

Madison – Esparto – Capay Valley
Summary Review of Park and Recreation options

May 11, 2009

Issue: Possible options for provision of park and recreational services generally from the area of Madison to the Capay Valley.

Introduction

Several agencies, including Esparto and Madison Community Services Districts, the Yolo County Planning and Public Works and Parks & Resources Departments, Madison-Esparto Regional County Service Area, Western Yolo Recreation Center Association and Capay Valley Vision have expressed interest in a consolidated provider of parks and recreation services in the north western corner of Yolo County (MAP A). Specific boundaries in which to provide these services have not been identified.

As a result, the Yolo LAFCO staff has met with interested parties on several occasions to discuss options. In all cases fiscal resources have been reviewed and responsibilities considered for either the conversion of an existing district or formation of a new entity. Financial resources are the major issue involved in providing the services. The following information is a compilation of agencies that either already provides park services, or could. Each description explains the basics of the agency and the options in physically and fiscally providing the park and recreation services.

Existing Situation

There are several entities that are interested in the future of parks and recreation in western Yolo County. The following summary describes the different types of existing entities as well as possible future service providers for park services in the western Yolo County region.

Non-Profit entities

Western Yolo Recreation Center Association (WYORCA)

Provided Services: According to their website, the goal of this nonprofit association “is the establishment of an aquatic and recreation center consisting of a community swimming pool complex and a multipurpose center to serve the communities of Madison, Esparto, Capay, Brooks, Guinda, and Rumsey. A gathering place that would enhance the recreational and cultural opportunities of the rural Capay Valley region. A resource for long-term health benefits via swimming, exercise and other physical and mental well-being programs.”

General Information: WYORCA has worked with civic groups toward obtaining this goal including the Hoes Down Harvest Festival, Esparto Lions Club, Capay Valley Vision Recreation Task Force, and the Capay Valley Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary. A report is on-line at <http://www.capayvalley.com/documents/WYORCAAquaticAndRecreationCenterReport1.pdf>

that outlines the general interest of the association, actions to-date and considerations concerning location, design and comparisons for both the aquatic and community centers.

Parks and Recreation: This association's goal is to establish recreational and cultural opportunities for the western Yolo County area.

Financing: As a nonprofit, this entity is restricted to private fiscal resources, including donations, fees for service, loans or grants. It does not have the ability to pursue public financing such as special assessments, taxes or zone of benefit assessments. User fees could also be imposed for use of facilities once established.

Existing governmental agencies

The following existing entities have been identified in discussions concerning the organization of parks and recreation services in western Yolo County.

Madison Community Services District (Independent)

Provided Services: Water, wastewater, parks and recreation

General Information: The Madison CSD serves approximately 60 acres bounded by State Route 16 (SR-16) on the north and Interstate 505 (I-505) on the east (MAP B). The Madison Migrant Center is located outside the District boundaries. The CSD provides water, wastewater, and parks to the 384 residents of the town of Madison and to the approximately 260 residents of the Madison Migrant Center. Revenues for the district are garnered through service charges. This is an independent district with an independently elected Board of Directors that hires its' own employees.

Parks and Recreation: The Madison CSD currently maintains and operates one park located within the service area. The park is approximately 1.5 acres and is adjacent to the Madison High School on the corner of Quincy Street and Stephens Street. The Migrant Center also contains playground equipment on its' grounds. The district park's facilities consist of children's playground equipment, one picnic table, and one soccer field with goals. No other amenities, including restrooms or a water fountain, are present onsite. The District is responsible for mowing the park's grass areas and for upkeep of the playground equipment. A sprinkler system is present at the park; however, the system does not cover the entire park area. During the summer months, portable hoses and sprinklers irrigate the section of the park not accessible by the sprinkler system. Parks services provided by the district outside its' existing boundaries would have to be on a contract basis. Expansion of the district boundaries for park services would also imply expansion of water and wastewater services. The expansion of boundaries for a municipal service district is a growth inducing impact and not an advisable action to pursue in a rural area unless thoroughly and carefully planned.

Financing

Currently, the Madison CSD's only source of funding is service charges. In the last few years the district has obtained domestic and waste water grants and loans to upgrade their systems.

