



**Plumas County  
Public Health Agency  
Environmental Health Division**

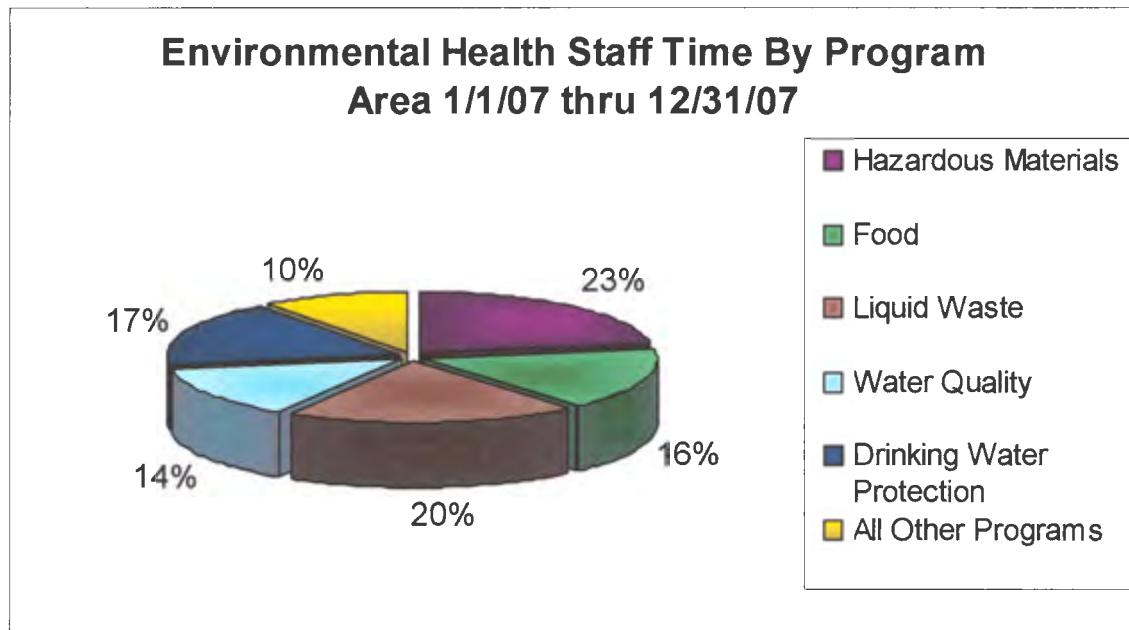
**ANNUAL REPORT  
2007**

## Plumas County Environmental Health Services 2007 Annual Report

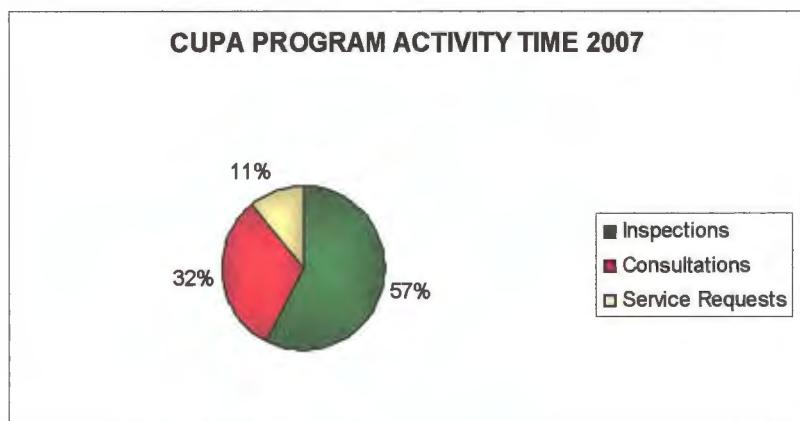
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH is a Division of the county's Public Health Agency. The Division consists of a director, two clerical staff, and five field staff. Our main office is in the Health and Human Services Center in Quincy, and we also maintain a satellite office in the Chester Civic Center.

OUR MISSION is to preserve the environment and enhance public health through outreach, education, collaborative planning and sensible application of environmental health principles, laws and statutes.

WE CARRY OUT THIS MISSION by providing a variety of services in each of ten program areas. These program areas are primarily where people interact with their environment. The amount of time spent in each program area depends on a variety of risk factors as well as the service needs of the community. In Plumas County, core environmental health programs include: liquid waste management, drinking water protection, hazardous materials management, water quality assurance, and food safety. In 2007, staff time was allocated according to the chart below.



