

2. Environmental Factors

Environmental factors can influence a county’s agriculture, economic standing, recreation, and the quality of life of its residents. Climate is a key factor in determining what types of limitations or opportunities exist for agricultural production or recreational activities. The waste indicator is a measure of greenhouse gas emissions from landfills in a particular area. Proper waste management protects public health, safety, and the environment. This section provides information useful for making decisions concerning residential and business location.

Many state parks in mountainous El Dorado County offer a variety of recreational opportunities. Due to the mountainous geography and extreme seasonal weather changes, there are ever-changing recreational opportunities in El Dorado County. Below, the county’s eight state parks and recreation areas are listed according to acreage.

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National Forests & State Parks

Overview

Parkland is essential to human and other living communities. Humans use parkland as a recreational respite while many other species depend upon it for survival, away from human development.

Not all national forest land is administered by the federal government. These lands are included in the national forest table under the heading “Other Administration.” Not all counties have these lands.

El Dorado County

The county is home to 501,554 acres of national forest land and 49,742 acres of state park land. Together, these cover approximately 50 percent of all land area in El Dorado County. The largest national forest in the county is El Dorado with 499,462 acres and the largest state park is Auburn State Recreation Area covering 42,377 acres.

National Forest and Wilderness Areas

Name	Acreage
Eldorado NF *	499,462
Eldorado NF, Other Administration	1,683
Eldorado Purchase Unit	180
Inst. of Forest Genetics EA	194
Tahoe NF	4
Toiyabe NF *	31

Source: U.S. Forest Service

State Parks

Name	Acreage
D. L. Bliss SP	2,149
Emerald Bay SP	1,533
Auburn SRA	42,377
Lake Valley SRA	155
Marshall Gold Discovery SHP	576
Ed Z'berg Sugar Pine Point SP	2,324
Washoe Meadows SP	628

Source: California Department of Finance

Climate Data

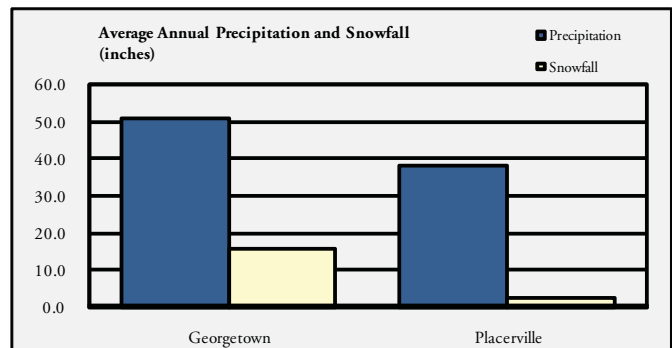
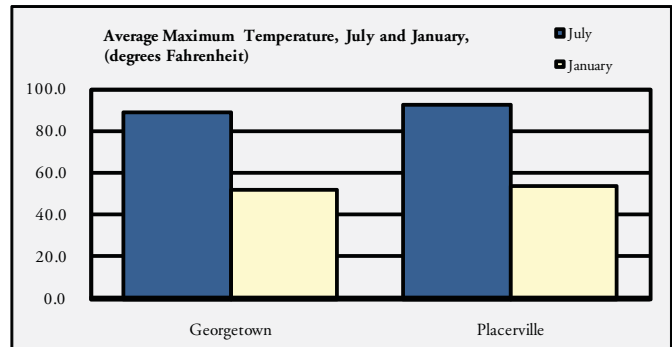
Overview

This indicator shows climate readings from selected weather stations in El Dorado County. Climate data is collected on an ongoing basis and is reported by the Western Regional Climate Center in December of each year unless otherwise noted. The data expresses an annual average calculated over the time indicated below.

It is important to know what types of weather a certain area may experience because of extremes of heat and cold, and severe storms may reduce the desirability of an area for tourists or retirees. These conditions may occur in a particular season and limit the attractiveness of an area at certain times of the year. This information can be useful for determining which particular businesses might be viable in a specific area.

El Dorado County

The two weather stations in El Dorado County are located in Georgetown and Placerville. Of these, Georgetown reports the most precipitation with an annual average of 51.1 inches. The following figure shows the average temperatures and precipitation rates in winter and summer for each weather station in the county.



