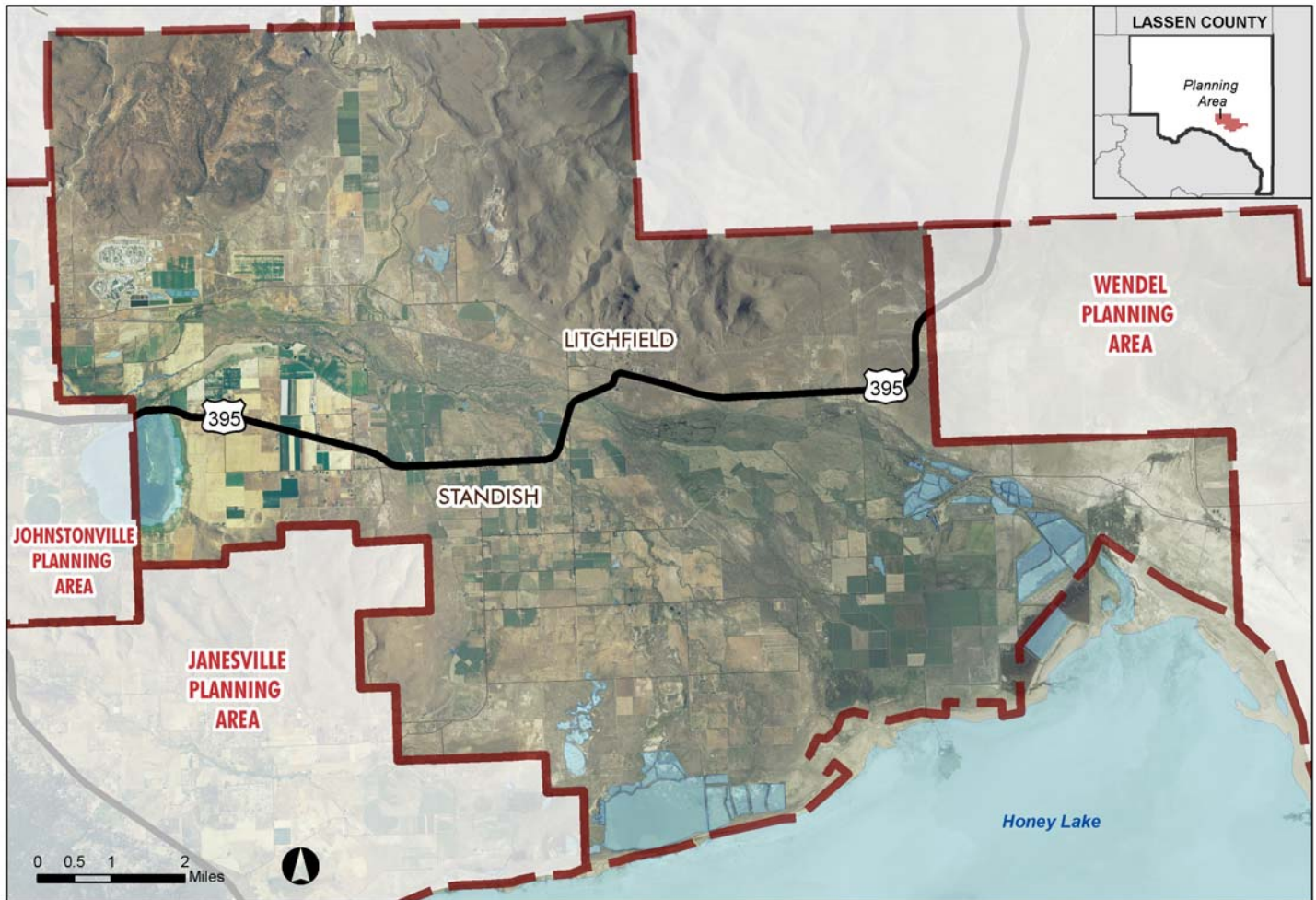


STANDISH/LITCHFIELD PLANNING AREA

PLANNING AREA AT A GLANCE



Location and Communities

The Standish/Litchfield Planning Area encompasses approximately 105 square miles northwest of Honey Lake in the Honey Lake Valley. The Susan River crosses the area and ends at Honey Lake. Lake Leavitt is located on the western edge of the planning area. US Highway 395 bisects the planning area, passing through the communities of Standish and Litchfield. Both communities are unincorporated but are designated town centers. The planning area is also home to the High Desert State Prison and the California Correctional Center.

