



Chapter

14

WATER SUPPLY

A place where all citizens enjoy opportunities to thrive in a safe, healthy, and productive community.
- The Tuolumne County Vision

Introduction

An adequate and high-quality water supply is considered a basic need, and the use and quality of water has long been regulated by government. Since water moves easily across jurisdictional boundaries, much of the regulation is at the regional, state and federal levels. However, since cities and counties have legal authority over development and land use, they must consider the adequacy of water supplies and how development affects the quantity and quality of water available for other beneficial uses, such as domestic, agricultural, industrial, biological and wildlife. The long term adequacy of groundwater and surface water resources has become a major public concern in California. Water related issues include lowered groundwater levels, increased stormwater runoff, sediment and pollutants in runoff, the water needs of fish and wildlife, the rates of water usage, conservation methods, water storage limitations, the growing re-use of water and continuing changes in State and Federal regulations. Goals, Policies, and Implementation Programs regarding water related catastrophes, such as flooding and droughts, are discussed in the Public Safety Element.

Purpose
Tuolumne County supports actions that provide adequate water on a County-wide basis, and to balance the needs, for current residents, agriculture, new development and other users.

Overarching Vision

OAV1. Promote development in Tuolumne County that reflects the values and vision of the community and implement the latest legal, statutory, scientific, and technical changes and advances.

OAV2. Achieve, enable and preserve maximum flexibility within the constraints of state and federal law and an ever-evolving legal, cultural and environmental landscape.

OAV3. Recognize that the County has a unique role to collaborate with special districts/stakeholders within the County to promote the delivery of efficient and cost effective public services.



GOAL 14A:

Pursue adequate water supply for all Tuolumne County residents and visitors.

POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Policy 14.A.1: Support the pursuit and acquisition of County Area of Origin Water Rights and other water rights to ensure adequate and stable water supplies.

Implementation Program

14.A.a - Evaluate and consider pursuing senior water rights. Tuolumne County supports Area of Origin Water Rights, the existing water right priority system and the authority to make water management decisions locally to meet the County's current and future needs, thereby protecting Tuolumne County's communities, economy and environment.

Policy 14.A.2: Support the efforts of local water purveyors to increase water storage capacity, maintain and enhance infrastructure, and cross-connect water systems.

Implementation Programs

14.A.b - Support the efforts of the Tuolumne Utilities District to secure modified lake level guidelines at Pinecrest Lake to provide a reliable water supply to its customers.

14.A.c - Support the efforts of local water purveyors to increase water storage and pursue additional water storage initiatives within the County or acquire access to increase water storage.

14.A.d - Work with other agencies and water purveyors, such as the Tuolumne County Water Agency, to develop, adopt and fund long term strategic infrastructure maintenance, modernization and sustainability plans by identifying areas that would benefit from improvement projects, obtaining funding for such projects, and implementing projects identified in the strategic plan.

Policy 14.A.3: Work with other agencies in developing joint water policies supporting healthy watershed management.

Implementation Programs

14.A.e - Implement the Tuolumne County *Water Action Plan: Developing a Plan for Our Future* adopted by the Board of Supervisors on April 7, 2015, as it may be amended from time to time.

14.A.f - Collaborate with the other agencies and water purveyors to develop a Comprehensive Water Resources Plan to manage and protect the County's water resources by developing and prioritizing a list of water resources projects and a monitoring program. Utilize planning reports from the Tuolumne-Stanislaus Integrated Water Management Authority (IRWM) in future water planning efforts.

Policy 14.A.4: Pursue access to all existing water storage not currently available for use within Tuolumne County.

Implementation Programs

14.A.g - Develop incentives, such as fee reductions, local green building codes, and water conservation strategies/programs accepted by state agencies, to encourage provision of



rainwater harvesting and storage facilities on development projects to conserve water and minimize water loss. Recognize that water or sewer purveyors may adopt regulations to prohibit or otherwise regulate rainwater harvesting and storage facilities that could adversely affect the efficient operation of their systems.