Rates for customers were recently raised to fund both increases in maintenance costs and the repayment of Community Housing Development program loans.

New services would require new funding. Since Madison has no share of the property tax, any park services would more likely be funded with special assessments (approved by a vote of landowners) and user fees by those participating in park services.

Esparto Community Services District (Independent)

Provided Services: Water, wastewater and street lighting

General Information: The Esparto Community Services District covers about .85 square miles of land and is located on Highway 16 between the communities of Madison and Capay in western Yolo County (MAP C). According to the 2000 US Census, the District currently serves water, wastewater and street lighting to a population of 1,858. Revenues for this district come from property tax and service charges. This is an independent district with an independently elected Board of Directors that hires its' own employees.

Parks and Recreation: The Esparto CSD does not currently provide, nor are they authorized to provide, parks and recreation services. In order to receive the responsibility for those services the CSD board of directors would have to formally request the addition of this power to those they currently hold. A resolution of application provided to the Yolo Local Agency Formation Commission would also have to provide a plan outlining the new service requested and how the services would be provided both physically and financially. Parks services provided by the district outside its' existing boundaries would have to be on a contract basis. Expansion of the district boundaries for park services would also imply expansion of water and wastewater services, a growth inducing impact and not an advisable action to pursue in a rural area unless carefully planned and researched.

Financing: Currently, the Esparto CSD receives funding from both property tax and service charges. The district had obtained CDBG grants and loans to upgrade their systems in the past. Development agreements have also provided improvements in the district.

In this district, new services would also require new funding. New park services would most likely be funded with special assessments (approved by a vote of landowners) and user fees by those participating in park services.

Madison – Esparto Regional County Service Area (Dependent)

Provided Services: Drainage, open space, median and landscaping maintenance services to the Parker Place, Lopez and Country West 2 subdivisions with the CSA providing storm drainage-related services to the remainder of the district

General Information: The Madison-Esparto Regional County Service Area (MERCOSA) is generally located in the northwest quadrant of Yolo County, encompassing the communities of Esparto and Madison. Cache Creek is generally the northern boundary of the District while

County Road 26 is generally the southern boundary (MAP D). The town of Madison is at the eastern edge, while Esparto represents the western boundary. Highway 16 is the only major road through the area. Most of the residents are concentrated in the towns of Madison and Esparto. The population of the district is estimated at 2,600. MERCSA covers approximately 30 square miles of land. This is a dependent district governed by the Yolo County Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors has appointed an advisory committee, made up of district residents, to provide input and recommendations on district concerns. County staff provides support.

Parks and Recreation: MERCSA was created by consolidating two existing CSA's (Madison and Esparto) into one county service area. The goal was to provide storm drainage maintenance throughout the district area and park, recreation or parkway facilities and services primarily to several small subdivisions in Esparto by maintenance of storm drainage ponds. These ponds are used as parks in some situations by the community. Additional park services could be provided by MERCSA, if the inhabitants are interested in paying for the services. Provision of park and recreation services outside the existing boundaries would have to be implemented through a contract or expansion of existing boundaries.

Financing: MERCSA collects a small portion of the property tax in all areas of the district, except Esparto. Esparto itself does not provide a share of property tax or any special assessments to MERCSA. Three small subdivisions in Esparto: Country West II, Esperanza and Parker Place have special assessments levied on them to pay for maintenance of the storm drainage ponds that were built to control drainage for their subdivisions.

New services would also require new funding in this district. Additional park services would most likely be funded with special assessments (approved by a vote of landowners) and user fees by those participating in park services. Because this district has restricted authority to provide municipal services, additional area could be added to the district boundaries if surrounding landowners were interested in directly receiving storm drainage and parks and recreation services.

Yolo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (Independent)

Provided Services: Management of surface and ground water including drainage and irrigation. This district also has the authority to provide recreation services and hydroelectric power.

General Information: This special act agency is an independent district with a five member Board of Directors appointed by the Yolo County Board of Supervisors. It covers 306 square miles of area from northern Capay Valley to the eastern side of the City of Davis (MAP E). The population of the district is about 134,000 people. The District manages three dams, two hydroelectric plants, two reservoirs, more than 150 miles of canals and laterals and one of the world's longest, inflatable rubber dams. District boundaries encompass 195,000 acres of Yolo County, including the cities of Woodland, Davis and Winters, and the towns of Capay, Esparto, Madison and other small communities within Capay Valley. The staffing for this district is hired and directed by the District Board of Directors.

