

# COBB AREA COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

16320 High Rd/ P.O. BOX 284 COBB, CA 95426 PH 707-928-5262 FAX 707-928-5263  
[cal@cobbareawater.com](mailto:cal@cobbareawater.com) < EMAIL > [ben@cobbareawater.com](mailto:ben@cobbareawater.com)

**County:** Lake

**Population:** 3300

**Challenges:** Effects from the 2015 Valley Fire and failing infrastructure

**Consolidation Date:** August 18, 2018

**Prepared for SAFER by:** Ben Murphy, Cobb Area Water

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In 2015 the Cobb Area suffered the effects of the Valley Fire. The Cobb Area County Water District suffered a loss of 38% of its customer base. In 2016 with the help of the Division of Drinking Water, Division of Finance, RCAC, CRWA, County of Lake, Brelje and Race Engineering, UC Davis, Sac State, Cobb Area County Water District, and so many more a consolidation of the surrounding Water Systems into the Cobb Area County Water District began. It was determined that the fire left some Districts in the area too small to be able to maintain their water systems. One system (Starview) lost 87% of its customer base.

Once the feasibility report and income surveys were completed the group was able to identify 21 million in needed upgrades throughout the District and it was also determined that the area was a severely disadvantaged community. It was decided that the best course of action was to consolidate the 7 Districts. They are Adam Springs Water System, Pine Grove Water System, Starview County Water District, Bonanza Springs County Water District, Mt Hannah County Water District, Branding Iron Mutual Water Company, Hill 9 and 10 Water Association. In August of 2018 the consolidation was finished and accepted by LAFCO and was one of the fastest consolidations conducted at the time.

Two construction projects (7 million) have been completed, and the 2.5 million dollar planning effort in the area, consisting of multiple construction projects for the next 5 to 10 years, is almost complete. Two of these projects should start in 2022, and two more the next year and so on.



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The consolidation of these systems was necessary to not only to fix failing infrastructure, but to also keep these water systems financially stable. If it had not been conducted quickly these water systems would have failed financially due to a low return rate by its customer base. The Cobb Area now has one thousand connections, and the return rate has been at about 20% and more homes are added every year. We have also recently added the Cobb Mountain Water Company as of July of 2021 and will soon add Alpine Meadows, a state small, to the Cobb Area County Water District.

This consolidation ensured the survival of not only the primary agency but, the other systems as well. It made the District stronger, more solvent, and has been a positive in the community.

