

PART I

INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT BACKGROUND

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Along with other federal agencies, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service is required by law to identify, evaluate, and protect the significant prehistoric and historical cultural resources located on the public lands within its jurisdiction. It must also take into consideration the concerns of those Native Americans with ancestral or cultural ties to the lands under its jurisdiction.

As a step toward fulfilling this mandate, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland Regional Office, following a competitive bidding process, entered into an agreement with Archaeological Consulting of Salinas, California to prepare a Cultural Resources Overview and Cultural Resources Management Plan for the San Luis, Merced, and Kesterson National Wildlife Refuges, located in western Merced County, California.

The contract was awarded on February 29, 1984, and the draft report was submitted on August 1, 1984. The draft final report was submitted on December 8, 1984, and the final report, with corrections, was submitted on March 25, 1985. The bulk of the background research and field work was completed during April and May, 1984, and the primary report preparation was done during June and July, 1984.

The present report has been structured to provide a framework of both general and specific information required to make sound management decisions on the cultural resources encountered on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lands within the project area.

In many cases, however, specific information is not available for areas of Fish and Wildlife Service lands, and in any case, the history and prehistory of Fish and Wildlife Service lands cannot be considered in a vacuum. Any cultural resource management decisions must consider Fish and Wildlife Service lands within the context of surrounding lands. For example, while the management of archaeological sites stems from a federal mandate, determination of significance and other forms of evaluation must be based largely on local and regional research questions. As there has been no excavation on Fish and Wildlife Service lands, virtually all information on prehistoric cultural sequences must be extrapolated from adjacent areas. Because of this, the cultural resources overview will deal with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lands within a broader context.

Unlike most other resources, cultural resources are both extremely fragile, and totally non-renewable. Further, they are often difficult for the lay person to recognize until after serious impacts, such as bulldozing, have occurred. As a result, as many as 75% of all cultural resources have already been destroyed in some areas of California (Breschini and Haversat 1980a). This is probably the case throughout much of the San Joaquin Valley, within which the study area is located. For example, a study conducted by Joe Pope within Stanislaus and Merced Counties showed that about 85-90% of the previously recorded archaeological sites which he revisited had been destroyed (Pope 1976:38).

The story of human occupation in the general vicinity of the study area goes back at least 12,000, and possibly 20,000 or more years, and constitutes an important segment of the total history of mankind. The faint traces of that prehistory which lie written in the earth can be properly read and interpreted only through the skilled application of modern archaeological techniques and research, aided by the knowledge of cultural

patterns throughout the world, both past and present. But regrettably, with each year that passes, more and more of the archaeological record is sacrificed to further the economic growth of our expanding society (Breschini and Haversat 1980a).

Among other goals, then, this report is designed to provide methods whereby cultural resources will be identified, evaluated, and where significant preserved in accordance with federal law.

