO Santsche introduced the staff report and noted that Trinity LAFCo did not currently have a section related to Commissioner decorum and responsibilities. Commissioners asked clarifying questions. EO Santsche proposed a change to Item 1.13.1(a)(5) and stated it would read as "Keep remarks and discussion relevant, concise, and limited to properly noticed agenda items and matters within the Commission's authority" instead of "Keep remarks relevant, concise, and limited to agenda items during meetings".

Motion to approve the addition of Section 1.13 "Responsibilities of Commissioners" with the update to 1.13.1(a)(5) by Commissioner Burke, seconded by Commissioner Grossman-Crist, and passed by a 6-0-0 voice vote.

7. EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT/CORRESPONDENCE (Information Only)

A. Form 700 and Ethics Training

Clerk Chung introduced the staff report and explained the various training and certification requirements of Commissioners. Chair Cox inquired about whether CALAFCO would be offering a free SB 827 fiscal and financial training; EO Santsche responded that she would be looking into this and would provide an update at the next Commission meeting.

B. Brown Act Update

EO Santsche introduced the staff report and provided an update on the recent changes to the Brown Act and how they affect the Commission. Commissioners asked clarifying questions regarding the revised "just cause" provision.

C. Status of Expiring Commissioner Terms

Clerk Chung introduced the staff report and indicated that Commissioner Corbett and Alternate Commissioner Harper's seats would be expiring on June 30, 2026. Staff stated they would be beginning the special district member call for nomination process and would provide an update at the next Commission meeting.

D. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

No Commissioner comments.

E. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Cox adjourned the meeting at 5:35 pm.

ATTEST:

Amber Chung, Clerk

DATE: _____

AGENDA ITEM 5.A.

MEETING: April 21, 2026
TO: Trinity LAFco Commissioners
FROM: Colette Santsche, Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-27

BACKGROUND

Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFcos) are responsible for annually adopting a proposed budget by May 1st and a final budget by June 15th in accordance with Government Code Section 56381. State law specifies the proposed and final budgets shall, at a minimum, be equal to the budget adopted for the previous fiscal year unless LAFco finds the reduced costs will nevertheless allow the agency to fulfill its prescribed regulatory and planning duties.

DISCUSSION

Funding Sources:

Trinity LAFco's annual operating expenses are principally funded through appropriations from the County and Special Districts, in addition to application fees. Each fiscal year, after the Commission adopts the final budget, the County Auditor-Controller apportions operating expenses between the County and the independent special districts. Statutory authority allows the County Auditor-Controller to collect the amounts apportioned.

Operating Expenses:

The proposed operating expenses reflect the anticipated staffing services, daily operational needs, and preparation of municipal service reviews and sphere of influence updates. No changes in operating expenses are proposed from the prior fiscal year.

Operating Revenues:

LAFco has been operating at a deficit and relying on reserve funding to balance revenues and expenses. In years past, staff has proposed a 2-3% increase in member contributions every year while maintaining operating expenses in order to slowly close the gap between revenues and expenses. However, last fiscal year, it was determined that this course of action was expected to deplete reserves over the next five to seven years. On April 14, 2025, staff proposed that the Commission increase revenues by either five percent or seven percent over the next five fiscal years. The Commission chose to proceed with the budget option that increased revenues by five percent. As such, the proposed budget for FY 2026-27 (Attachment A) also proposes an increase of approximately five percent in member contributions. Beginning and ending fund balances are estimated based on the FY2025-26 adopted budget and mid-year actuals.

Proposed Work Plan:

As stated above, the proposed budget is intended to cover basic operating and administration expenses of the Commission. This includes the development of municipal service reviews and sphere of influence updates for special districts throughout the county. As part of the Fiscal Year 2026-27 budgeting process, staff is proposing the following work plan:

Activity	Tentative Time Frame
Planning and Regulatory Activities	
Post Mountain PUD MSR/SOI Follow-up	Ongoing
Downriver Region Fire Services MSR/SOI Update	June 2026 Hearing
Countywide Park and Recreation Services MSR/SOI Update	Oct/Dec 2026 Hearing
Trinity County Resource Conservation District MSR/SOI Update	Feb/Apr 2026 Hearing
Change of Organization/Reorganization Proposals (0-2/yr)	Ongoing
Out of Agency Service Requests (0-1/yr)	Ongoing
Agency pre-application meetings, inquiries and technical support	Ongoing
Administrative Activities (Priority 1)	
2026-27 Budget, claim forms, tracking	Ongoing
2026 CALAFCO Annual Conference in Sacramento	Oct 21-23
2027 CALAFCO Staff Workshop	TBD
Public information/communications	Ongoing
Website Maintenance and Updates	Ongoing
GIS Boundary Mapping Updates	Ongoing
Administrative Activities (Priority 2)	
Public Records Act Requests	As needed
Respond to Grand Jury Reports	As needed
LAFCo Policy Review and Revisions	As needed
State Legislation Monitoring and Position Letters	As needed
Comment on LAFCo-related local government proceedings	As needed

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Commission adopt Resolution No. 2026-01, approving the Proposed Budget and workplan for Fiscal Year 2026-27, with any requested changes; direct staff to forward the proposed budget to local funding agencies; and direct staff to prepare the final budget at a public hearing scheduled for June 16, 2026.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Trinity LAFCo FY 2026-27 Proposed Budget

Attachment B: Resolution No. 2026-01

Trinity LAFCo Budget

Categories	Acct #	FY 2024/25 Amended Budget	FY 2024/25 Year End Actual	FY 2025/26 Adopted Budget	FY 2025/26 Mid Year Actuals	FY 2026/27 Proposed Budget
REVENUES:						
Interest	6601	-	3,294.83	-	-	-
LAFCo Fees (Applications)	8404	12,000	11,557.50	5,000	-	5,250.00
Cont From Other Agencies:						
County	9282	15,500	15,500.00	16,400	16,400.00	17,200
Indep Spec Districts	9285	15,500	16,226.42	16,400	16,326.05	17,200
TOTAL Revenues		\$ 43,000	46,578.75	\$ 37,800	\$ 32,726.05	\$ 39,650

4.89%

EXPENDITURES:						
Memberships	2240	1,400	1,378.00	1,500	1,423.00	1,500
Office	2260	500	395.70	600	22.80	600
Professional & Specialized:	2300	52,800	51,557.50	45,800	16,182.49	45,800
- Staffing services		25,000	24,650.00	25,000	10,915.00	25,000
- MSR/SOI		15,000	15,350.00	15,000	5,247.50	15,000
- Applications		12,000	11,557.50	5,000	-	5,000
- Legal Counsel		500	-	500	-	500
- Web Service		300	-	300	19.99	300
Publications & Legal Notices	2500	550.00	514.91	500	-	500
Transportation & Travel	2750	1,650.00	1,608.02	1,500	344.40	1,500
Training	2756	-	-	-	-	-
Contrib to Non LAF Agency	3200	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer Out		-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL Expenditures		\$ 56,900	\$ 55,454.13	\$ 49,900	\$ 17,972.69	\$ 49,900

Operating Difference		\$ (13,900)	\$ (8,875.38)	\$ (12,100)	\$ 14,753	\$ (10,250)
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(Negative Balance Indicates Use of Reserves)

FUND BALANCE/RESERVES		<i>Estimate</i>				
Beginning Year Fund Balance		\$ 71,172		\$ 62,297		\$ 52,448
Ending Year Fund Balance			\$ 62,297		\$ 52,448	

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-01
ADOPTING A PROPOSED BUDGET FOR
FISCAL YEAR 2026-27

WHEREAS, the Trinity Local Agency Formation Commission is required by the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 to adopt a proposed budget for the next fiscal year no later than May 1; and

WHEREAS, the Executive Officer prepared a report concerning the proposed budget, including recommendations therein; and

WHEREAS, the Executive Officer's report was presented to the Commission in the manner provided by law; and

WHEREAS, the Commission heard and fully considered all the evidence presented at its public hearing on the proposed budget held on April 21, 2026; and

WHEREAS, the Commission determined that the proposed budget projects staffing and program costs of the agency as accurately and appropriately as is possible.

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED, DETERMINED AND ORDERED as follows:

1. The proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2026-27 as outlined in Exhibit A is hereby approved and by this reference incorporated herein;
2. The overall operating costs provided in the proposed budget will allow the Commission to fulfill its regulatory and planning responsibilities as required under Government Code Section § 56381(a);
3. The adopted proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2026-27 shall be circulated to funding agencies for review and comment.

THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION was introduced at a regular meeting of the Trinity LAFCo Commission on the 21st day of April, 2026, and adopted by the following roll call vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTAINS:

ABSENT:

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Colette Santsche
Executive Officer

Jill Cox
Chair

AGENDA ITEM 6.A.