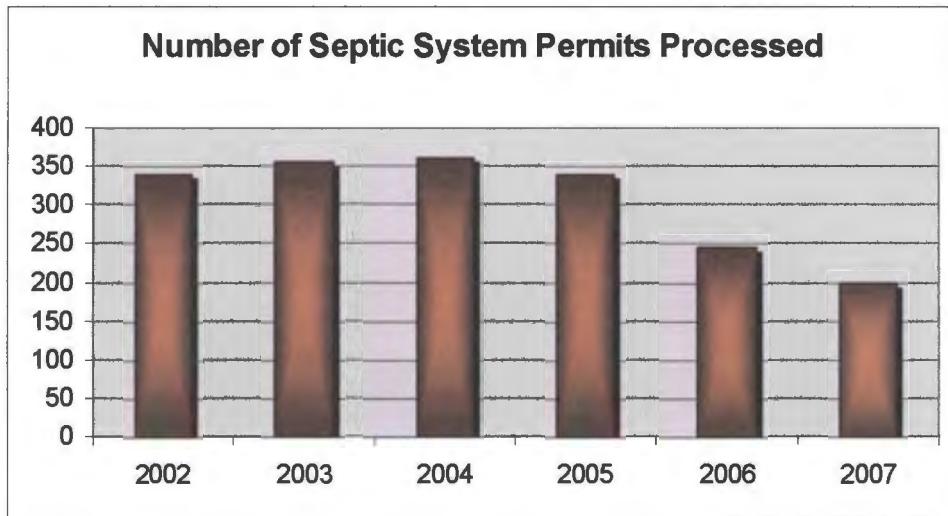
Environmental Health carries out this program under certification requirements specified in state law and administered by the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal EPA). Mandated services provided in this program are inspection-related activities, but we also spend a significant amount of time offering consultation, education and compliance assistance to regulated facilities. Plumas County also provides these services to Sierra County under contract.



## LIQUID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Our liquid waste program ensures that wastes are properly handled, treated and disposed to protect public health and the environment. This includes preventing direct and indirect exposure to contaminated wastewater as well as preventing contamination of surface and groundwater. We review and approve the location, design, construction, installation and repair of all on-site sewage disposal systems through a permit and inspection program. In 2007, one fifth of Environmental Health staff resources were dedicated to this program. The number of permits issued annually over the past six years is tabulated below.





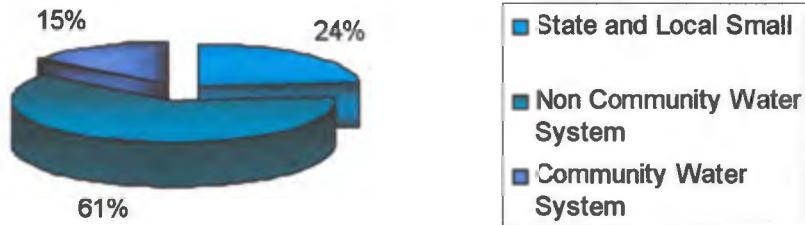
Safe and proper septic disposal is another important part of the liquid waste program. Environmental Health participated in the county's Septage Summit in January 2007, and continues participation with the Septage Working Group to help find solutions to this growing problem.

#### DRINKING WATER PROTECTION

Ensuring safe and potable drinking water supplies is a vital function of Environmental Health. In 2005, Environmental Health was designated as the Local Primacy Agency (LPA) by the State Department of Health Services. This designation provided water system purveyors and operators a local contact and resource in helping protect drinking water quality. 2007 marks the second full year of successful public water system program implementation and management by Environmental Health.

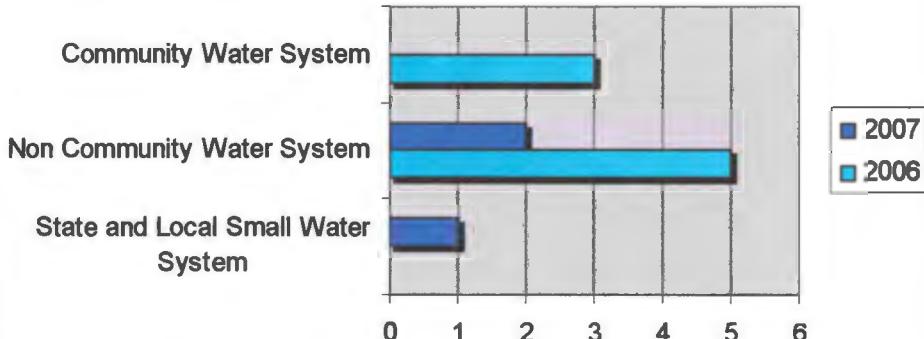
Environmental Health monitors drinking water quality of over 130 drinking water systems throughout the county. These include non community systems such as resorts and campgrounds, small systems serving less than 15 connections, and community systems with up to 200 connections. All told, Environmental Health ensures drinking water quality at public water systems serving over eleven thousand residents and visitors to Plumas County annually. The number and type of regulated drinking water systems subject to county regulation is as follows:

### Plumas County Water Systems



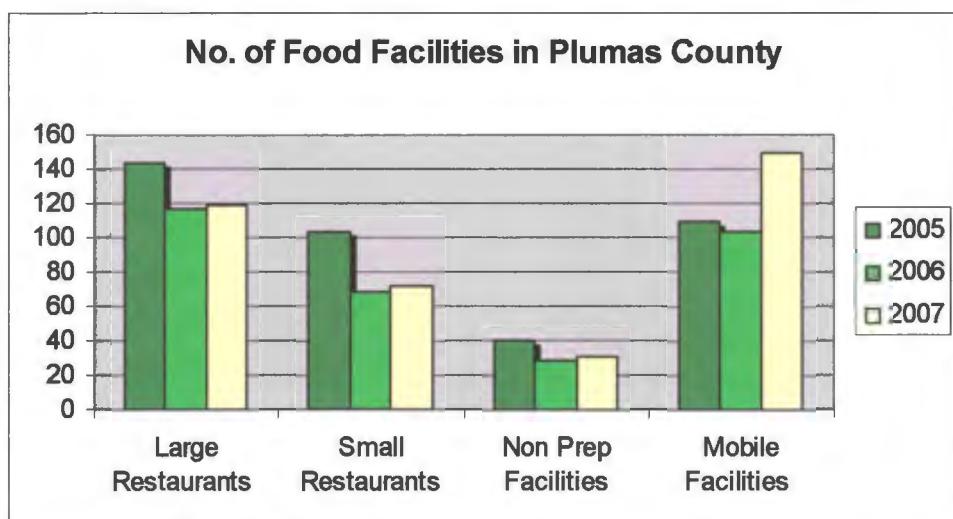
Whenever drinking water quality does not meet established standards, the system operator must advise its customers. If there's an immediate risk to human health, the system operator must issue a Boil Water Advisory. The number of Boil Water Advisories issued is a good indicator of overall drinking water quality, and is a key part of public health protection. Data on the number of Boil Water Advisories issued the past two years is charted below:

### Plumas County Boil Water Notices Issued



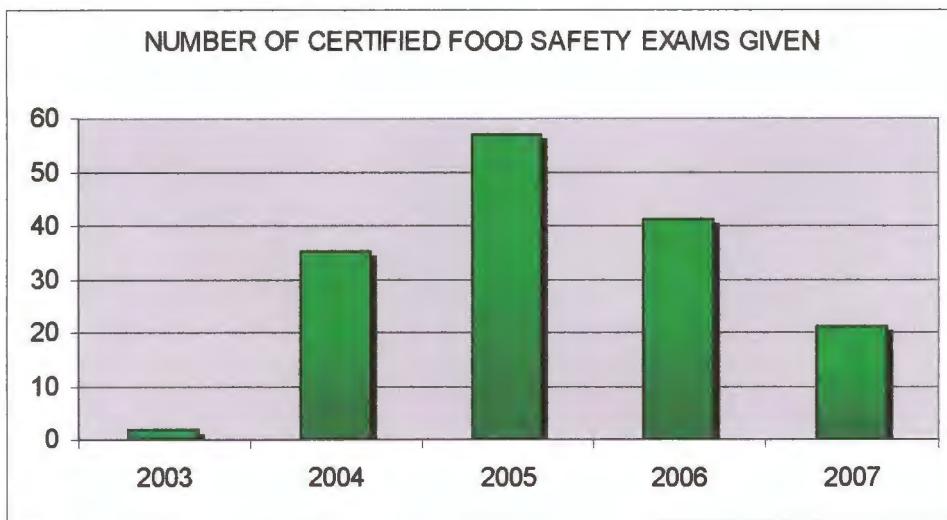
## FOOD SAFETY

Our food safety program helps protect the public from food-borne illness. In Plumas County, the inventory of food facilities includes large restaurants (with a seating capacity of more than 25 or food preparation area in excess of 500 square feet), small restaurants, non-prep facilities such as convenience markets, and mobile or temporary facilities such as seen at community events and the county fair. The inventory of facilities operating in Plumas County since 2005 is as follows:



