

3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

This section describes background research completed for the project. The information presented here was gathered from a cultural resources background record search as well as a field visit to several of the bars proposed for mining. The study area is located within Township 9-10 North, Range 8-9 West, as depicted on the Jimtown and Geyserville 7.5-minute U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) quadrangle maps.

A. Setting

PREHISTORIC SETTING

In the early 1970s, Fredrickson (1973, 1974) proposed a sequence of cultural manifestations or patterns for the central districts of the North Coast Ranges, placing them within a framework of cultural periods he believed were applicable to California as a whole. These different cultural modes could be characterized by:

- similar technological skills and devices (specific cultural items);
- similar economic modes (production, distribution, consumption), including especially participation in trade networks and practices surrounding wealth (often inferential);
- similar mortuary and ceremonial practices.

The region's cultural patterns are associated with specific temporal periods, as follows:

- Paleo-Indian Period (10,000 B.C. to 6000 B.C.)
- Lower Archaic Period (6000 B.C. to 3000 B.C.)
- Middle Archaic Period (3000 B.C. to 1000 B.C.)
- Upper Archaic Period (1000 B.C. to A.D. 500)
- Emergent Period (A.D. 500 to 1800)

The Russian River has been used as a natural pathway for Native Americans since prehistoric times. The possibility of discovering permanent and/or seasonal inhabitation sites and associated artifacts within the Russian River floodplain is great. Centuries before settlement by the Europeans, groups of native peoples inhabited village communities throughout Sonoma County (Sonoma County 1994). Pomo, Wappo, or Miwok, lived in the region for several thousand years, passing their cultures from generation to generation in oral traditions, complex ceremonies, and among Pomos, in the demanding art of basket weaving.

The Pomo utilized the abundant resources of the Russian River floodplain, creating milling surfaces on rock faces, and establishing permanent settlements along the river and at the confluence of the Russian River and small tributaries (Sonoma County 1994). Because of this use, there is a high probability of encountering significant archaeological sites within the area. Artifacts that may be encountered include portable artifacts such as mortars, metate, bowls, ornaments, obsidian points, and scatter. Evidence of permanent camps includes fire-affected rocks, midden deposits, house pits, grave sites, and associated grave goods.

Early Native Americans in the region relied on hunting an important source of food and raw material. Later, a subsistence system based on plant foods and products gradually became dominant. The economic system became more diversified through time, with the gradual changes in technological and social institutions.

ETHNOGRAPHIC SETTING

The study area lies near the intersection of lands that were controlled by three separate ethnographic groups at the time of European contact, the Wappo, Southern Pomo, and Coast Miwok. The study area lies within the Wappo sphere of influence, although each group may have shared some access to the region (Beard 1997).

The Wappo language included five dialects (Sawyer 1978), distributed across two major territorial divisions. The smaller area included lands on the southern edge of Clear Lake; the larger ranged from just north of Napa and Sonoma up to Cloverdale and Middletown. The Wappo were known to readily adopt words from other languages spoken in their vicinity and, interestingly, gave at least one village a name that is still in use, cho*nóma, meaning “abandoned camp” (Sawyer 1978). Another triblet, Wilikos, was described by Barrett (1908) as being located at the head of Sonoma Creek.

The Wappo lived in villages usually located on a creek or other water source. Villages included one or two sweathouses as well as houses of varying size. Village chiefs might be elected or appointed based on the organization of the individual village. Some villages even had multiple chiefs, each with different spheres of influence (Sawyer 1978). Seasonal travel to Clear Lake, the Russian River, the Pacific coast, and Napa Glass Mountain was common.

HISTORIC SETTING

The region in and around the Mayacamas Mountains was sparsely populated and little-used historically because of steep hills, narrow canyons, and difficulty of access (Lortie 1979). American and immigrant settlement in the area began in the mid-19th century, with some homestead patents or claims being filed in the 1870s. Other historic uses of the area included marginal agriculture, charcoal production, and recreation in later years.