Parks and Recreation: The district has the Indian Valley Reservoir in Lake County which can be accessed by the public for passive recreational use.

Financing: This district receives a portion of the property tax and in addition sells water to farmers for irrigation purposes. YCFC&WCD has the authority to create zones of benefit within the district to assess special assessments or charges. These charges could be applied within a zone of benefit within the district boundaries if voter approval is received.

Yolo County Parks and Resources Department (Dependent)

Provided Services: The Yolo County Parks and Resources Department plans, maintains and operates the county owned parks and open space properties in Yolo County. In addition, this department regulates the gravel mining program and monitors the water issues of the county.

General Information: This department is a general fund unit within the County of Yolo, overseen by the Yolo County Board of Supervisors. Created in 2007 it has 16 regular employees for 13 parks and the water and gravel mining programs. This department had 14 construction projects and 4 new parks planned until the recent state budget challenges created delays. Due to county financing issues the Parks Department may be facing financing and program cuts (MAP F).

Parks and Recreation: The county park system has only two municipal type parks: Esparto and Dunnigan. These community parks both have play equipment. Esparto is larger and is used for community activities such as a farmers market and the Almond Festival. The community activities are overseen and organized by nonprofit groups such as Capay Valley Vision. This department is also responsible for the Cache Creek Canyon Campground, a heavily used facility in the far north western corner of Yolo County. The County of Yolo also has three boat ramps: Knights Landing, Elkhorn and Clarksburg. The remaining parks are passive use, primarily open space facilities.

Financing: The Parks Department receives general fund money from the Board of Supervisors as the primary funding source. This department also collects fees from the use of the campgrounds, boat ramps and rafting concessionaires. Gravel fees at the mining operations in Cache Creek are paying to implement the resources plan to restore Cache Creek. This department has also been successful in receiving state grants for the construction and improvement of county parks. Those grants are currently in flux due to the state budget situation. If the county were to undertake municipal recreation services additional funds would be required from special assessments, fees or other grants available for appropriate purposes.

Other possible governmental agencies

Park & Recreation District (Independent) – Public Resources code 5780, et. seq.

Provided Services: Organize, promote, conduct and advertise programs of community recreation, including, but not limited to, parks and open space, parking, transportation, and

other related services to improve the community quality of life. Also establish systems of recreation and facilities.

General Information: This independent district can be formed by application to the Yolo County Local Agency Formation Commission. Either a resolution can be tendered from the Yolo County Board of Supervisors or a petition from 25% of the registered voters within the proposed district boundaries. The petition must be consistent with government code 56700 et. seq. and also:

1. set out methods by which the district will be financed,
2. a proposed district name,
3. the method by which the initial Board of Directors will be seated,
4. specify if the district will have the power of eminent domain.

Parks and Recreation: This district is specifically created to provide parks and recreation services and all the attendant powers to provide adequate facilities and operations. No specific boundaries have been developed for the suggested services.

Financing: A new district could receive special taxes, benefit assessments or other revenues if approved by the registered voters of the district. In addition, user fees and other charges could be imposed to finance the district services. Since this is an independent district, sufficient sources of revenue would have to be identified and approved to fund personnel, operations and maintenance, and facilities for the parks. This process would be separate from the County of Yolo park services system and would require a very specific jurisdiction of district boundaries to be identified.

CONCLUSION

Primarily the choices of agency seem to narrow to three: MERCSA, Yolo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District or a new parks and recreation district.

MERCSA already possesses park service authority and covers a large portion of the area in question. If annexation were needed to match an identified service area there would be minimal impact because the district is only authorized to provide storm drainage and parks services. The main restriction is the willingness of the residents to provide financial support to a dependent district governed by the Board of Supervisors.

YCFCWCD is an independent district with support staff already providing services that could be consistent with park maintenance. This district is already authorized to provide park services. The current district boundaries cover much of the area under discussion for the new services. The district also has the ability to apply a zone of benefit to finance new park services if the residents within that area approve the assessments necessary. The main question is the willingness of the district to participate in this new venture and in the residents' interest in financing it.