MEETING: April 21, 2026
TO: Trinity LAFCo Commissioners
FROM: Colette Santsche, Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Preview of Down River Fire Services MSR/SOI Update

BACKGROUND

Staff is currently preparing the Down River Regional Fire Services Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence (MSR/SOI) Update, which will evaluate fire protection and emergency response services in the Down River region of Trinity County. The geographic scope aligns with the Trinity County Wildfire Protection Plan and includes the following primary fire service providers:

- Salyer Community Services District (CSD)
- Downriver Volunteer Fire Department (VFD)
- Hawkins Bar Volunteer Fire Department (VFD)

Salyer CSD is the only independent special district within this region. As such, formal Sphere of Influence determinations will apply solely to this agency. However, the MSR will place significant emphasis on mutual aid relationships and opportunities for governance and funding opportunities among providers in the region.

The Downriver and Hawkins Bar VFDs are non-district volunteer departments and do not have sustainable base funding beyond community donations and grants. Regional service is further supported through mutual aid by Willow Creek FPD (Humboldt County) and Junction City FPD, as well as other regional, state, and federal partners.

DISCUSSION

The Down River region presents unique fire and rescue service conditions, particularly with respect to emergency response along the State Route 299 (SR 299) corridor. Local fire departments respond to vehicular accidents and other emergencies along SR 299, a state-owned and managed highway.

Willow Creek FPD has drafted a letter (Attachment A) to Senator Mike McGuire and other state representatives requesting stable state funding to sustain emergency medical and rescue services along state highways. Down River departments expressed interest in supporting the effort, and a meeting with state agencies, and local departments is scheduled for early May.

Staff is working to prepare a comprehensive MSR/SOI Update of the Down River region. A preview of the introduction section is attached (Attachment B) for Commission review. Staff anticipates bringing an administrative draft of the document to the June 16, 2026, Commission Meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Commission receive and file this report. The Commission is invited to discuss the item and provide direction to staff as needed.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Willow Creek FPD Letter

Attachment B: Introduction Section of Down River Regional Fire Services MSR/SOI Update

March 18, 2026

Dear Senator McGuire, Assemblyman Rogers, CAL FIRE, Caltrans, USFS, CHP, and Humboldt and Trinity County Supervisors,

This letter is a follow up to an initial request letter sent on January 29, 2026 regarding the request for a meeting to discuss the lack of State of California fire and medical resources along the State Route 299 Corridor between Junction City east of Weaverville (MM 43), and Lord Ellis Summit between Willow Creek and Blue Lake (MM 17). This meeting will convene of all involved parties and agencies to seriously discuss current and future solutions, including Senator McGuire, Assemblyman Rogers, CAL FIRE, Caltrans, USFS, CHP, and County Supervisors.

Recently, Fire Chiefs from Junction City Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) and Fire Protection District (FPD), Down River VFD, Hawkins Bar VFD, Salyer VFD, and Willow Creek VFD/FPD met to discuss ongoing and worsening issues regarding lack of available personnel or sustainable funding in a region unlike any other in the State, where there are no urban, paid, or State fire departments within adequate response range. From Willow Creek west, the nearest CAL FIRE station is over 50 miles away and does not provide support to responses along State Highway 299. The burden of response then falls on small, rural volunteer fire departments in economically depressed communities where the majority of firefighter-aged residents must work out of the area to support their families. The call volume for these five fire departments has increased drastically over the years, coupled with fewer volunteers able to respond. See Table 1 below.

Department	Average Annual Call Volume	# of Vol. Firefighters (# of daytime active)
Junction City	75	13 (1-2)
Down River	26	2 (1)
Hawkins Bar	100	12 (2-3)
Salyer	130	11 (5)
Willow Creek	350	14 (5)

Table 1. Annual Call Volume and Number of Volunteers per Department

The area between Junction City and Lord Ellis Summit is a windy, 70 mile stretch of State Route 299 that follows the Trinity River (see map in Attachment A), where an average of 8,000 vehicles travel per day (per Caltrans data). State Route 299 is the only STAA-approved route in and out of Humboldt County from the Interstate 5 Highway, and is the major tourist and commercial route between Redding and Eureka. The five fire departments that currently carry

the burden of responding along this State highway are requesting representation, sustainable funding, and State fire and medical personnel to provide 24/7 coverage to the region. Recently, the State of California has supported increasing the number of CAL FIRE personnel and ensuring those firefighters are employed year-round through the Fight for Firefighters Act. As conveyed by Senator McGuire's office, this act is being implemented right now, and we have never had a meeting/summit to address this essential need. We are formally requesting a meeting with all parties involved, including Senator McGuire, Assemblyman Rogers, Humboldt CAL FIRE Unit Chief, Trinity CAL FIRE Unit Chief, USFS, CHP, Humboldt County Supervisor Madrone, Trinity County Supervisor Carpenter-Harris, and Caltrans Districts 1 and 2, whether virtually or in person, as soon as possible to discuss potential solutions for our region.

Sincerely,

Todd Wright
Chief, Hawkins Bar VFD

Dave Murphy
Chief, Salyer VFD

Samantha Brown
Chief, Willow Creek VFD

Gloria Reynolds
Chief, Down River VFD

Justin Kerwick
Chief, Junction City VFD

March 18, 2026
Date

Down River Regional Fire

Municipal Services Review and Sphere of Influence Update



Administrative Draft
April 2026



www.trinitylafco.org

TRINITY LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

Commissioners:

Julia Brownfield, District 5 County Supervisor

Jill Cox, District 2 County Supervisor

Liam Gogan, District 3 County Supervisor

Andrew Johnson, Special District Member - Trinity Public Utilities District

Todd Corbett, Special District Member - Trinity Life Support Community Services District

Anna C. Burke, Public Member

Jake Grossman-Crist, Public Member

Alternate Members:

Heidi Carpenter-Harris, Alternate County Member

Lisa Harper, Alternate Special District Member

Joseph Kasper, Alternate Public Member

Staff:

Colette Santsche, AICP, Executive Officer

Amber Chung, LAFCo Clerk/Analyst

Louis Choy, GIS Analyst

Acknowledgements:

LAFCo would like to thank the following people for their contributions and instrumental assistance in the completion of this document:

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1.0 MSR/SOI BACKGROUND

The Trinity Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) is preparing this Municipal Service Review (MSR) and Sphere of Influence (SOI) update for fire service providers in the Down River region of Trinity County following the requirements of State law and LAFCo policies. LAFCo acts as the countywide oversight agency that coordinates logical and timely changes to local government boundaries. A primary objective for this MSR is to provide a recommendation for the SOI of Salyer Community Services District (CSD) and to document the service areas and levels of services of the studied agencies including:

- Salyer Community Services District (CSD)
- Hawkins Bar Volunteer Fire Department (VFD)
- Down River Volunteer Fire Department (VFD)

The Trinity County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) apportions the County into five divisions (Figure 2-1). The Down River region contains the boundaries of all three local fire service providers covered in this MSR/SOI update (Figure 2-2). Regional distinctions of the County will be referred to according to the divisions set forth by the CWPP throughout this report.

Fire service providers in rural areas often face unique obstacles in the provision of services including remote service areas with an aging population and low volunteerism, limited water storage capacity for fire response, limited administrative staff capacity, lack of resources and funding, and more. This MSR will take a systems approach to review the current level of services and identify potential areas of opportunity to increase efficiency and resiliency in the region. This report is organized as follows:

- A background section with additional discussion of LAFCo responsibilities, the legal requirements of MSR/SOI updates, and the methodology and data sources used.
- A summary section with an overview of the County, a brief discussion of current or potential wildfire and evacuation planning impacts, and a summary of MSR findings.
- Agency profiles for each agency within the study area.
- Service review for Salyer CSD and recommended SOI changes where applicable.

1.1 ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF LAFCO

LAFCo is an independent regulatory commission that was established by the State legislature in 1963 to encourage the orderly growth and development of local governmental agencies including cities and special districts. Today, there is a LAFCo in each of California's 58 counties. Trinity LAFCo has a public Commission with seven regular Commissioners and three alternate Commissioners. The Commission is composed of three members of the Trinity County Board of Supervisors, two Special District Representatives, and two Public Members-At-Large. The Commission also includes one alternate member for each represented category.

LAFCo is responsible for implementing the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 ("CKH Act") (California Government Code Section 56000 et seq.) for purposes of facilitating changes in local governmental structure and boundaries that fosters orderly growth and development, promotes the efficient delivery of services, and encourages the preservation of open space and agricultural lands. Some of LAFCo's duties include regulating jurisdictional boundary changes and the extension of municipal services. This includes city and special district annexations, incorporations/formations, consolidations, and other changes of organization. LAFCo seeks to be proactive in raising awareness and building partnerships to accomplish this through its special studies, programs, and actions.

The CKH Act outlines requirements for preparing MSRs for periodic SOI updates. MSRs and SOIs are tools created to empower LAFCo to satisfy its legislative charge of "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 conditions and circumstances" (Government Code (G.C.) §56301). CKH Act Section 56301 further establishes that "one of the objects of the commission is to make studies and to obtain and furnish information which will contribute to the logical and reasonable development of local agencies in each county and to shape the development of local agencies so as to advantageously provide for the present and future needs of each county and its communities." SOIs therefore guide both the near-term and long-term physical and economic growth and development of local agencies, and MSRs provide the relevant data to inform LAFCo's SOI determinations.

