

## **CHAPTER 5.14**

### **CULTURAL RESOURCES**

#### **A. Existing Conditions**

Designated historical sites in the Nipomo Area include the Dana Adobe, the Dana Home, the Los Berros Schoolhouse, an Adobe Barn in Los Berros, the Pacific Coast Railroad depot in Nipomo, old St. Joseph's Church, and the Runels' home. In addition, archeological sites exist in the area and an inventory is maintained by the County's Environmental Coordinator's Office.

This project area is within the territory historically occupied by the Obispeio Chumash, the northernmost of the Chumashian speaking peoples of California. Archaeological evidence has revealed that the ancestors of the Obispeno settled in northern Santa Barbara County and San Luis Obispo County more than 9,000 years ago. The Arroyo Grande, Oceano and Nipomo areas have a number of archeological sites extending back over 5,000 years.

Following an annual cycle of hunting, fishing, fowling and harvesting, the Chumash peoples adapted to changing environmental and social conditions and grew into a large complex society which persists today. Aboriginal society underwent major changes soon after Spanish contact in A.D. 1769, primarily due to the introduction of epidemic European diseases and the consequent high mortality rate. After the establishment of the mission at San Luis Obispo in September of 1772, baptisms from the Arroyo Grande to Nipomo area began within a year and continued until about 1804 when villages in the area were abandoned and the inhabitants were moved and living at the mission or on outposts.

The nearest Late period (post 1000 A.D.) settlement was probably at the town of Nipomo (Lachito), east of the Woodlands project. The name Nipomo was reported by the Chumash consultant Fernando as the Purisimeno Chumash word, *anipomo*, meaning "promontory". It may have been one large permanent

village of about 50 people, and in the Middle period, smaller seasonal camps may have been the settlement pattern. The population may have moved west to the lake/dune areas then returned to the Nipomo area and possibly east into the foothills for hunting and gathering additional plant resources. There are many small temporary or day use sites in the sand dunes west of Nipomo Mesa. A similar pattern of use has been defined for the village of Lompoc and Lompoc Mesa just south of the Santa Ynez River.

Archaeological surveys done during the past 40 years on the south, east, west and north sides of Nipomo Mesa have recorded many archaeological sites along the edges of the mesa but very few in the interior. Middle and Late period sites are common (post 3,000 years B.C.). West of the mesa are a number of fresh water lakes and a series of low sand dunes. Many small seasonal sites have been recorded in these dunes. They usually contain a sparse to low density of Pismo clam shells and chert flakes with rare tools and burnt rock. The edge of the mesa directly south of the Woodlands project contains a number of archaeological sites, some of which extend near the southern boundary of the project property.

Overall, it appears as if many sites were probably semi-permanent camps or permanent villages occupied during at least the last 2,000 to 3,000 years. Based on this data, it appears as if sites on the Nipomo Mesa contain at least two general types of activities. The first is female dominated food preparation involving grinding tools, manos (hand stones) and metates (grinding slabs) and/or pestle and mortars, burnt rock from ovens, shellfish and bone remains. The other is characterized by cobble flaking hammers, chert biface blanks (the intermediate stage of manufacturing a tool), biface knives and chert (flint) flakes and probably reflects male dominated stone tool manufacturing. Most of these sites have been damaged or destroyed in the past 30 years. Almost nothing is known about their antiquity, internal organization, relationship to the ancient Halycon bay or other sites in the Arroyo Grande/Nipomo Mesa region.

With respect to the large prehistoric site, Woodland Prehistoric Site 1, useful comparative information can be obtained from several sites located on the north side of Black Lake Canyon which is about 1-1/2 miles north of the Woodland property. In 1984, a survey of 384 acres identified three prehistoric sites and one isolated artifact. These three sites are included in Table 4.8-2. Later, a small scale subsurface testing program was conducted at these sites. These sites appear similar in content, antiquity, and geographic~ setting with the Woodland property sites.

Because of the antiquity of the cultural deposits at the Black Lake complex, most of the cultural materials have settled down in the soil profile to depths of 60 cm to 1 meter. Surface indicators of these types of sites at Black Lake and elsewhere are sparse and cannot be relied upon for boundaries or densities of cultural materials.

At least 19 archaeological sites have been identified in the general area around the community of Nipomo. These sites generally contain chipped stone artifacts (flint, flakes, tools, etc.), some of which contain a light density of shell fragments. Given the sandy nature of soils west of Nipomo Creek, all of the natural stone for these artifacts was taken from areas east of Nipomo Creek. Several of these sites are seasonal camps, similar in character to sites noted along the project roadway facilities (see discussion below). They also provide an indication of period of use of these sites, that being 1,000 to 3,000 years ago. The largest archaeological site in the area (approximately 420,000 square meters) is SLO-804, a permanent village site located west of Nipomo Creek. Its use continued up through the post AD 1500 period.