The earliest visitors to the Marin-Sonoma coast were English and Spanish sailors, including Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo in 1542, Drake in 1579, and Cermeño in 1595. Cermeño’s ship, in fact, was wrecked in Drakes Bay. The British and Spanish did not engage in overland explorations, or even thorough exploration of Drake and Bodega Bays, until the late 18th century. Russian seal and sea otter hunters from Alaska made covert poaching trips to Bodega Bay in the early 19th century. They eventually established Fort Ross in 1812, 12 miles north of the mouth of the Russian River. Although they continued to hunt sea mammals, a small agricultural community was also established, growing fruits, grains, and livestock for settlements in Alaska. These holdings were sold to John Sutter in 1841, after the seal and otter populations had dwindled to unprofitability.

Spanish exploration in the area included attempts to settle the Petaluma and Santa Rosa regions, using natives to labor on the land grant ranchos in the region. Several of these Mexican land grants border the Russian River, including the *Bodega* grant, *Canada de Jonive*, *Molinos*, *Sotoyome*, *Tzabaco*, *Caslamayomi*, and *Rincon de Musalacón*. The study area abuts the historic *Tzabaco*, *Caslamayomi*, and *Sotoyome* land grants (see records search results).

The Alexander Valley and Russian River floodplain have traditionally been used for agriculture. Railroads, including the San Francisco & Northwestern Pacific, were built along the valley to accommodate shipment of produce, as well as timber mills and stone quarries (Sonoma County 2006). Artifacts relating to historic uses described above could include building materials and foundations, and railroad-associated materials.

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

A records search was conducted at the Northwest Information Center (NWIC) of the California Historical Resources Information System in May 2007. The NWIC records search included examination of the following resources:

- The State Office of Historic Preservation's Historic Property Directory and Determination of Eligibility
- The National Register of Historical Places and California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR)
- California Inventory of Historical Resources
- The following historic maps:
 - 1874, 1876, 1894, 1901, and 1926 General Land Office plat maps
 - 1858 Rancho Tzabaco plat map
 - 1857 Rancho Sotoyome plat map
 - 1867 A. B. Bowers map of Sonoma County
 - 1877 Thos. H. Thompson & Co. historical atlas map of Sonoma County
 - 1898 Reynolds & Proctor *Illustrated Atlas of Sonoma County, California*
 - 1920 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) tactical map, Healdsburg Quadrangle

None of the historic maps included by the NWIC depicted any development in the vicinity of the Russian River.

The NWIC reported that several cultural resources inventories have been conducted at least partially within the study area (Table 3.5-1). No cultural resources were identified during those efforts. Limited surveys have been completed within the study area, however. Based on the studies conducted to date, the study area appears likely to have few if any known cultural resources of significance.

NCIC Report #	Author	Title	Date
969	Eric McGuire	<i>Archaeological and Historical Review—Geyserville Project</i>	1976
1030	Robert J. Jackson	<i>An Archaeological Investigation of the Preferred Vineyards Proposed Subdivision Property, 2001 SR 128, Geyserville, Sonoma County, County File MS-6484</i>	1978
1039	John F. Hayes	<i>An Archaeological Survey of the Fay Property, Geyserville, Sonoma County, California</i>	1978
8968	Leigh Jordan	<i>An Archaeological Study of the Murphy-Goode Winery Property at 3740 SR 128, Geyserville, Sonoma County, California APN 131-060-25</i>	1987
30495	Thomas M. Origer	<i>A Cultural Resources Survey of Four Properties Owned by Clos du Bois, Geyserville, Sonoma County, California</i>	2005

Source: Data provided by the Northwest Information Center, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, in 2007