In July 2007, California adopted a new food safety law known as Cal Code. This law updated safe food handling practices and standards, introduced a new food facility inspection form, and made California consistent with the federal standards. To help businesses successfully implement the new law, Environmental Health offered Cal Code workshops throughout the county. Additionally, we offered a consultation-based inspection to help food handlers become familiar with the new requirements and inspection form. The final phase of Cal Code implementation will begin in 2008 as food facility inspection reports will be posted on the internet.

Another important part of the food safety program is food safety knowledge and certification. Starting in 2003, Environmental Health began administering Serv-Safe food safety certification exams for retail food handlers. Although this certification is available from private providers, offering it locally provides advantages to the facility operator and demonstrates Environmental Health's commitment to food safety. The decrease in the number of exams given the past few years reflects the 5 year renewal cycle. Nevertheless this remains a popular service due to its local availability and flexibility.

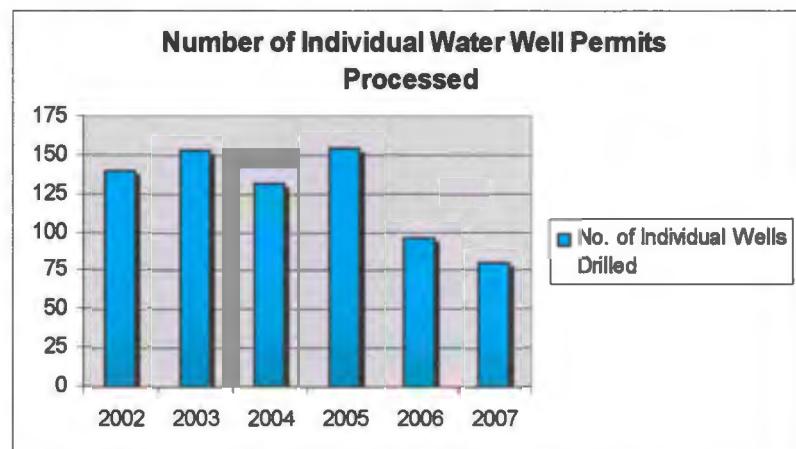


## WATER QUALITY ASSURANCE

Protecting the quality of Plumas County's lakes, streams and groundwater supplies is another core function of Environmental Health. During the past year, the importance of this work has been highlighted by the California Department of Fish and Game's project to chemically treat Lake Davis to eradicate northern pike. Working closely with the California Department of Fish and Game, the Department of Water Resources, the Department of Health Services and the Regional Water Quality Control Board, Environmental Health sampled and tested drinking water wells, Lake Davis, its tributaries and Grizzly Creek to ensure this project will not permanently impact groundwater quality. In addition to the 2007 project, Environmental Health completed year 9 of the 10 year monitoring program as a result of the 1997 treatment of the lake.

