

## **Emergency Retention Basin (ERB)**

The ERB is a seldom used but essential feature of the District's wastewater treatment system. Located near the intersection of Blackbart and Pioneer Trail, the ERB can hold up to 58 million gallons of water. It is lined with polyethylene and considered a dam by California division of dams which inspects it annually. The facility is completely fenced to protect the public from fall, drowning, and biological hazards.

The ERB is used to store treated or partially treated wastewater under emergency conditions, meaning only when absolutely necessary. Equipment failures, construction projects, extreme weather conditions, power failures, and major maintenance projects can all necessitate ERB usage. Without the ERB the District would have no way to prevent wastewater from entering Lake Tahoe during the above events. As with all large municipal wastewater systems there is no way to "turn-off" the influent flow.

District policy and Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board regulations require minimal usage of the ERB as well as timely emptying after use. Equipment upgrades and plant improvements have reduced ERB usage in recent years. Even so, it is possible that partially treated wastewater pumped to the ERB could cause significant odor impacts to residents in the area for weeks, even months at a time. That situation occurred after large storm events in 1983, 1986 and 1997.