A new parks and recreation district would require all that was discussed in the section concerning the new district. It would allow the residents to identify the area best suited to be served and how it would be financed. It would be an independent district that could hire its own

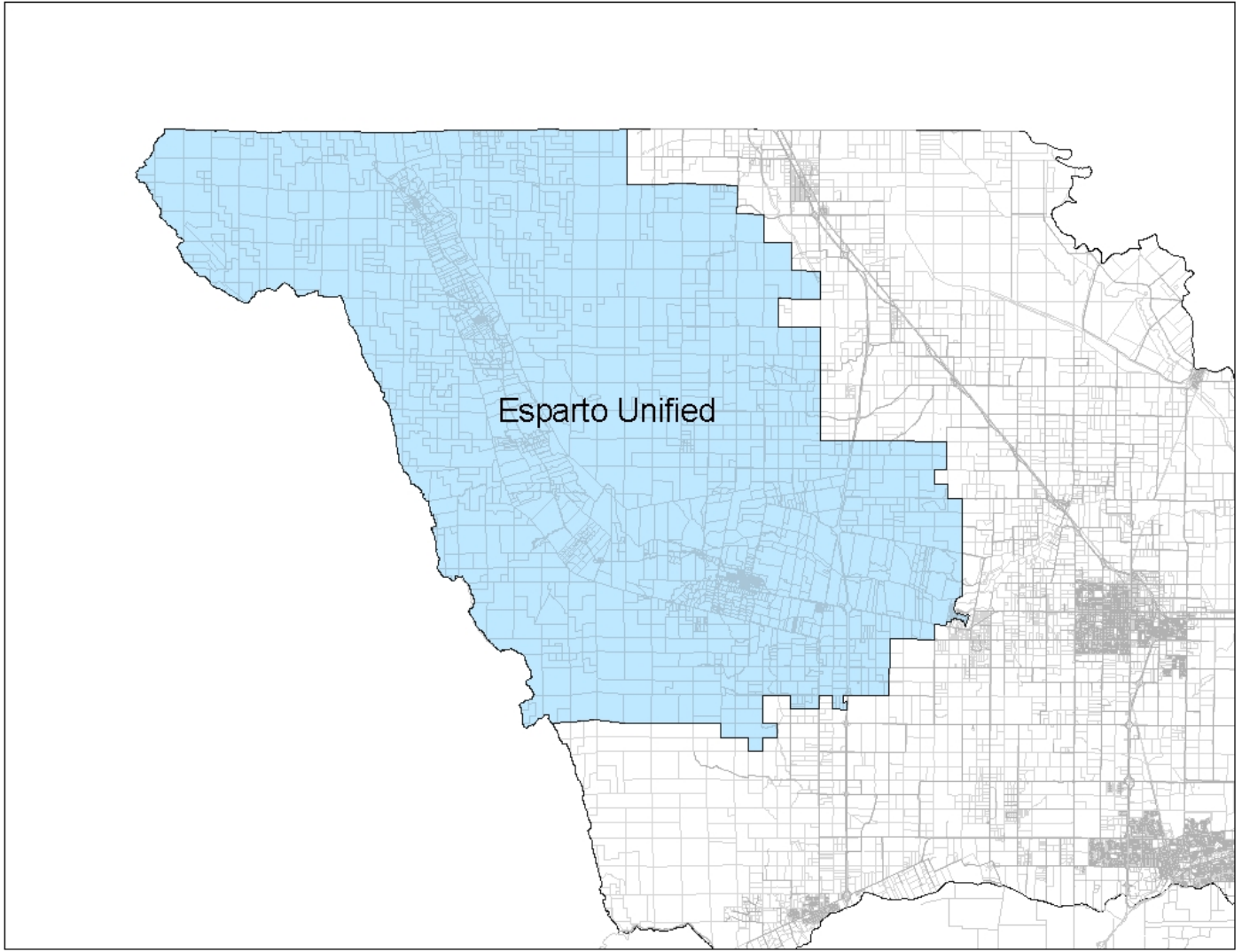
staff or contract as necessary for service provision. The independently elected board would be directly responsible to the electorate of the parks and recreation district.