Legal Mandates for Cultural Resource Management

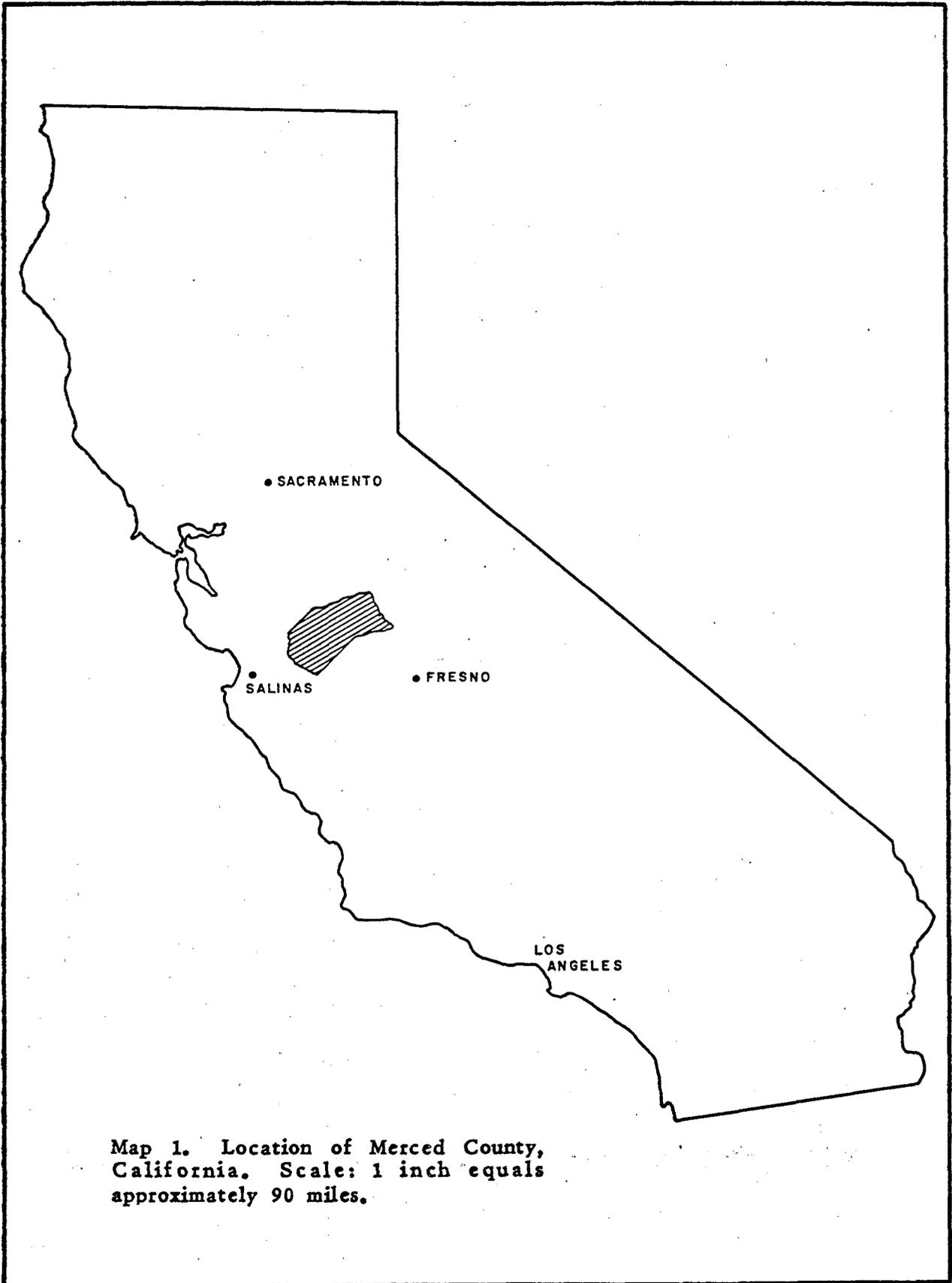
The legal requirements for cultural resource management stem from a number of sources within federal legislation and regulation (see also Chapter 9). These include, but are not limited to, the Antiquities Act of 1906, the Historic Sites Act of 1935, the Reservoir Salvage Act of 1960 (as amended by the Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974), the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (amended 1976), the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended), the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, the Surface Mining and Control Act of 1977, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, and Executive Order 11593. In addition to these laws and Executive Order 11593, there is a series of implementing regulations and guidelines, such as the American Indian Religious Freedom Joint Resolution of 1978, as well as a growing corpus of case law dealing with cultural resources (Practising Law Institute 1979). In general, it is required that federal agencies conduct inventories of the lands within their jurisdiction, identify those properties which are eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, and provide measures for the protection of significant cultural resources (King, Hickman, and Berg 1977).

Location of the Study Area

The project area consists of approximately 15,892 acres (24.83 square miles) of land, and is located in western Merced County, California (see Maps 1 and 2). As defined in the Scope of Work, the project area consists of the San Luis, Merced, and Kesterson National Wildlife Refuges. In addition, the area within one mile of the boundary of each of these wildlife refuges has been defined as a part of the larger study area for this project.

Map 1 shows the location of the project area within the state of California. Map 2 depicts the locations and the relationships among the three wildlife refuges, as well as many of the local towns, roads, and other features within the general area.

Maps 3, 4, and 5 show each of the three wildlife refuges on a larger scale. On these maps, additional local detail is available.



Map 1. Location of Merced County,
California. Scale: 1 inch equals
approximately 90 miles.

Report Format

This overview has been broken down into five parts, consisting of 11 individual chapters and various supporting data. These are described below:

Part I. Part I, the introduction and project background, contains two chapters.

Within Part I, Chapter 1 contains the introduction and a brief project background, with additional data on the general project location, approach, and techniques used for secondary research.

Chapter 2 presents details on the methods used in the primary research conducted for this project.