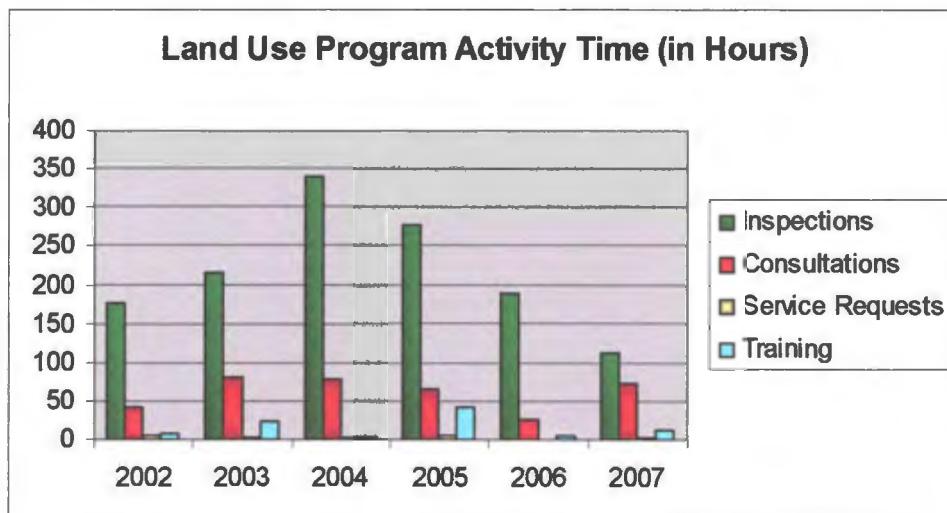


Another important part of water quality assurance is the well protection program. Plumas County is highly dependent upon groundwater for domestic, commercial and agricultural uses. Unless properly located and constructed, water supply wells can compromise the quality of this valuable resource. Through our permit and inspection process, we ensure all wells meet the appropriate state and local standards. The number of individual wells drilled in Plumas County since 2002 is shown on the chart.



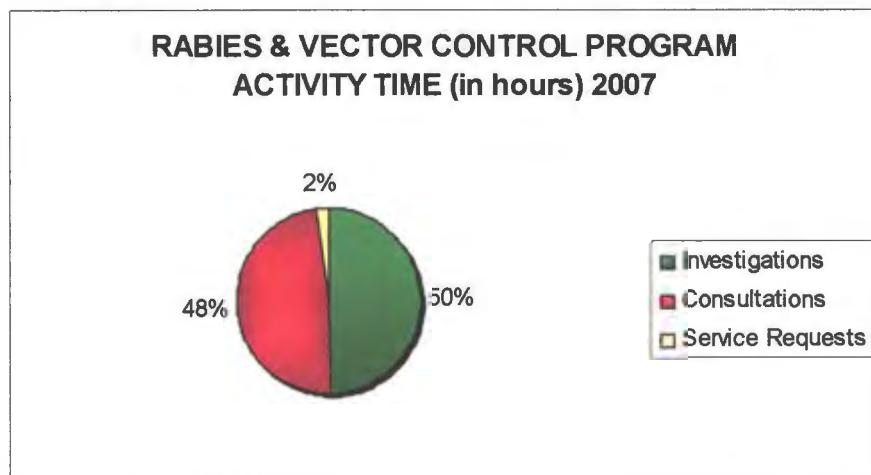
#### LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Working in concert with Planning and Building Services, Engineering, Public Works, and other state and local agencies, we evaluate proposed planning and development projects and apply established environmental health standards. This helps ensure today's projects meet the environmental health needs of the community for years to come.

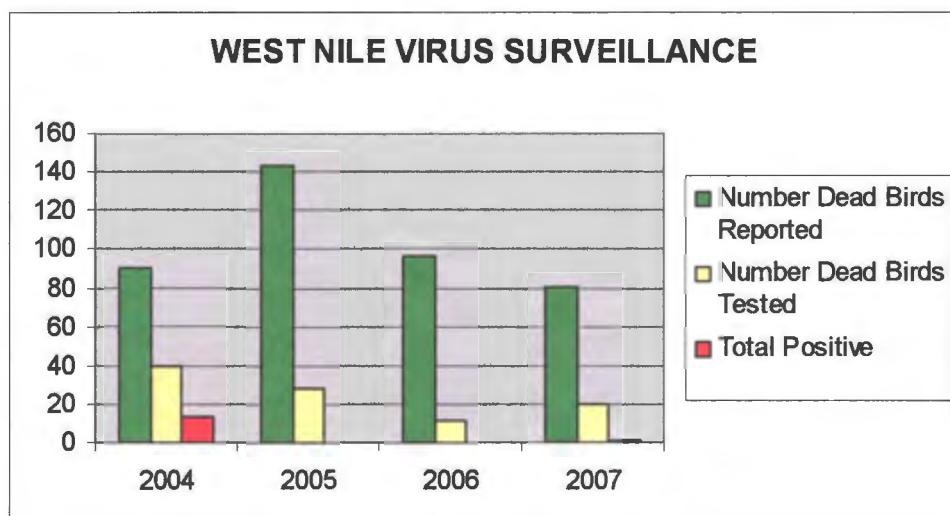


## RABIES AND VECTOR CONTROL

Our rabies and vector control program protects the public from exposure to vector-borne diseases such as rabies, hantavirus, plague and West Nile Virus. We closely coordinate with state, federal and local partners while performing exposure investigations, environmental surveillance, consultation and other activities.