1.2 PURPOSE OF MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEWS

As described above, MSRs are designed to equip LAFCo with relevant information and data necessary for the Commission to make informed decisions on SOIs. The CKH Act, however, gives LAFCo broad discretion in deciding how to conduct MSRs, including geographic focus, scope of study, and the identification of alternatives for improving the efficiency, cost-effectiveness, accountability, and reliability of public services.

The purpose of a MSR in general is to provide a comprehensive inventory and analysis of the services provided by local agencies. A MSR evaluates governance structures and efficiencies of service providers - and may also serve as the basis for subsequent LAFCo decisions. The MSR is intended to provide information and analysis to support changes or updates to spheres of influence. A written statement of the study's determinations must be made in the following areas:

- (1) Growth and population projections for the affected area.
- (2) Location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or continuous to the sphere of influence.
- (3) Present and planned capacity of public facilities, adequacy of public services, and infrastructure needs or deficiencies.

- (4) Financial ability of the agency to provide services.
- (5) Status of and opportunities for shared facilities.
- (6) Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies.
- (7) Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery, as required by Commission policy.

This MSR is organized according to these determinations listed above. Information regarding each of the above issue areas is provided in this document.

1.3 PURPOSE OF SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

In 1972, LAFCOs were given the power to establish SOIs for all local agencies under their jurisdiction. As defined by the CKH Act, "sphere of influence" means a plan for the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency, as determined by the commission" (G.C. §56076). All boundary changes, such as annexations, must be consistent with an agency's SOI with limited exceptions.

Pursuant to Trinity LAFCo policy, a MSR is conducted prior to or in conjunction with its mandate to review and update each local agency's sphere of influence every five years or as necessary. The MSR process is intended to inform the Commission as to the availability, capacity, and efficiency of local governmental services prior to making SOI determinations.

LAFCo is required to make five written determinations when establishing, amending, or updating an SOI for any local agency that address the following (G.C. §56425(c)):

- (1) The present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open space lands.
- (2) The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area.
- (3) The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services that the agency provides or is authorized to provide.
- (4) The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the commission determines that they are relevant to the agency.
- (5) For an update of an SOI of a city or special district that provides public facilities or services related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, or structural fire protection, the present and probable need for those public facilities and services of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within the existing sphere of influence.

Service reviews may also contain recommendations for SOI or government structure changes needed to implement positive service changes. Where more detailed analysis of service options is necessary, service reviews may contain recommendations for special studies where there is the potential to reduce service gaps and improve service levels.

1.4 DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES

SB 244 (Chapter 513, Statutes of 2011) made changes to the CKH Act related to disadvantaged unincorporated communities, including mandating the incorporation of an SOI determination focusing on the topic. A disadvantaged unincorporated community (DUC) is defined as an inhabited territory containing 12 or more registered voters, where the median household income of the area is less than 80 percent of the State of California's median household income.

Pursuant to Government Code §56425(e)(5), LAFCOs are required to make written determinations regarding the present and probable need for public facilities and services—including water, wastewater, and structural fire protection—in any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to an SOI. In addition, pursuant to Government Code §56425(c), these communities are recognized as social and economic communities of interest for purposes of SOI determinations.

1.5 REVIEW METHODS

The following information was considered in the development of this service review:

- Agency-specific data: responses to LAFCo Requests for Information
- Demographic data: U.S. Census Bureau; Department of Finance
- Finances: budgets and audits; State Controller's Office
- Personal Communications with District staff/Board and Department volunteers
- Other Reports: Trinity County Community Wildfire Prevention Plan Update 2020; Trinity County 2050 General Plan Update Public Review Draft Background Report; Trinity County 2019-2024 Housing Element Update

The information gathered was analyzed and applied to make the required determinations. All information gathered for this report is filed by LAFCo for future reference.

1.6 CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is contained in Public Resources Code §21000 et seq. Public agencies are required to evaluate the potential environmental effects of their actions. CEQA Guidelines are contained in the California Code of Regulations (CCR) and provide guidance on compliance with CEQA. MSRs are statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to CCR §15262 (feasibility or planning studies) and categorically exempt pursuant to CCR §15306 (information collection).

CEQA requirements are sometimes applicable to SOI Updates. The CEQA lead agency for SOI Updates is most often LAFCo, unless an agency has initiated an SOI expansion or update. In the case of the SOI amendments contained in this report, they are considered exempt under CEQA Guidelines §15061(b)(3) or the Common Sense exemption because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment. The changes in SOIs are related to the response areas of the various districts and do not extend water, wastewater, or other services that may induce growth or otherwise impact the environment.

2.0 REGIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The Trinity County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) apportions the County into five divisions (Figure 2-1). The Down River region contains the boundaries of all three fire service providers covered in this MSR/SOI update (Figure 2-2).

Figure 2-1: Trinity County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Divisions

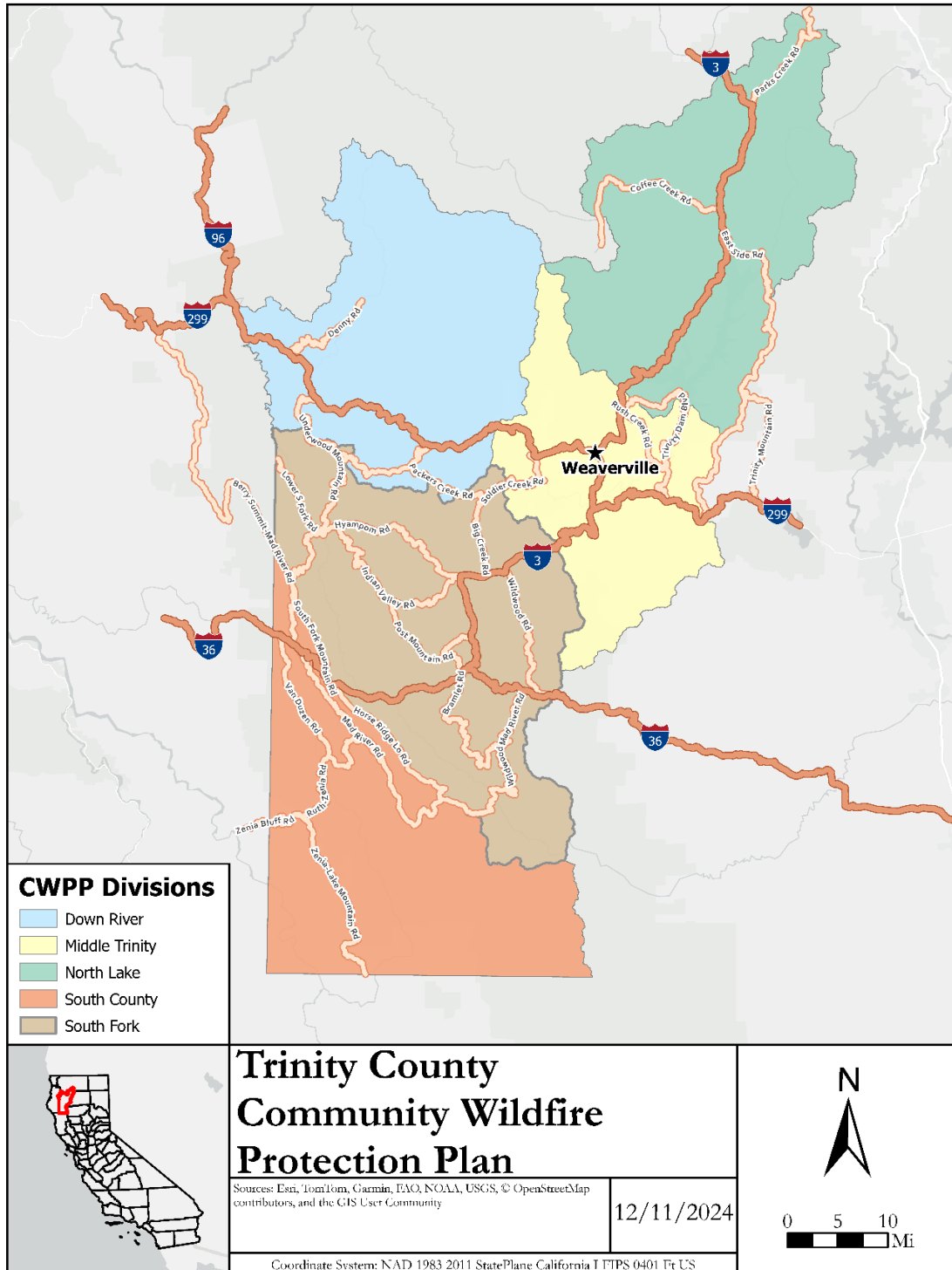
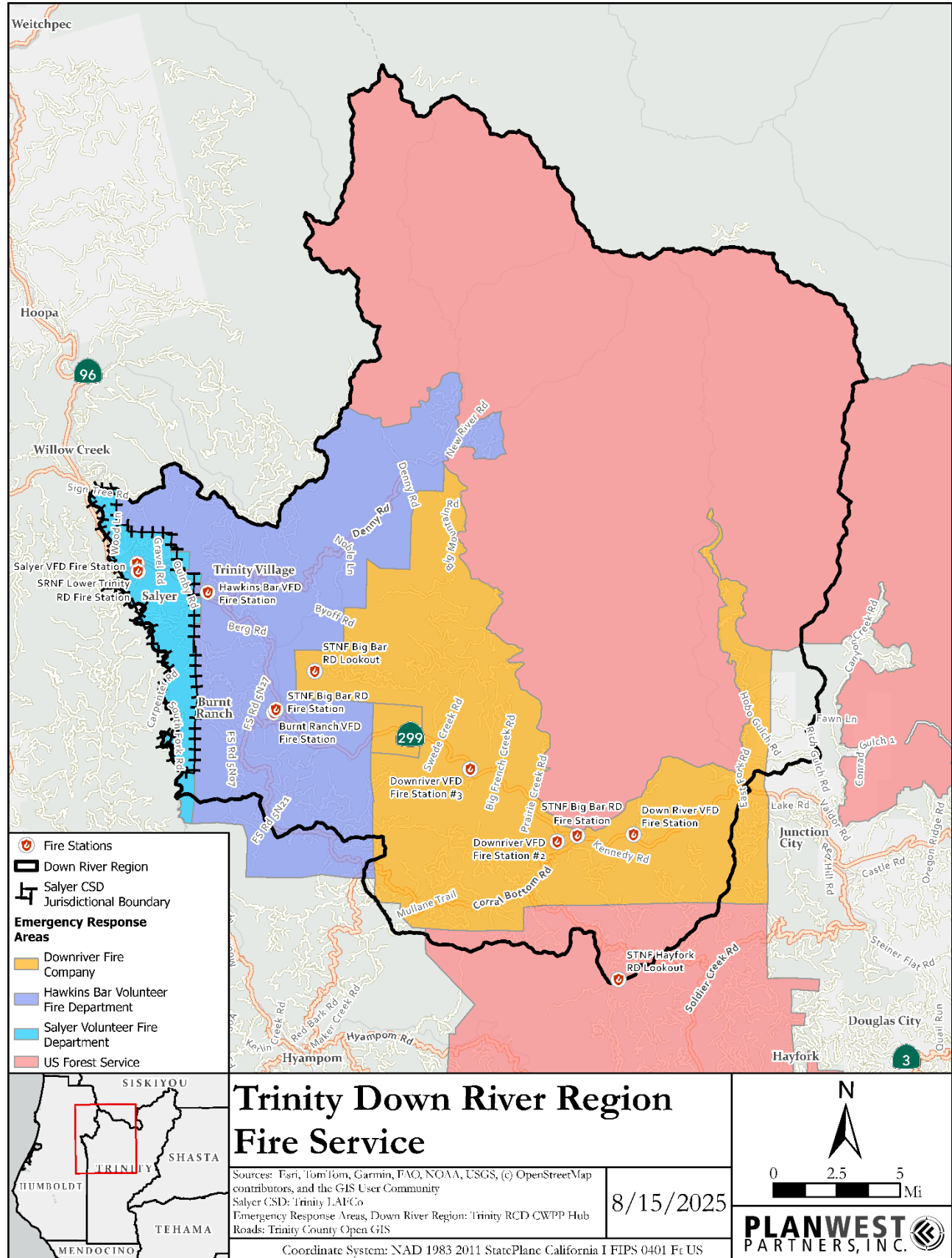