Field Visit

On May 7, 2007, EDAW archaeologist Loren Huddleston visited the study area and conducted a partial cultural resources inventory. A boat trip along the Russian River was required to access the gravel bars specified for mining and to complete the inventory. The float began across the river from Bar S-13, and continued downstream to Bar SD-4. Stops were made on each gravel bar, and Bars S-13 through SD-4 were closely inspected through a pedestrian survey where transects were spaced at no more than 30-meter intervals; survey methods were consistent with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Identification of Cultural Resources* (48 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 44720–44723). Visibility along the gravel bars was 100%, but areas along the riverbank had limitations imposed by grasses and other vegetation, decreasing visibility to around 70%. Even with decreased visibility in these areas, coverage and visibility were optimum and all areas on and along each gravel bar were fully inspected for cultural resources. Because the river and floodplain are active depositional environments and may bury or obscure archaeological evidence, exposed cut banks, animal burrows, and any point of convergence with the river and smaller streams were also closely inspected for evidence of subsurface cultural deposits. No prehistoric or historic artifacts or sites were encountered during the cultural inventory.

In the absence of prehistoric and historic resources, the inventory was limited to observations of decidedly modern cultural intrusion associated with mining and flood control maintenance. These include two buildings from a defunct gravel mining company located northeast, and across the river from Bar S-13, and a large piece of mining equipment remains along the riverbank near Bar S-7. Also, at several points along the river (in the channel, along the bank, and on Bar S-9), remnants of a USACE bank stabilization project are visible. These appear as the remains of steel girder, riprap “jacks.” Some of these jacks are strung together with steel cables and anchored along the bank, but most are broken, out of placement, and lie as solitary river hazards. These structures were washed out by a flood in 1963 or 1964. Other evidence of this flood activity includes corroded fragments of metal and river-worn bits of glass that were observed in sparse quantities on several of the bars, and a complete 1950s Buick that remains in the trees near the Geyserville Bridge. Based on the field visit, no apparent cultural resources sites of potential significance evident in the floodplain and proposed point bars on mining sites exist.

B. Regulatory Framework

STATE REGULATORY ISSUES

California Environmental Quality Act

CEQA offers directives regarding impacts on historical resources and unique archaeological resources. The State CEQA Guidelines define a “historical resource” to include more than one category of resources. The first category is “resource(s) listed or eligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR)” (Title 14, Section 15064.5[a][1] of the California Code of Regulations [i.e., 14 CCR Section 15064.5(a)(1)]; see also Public Resources Code Sections 5024.1 and 21084.1). A historical resource may be eligible for inclusion in the CRHR, as determined by the State Historical Resources Commission or the lead agency, if the resource:

- is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California’s history and cultural heritage; or

- is associated with the lives of persons important in our past; or
- embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or
- has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

In addition, a resource is presumed to constitute a “historical resource” if it is included in a “local register of historical resources” unless “the preponderance of evidence demonstrates that it is not historically or culturally significant” (14 CCR Section 15064.5[a][2]).

In addition to the obligation to consider impacts on “historical resources,” CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines require consideration of unique archaeological sites (Public Resources Code Section 21083.2, 14 CCR Section 15064.5). A “unique archaeological resource” is defined in CEQA (Public Resources Code Section 21083.2[g]) as:

...an archaeological artifact, object, or site about which it can be clearly demonstrated that, without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that it meets any of the following criteria:

- (1) Contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and that there is a demonstrable public interest in that information.
- (2) Has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type.
- (3) Is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.

The State CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR Section 15064.5[e]) require that excavation activities be stopped whenever human remains are uncovered, and that the county coroner be called in to assess the remains. If the county coroner determines that the remains are those of Native Americans, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) must be contacted within 24 hours. At that time, the State CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR Section 15064.5[d]) direct the lead agency to consult with any appropriate Native Americans as identified by the NAHC in a timely manner, and direct the lead agency (or applicant), under certain circumstances, to develop an agreement with the Native Americans for the treatment and disposition of the remains.

LOCAL REGULATORY ISSUES

Excerpts from the Open Space Element of the *Sonoma County General Plan* that are relevant to the project are listed below.

Goal OS-9: Preserve significant archaeological and historical sites which represent the ethnic, cultural and economic groups that have lived and worked in Sonoma County.

Objective OS9.3: Encourage preservation of archaeological resources by reviewing all development projects in archaeologically sensitive areas.