Like many of the other areas within the Honey Lake Valley, there are numerous recorded archaeological sites within the planning area.

KEY FACTS AND FIGURES:

Population

- In 2000, the planning area was home to approximately 1,375 residents.

Employment

- The High Desert State Prison and California Correctional Center employ approximately 2,600 people in the planning area.

Sources:

2000 US Census data



STANDISH

Standish is the largest community in the planning area. Standish was once a major center for agricultural trade, and significant agricultural activity still occurs in the surrounding area. Residential development stretches towards Lake Leavitt and commercial services line US Highway 395.

LITCHFIELD

Litchfield is located northwest of Standish, and similarly it features a scattering of residential and commercial development, mostly along US Highway 395. Agricultural and public lands surround the community.

AREA TRENDS AND ISSUES:

Agriculture

- Division of agricultural lands along Standish Buntingville Road, Lake Leavitt Road, and Alexander Lane for rural residential development has fragmented agricultural lands and created conflicts between residents and agricultural operations.
- Small scale specialty crop production has shown promise—with crops such as strawberry nursery plants ranked 2nd in gross value in 2004. (California Labor Dept., 2006)
- Invasive weeds, such as Whitetop, have spread through many portions of the planning area and are creating management challenges.

Infrastructure and Services

- Future growth and fire protection capabilities are limited by the lack of a centralized water and sewer system in Standish and Litchfield.
- During major storm events, the bridge at Litchfield floods, creating access challenges for residents and the Shaffer School.

Land Use Characteristics

- 45 percent of land within the Standish/Litchfield Planning Area is currently used for agricultural activity. The majority of this land is concentrated south of Center Road on the valley floor.
- Of the 32,240 acres currently used for agriculture, 12,469 acres are protected under the Williamson Act.
- 8,712 acres of land are designated for upland conservation and are primarily used as grazing land.
- A small portion (43 acres) of the planning area is occupied by low-density residential development. An additional 633 acres is occupied by rural residential development. The majority of this development is concentrated in and around the communities of Standish and Litchfield.
- The marshlands near Honey Lake fall within the Honey Lake Wildlife Area (managed by the California Department of Fish and Game). This area occupies approximately 6,441 acres and provides hunting opportunities for residents and visitors.
- Some small scale commercial development occurs along US Highway 395 in Standish and Litchfield, however, the availability of services is limited in both communities.
- Over 27 percent of the planning area's land area is occupied by public lands (not including the Honey Lake Wildlife Area). Much of this public land is concentrated north of Center Road on the slopes that form the valley's boundary.

STANDISH/LITCHFIELD PLANNING AREA

Area Services

- **Fire Protection**—Standish-Litchfield Fire Protection District is the local fire protection agency.
- **Schools**—Shaffer Union School District is a one-school district located in Litchfield. Shaffer Elementary School serves approximately 315 students in grades kindergarten through eighth.
- **Water and Wastewater**—The Standish-Litchfield Planning Area relies on individual wells and septic systems for water supplies and sewage disposal.



AREA TRENDS AND ISSUES:

Community Character

- Residents value the rural character of the area and have expressed a desire for a more coordinated pattern of development in and around Standish and Litchfield.

Water Quality/Availability

- High surface water flows in some portions of the planning area limit the viability of septic systems and increase the potential for well contamination.
- Some wells in the planning area have a history of arsenic contamination.
- Although water is plentiful, conversion of agricultural lands to residential will reduce the amount of water available for agriculture in the future.

RELATED PLANNING DOCUMENTS:

- Standish-Litchfield Planning Area Master Environmental Assessment (1983)
- Standish-Litchfield Area Plan and Environmental Impact Report (1986)
- Lassen County Community Action Plans (1999)