Climate Station Readings as of January 2009

	Georgetown	Placerville
Average July maximum temp. (deg.)	89.1	92.6
Average January maximum temp. (deg.)	52.2	53.3
Average July minimum temp. (deg.)	60.6	57.1
Average January minimum temp. (deg.)	34.0	32.4
Average July precipitation (in.)	0.1	0.1
Average January precipitation (in.)	10.0	7.0
Average annual precipitation (in.)	51.1	38.2
Average January snowfall (in.)	5.3	1.2
Average annual snowfall (in.)	15.9	2.6

Source: Western Regional Climate Center

*Georgetown date from 1893 - 1967

Waste Data

Overview

Waste that is landfilled negatively affects our environment due to high levels of greenhouse gases that are generated and emitted into the atmosphere. Two greenhouse gases make up the majority of the pollution at every solid waste landfill: Carbon Dioxide and Methane. CO2 and Methane are created through the anaerobic decomposition breakdown of a waste stream. Methane is an extremely potent molecule, and poses a threat to our environment. It is more potent than CO2. Diversion programs such as recycling are ways to reduce the current level of GHGs that are emitted into the atmosphere. The concepts of recycle, reduce, and reuse can be implemented in every county, city, industry, and home to reduce the amount of waste that is being sent to the landfills.

This indicator includes the level of waste that was generated and sent to the landfills by El Dorado County in 2004, with additional per capita statistics. The table which follows also compares the per capita waste generated in the county with the California state average along with other counties of similar size. These comparisons show how well a county is doing to divert its waste and whether there may be opportunities available for increased diversion.

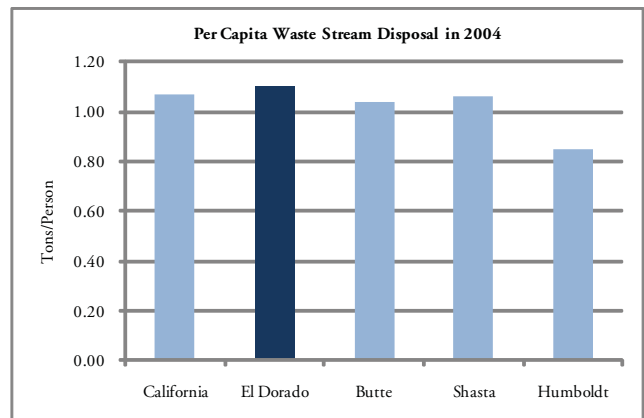
In 2004 California sent over 38 million tons of waste to the landfills, which equates to the average person contributing about 1.07 tons of waste in that year alone.

Many counties have taken steps forward to reduce their impacts on the environment by signing on to the Mayor’s Clean Air Climate Protection Agreement, which strives to meet or beat the Kyoto Protocol Targets, while enacting policies that will regulate greenhouse gas and air pollution levels. Over 600 city mayors across the country have signed on to this agreement, 115 of which are from cities within California.

Waste Stream Disposal in 2004

	Total Tons of Solid Waste Generated in 2004	2004 Population	Per/Cap Tons of Solid Waste 2004
California	38,789,018	36,199,342	1.07
El Dorado	186,161	169,830	1.10
Butte	220,515	212,393	1.04
Shasta	186,650	175,686	1.06
Humboldt	110,240	130,452	0.85

Source: California Integrated Waste Management Board



Pesticide Use

Overview

The data in this indicator shows total weight of active ingredients of pesticides applied by farmers in the county. Residential use of over-the-counter garden pesticides is not included.

Pesticide application is not harmful in every case. Pesticide use to control non-native species using agents shown to cause less negative effects may be warranted. However, such use must be monitored by field professionals to avoid unnecessary environmental contamination.

Pesticide use can also be an indicator of weather patterns and environmental quality from year-to-year. Increasing pesticide use is necessary when physical conditions for agriculture, including weather and soil, are not ideal.

El Dorado County

Pesticide use has been up and down in the county from year to year since the mid-1990s. Use fell to a low of 73,449 pounds of active ingredients in 2000, but has since risen to nearly 200,000 pounds in 2007.

Total Pounds of Pesticide Active Ingredients	
Year	Pounds of Pesticide
1995	139,817
1996	N/A
1997	126,461
1998	238,751
1999	121,995
2000	73,449
2001	81,552
2002	96,860
2003	103,487
2004	105,982
2005	130,004
2006	113,738
2007	193,053

Source: California Department of Pesticide Regulation