The primary questions that face the residents are:

1. identify the actual area to be served,
2. what park and recreation services would be desired,
3. how much residents would be willing to finance

Discussions with interested parties outlined the need for volunteer and community involvement, surveys to determine interest by the public and if there is willingness to finance the new services. In all cases discussed in this report the County of Yolo could entertain the option of providing a portion of the property tax for parks and recreation services to a new or existing entity. However, any new share of the property tax provided to an entity would result in the reduction of property tax shares to the other entities within the tax rate area affected and so may not be practical.

The Yolo LAFCO would be involved in varying degrees with any of these reorganization pursuits. LAFCO staff will continue to work with affected agencies and interested parties to identify best options.



General north west Yolo County Area



Figure 1
Madison Community Services District Map

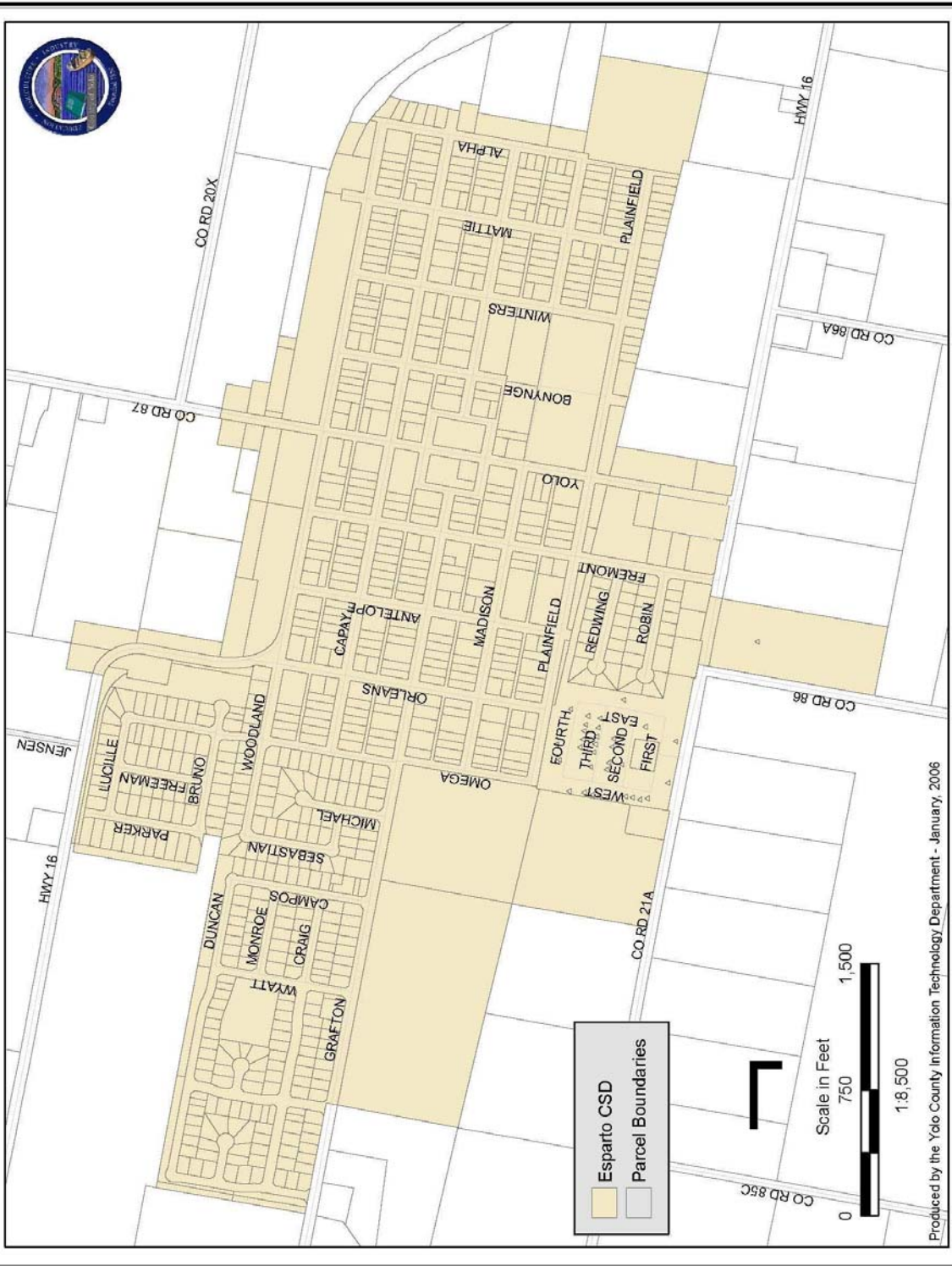
COUNTY OF YOLO LAFCO - MADISON COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT
 MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW AND SPHERE OF INFLUENCE UPDATE STUDY