Policy OS-9f: Refer applications for discretionary permits to the Northwest Information Center to determine if a study area might contain archaeological or historical resources. If a site is likely

to have these resources, require a field survey and include mitigation measures if needed. Discourage paving over resources.

C. Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

CRITERIA USED FOR DETERMINING IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines and Division 13 of the California Public Resources Code, a project would typically have a significant impact if it would:

- cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a unique archaeological resource or an historical resource as defined in Section 21083.2 of CEQA and Section 15064.5 of the State CEQA Guidelines, respectively;
- disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries; or
- directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature.

The State CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR Section 15064.5) define “substantial adverse change” as physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings.

PROJECT IMPACTS

Findings in the ARM Plan PEIR

The PEIR evaluated potential impacts on cultural resources were evaluated in Section 8.15, “Cultural Resources”. The PEIR determined that adverse impacts could occur on these resources as a result of ground clearing, aggregate removal or associated processing, transportation activities, and reclamation and enhancement activities. Implementation of identified mitigation measures (including reviewing the use permit application and implementing procedures upon discovery of cultural resources) would reduce potential impacts to less-than-significant levels.

Project Impacts

This section addresses potential impacts associated with the discovery of unrecorded or unknown cultural resources, as no cultural resource sites of potential significance were evident in the floodplain or proposed gravel bars within the study area.

Impact 3.5-1 Mining activities and enhancements during project implementation could result in the loss of as-yet-unknown cultural resources, including human remains.

Mining activities and enhancement (e.g., any method of skimming, riparian or aquatic enhancements) on the gravel bars are not expected to affect cultural resources. Any evidence of Native American or historic use between the banks of the Russian River would likely be only ephemeral because of annual flooding disturbance. More permanent evidence of past land use is more likely to be seen above the river, on the terraces adjoining the river. Evidence of prehistoric use and occupation of these areas might take the form of bedrock mortars, occupation midden, remnants of tool manufacture, or Native American burials. Historic uses might have included habitation, agriculture, or mining. These resources would most likely be encountered during activities that disturb the riverbanks, including installation of access roads,

enhancement activities, and staging areas. In addition, human remains, in particular from any Native American occupation sites that might be found along the banks of the Russian River, may be uncovered during ground-disturbing activities within the riverbank. Depending on the nature of any cultural resources encountered, impacts would be potentially significant.

Mitigation Measures

3.5-1a **Reduce Potential Impacts on Cultural Resources Through Preoperation Worker Education, and Archaeological Field Surveys, and Cease Work If Resources Are Encountered.** During the pre-mining worker training, machine operators and their supervisors shall be alerted to the possibility of finding buried cultural resources. Mining bars and access areas not examined by the archaeologist on the May 7, 2007 field visit (Bars S-14, SD-2, and SD-1, and all access roads leading to the bars) shall be surveyed for cultural resources by a qualified professional archaeologist before the commencement of any ground-disturbing activity. Should any historic-era cultural resources, such as structural features, artifacts, historic debris, or architectural remains be encountered during any mining activities, work shall be suspended within 50 feet of the specific location at which the suspected resources have been uncovered, and PRMD shall be immediately contacted. At that time, Syar shall retain a professional archaeological consultant who shall conduct a field investigation of the specific site and recommend mitigation for the protection or recovery of any cultural resources concluded by the archaeologist to represent significant or potentially significant resources (as defined by CEQA). The lead agency shall ensure that the mitigation is implemented before the resumption of mining activities at the location of the find. This mitigation is consistent with mitigation identified in Section 8.15 of the ARM Plan.