Part II presents the cultural resource overview and is compiled almost entirely from secondary sources. It includes Chapters 3 through 6.

Chapter 3 presents a very brief overview of the natural history of the study area, and includes such topics as vegetation, climate, and physical setting.

Chapters 4 and 5 are primarily data oriented and contain detailed overviews of the prehistory, ethnography (including ethnohistory), and history of the study area.

Chapter 6 presents a summary of the overview and analyses of some of the information presented in Part II. This includes discussions of the biases and deficiencies found in the data, details on potential historical site types within the study area, and other related discussions.

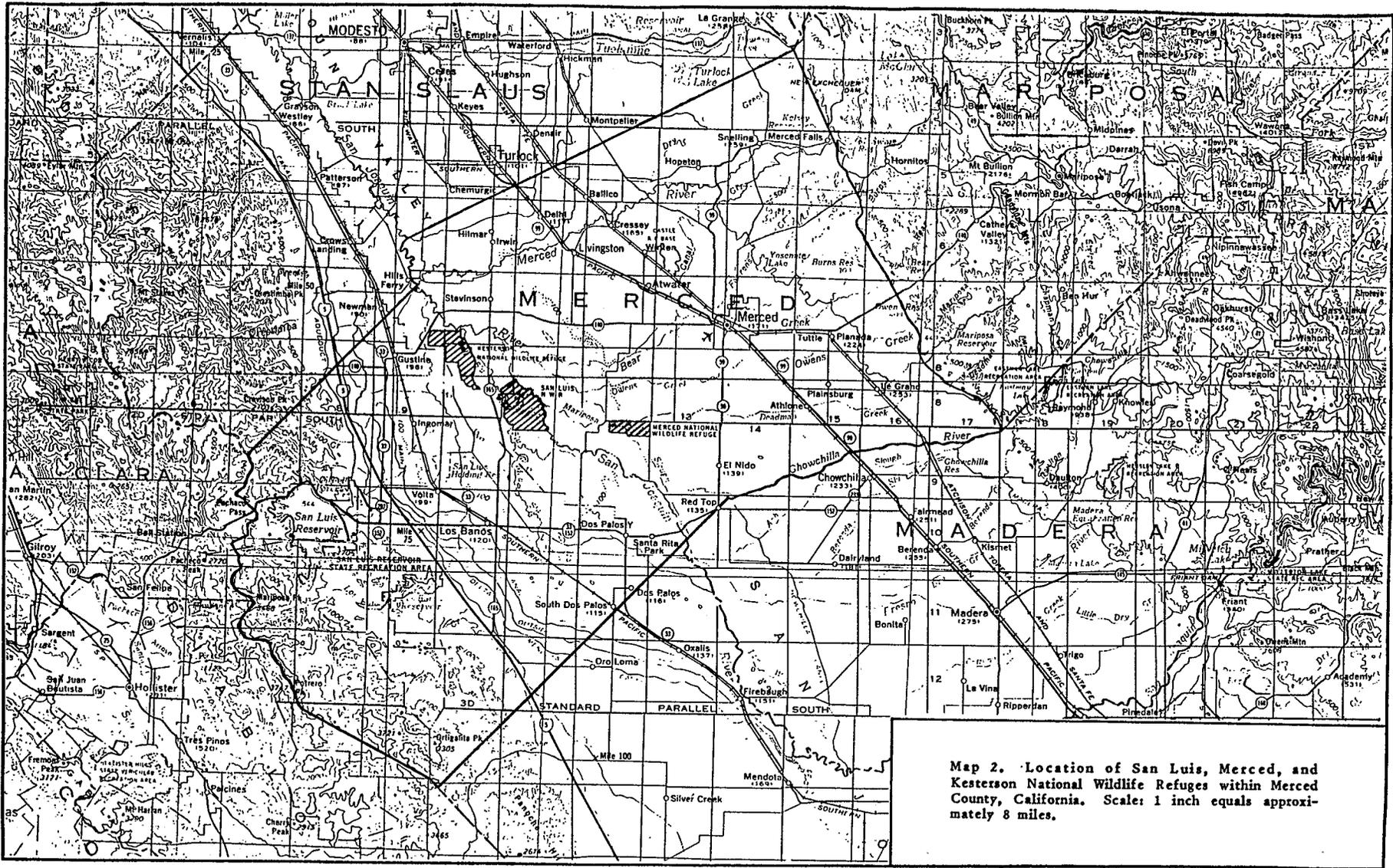
Part III, consisting of two chapters, details the primary field research done as a part of this project.