Figure 2-2: Down River Fire-Related District and Department Boundaries



2.1 TRIBAL LANDS

Within the geographical boundary of Trinity County, there are ancestral tribal lands for numerous native peoples including the Tsnungwe, Chimariko, and Wintu. All three of these tribes occupied the northwest region of Trinity County, overlapping with the Down River region.

Tsnungwe

The Tsnungwe's largest village was located at the confluence of the South and Main Forks of the Trinity River, near present-day Salyer. This village, te:ldin, was an important trade center for the area and the many neighboring tribes. The Tsnungwe people spoke in a Hupa dialect but frequently spoke many other languages due to the importance of te:ldin as an economic trade center¹.

The influx of European settlers and miners to the region during the California Gold Rush drastically altered the Tsnungwe's way of life. The Tsnungwe signed treaties with the settlers in 1851 and 1864, but these were never ratified. The Tsnungwe people were removed to the Hoopa Reservation, fled, or were killed by settlers in conflicts. Many years later, some Tsnungwe people returned to their homelands and worked to regain their way of life.

The Tsnungwe peoples are led by two councils: the elders council, is composed of family leaders from the original Tsnungwe families, and the general council is made up of current adult tribal members. The general council manages tribal affairs but only with elder council approval.

Chimariko

The Chimariko people originally lived along the Trinity River, with smaller settlements on the New River² and South Fork tributaries to the Trinity. They were a small tribe and like many other tribes in the area, suffered extreme population decline during the California Gold Rush. Surviving Chimariko largely left the area and lived with surrounding tribes.

Wintu

Historically, the Wintu lived in the northern part of the Sacramento Valley on the western side, from the Sacramento River to the Coast Range. These peoples also lived in the southern portion of the Upper Sacramento River, the southern portion of the McCloud River, the upper Trinity River, and the west side of the Sacramento River near present-day Chico³. The Wintu subsisted off of the waters of the area and resources from nearby mountains⁴. The Wintu were stewards of the land and engaged in indigenous prescribed fire practices to benefit the landscape.

European colonization and the discovery of gold resulted in the transmission of smallpox and influenza and the outright extermination of the Wintu peoples, largely decimating the tribe's population⁵. The California Gold Rush motivated Europeans to forcefully relocate the Wintu to other lands.

Today, the Wintu peoples largely live on reservations and rancherias in Colusa, Glenn, Yolo, Mendocino, and Shasta counties⁶ including the Redding Rancheria. The Wintu Tribe of Northern California has a Museum and Cultural Resource Center in Shasta Lake, California and has a

¹ Tsnungwe Tribe. (2019). Who We Are. <https://dannynammon.wixsite.com/website>

² AAA Native Arts. (n.d). Chimariko Tribe of California. <https://www.aaanativearts.com/chimariko-tribe#:~:text=Traditional%20Territory:,South%20Fork%20and%20New%20Rivers.>

³ Redding Rancheria. (n.d). *Our Tribes*. Wintu. [https://www.reddingrancheria-nsn.gov/our-tribes/#:~:text=The%20Wintu%20\(also%20Northern%20Wintun,of%20the%20Penutian%20language%20family.](https://www.reddingrancheria-nsn.gov/our-tribes/#:~:text=The%20Wintu%20(also%20Northern%20Wintun,of%20the%20Penutian%20language%20family.)

⁴ National Park Service. (2023, December 14). *History & Culture*. The Wintu. <https://www.nps.gov/whis/learn/historyculture/the-wintu.htm>

⁵ Trinity County Chamber of Commerce. (2023, May 16). *Natural and Cultural History*. The Wintu Indians. <http://www.trinitycounty.com/index.php/2023/05/16/natural-and-cultural-history/>

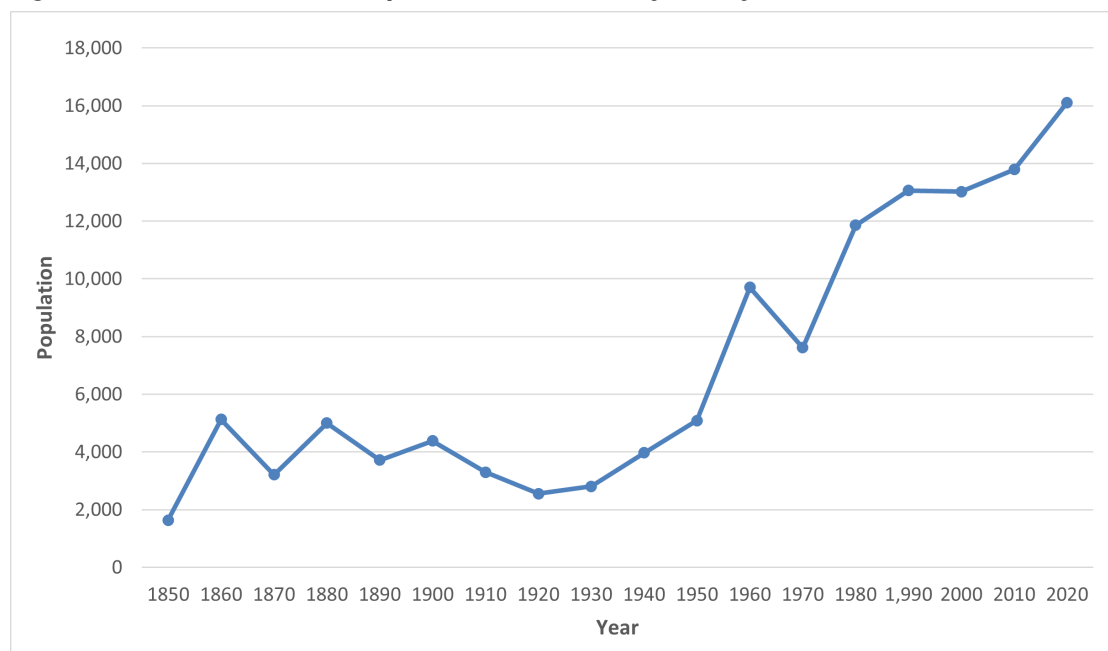
⁶ Pritzker, B. (2000). *A Native American Encyclopedia: History, Culture, and Peoples*. Oxford University Press.

government-to-government relationship with the State and the City of Shasta Lake⁷. The Tribe has a tribal council, is involved in community events, and exercises the currently attainable native rights allowed under current policies.