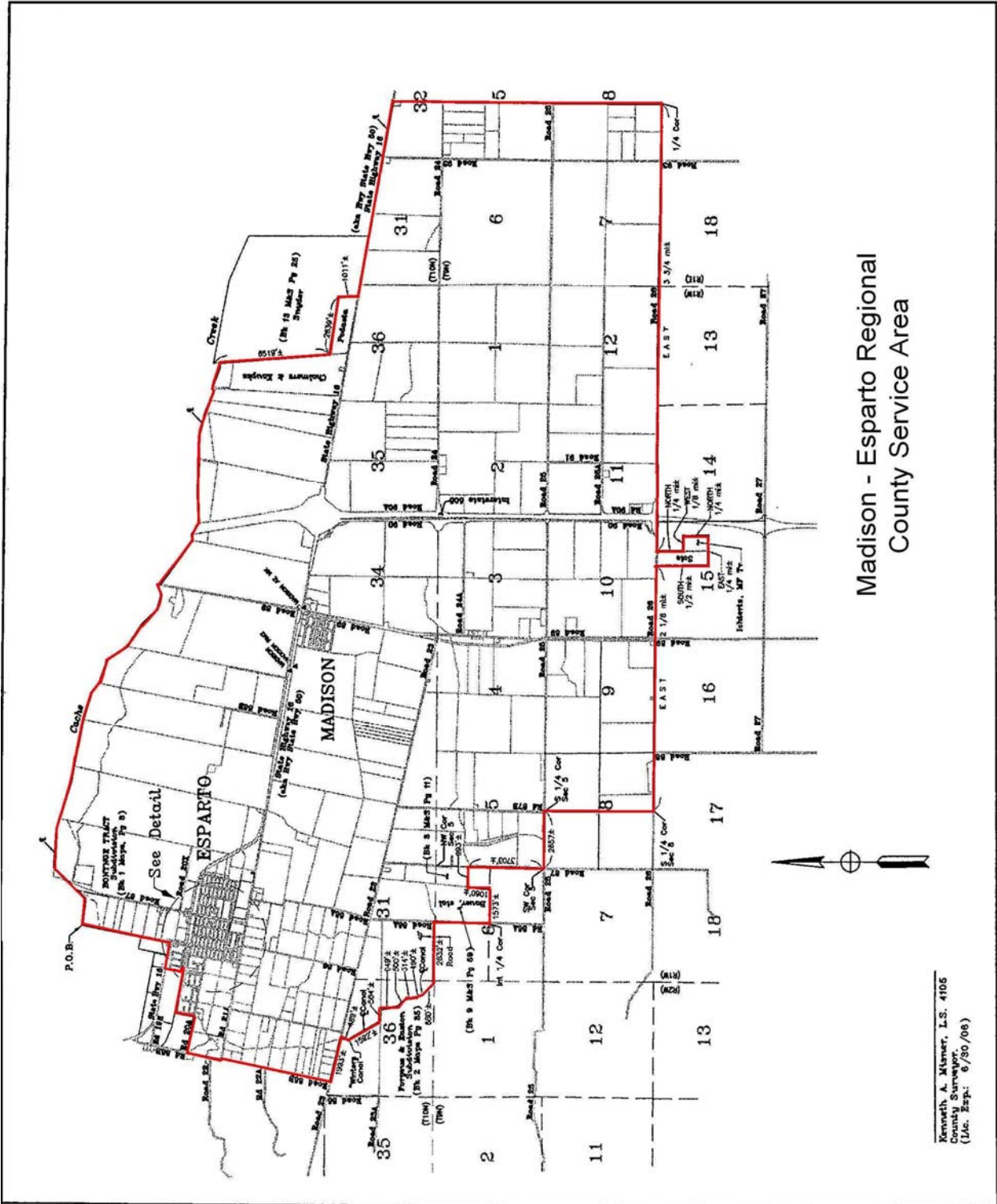
Source: Yolo County Information Technology Department - January, 2006.