Chapter 7 includes an introduction to the archaeological field work, and contains a preliminary evaluation of the cultural resources data base. This includes the evaluation of eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. Also summarized are such field studies as the obsidian analyses conducted for the project.

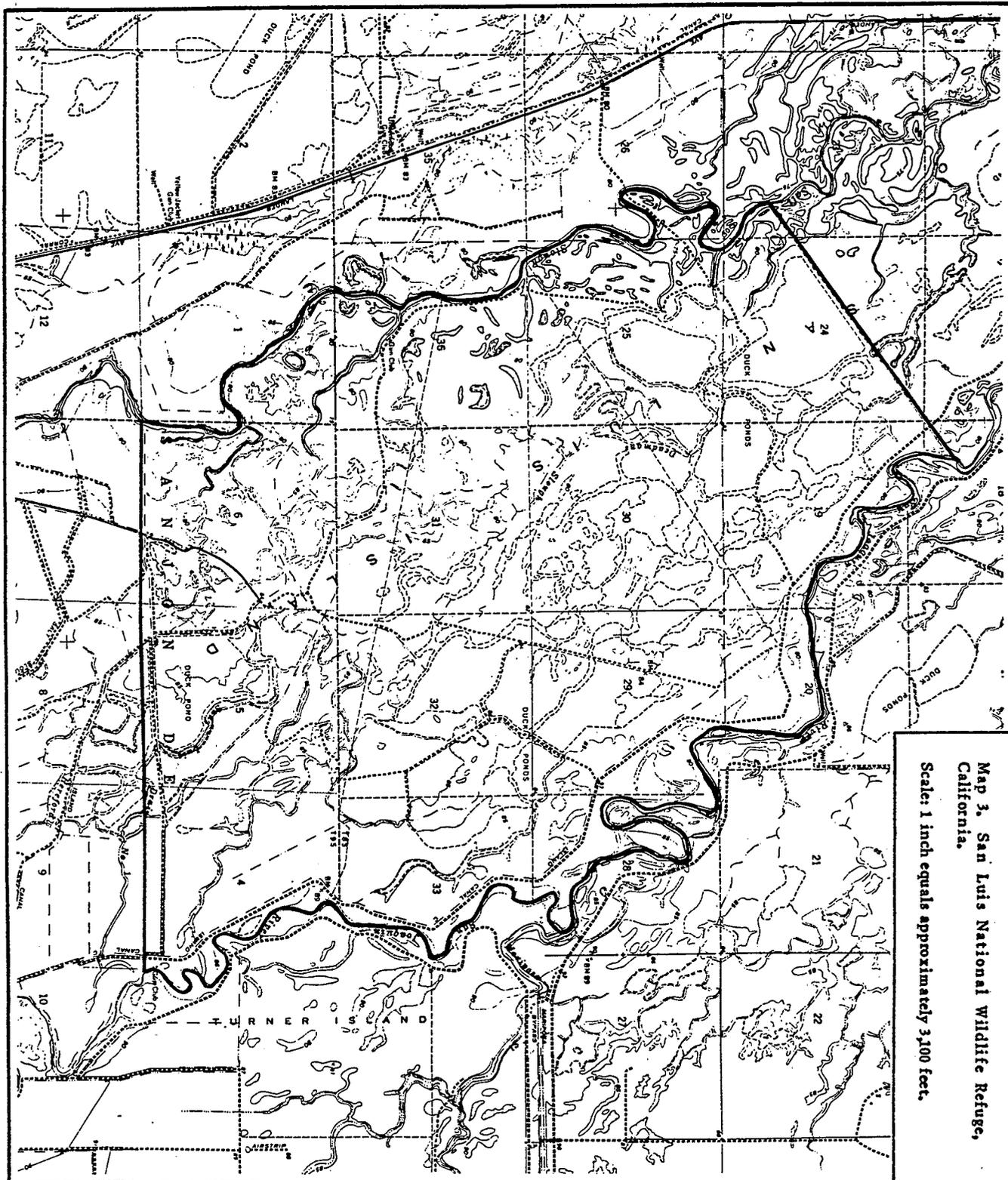
Chapter 8 contains the results of the interviews with Native Americans which were conducted in an attempt to locate Native Americans with cultural or biological ties to the project area.