Policy 14.A.5: Manage groundwater resources consistent with the requirements of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, in response to the probability that the State will extend regulations to the County of Tuolumne.

Implementation Program

14.A.h - Use of groundwater recharge to help stabilize and supplement groundwater levels and protect water supplies. Discourage incompatible development near groundwater recharge stations, such as ponds, basins and tanks, that could affect the recharged groundwater levels.

Policy 14.A.6: Encourage water purveyors to provide an adequate water supply to meet long term needs in a manner that is consistent with this General Plan and urban water management plans and that maintains water resources for water users while protecting the natural environment.

Policy 14.A.7: Encourage the beneficial capture and utilization of stormwater to promote healthy watersheds, fire-safe landscapes, and groundwater recharge.

GOAL 14B:

Maximize the efficient use and reuse of water supplies through water conservation, water recycling, and public education.

POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Policy 14.B.1: Support water districts in establishing conservation standards to reduce demand for water.

Implementation Program

14.B.a - Support the efforts, such as funding applications and inter-agency coordination, of water agencies and districts to prevent the depletion of water resources and promote the conservation and reuse of water.

Policy 14.B.2: Increase water conservation efforts to maximize water use efficiency within Tuolumne County through conservation, recycling and education.

Implementation Programs

14.B.b - Encourage water reuse programs in new development to conserve raw or potable water supplies consistent with State Water Resources Control Board guidelines through the application review process.

14.B.c – Support the efforts of water purveyors to rehabilitate water delivery systems to reduce lost water and increase the efficient use and availability of water.

14.B.d - Encourage water reuse/recycling through the treatment and distribution of treated wastewater by working with new development to identify ways to incorporate reuse/recycling into projects.



14.B.e - Ensure the conservation of water through the implementation of the Tuolumne County Landscaping Requirements, Chapter 15.28 of the Tuolumne County Ordinance Code, which provide for the use of xeriscape landscaping plants and materials to conserve water, the use of water conserving irrigation systems for landscaping, and the use of reclaimed or reused water for irrigation.

14.B.f - Prohibit any processing activities with high water use practices near areas where groundwater overdraft problems exist, unless the facility uses water recycling and conservation techniques that minimize effects of water use on the groundwater table.

14.B.g - Develop an outreach program, working with the water service providers in the region, to encourage development to be constructed with, or upgraded to, water-efficient plumbing fixtures, landscaping, and irrigation systems, and use graywater and/or recycled water for irrigation.

14.B.h - Encourage the use of domestic graywater for landscape irrigation and other purposes and consider establishing incentives for new development to install graywater systems in areas where such systems are allowed by the applicable water or sewer purveyor. Recognize that water or sewer purveyors may adopt regulations to prohibit or otherwise regulate graywater systems that could adversely affect the efficient operation of their systems.

14.B.i - Explore the feasibility of reducing wastewater through the use of dry/composting toilets in new construction consistent with Goal 3E.

14.B.j - Support the development of educational programs by water districts and public agencies to increase public awareness of efficiently conserving, using, reusing, and managing water resources.

14.B.k - Provide information on water conservation measures to the general public and support conservation efforts of the water districts.

14.B.l - Promote and facilitate the use of reclaimed wastewater for agricultural irrigation, in accordance with the guidelines published by the State Water Resources Control Board.

14.B.m - Cooperate with the Agricultural Commissioner, Cooperative Extension Service, Farm Bureau and water districts to promote the protection of water resources in agricultural areas by encouraging programs that assist producers in using water efficiently in agricultural operations and by promoting technology for efficient water use in agriculture.

14.B.n - Utilize water-efficient plumbing fixtures and irrigation systems on publicly owned property.

14.B.o - Support development of new technology to improve efficient use of water.

14.B.p - Encourage plumbing retrofits to be installed in existing buildings to reduce water use by working with water purveyors to inform their customers about the permit process to facilitate such retrofits.