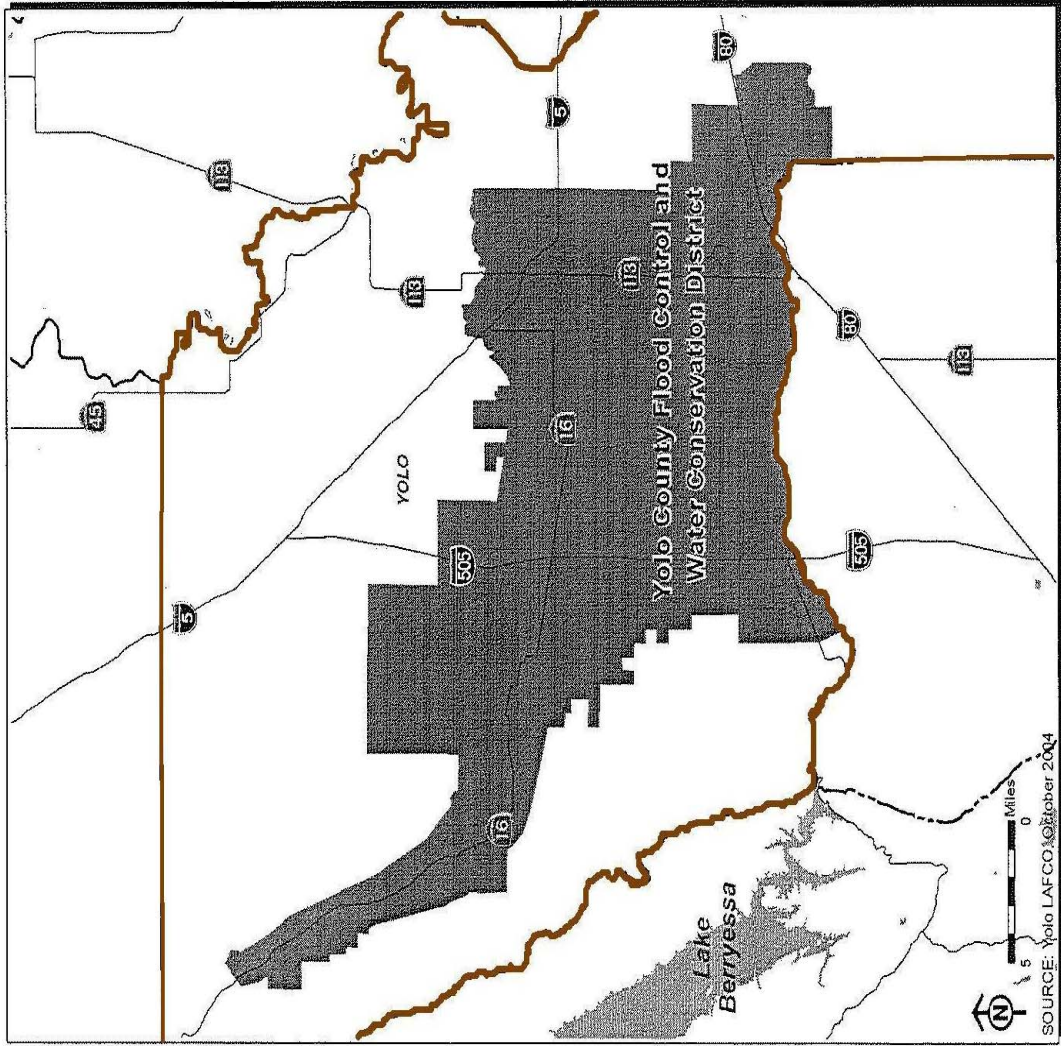


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Esparto Community Service District







Yolo County
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