Part IV of this report consists of the cultural resource management plan. This is divided into three chapters.

Chapter 9 presents a cultural resources progress report and includes a brief section on the applicable cultural resource management laws and regulations, as well as details on cultural resource management policies, procedures, and adverse impacts within the project area.

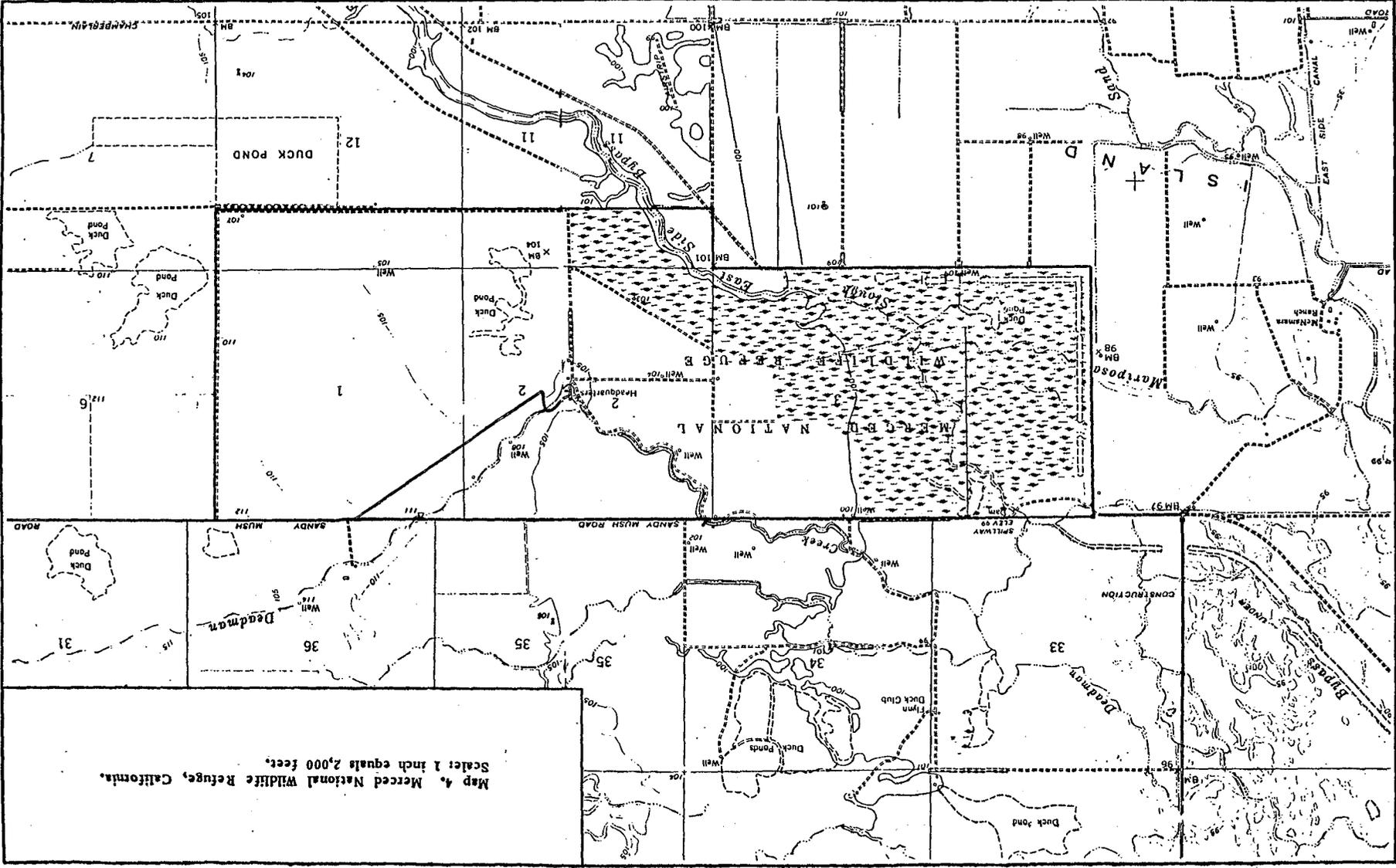


Map 2. Location of San Luis, Merced, and Kesterson National Wildlife Refuges within Merced County, California. Scale: 1 inch equals approximately 8 miles.



Map 3. San Luis National Wildlife Refuge,
California.
Scale: 1 inch equals approximately 3,100 feet.