2.2 TRINITY COUNTY POPULATION

Trinity County was established in 1850 and was included in the 1850 census. The area of the County was much larger in 1850 than present-day as it was one of the original 27 counties in California and would later lose much of its land to create additional counties in the state. At the time of establishment, the County had a recorded aggregate population of 1,635⁸. Since the 1920s, the County has seen steady population growth, and the current population is approximately 16,112⁹ according to the 2020 decennial census. Like most areas in the state, the highest population growth occurred from 1940 to 1960 (Figure 2-3). During this time the population of the County more than doubled from 3,970 to 9,706 (5,736 persons). From 1970 to 1980 the County saw another large population increase of approximately 4,243 persons which continued to steadily grow until 2010, when another significant population increase of 2,326 persons occurred between 2010 and 2020.

Figure 2-3: Decennial Census Population Data for Trinity County



Data Source: US Department of Finance. (August 13, 2021). Historical Census Populations: 1850-2020. California, Counties, and Incorporated Cities/Towns.

Population growth projections are prepared for the State and its counties by the State Department of Finance (DOF) and were last published in 2023. The DOF Economic Forecast projects that the County population will decline and reach 15,330 in 2050. This decline is based on the County’s annual out-migration exceeding its in-migration and having an aging population, combined with annual deaths exceeding new births. The surge in positive net in-migration from 2012-2020 shown in Figure 2-3 is potentially coming to an end and is not anticipated to occur again between now and 2050. However, DOF projections do not include other factors that could influence local or regional population changes

⁷ The Wintu Tribe. (n.d.) *About Us*. <https://wintutribe.com/what-we-do/>

⁸ DeBow, J. D. B. (1853). *1850 Census: The Seventh Census of the United States*. Table of Counties, Districts, and Parishes in the United States. Washington: Robert Armstrong, Public Printer. <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1850/1850a/1850a-14.pdf>

⁹ US Census Bureau. (2020). Table P1 Race

such as possible future movements from urban areas to less populated areas or changes to regional economic conditions.

A population decline of 0.4 percent is used in this review. This rate is consistent with the population projections set forth by the DOF based on County trends and characteristics. It is unlikely that there will be substantial growth in the communities under review.

2.3 GOVERNANCE AND STAFFING

Governance and staffing are persistent challenges for rural fire protection districts, particularly in areas characterized by small, dispersed populations and limited local workforce availability. Many districts rely on a small pool of community members to serve in governance roles, and filling board vacancies can be difficult over time. Similarly, fire protection services in these areas are often heavily dependent on volunteer personnel, whose availability may fluctuate due to work, family, and other commitments.

Volunteer recruitment and retention remains a central issue across rural fire service providers. In many cases, a core group of dedicated individuals provides a disproportionate share of response and administrative capacity, which can lead to fatigue and long-term sustainability concerns. At the same time, limited administrative staffing and financial resources constrain a district's ability to prioritize recruitment, training, and organizational development.

Rural districts also tend to operate with constrained and variable revenue sources, often including a combination of property tax allocations, grants, and service-related funding. While grant funding can be critical for maintaining equipment and service levels, it is typically project-specific and may not support ongoing operational or administrative needs. This can make long-term planning, including capital improvements and staffing stability, more difficult.

Administrative capacity is another important consideration. Maintaining consistent financial reporting, audits, and other required documentation can be challenging for districts with limited staff or reliance on part-time support. These constraints are not uncommon in rural settings and can affect a district's ability to compete for external funding or financing opportunities.

To support long-term sustainability, rural fire protection districts may consider opportunities to enhance administrative and service capacity through shared services, partnerships, or organizational restructuring (e.g., annexation or consolidation). These approaches can help distribute administrative responsibilities, improve service reliability, and position districts to better meet future demands. Additional discussion of these options is provided in subsequent sections of this report.

2.4 FIREWISE COMMUNITIES

The Firewise USA® program, administered by the National Fire Protection Association, provides a framework for communities to organize and implement local wildfire preparedness and risk reduction efforts. In California, the program is supported by CAL FIRE and implemented locally through partnerships with regional organizations.

Firewise efforts are coordinated in collaboration with the Trinity County Resource Conservation District, which provides technical assistance for completing required components such as community wildfire risk assessments and three-year action plans. These locally driven efforts are an important complement to fire protection services, particularly in remote areas where response times and resource availability may be limited.

Several communities within the Down River area—including Hawkins Bar, Salyer, Big Bar/Big Flat, and Burnt Ranch—have obtained Firewise USA® recognition. These areas generally correspond to the service areas of the Salyer CSD, Down River VFD, and Hawkins Bar VFD. The Firewise program supports

community-level coordination around defensible space, fuel reduction, and emergency preparedness, helping to reduce overall wildfire risk.

Participation in the Firewise USA® program can also improve a community's competitiveness for state and federal grant funding, which is critical for rural areas with limited financial capacity. In addition, some insurance providers offer incentives or premium considerations for properties located within recognized Firewise communities, further supporting local resilience efforts.

2.5 WILDFIRE

Wildfire is the largest hazardous threat in Trinity County and wildfire activity has only increased throughout the years. From 1998 to 2024, 40 percent of the County's land has been affected by wildfires; up from 12 percent from 1990 to 1998. Beginning in the early 2000s, the County shifted its proactive fire management planning efforts from primarily wildland firefighting to focusing more on fuels reduction and fire prevention, leading to the development of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) - one of the first in the country.

The CWPP identifies and prioritizes fuel reduction projects for the County and serves as support for grant funding applications. The Trinity Fire Safe Council (FSC), founded in 1998, consists of representatives from local volunteer fire departments, land management agencies (local, state, and federal), citizens, and other non-governmental organizations. The FSC improves the coordination and cooperation of wildfire management in the County.

Recent major wildfires in the County include the Monument Wildfire (222,946 acres burned) and Haypress River Complex Wildfire (192,507 acres burned) in 2021, the August Complex Wildfire (1,028,897 acres burned) in 2020, and the Carr-Delta Wildfire (229,475 acres burned) in 2018. Many of these wildfires impacted neighboring counties and required multijurisdictional collaboration for effective firefighting response. Collaboration was facilitated by the FSC, Trinity County Fire Chief's Association (TCFCA), Trinity County Resource Conservation District (TCRCD), CAL FIRE, local fire departments, and other entities responsible for fire suppression services. Wildfire risk is of significant concern to the local responders in the County and is a significant challenge for the area.

2.6 EMERGENCY ACCESS AND EVACUATION PLANNING

Trinity County is a rural, mountainous area with approximately 1,884¹⁰ miles of maintained roads. Residents primarily travel via personal vehicle due to the region being physically isolated with connectivity challenges. Road closures due to severe weather such as snow or landslides, traffic collisions, or poor pavement conditions severely limit emergency access and evacuation planning. Emergency responders and evacuation planning must consider and be prepared for the numerous challenges that threaten effective emergency responses.

Trinity County frequently receives rain and snow storms in the winter months. Snow removal is conducted in accordance with the County's Snow Removal policy #2010-01, which provides for snow removal on County roads after an accumulation of more than three inches of snow prior to 3:00 pm. Snow removal is not conducted by the County on private roads, state highways (including SR-299), or roads not winter maintained. The County prioritizes the removal of snow on main roads and school bus routes; then roads classified as major collector or arterial, and those requested by Sheriff Dispatch via emergency request; then roads classified as minor collector, bus routes, or public spaces; and then other County roads. The County has limited staff in its Road Maintenance Division and limited funding, which impacts its ability to provide effective snow removal in the case of a storm. In the case of

¹⁰ Trinity County Transportation Commission, 2022. 2022 Trinity County Regional Transportation Plan. <https://www.trinitycounty.org/sites/default/files/DOT/2023%2BTrinity%2BCounty%2BRTP%2B-%2BPUBLIC%2BDRAFT.pdf>

emergency responses or evacuation planning, snow can pose a serious risk to effective transportation requiring alternative routes or other mitigation tactics.