14.B.q - Develop an outreach program, working with the water service providers in the region, to encourage existing development to upgrade to water-efficient plumbing fixtures, landscaping, and irrigation systems, and use grey and/or recycled water for irrigation.

14.B.r - Develop incentives, such as fee reductions, for the installation of rainwater harvesting and storage facilities to conserve water and minimize water loss in areas where such systems are allowed by the applicable water or sewer purveyor. Recognize that water or sewer purveyors may



adopt regulations to prohibit or otherwise regulate graywater systems that could adversely affect the efficient operation of their systems.

14.B.s – Encourage the use of raw water for non-potable uses where feasible.

GOAL 14C:

Protect and improve the quality and quantity of the County's water resources, while protecting the rights of land owners.

POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Policy 14.C.1: Protect the quality of the County's water resources by supporting the efforts of local districts to maintain infrastructure and cross-connect sewer systems and ensuring Tuolumne County's development standards are adequate to protect surface and groundwater resources from contamination.

Implementation Programs

14.C.a - Maintain local source water protection and wellhead protection programs in the Tuolumne County General Plan, such as setbacks, to protect the sources of drinking water supplies.

14.C.b - Implement grading and surface runoff standards, such as retention and detention, permeable surfaces and recharge, necessary to protect water resources in compliance with State and Federal water quality regulations and with the County's water quality plan referenced in Implementation Program 14.C.e.

Policy 14.C.2: Encourage new urban development to locate in areas where public water and sewer services are available or can be developed.

Implementation Programs

14.C.c - Continue to require new urban residential development with a density of one dwelling unit per two acres, or greater, and commercial development, except on land designated as Special Commercial by the General Plan land use diagrams, to be served with public water.

14.C.d - Continue to require new urban residential development with a density of three dwelling units per acre, or greater, and commercial development, except that on land designated Special Commercial by the General Plan land use diagrams, to connect to public sewer.

Policy 14.C.3: Support the efforts of the local water agencies in identifying and procuring new water resources to meet projected future demands from growth in the County, including the use of reclaimed water.

Policy 14.C.4: Encourage the conservation of water resources in a systematic manner that is sensitive to the maintenance of water quality, natural capacities, ecological values, and consideration of the many water related needs of the County.



Implementation Program

14.C.e - Update the Tuolumne County Water Quality Plan, subject to receiving funding, to facilitate a consistent, fair and cost-effective approach to water resource mitigation and encourage and support the restoration of degraded riparian areas through public education programs demonstrating the value of healthy riparian habitats in protecting water quality, and provide for permit streamlining while conserving important water resources.

Policy 14.C.5: Develop and evaluate criteria to allow limited development to occur where harmful area-wide impacts to groundwater exist based on known hazard areas when feasible.

Implementation Program

14.C.f - Consider creating and maintaining soil maps that identify areas of high ground water, impervious soils, limestone or other hazards which, either by themselves or in combination, create potentially serious health conditions due to failing septic systems or which are inappropriate for on-site sewage treatment and disposal on an areawide basis. Continue to develop and evaluate criteria to allow development to occur in areas of high ground water, impervious soils, limestone or other hazards without degrading the water resources.

Policy 14.C.6: Recognize that the decisions made by the County of Tuolumne concerning water resources have an effect on water supply needs for all beneficial uses of water consistent with the California Water Code, including, but not limited to, domestic, municipal, agricultural and industrial supply; power generation; recreation; aesthetic enjoyment; navigation; and preservation and enhancement of fish, wildlife, and other aquatic resources or preserves.

Implementation Program

14.C.g - Continue to consult with local public water agencies to determine that water supplies and delivery systems can meet the demands of the anticipated new development and population growth of the County. In accordance with Section 65352.5 of the California Government Code, the General Plan Land Use Diagrams were formulated in consultation with the applicable urban water management plans from these agencies and any amendments to those diagrams shall be reviewed in consultation with the respective public water agency serving the parcel or parcels affected by the proposed amendment.

