



February 23, 2015 | Posted by [Julie Samrick](#)

RUSD finalizes Bass Lake purchase

After months of speculation, on Feb. 20 Rescue Union School District formally purchased Bass Lake and 58 surrounding acres of land for \$300,000 from El Dorado Irrigation District.

The 150-acre sale includes Sellwood Field and a 30-acre maintenance yard, Rescue Union Superintendent David Swart said the school district transferred the yard back to EID in the final paper work. "We don't need the maintenance yard and they do," he said.

In 2009 EID directors declared the Bass Lake property surplus. El Dorado County and Rescue Union expressed interest and the school district made an offer first.

Swart said the district plans to build a 20-acre school site behind Bass Lake Road. There will also be a public park on the property, which Swart said isn't as high a priority as developing the school site. As for Bass Lake, Swart said, "We're looking for partnerships to be good stewards of that lake. We've been working with Supervisor Mikulaco, the Planning Commission and the Bass Lake Action Committee."

When asked why the district would consider building a new school despite declining enrollment, Swart explained categorical funding — federal or state funding that can only be spent on specific programs and can't be transferred to other funds for other uses.

"There is categorical money that can only be used for school acquisition. It is not general fund money," he said. Swart also said the district must look to the future. "We have to look at the price of land now — not 10 years from now.

"We've purchased a school site at a wonderful price," Swart continued. "We believe we're setting aside a beautiful school site for even sooner than I thought. Even though our enrollment doesn't support building a school immediately, we're starting to see some growth."

Swart has said in the past the district plans to build a school that focuses on environmental science, technology and outdoor education. Whether the school is kindergarten through fifth grade or kindergarten through eighth depends, Swart said, "on what the community wants.

"We will know there is a need before we start construction," he continued. "We believe holding on to the money until the need is there is also being good stewards. There's still a lot up in the air about state funding. The plan is definitely to move forward. It's destined to be a fabulous school site."