Narrow, curving roadways, similar to many of the roads in Trinity County, can contribute to vehicle collisions. A majority of collisions in the area happen on State Route 299 (SR-299), which serves as the main access road in and out of the County, connecting into Shasta and Humboldt counties. The provision of fire services to SR-299 is a unique and persistent challenge for the Down River region. Collisions heavily impact traffic access including emergency responses and evacuation routes.

The 2020 Pavement Condition Index (PCI) for Trinity County was 54 on a scale of 0-100, which is an overall increase from the 2012 PCI of 50. Lower PCIs indicate declining pavement conditions which can lead to higher repair costs. As with most municipalities, funding for roadway repair and maintenance can be difficult to obtain. Declining pavement conditions can impact fire service providers' abilities to effectively provide services, especially when responses are in the more rural parts of the County or require larger fire engines.

3.0 MUTUAL CHARACTERISTICS

The Down River region experiences similar challenges to those of other rural fire departments. The area also presents unique fire and rescue service conditions, particularly with respect to emergency response along the State Route 299 (SR-299) corridor. Local departments – including Salyer CSD, Downriver VFD, Hawkins Bar VFD, Junction City FPD, and Willow Creek FPD (located in Humboldt County) – historically respond to vehicular accidents and other emergencies along SR 299, a state-owned and managed highway.

3.1 SHARED CHALLENGES

The fire service providers reviewed have shared challenges (Table 3-1) that are largely consistent with those experienced by providers in other rural communities, notably issues with limited funding, aging equipment and facilities, and volunteer recruitment and retention. The communities under review are aging and experiencing little to no population growth, which results in a minimal pool of potential volunteers. Current volunteers are, in turn, experiencing high levels of burnout from working more to compensate for the low volunteerism rates in the area. The limited number of volunteers also results in limited leadership development or succession planning for the future of the departments. Additionally, these departments lack paid or dedicated staff to assist with administrative work. This lack of administrative capacity results in the departments struggling to maintain compliance with regulatory requirements.

Rising apparatus, equipment, and insurance costs are causing increased strain on these already financially burdened departments. Some of the departments under review have opted to reduce insurance coverage levels for select department assets as it was determined to be the more cost-effective option. Particularly, volunteer fire departments that are non-districts have experienced exceptionally high and increasing insurance premiums in recent years. Apparatus manufacturers have consolidated in recent years, thus reducing the available purchasing options and overall increasing costs for apparatus upgrades. The purchasing of turnout gear has also been identified as a significant financial cost for departments, which is further exacerbated by the frequent turnover of volunteers. Turnouts are ordered in the sizes needed by the particular volunteer and due to long processing times, they often arrive after the volunteer has already ceased working with the department.

In the Down River region—and throughout much of Trinity County—large portions of the landscape are under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). Local fire providers routinely respond to incidents on these federal lands as part of mutual and automatic aid, yet have reported ongoing challenges with delayed or inconsistent reimbursement for those responses. These delays can create cash flow constraints and add administrative burden for small districts with limited staffing and reserves.

In addition, local departments regularly respond to incidents along State Route 299, a critical transportation corridor that generates a significant share of emergency call volume. While these responses are essential for public safety, they are not directly tied to a dedicated or proportional local funding source. As a result, departments are often absorbing the cost of providing service beyond their core service areas, including federal lands and state highway incidents, without reliable cost recovery. This dynamic places additional strain on already limited financial resources and highlights a structural mismatch between service demand and available funding.

Table 3-1: Shared Challenges Among Departments

	Salyer CSD	Hawkins Bar VFD	Down River VFD
Lack of funds	X	X	X
Collaboration with USFS (timely payments)		X	X
Volunteer Recruitment and Retention	X	X	X
Aging Volunteers and Personnel, Lower Influx into the Population	X	X	X
High Insurance Costs		X	X
Conflict with the County on Direct Charge Lists	X		
Lack of an Adequate Supply of Turnouts	X	X	X
Increased Cost of Equipment, More Issues with Apparatus (consolidation among fire apparatus manufacturers)	X	X	X
Lack of Succession Planning	X	X	X
Lack of Personnel for Admin Duties (difficult to stay in compliance)	X	X	X

3.2 SHARED SUCCESSES

While many accomplishments are unique to particular departments, there have been multiple identified shared successes among all three departments in review (Table 3-2). The Down River region has seen notable improvements in recent years regarding internet service access, highway improvements, and coordination with regional partners. This region of the state has a long history of sparse adequate internet and phone service due to its remote geography and infrastructure vulnerability. There are frequent outages of internet and phone services. These communication issues are a serious concern with providing fire services in the area. The three departments in review have installed Starlink systems, some with additional mobile Starlink installed on apparatus, to address this limited broadband access.

While providing service along SR-299 is a significant challenge for the region’s providers, there have been noted improvements to the highway in recent years including additional pullouts and paving projects. The departments under review have a perception of fewer vehicular accidents along SR-299 in recent years; more collision data is needed to confirm this trend.

Numerous volunteer fire departments in Trinity County received grant funding through Senator Mike McGuire for the purchase of new or upgraded extrication equipment in 2025. The departments under review noted strong collaboration between providers in the region and the County, specifically effective countywide coordination on grant funding and regional collaboration and mutual aid efforts on providing fire services in the Down River region.

Table 3-2: Shared Successes Among Departments

	Salyer CSD	Hawkins Bar VFD	Down River VFD
Starlink	X	X	X

Mobile Starlink		X	X
SR 299 Improvements	X	X	X
New Extrication Equipment	X	X	X
Collaboration with Neighboring Providers	X	X	X
CAL FIRE Response Support from Weaverville Station			X

3.3 POTENTIAL STRATEGIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Regional Coordination

Given the geographic isolation and communication limitations in the Down River region, enhanced coordination among local, state, and regional partners represents a key opportunity to improve service delivery. Local providers have identified the potential installation of satellite-enabled call boxes along State Route 299 (SR-299) as a priority to address gaps in emergency communication coverage. Implementation would require coordination with the County Transportation Department, California Department of Transportation, and the California Highway Patrol.

There are also opportunities to improve operational efficiency through shared resources. One example is the establishment of a regional “turnout closet” which would allow participating departments to share personal protective equipment. Given the high cost and size-specific nature of turnout gear, a centralized system could reduce redundant purchases, better accommodate volunteer turnover, and improve overall equipment availability across agencies.

Rising insurance premiums continue to place significant financial pressure on volunteer fire departments. This issue is particularly acute for Hawkins Bar VFD and Down River VFD, which rely on limited and variable funding sources. Exploring options to reduce insurance costs—such as risk mitigation programs, regional pooling, or advocacy for state-level relief—may be critical to maintaining service levels. By comparison, Salyer CSD has not identified insurance costs as a major constraint, likely reflecting differences in organizational structure and funding stability.

Coordination with CAL FIRE on State Route 299 (SR-299) Responses

The SR-299 corridor between Junction City (MM 43) and Lord Ellis Summit (MM 17) represents a significant and ongoing source of emergency response demand along an approximately 70-mile stretch of roadway. This corridor’s design—characterized by narrow lanes, sharp curves, elevation changes, and limited visibility—contributes to a high incidence of traffic collisions and emergency calls. Most recently in 2026, four young adults were killed, and two people were seriously injured in a head-on collision along this SR-299 corridor due to one of the vehicles crossing “into the eastbound lane while negotiating a curve”¹¹. Despite the hazards and high call volume, local providers do not receive dedicated or proportional funding to support emergency medical and rescue services along this state highway.

Traffic volumes further underscore this imbalance. According to Caltrans District 1, the SR-299 segment near Willow Creek averages approximately 8,000 vehicles per day—comparable to or exceeding volumes on segments of U.S. Highway 101, such as in the Garberville area of southern Humboldt which averages approximately 7,000 vehicles per day and is predominantly a four-lane

¹¹ Brenna O’Boyle. (January 25, 2026). “4 die in head-on crash near Shasta-Trinity National Forest”. <https://www.kolotv.com/2026/01/25/4-die-head-on-crash-near-shasta-trinity-national-forest/>

facility that benefit from more robust infrastructure and service support. This level of use generates a regional service demand that extends beyond the capacity of local funding mechanisms.

In response, regional partners have begun exploring strategies to secure more sustainable support. Willow Creek FPD has initiated outreach to Senator Mike McGuire to advocate for dedicated state funding for local emergency response along state highways. Other ideas include the exploration of implementing a satellite CAL FIRE resident program in Willow Creek that would increase the presence of paid state personnel. Currently, the nearest CAL FIRE stations are located more than 50 miles west of Willow Creek, in Hayfork, and in Weaverville. These stations are not positioned to consistently serve the Down River segment of SR-299, highlighting a gap in regional response coverage.

Governance Models and Options

Discussions with fire service providers in the Down River region indicate a shared interest in exploring alternative governance structures that improve long-term service sustainability and funding stability. One concept is the consolidation/formation of a regional or countywide fire protection district that retains localized service delivery through existing volunteer departments as battalions while establishing a more consistent administrative and funding framework. Such a model could enhance coordination, reduce administrative burdens on individual agencies, and provide access to stable revenue mechanisms, including special taxes or assessments.