Policy 14.C.7: Recognize that clean water is essential to the public health, safety and welfare, fosters economic development and job creation, protects the environment, maintains fish and wildlife, and supports recreation.

Policy 14.C.8: Encourage water resources to be protected from pollution, conserved, and recycled whenever possible to provide for continued economic, community, and social growth.

Implementation Program

14.C.h - Continue to regulate the exportation of groundwater to preserve the County's limited groundwater reserves for use by its residents and businesses through the provision of Chapter 13.20 of the Tuolumne County Ordinance Code.

Policy 14.C.9: Promote improved watershed health, improved water quality and water quantity yields of the watersheds in Tuolumne County.



Implementation Programs

14.C.i - Promote the development of plans for watershed rehabilitation projects which provide for such watershed improvements as:

- A reduction in the presence of contaminants in drinking water by addressing the origins and treatment of the contaminants, including, to the maximum extent practicable, the specific activities that affect the drinking water supply of a community or communities.
- An increase in the quantity of water available from the watershed.
- The improvement, restoration, or enhancement of fisheries habitat, including riparian habitat, in and along streams and watercourses in the watershed. These projects may address factors which increase sedimentation in streams and watercourses in the watershed.
- The improvement of overall forest health, including the reduction of factors which may contribute to the severity of wildfires in the watershed.

14.C.j - Initiate or assist in the formulation of plans for watershed rehabilitation projects with the County serving as the coordinating agency for the various stakeholders in such a plan, such as property owners, water agencies, other public agencies, private industry, recreational facility providers and other interested groups and organizations. Provide technical assistance in the development of plans for watershed rehabilitation projects through such means as data sharing.

14.C.k - Cooperate and consult with Federal, State and local agencies, such as the Tuolumne County Water Agency, in promoting the stewardship of the watersheds within the County. Consult with these agencies to avoid duplication of effort and to maximize use of public resources in working towards a common goal of improving the watersheds within Tuolumne County which will, in turn, contribute to the State and Federal objective of providing long-term Bay-Delta recovery and protection.

14.C.l - Support the Tuolumne County Resource Conservation District in its efforts to improve watersheds within Tuolumne County, including stream water quality sampling, which can assist agencies where to direct their efforts.

14.C.m - Submit applications for grants which become available for funding for County initiated or sponsored watershed rehabilitation projects and support the efforts of other public agencies and water agencies, such as the Tuolumne County Water Agency, Tuolumne-Stanislaus Integrated Regional Water Management Authority and other entities in their efforts to seek funding for watershed improvement projects. This support may manifest itself in such ways as adopting a resolution of support or co-sponsoring an application for funding for a watershed project.



GOAL 14D:

Promote cooperation between Tuolumne County, the Tuolumne County Water Agency and water supply purveyors.

POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Policy 14.D.1: Work collaboratively with water supply purveyors to strive for mutual benefits.

Implementation Programs

14.D.a - Provide land use data from the General Plan, proposals being considered for updating the land use diagrams of the General Plan, and other relevant maps and data to water purveyors to be used in preparing their water master plans and Urban Water Management Plans.

14.D.b - Review and consider land use implications of water master plans and Urban Water Management Plans prepared for any of the water supply purveyors in the County. Water master plans and Urban Water Management Plans examine the projected water needs, and outline the necessary repairs, replacements, and additions to the water distribution infrastructure.

14.D.c - Provide descriptions of proposed land development projects that may require water service or in some way affect the ability of the water purveyor to provide service, to all affected water districts or water supply companies. Comments or requirements addressed by the water purveyor shall be considered prior to approval of the project.

Policy 14.D.2: Maintain a water service database on the County Geographic Information System (GIS) which shows the boundaries of each water district, the service areas, and any available master planning maps showing future infrastructure. The database shall be used for review of proposed land use changes or development projects.