Prominent historical features of the Nipomo Mesa area include portions of the Pacific Coast Railway as well as the pre-1880 road which also crossed the project area. The project area is in the boundaries of the Nipomo Rancho, granted in 1837 to Captain William Goodwin Dana and was likely used for wooded pasture. No structures of the Spanish-Mexican or Early American

Periods are known to exist in the project area. The Canada homestead is located east of Highway 101 on a terrace overlooking Nipomo Creek. It consists of a wooden house, barn, windmill, and other farm-related structures that date to the turn of the century. Although in apparent poor condition, they would qualify as a significant historic resource as outlined in the State CEQA Guidelines.

The pre-1880 road between Arroyo Grande and Santa Maria Valley followed the edge of Nipomo Mesa. However, features associated with it are no longer evident in the field. It is probable that use of the road extended well back into prehistoric times. Chumash regularly transported food and manufactured items between villages. The fact that the historic village of Nipomo is located near Highway 101 is not a coincidence. The road has probably been used for at least several thousand years and was a part of the Spanish- era El Camino Real in order to avoid the deep sands along the coast. From the top of the grade above Los Berros, the road ran along the northern mesa's edge to Casa de Dana, the ranch built 1839-40 by Captain William Goodwin Dana on the Nipomo Mesa.

The County Surveyor 1874 Map shows the road crossing the Pacific Coast tracks near (or at) the Summit Station locality, staying along the mesa's edge eventually leading to the town of Nipomo. The hard sands exposed along the mesa edge were easier to traverse than softer sands further west on the mesa or the clayey soils of Nipomo Valley.

The County Surveyor 1874 Map also indicates much of the northern mesa edge was covered by timber. Much of this coast live oak has been cleared during the twentieth century, but significant remnants of the coast live oak forest still remain. In 1880, the Dana's built Casa Grande in the town of Nipomo. After Josefa Carillo Dana died in 1882, Nipomo Rancho was subdivided amongst family heirs. The County Surveyor 1890 Map shows the resulting land pattern and has roads following today's rural pattern. Thompson Avenue was likely the major route, yet Summit Station Road, Hetrick Avenue, Pomeroy Road, and Live Oak Ridge Road are all shown on these early maps.

## **B. Thresholds of Significance**

The proposed project would have a significant impact if it significantly impacted a prehistoric or historic archeological site, a property of historic or cultural significance to a community or ethnic or social group, or a paleontological site except as a part of a scientific study.

## **C. Project Impacts**

Expanding the District's Sphere of Influence would not significantly impact cultural resources in the area. Although the proposed Sphere of Influence Update and Municipal Service Review does not significantly impact cultural resources, the proposed project could represent the first step in the development of the areas within the SOI. Future development of this property could adversely impact cultural resources in these areas.

It should be noted that the SOI would not cause a change in zoning or an increase in density. An increase in density in the SOI Study Areas would first require review and evaluation through one, or more of the following processes:

- A zoning change in the form of a General Plan Amendment;
- Approval of a Specific Plan;
- Conditional Use Permit (Minor Use Permit/Development Plan approvals);
- Tract/Parcel Map approvals; or
- an Annexation into the District.

The above-listed processes are subject to the California Environmental Quality Act. Inclusion in the SOI does not guarantee service or development of an area, but allows for the jurisdiction to plan serving that area. A General Plan Amendment, Specific Plan, Tract/Parcel Map or Conditional Use Permit would study a variety of land use and environmental issues before being approved or

denied including community character and compatibility, existing Land Use policies, traffic and circulation impacts, the provision of public services, etc.

The proposed project would not directly result in any changes in land use for the involved properties. The precise nature and extent of future development within the proposed SOI is subject to speculation and cannot be determined at this time. Any future development of the areas within the SOI would require a number of land use planning steps as listed above.

The Program EIR represents the first-tier environmental document for these related actions. Once the Program EIR is prepared, subsequent activities within this program must be evaluated in order to determine the extent of the required additional CEQA documentation.

Establishing the Sphere of Influence would not cause a significant impact to the cultural resources in the area because the SOI is not a construction project. It may (or may not) encourage or influence increased development in the area, but this development would be required to study the impacts to cultural resources through the County's Land Use permit and environmental review process.

#### **E. Mitigation Measures**

Since the impacts are less than significant, no mitigation measures are necessary. Under the County's General Plan, any future development projects would be required to evaluate the impacts and identify mitigation measures regarding cultural resources as part of the projects review.

#### **F. Residual Impacts**

Impacts related to cultural resources from the Sphere of Influence are not considered to be significant (Class III Impact). Implementation of the mitigation measures noted in other sections of this EIR will further reduce residual impacts to cultural resources.