In 2007, Environmental Health continued dead bird testing as the primary West Nile Virus (WNV) surveillance activity. This past year, Plumas County residents reported 81 dead birds of which 20 were submitted to the State Department of Health Services Laboratory for testing. The positive results confirm West Nile Virus remains a public health issue to monitor in the future.



## RECREATIONAL HEALTH

Our recreational health program helps prevent the spread of disease by ensuring the safe and sanitary operation of public swimming places. Primarily this means public swimming pools and spas, but we also monitor the quality of popular natural bathing places such as freshwater ponds and beaches, and may post warnings or close certain areas to protect the public.

## HOUSING AND INSTITUTIONS

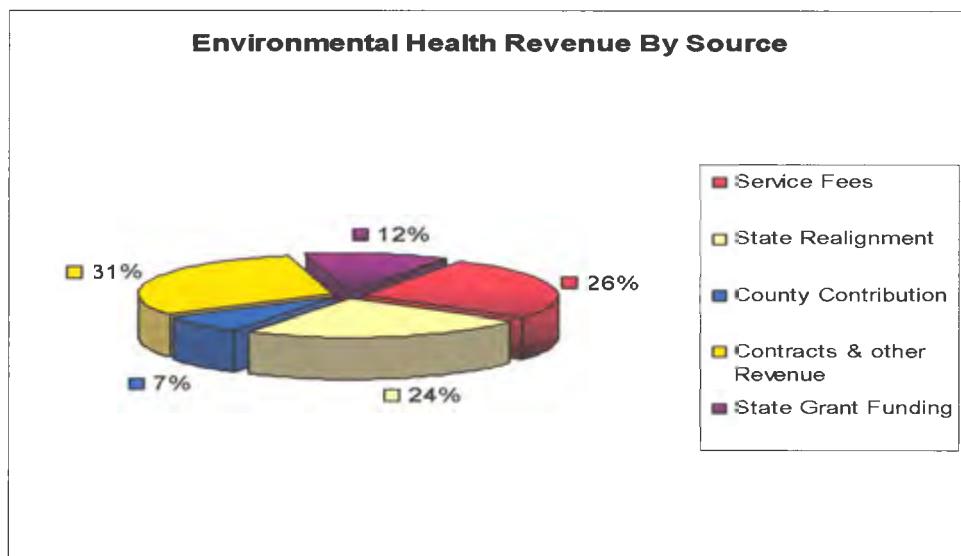
The housing and institutions program helps assure that rental housing, day camps, organized camps, and institutions (such as the jail) are maintained and operated in a safe and sanitary manner. This is important because the condition of our housing is a significant indicator of the health, social and mental well-being of county residents.

## SOLID WASTE

Environmental Health ensures the proper and safe handling of the county's solid waste. Through contract with the State Department of Public Health, we inspect and permit county landfills, transfer sites, and investigate old or abandoned sites for hazards. Local Environmental Health staff respond to complaints about litter, debris, and illegal dumping.

## BUDGET AND REVENUE

Revenue sources include Fees for Service, State Realignment, State Program Reimbursement Grants, Contracts for Services, and County Contribution. These funding sources are summarized below.



## LOOKING FORWARD

2008 promises to be another full and exciting year for Environmental Health. In addition to continuing and improving program services discussed above, noteworthy issues include:

- **Wastewater Challenges:** Septage disposal has become a well-known problem, but this is part of the much larger wastewater challenge. Municipal wastewater treatment plants throughout the county are finding it difficult to meet increasingly stringent state discharge standards. Meanwhile their treatment plants and infrastructure are aging and deteriorating. Further mandates and restrictions on individual septic systems are coming through statewide regulations (AB 885) which are expected to be released later this year. Environmental Health continues exploring creative and community-based solutions to these and other wastewater challenges.
- **Cal Code Inspection Reporting:** Cal Code is the new statewide food safety law that took effect July 1, 2007. The final phase of implementation is the posting of restaurant inspection reports beginning in 2008.
- **Solid Waste Program:** Currently, the state Department of Public Health provides solid waste enforcement program services under contract to Environmental Health. By July, Environmental Health will explore implementation options including local, regional, or continuing with the state service contract.

Although many of Environmental Health's programs and priorities are established by state legislation and regulations, collaborative planning continues to be a guiding principle for all our activities. Without collaboration, Environmental Health could not meet the needs of the community we serve. We would like to thank all of our state and local partners for their continuing support.

Jerry Sipe, Director  
Plumas County Environmental Health