More immediate opportunities may exist through consolidation or reorganization among the agencies evaluated in this study. Hawkins Bar VFD and Down River VFD, as non-district entities, do not have access to the same base funding opportunities that Salyer CSD has, due to their non-district status. These departments rely on community donations, grants, and reimbursements as their base funding. This approach presents ongoing sustainability challenges, particularly as operational costs increase. Options such as district formation, annexation to an existing district (e.g., Salyer CSD), or consolidation with neighboring providers may improve financial stability, administrative capacity, and service reliability. These options are discussed further in the individual agency profiles.

The Trinity County Fire Chiefs Association (FCA) also represents a potential platform for strengthening regional coordination. Formalizing the FCA as a nonprofit entity (e.g., 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4)) could expand its ability to pursue grant funding, accept tax-deductible contributions, and support shared regional initiatives. This structure may provide smaller, volunteer-based departments with improved access to funding and administrative resources that are difficult to secure independently.

AGENDA ITEM 7.A.

MEETING: April 21, 2026
TO: Trinity LAFCo Commissioners
FROM: Amber Chung, LAFCo Clerk
SUBJECT: Form 700, Ethics, and Fiscal Training Reminders

BACKGROUND

The Political Reform Act (Government Code §§ 81000-91015) requires most state and local government officials to publicly disclose personal assets and income and to disqualify themselves from participating in governmental decisions that may affect their financial interests. The Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) is the state agency responsible for administering the Act, issuing the Statement of Economic Interests (Form 700), and interpreting its provisions.

In 2005, Assembly Bill 1234 (AB 1234) was enacted, requiring local agency officials to complete ethics training within one year of assuming office and every two years thereafter.

Effective January 1, 2026, Senate Bill 827 (SB 827, Chapter 661, Statutes of 2025) expands training requirements for local agency officials, including LAFCo Commissioners. These requirements are in addition to AB 1234 ethics training and Form 700 filing obligations.

DISCUSSION

Form 700 - Statement of Economic Interests:

Upon appointment or election to the Commission, Commissioners must file an Assuming Office Form 700. In addition, an Annual Form 700 covering the period from January 1 through December 31 must be filed each year.

- Annual Filing Deadline: April 1
- Filing Officer: LAFCo staff
- Access: Forms are retained by LAFCo and made available to the public upon request
- FPPC Website: <https://www.fppc.ca.gov/Form700.html>

Ethics Training (AB 1234):

Commissioners are required to complete ethics training within one year of assuming office (six months for officials assuming office on or after January 1, 2026), and every two years thereafter.

The FPPC offers an online ethics training course at:

<https://www.fppc.ca.gov/learn/public-officials-and-employees-rules-/ethics-training.html>

The course takes approximately 2.5 hours, may be completed in multiple sessions, and includes short quizzes following each section. Upon completion, Commissioners must save and submit the completion certificate to the Commission Clerk.

New Training Requirements Effective January 1, 2026 – SB 827

SB 827 establishes additional requirements applicable to Commissioners beginning in 2026:

- Accelerated Ethics Training Timeline: Officials assuming office on or after January 1, 2026 must complete ethics training within six months of assuming office.
- Fiscal and Financial Training: Commissioners must complete at least two hours of fiscal and financial training every two years, covering topics such as budgeting, financial reporting, fiscal oversight, revenues, and stewardship of public resources.
 - Due to the request of numerous LAFCoS, CALAFCO has worked with Best Best & Krieger (BBK) to allow free access to its SB 827 training for CALAFCO members. The *SB 827 Compliance Training: Essential Fiscal and Financial Oversight for Public Agency Officials* is available from now through December 31, 2026. This two-hour training is on demand and as such, may be completed at your convenience. You may start and stop as needed. Once you finish the training and complete the short survey at the end, BBK will email you a certificate of completion. Please see Attachment A for instructions on accessing the free webinar.
- Recordkeeping: LAFCo is required to retain ethics and fiscal training records for a minimum of five years and make information available regarding how training records may be requested.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Commission receive and file this report. The Commission is invited to discuss the item and provide direction to staff as needed.

Commissioner Training Requirements

Commissioner	Current Form 700	Ethics Training	Fiscal Training
Julia Brownfield			
Jill Cox	YES	YES	
Liam Gogan			
Heidi Carpenter-Harris			
Andrew Johnson	YES		
Todd Corbett			
Lisa Harper	YES		
Anna C. Burke			
Jake Grossman-Crist			
Joseph Kasper	YES		

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Access Instructions for CALAFCO SB 827 Fiscal and Financial Training



How to Access CALAFCO's Free SB 827 Webinar

CALAFCO members have free access to BBK's on-demand *SB 827 Compliance Training: Essential Fiscal and Financial Oversight for Public Agency Officials* from **now through December 31, 2026**. This two-hour training can be completed at your convenience, and you may start and stop as needed. Once you finish the training and complete the short survey at the end, BBK will email you a certificate of completion.

Please follow the **five steps** below:

Step 1: Register on the CALAFCO Website

Start by registering through CALAFCO using this link:

<https://calafco.starchapter.com/meetinginfo.php?id=14&ts=1776137616>

After you register, you will receive a confirmation email from CALAFCO with:

- your registration confirmation,
- the BBK registration link, and
- the CALAFCO member discount code

See Screenshot: Example of the CALAFCO confirmation email.



SB 827 Compliance Training: Essential Fiscal and Financial Oversight for Public Agency Officials

April 13, 2026

Virtual

2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

[Add to Calendar](#)

SB 827 Compliance Training: Essential Fiscal and Financial Oversight for Public Agency Officials

How to Register for the Training

1. Visit the registration link: [https://\[redacted\]](https://[redacted])
2. Complete the registration form with your individual information
3. When prompted for payment, enter the discount code: [\[redacted\]](#)
4. Your registration will be fully covered — no payment required

Have additional staff or officials who'd like to attend? Please have each attendee register individually at calafco.org. This helps CALAFCO track participation and demonstrate the value we're delivering to our members — information we report directly to our Board. Your discount code is an exclusive member benefit; please do not share it.

Step 2: Register with BBK

Use the BBK registration link and discount code provided in your CALAFCO confirmation email.

You will need to:

- open the BBK registration page,
- enter your information, and
- complete your registration.

Once you do that, BBK will send you a confirmation email with access to the webinar.

See Screenshot: Example of the BBK confirmation email.



Your registration for the **SB 827 Compliance Training: Essential Fiscal and Financial Oversight for Public Agency Officials** training is confirmed!

To access the training, please login to the attendee hub using the link below. Once logged in, locate the training title under "Upcoming Sessions" or "Schedule" and click to join the session.

[Login to Attendee Hub](#)

Agenda

Tuesday, March 24, 2026

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

SB 827 Compliance Training: Essential Fiscal and Financial Oversight for Public Agency Officials

Add session to calendar

[ICS](#) [Outlook](#) [Apple](#) [Google](#)

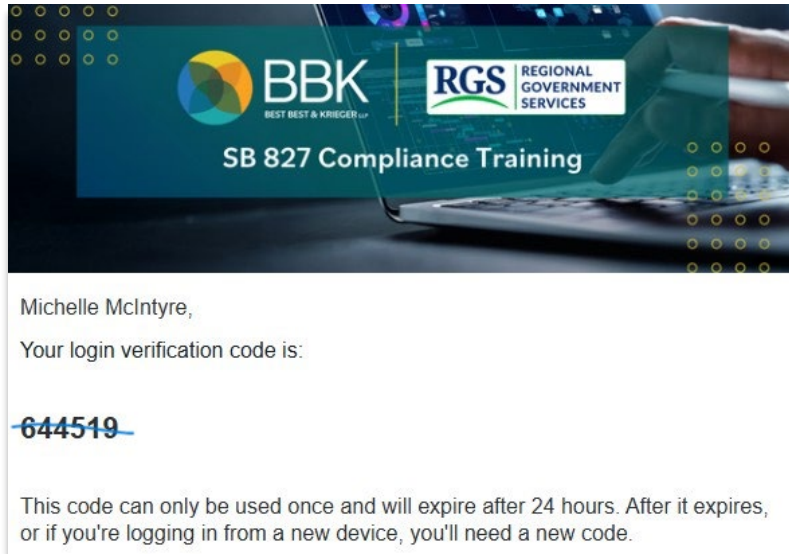
Step 3: Log In to the Attendee Hub

When you are ready to take the training:

- click the **Login to Attendee Hub** button in your BBK confirmation email (see screenshot from Step 2)
- Enter your name and email address.

BBK will then send you a one-time verification code by email (or text, depending on the info you provided).

See Screenshot: One-time Verification Code



Step 4: Complete the Training

The webinar is about two hours long. Since it is on-demand, you can stop and come back later if needed.