In the event that archaeological features such as pottery, arrowheads, midden, or culturally modified soil deposits are discovered at any time during grading, scraping, or excavation within the project, all work shall be halted in the vicinity of the find and PRMD Project Review staff shall be notified and a qualified archaeologist shall be contacted immediately to make an evaluation of the find and report to PRMD. PRMD staff may consult and/or notify the appropriate tribal representative from tribes known to PRMD to have interests in the area. Artifacts associated with prehistoric sites include humanly modified stone, shell, bone, or other cultural materials such as charcoal, ash, and burned rock indicative of food procurement or processing activities. Prehistoric domestic features include hearths, firepits, or house floor depressions, whereas typical mortuary features are represented by human skeletal remains. When contacted, a member of PRMD Project Review staff and the archaeologist shall visit the site to determine the extent of the resources and to develop and coordinate proper protection/mitigation measures required for the discovery. PRMD may refer the mitigation/protection plan to designated tribal representatives for review and comment. No work shall commence until a protection/mitigation plan is reviewed and approved by PRMD Project Review staff. Mitigation measures may include avoidance, removal, preservation, and/or recordation in accordance with California law. Archaeological evaluation and mitigation shall be at the applicant's sole expense.

Native American contact actions such as those outlined in Mitigation Measure 8.15-1 of the ARM Plan PEIR shall be modified to contact PRMD or currently appropriate groups or individuals at the time cultural resource discoveries are made.

3.5-1b

Stop Potentially Damaging Work if Human Remains Are Uncovered During Mining Activities. During the pre-mining and enhancement activity worker training, machine operators and their supervisors shall be alerted to the possibility of finding buried human remains. In addition, in accordance with the California Health and Safety Code, if human remains are uncovered during ground-disturbing activities, Syar shall immediately halt potentially damaging excavation in the area of the burial and notify the Sonoma County Coroner and a professional archaeologist to determine the nature of the remains. The coroner is required to examine all discoveries of human remains within 48 hours of receiving notice of a discovery on private or state lands (Health and Safety Code, Section 7050.5[b]). If the coroner determines that the remains are those of a Native American, he or she must contact the NAHC by phone within 24 hours of making that determination (Health and Safety Code, Section 7050[c]). Following the coroner's findings, the property owner, Syar, an archaeologist, and the NAHC-designated Most Likely Descendant (MLD) shall determine the ultimate treatment and disposition of the remains and take appropriate steps to ensure that additional human interments are not disturbed. The responsibilities for acting upon notification of a discovery of Native American human remains are identified in Section 5097.9 of the California Public Resources Code.

Upon the discovery of Native American remains, Syar shall ensure that the immediate vicinity (according to generally accepted cultural or archaeological standards and practices) is not damaged or disturbed by further development activity until consultation with the MLD has taken place. The MLD shall have 48 hours to complete a site inspection and make recommendations after being granted access to the site. A range of possible treatments for the remains, including nondestructive removal and analysis, preservation in place, relinquishment of the remains and associated items to the descendants, or other culturally appropriate treatment may be discussed. Public Resources Code Section 5097.9 suggests that the concerned parties may extend discussions beyond the initial 48 hours to allow for the discovery of additional remains. The following is a list of site protection measures that Syar shall employ to the extent possible:

- (1) Record the site with the NAHC or the appropriate Information Center.
- (2) Submit a document to the county in which the property is located.

Syar or its authorized representative shall rebury the Native American human remains and associated grave goods with appropriate dignity on the property in a location not subject to further subsurface disturbance if the NAHC is unable to identify an MLD or the MLD fails to make a recommendation within 48 hours after being granted access to the site. Syar or its authorized representative may also re-inter the remains in a location not subject to further disturbance if they reject the recommendation of the MLD, and mediation by the NAHC fails to provide measures acceptable to Syar. Syar shall be required to implement any mitigation

deemed necessary for the protection of the burial remains. Mining activities in the vicinity of the burials shall not resume until the mitigation is completed.

Impact Significance after Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.5-1a would reduce the impact of mining-related activities at the study area on undiscovered/unrecorded cultural resources to a less-than-significant level. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.5-1b would reduce the impact of mining-related activities at the study area on human remains to a less-than-significant level.

Impact 3.5-2 Mining activities during project implementation would not result in the loss of as-yet-unknown paleontological resources.

Mining and enhancement activities would be restricted to stripping the upper portions of gravel bars, which are formed by the accumulation of gravels displaced from numerous upstream resources. As a result, impacts on paleontological resources resulting from mining and enhancement activities on the Russian River would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None

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