

Section N  
Cultural Resources

---

C - 0 6 5 4 5 4

C-065454

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cultural resources were assessed by Archeological Services, Inc. in Stockton. The assessment consisted of a literature/records search and an onsite field survey. The following information is excerpted from the archeological report, which is attached as Appendix H.

### Setting

#### Native Americans

Prior to the coming of Euroamericans, the lower San Joaquin Valley was occupied by speakers of the Northern Valley Yokuts language. The northern Yokuts were part of a much larger, culturally diverse group that occupied almost the entire San Joaquin Valley and adjoining foothills.

Little information is available for this group of Native Americans because they were largely extinct by the time anthropologists began systematic studies of California Indian culture. By the 1840s, the Indian population of the Central Valley had been reduced by as much as 75 percent due to European diseases. It is known, however, that the Yokuts lived along the San Joaquin River and that the Stockton area was a major focal point for their subsistence. The Yokuts were hunters and gatherers; collecting and processing acorns, hunting waterfowl, and fishing for salmon were the major (food) gathering activities.

#### European Settlement

Spanish expeditions and French Canadian and English trappers from the Hudson Bay Company explored the Central Valley in the early 1800s. In the mid-19th century, the Mexican government began issuing land grants of their California territory to establish "ranchos" as frontier buffers.

The lower San Joaquin Valley was settled by Euro-Americans in the early 1840s. Stockton was established in the late 1840s and later became an important agricultural center and inland port. With the discovery of gold in the Sierra Nevada foothills, the first major population growth began in the Central Valley. This growth increased rapidly with the construction of levees and channels to provide water for agriculture.

## Survey Results

Records Search. The Central California Information Center, California State University, Stanislaus, acts as a clearinghouse for archeological records in San Joaquin County. These records were reviewed for previously recorded cultural sites. The files of the San Joaquin County Museum and relevant published and unpublished historical or anthropological texts were also examined.

The project site has not previously been studied for cultural resources, and no cultural sites have been recorded there. However, the area is very sensitive due to the potential presence of buried archeological sites, which have been documented since the late 19th century in the Sacramento San Joaquin Delta region and along nearby rivers and tributaries (see Appendix H).

Recorded archeological sites are located approximately 1.5 miles to the east on the Calaveras River east of Stockton, 2 miles to the north on Mosher Slough, and 2.5 miles to the southeast on French Camp Slough. Numerous other sites on the San Joaquin and Calaveras Rivers were characterized but not formally recorded. These sites would be difficult to locate due to changes in the cultural and natural landscape.

Onsite Field Survey. The surface of the project area, including the river banks and irrigation and drainage ditches, was examined systematically for archeological resources. The portions under actual cultivation (approximately 25 percent of the project area) were not inspected.

The entire surface of the project area has been disturbed by agricultural activities, including plowing, disking, irrigation line trenching, farm house and related building construction, and minor leveling for gravel and dirt roads. The land to the south of Brookside Road was formerly planted in asparagus, which requires soil preparation to a depth of several feet. There has also been extensive excavation to install the pipeline of the Mokelumne Aqueduct, which bisects the southern portion of the project site.

The extent of soil disturbance and changes in the land form, both natural and human-induced, presents problems in locating both recorded and unrecorded resources. Extensive construction of levees and channels led to drainage of the vast network of marshes and sloughs where habitation sites were located. Rapid sedimentation caused by natural alluvial deposits and hydraulic gold mining activities in the 1870s buried many archeological resources. In addition, sites were often reported to have been on low hills or mounds overlooking watercourses--mounds that have since been leveled for cultivation.

No archeological resources were identified on the project site during the field survey. If such resources do exist, they are probably buried 2 or more feet.

A farmhouse located on the project site, circa 1920s, is probably one of the first, if not the first, structures built within the project site. It may have belonged at one time to the Sargent family. This structure probably lacks historic value but may have architectural significance.

## Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

### Impact: Possible Damage, Destruction, or Removal of Resources from Cultural Context During Construction

Although a surface reconnaissance yielded negative results, archeological resources may exist within the project area. If such resources do exist, they are probably buried below 2 feet--the maximum vertical extent of existing ditches and trenches. If any cultural resources are unearthed during construction, excavation, or related project activities, such resources could be damaged, destroyed, or removed from their cultural context. Displacement of artifacts minimizes their potential for contributing to further studies of prehistoric or historic cultures. This impact would be significant. The excavation of the 48-acre lake would substantially increase the possibility of uncovering a deeply buried cultural resource.

Further monitoring would be needed when project construction commences because the project site is located in a sensitive area where cultural resources may be found. There are three recommended options for monitoring; each involves a different level of effort. At the minimum, option C should be implemented. Because of the area's sensitivity, however, it is preferable that option C be combined with either option A or B.

- A) Prior to construction, a qualified archeologist should use a backhoe to examine the areas requiring deep excavation (i.e., for a lake or underground utilities). This procedure would eliminate construction delays that could occur if cultural resources are found during construction.
- B) A qualified archeologist should monitor any project-related work involving excavations greater than 2-3 feet.
- C) Project personnel and county inspectors should monitor all construction activities for archeological materials.

### Mitigation Measures

- o During monitoring, if cultural material such as locally darkened soil (termed "midden,") which could conceal cultural deposits, animal bone, shell, obsidian, grinding stones (such as mortars), or human remains are uncovered, the following mitigation measures should be implemented.
  - All work within 100 feet of the find should cease.
  - The prime contractor or project officials should retain a qualified archeologist to evaluate the find and recommend further procedures.
  - If bone is found that appears to be human, the prime contractors or project officials should retain a qualified archeologist for verification. If the bone is human, the county coroner should be contacted as required by state law. The archeologist and coroner can determine at that point whether the remains are prehistoric.

If they are prehistoric, the Native American Heritage Commission in Sacramento should be contacted.

Impact: Possible Removal or Destruction of Farmhouse with Possible Historical Significance

The 1920s farmhouse on the project site could have cultural significance based on its architecture. If it were removed or destroyed without determining its possible historical value, the impact could be significant. This impact could be reduced to a less-than-significant level by implementing the following measure.

Mitigation Measure

- o Evaluate the farmhouse for possible historical significance before removal or destruction.

Cumulative Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impact: Possible Damage, Destruction, or Removal of Resources from Cultural Context During Construction

If cultural resources are unearthed during construction or related activities, such resources could be damaged, destroyed, or removed from their cultural context. This impact would be significant, but could be mitigated to a less-than-significant level by implementing the measures described above.

Mitigation Measures

- o Implement the same measures as for "Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures," above.