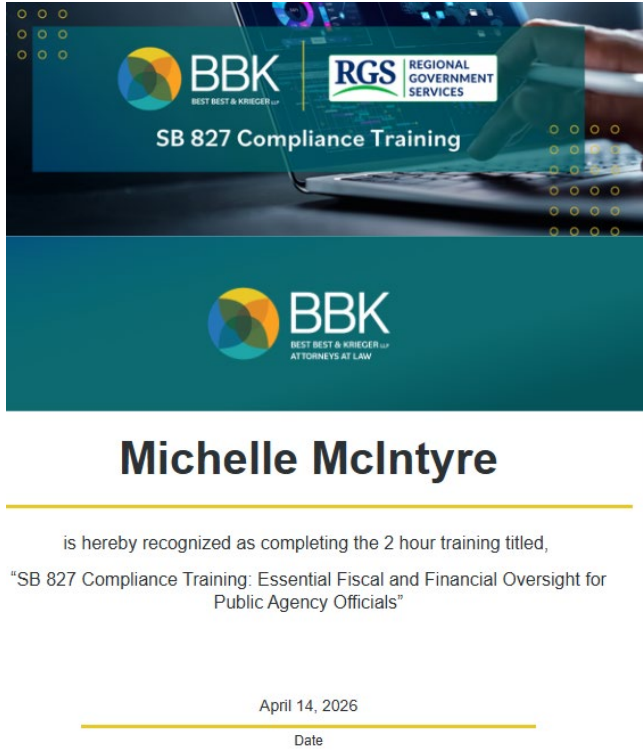
Be sure to complete the full training so you receive a certificate.

Step 5: Complete the Survey and Save Your Certificate

At the end of the webinar, BBK will ask you to complete a short survey. Once the survey is submitted, your certificate of completion will be emailed to you. Please save it for your records.

See Screenshot: Example of the certificate you will receive.

If you run into any issues getting logged in or accessing the training, please get in touch with me at mmcintyre@calafco.org. I'm happy to help.



The image shows a training certificate for Michelle McIntyre. At the top, there is a banner with logos for BBK (Best Best & Krieger LLP) and RGS (Regional Government Services), and the text "SB 827 Compliance Training". Below the banner, the BBK logo is repeated. The name "Michelle McIntyre" is prominently displayed in a large, bold font. Underneath the name, a horizontal line is followed by the text: "is hereby recognized as completing the 2 hour training titled, 'SB 827 Compliance Training: Essential Fiscal and Financial Oversight for Public Agency Officials'". At the bottom, the date "April 14, 2026" is written above another horizontal line, with the word "Date" centered below it.

Michelle McIntyre

is hereby recognized as completing the 2 hour training titled,
"SB 827 Compliance Training: Essential Fiscal and Financial Oversight for
Public Agency Officials"

April 14, 2026
Date

We are also working with BBK to offer an in-person SB 827 training session at the CALAFCO Annual Conference, tentatively scheduled for Thursday, October 22, 2026. Please keep an eye on the CALAFCO website for additional details as they become available.

Strong Foundation and Clear Direction

CALAFCO's Priorities for 2026 and Beyond



On February 26, the CALAFCO Board of Directors spent a full day focused on where the organization is headed and what members can expect over the next two years.

CALAFCO is in a strong position. Education programs are active and growing. Member outreach has improved. Governance has been reformed. The Board is clear on priorities and ready to execute.

Board members said so themselves, candidly and consistently throughout the retreat. Progress over the past year is real and visible, and the Board's focus now is on sustaining that momentum with consistent, reliable follow-through.

The retreat centered on fundamentals: the services members rely on, the reliability they expect, and the discipline required to deliver at that level.

HERE IS THE BOARD'S TWO-YEAR VISION:

1. Education Is the Top Priority

The Board identified education as the organization's highest priority. That includes CALAFCO University, the Staff Workshop, the Annual Conference, and webinars. The direction is to keep building on what is working and make sure programming stays practical and relevant for both commissioners and staff. A new emphasis includes making materials available after events conclude, so sessions have lasting value as an ongoing resource members can return to throughout the year.



2. Legislative Work: Present, Strategic, and Grounded

The Board wants CALAFCO to maintain a credible presence in Sacramento and serve as a resource for policymakers on LAFCO-related issues. Legislative efforts will be disciplined and selective, focused on issues with clear statewide relevance and genuine member support. Capacity is finite, and the Board is committed to directing it where it will have the most impact.

3. Governance Reforms Are in Place: Focus Shifts to Implementation

Recent changes to CALAFCO's governance structure, including allowing Executive Officers to serve on the Board and removing seat-type restrictions, were broadly supported at the retreat. The focus now is on making those changes work well in practice. Members were direct about the importance of clear roles. The Board sets policy direction, and the Executive Director manages day-to-day operations. That clarity benefits everyone.

4. Communication Is Improving and Will Keep Getting Better

Transparency and member outreach have improved, and Board members have noted it. The next step is to make communication even clearer and easier to access. Members want concise, timely updates on major initiatives, Board decisions, and working group activities. The website is on the agenda as well, with plans to develop it into a stronger information hub.

5. Building a Sustainable Staffing Model

The Board recognized the substantial work accomplished over the past year and is committed to building on it with a durable staffing structure. Expectations and resources need to align, and the organization is working toward a model that supports the Executive Director with the right capacity to deliver on member priorities over the long term.



6. Dues Structure Review Is a Near-Term Priority

The Board identified the dues structure as a priority for the coming year. The goal is a structure that is fair, transparent, and tied directly to the value members receive, with particular attention to equity across counties of different sizes. Members can expect an open process with clear communication as this work moves forward.



7. Serving Current Members and Growing the Community

The Board is committed to re-engaging LAFCOs that have stepped away and staying connected to those considering membership. The clearest path to both is continue deliver consistent value to current members. A strong track record of reliability and responsiveness is what makes membership worth maintaining and worth joining.



8. The Direction Is Clear

The Board left the retreat with a shared, practical commitment: stay focused, deliver on the fundamentals, and build on what is working. That means stronger education, clearer communication, an improved website, stable staffing, a fair dues structure, and consistent outreach to members across California.



 **CALAFCO's strength comes from the people it serves. Questions, feedback, or ideas? Reach out to your Board representative or contact the CALAFCO office directly.**

AGENDA ITEM 7.C.

MEETING: April 21, 2026
TO: Trinity LAFCo Commissioners
FROM: Amber Chung, LAFCo Clerk
SUBJECT: Update on Expiring Commissioner Terms

BACKGROUND

The Commission consists of seven regular and three alternate members. The term of office for each member pursuant to CKH Act §56334 is four years and until the appointment and qualification of a successor. There are no term limits.

- County - Three regular members and one alternate appointed annually by the Board of Supervisors;
- Special Districts - Two regular members and one alternate appointed by the Independent Special Districts; and
- Public Members - Two regular members and one alternate appointed by the Commission.

DISCUSSION

County Member Selection:

County member appointments were made at the Trinity County Board of Supervisors meeting on January 6, 2026. Changes made included making Commissioner Carpenter-Harris the Alternate County seat, with Commissioner Gogan now seated in the Regular County seat.

Special District Member Election:

The terms of Commissioner Corbett and Alternate Commissioner Harper are scheduled to expire on April 30, 2026. LAFCo staff have distributed a Call for Nominations to all independent special districts within Trinity County via email and the USPS. Two nominations have been received as of April 17, 2026 - one for the Regular seat (Todd Corbett, Trinity Life Support CSD) and one for the Alternate seat (Scott Nelson, Trinity Center CSD). If no other nominations have been received by 5:00 p.m. on April 20, 2026, Todd Corbett and Scott Nelson will be deemed appointed.

Public Member Selection:

The terms of Commissioner Grossman-Crist and Alternate Commissioner Kasper are scheduled to expire on April 30, 2027. At the beginning of 2027, LAFCo staff will issue a public notice and press release to solicit applications for these expiring public member seats. Commissioner Burke's term is not set to expire until April 30, 2029.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Commission receive and file this report. The Commission is invited to discuss the item and provide direction to staff as needed.

Attachments

- A) Current LAFCo Membership and Terms

ATTACHMENT A

Current LAFCo Membership and Terms

Member	Designation	Appointed	LAFCo Term (June 30)
Julia Brownfield	Regular/County	01/06/26	By Annual appointment
Liam Gogan	Regular/County	01/06/26	By Annual appointment
Jill Cox	Regular/County	01/06/26	By Annual appointment
Heidi Carpenter-Harris	Alternate/County	01/06/26	By Annual appointment
Todd Corbett	Regular/District	06/18/2024	2022-2026
Andrew Johnson	Regular/District	06/18/2024	2024-2028
Lisa Harper	Alternate/District	12/09/2022	2022-2026
Anna C. Burke	Regular/Public	05/01/2025	2025-2029
Jake Grossman-Crist	Regular/Public	06/20/2023	2023-2027
Joseph Kasper	Alternate/Public	04/30/2023	2023-2027