Map 4. Merced National Wildlife Refuge, California.
Scale: 1 inch equals 2,000 feet.



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Chapter 10 presents the recommended cultural resources management plan. This includes both short and long range recommendations for the preservation, study, and development of the cultural resources located within the project area.

Finally, Chapter 11 summarizes both the cultural resource management plan and the previous sections of the report.

Part V consists of additional supporting data and includes the bibliography, the annotated bibliography, the appendices, and plates.

Miscellaneous Notes

In this overview archaeological sites which have been formally recorded with the California Archaeological Inventory, and which have been assigned trinomial numbers, are referenced by those designations. The trinomials take the form "CA-MER-123," where the first two letters designate the state, and the next three are the county abbreviation. The numbers are sequential and represent the order in which the site was recorded within each county.

Specific site locations will not be given in this overview for the archaeological sites discussed. This information is considered confidential, and our agreement with the Regional Information Center of the California Archaeological Inventory, professional standards, and our contract with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service all prohibit the publication of specific site locations.

The site record information generated as a part of this project is on file with the Regional Information Center of the California Archaeological Inventory, located at California State University, Stanislaus, and with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Los Banos and Portland. These repositories are open to qualified individuals and agencies. Because detailed site data cannot be included in this report, we have cited full trinomial designations, whenever possible, so that the locations and other data pertaining to specific archaeological sites may be readily obtained from the Regional Information Center or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service records and files.

CHAPTER 2

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides a brief overview of the methods used to gather the information presented in Parts II and III of this report.

Project Description, Goals, and Approach

In order to gather the cultural resource data to be used in the Master Plan for the San Luis, Merced, and Kesterson National Wildlife Refuges, and to insure that the Fish and Wildlife Service is in compliance with cultural resource management laws and regulations, the Fish and Wildlife Service has contracted for the preparation of a cultural resources overview, a preliminary cultural resources evaluation, the recording of known but unrecorded cultural resources, and an updating of all previously recorded archaeological sites. This information is to be compiled into a cultural resource management document which identifies management needs and objectives and formulates a strategy by which these needs and objectives may be met.

This report is broken down into two primary sections: the cultural resource overview and the cultural resource management plan. The cultural resource overview is contained within Parts II and III, and the cultural resource management plan is contained within Part IV of this report.

Methods Used in Preparation of the Cultural Resources Overview

As dealt with in this report, the cultural resources data base may be broken down into three separate, although overlapping, areas of study. These areas are prehistory, ethnography (including ethnohistory), and history. Within the cultural resources overview prepared for this project, each of these areas has been handled distinctly, as the data base and the approach which had to be used were somewhat different for each of these fields. The general methods used within the secondary research within these fields are summarized below.

Prehistory

The general approach included a review and synthesis of the existing archaeological data base. This included acquiring data on the locations of archaeological sites from archaeological site maps, and the gathering of published reports, unpublished manuscripts, and other data (site records, rumors, etc.) generated from previous projects.

During the project, a great deal of information from archaeological excavations and other investigations was located and synthesized. This information, which appears in Chapter 4, has been provided in an attempt to present an overview of the general

study area from which estimations of significance, temporal or cultural affiliations, and other archaeological inferences may be drawn. These inferences, in turn, are useful in estimating the significance and evaluating the National Register of Historic Places eligibility of the cultural resources within the project area.

Ethnography and Ethnohistory

The section on ethnography contains an overview of the Yokuts groups within the study area. This is presented in the first half of Chapter 5, and includes discussions on group locations, social and political organization, tribal and group functionaries, family structure, population, subsistence strategies, religious practices, and other topics pertaining to the groups within the study area. This section also includes a brief ethnohistory of the Yokuts in the immediate vicinity of the study area.

History

The technique used in compiling the historical sections consisted of an examination of the historical literature and data base. This ranged from major published sources to local histories, manuscripts, and notes, and also included an examination of early maps. This information was then organized around the study area's major periods and themes.

The second half of Chapter 5 contains the in-depth presentation of the major historical periods and themes pertaining to the study area. This section also includes information on the history of each of the three wildlife refuges which constitute the project area.

Although most of the overview of study area history consisted of research among primary and secondary archival sources, some primary research was conducted as a part of this project. This included interviews with knowledgeable persons from the general study area.

Methods Used in Preparation of the Cultural Resources Management Plan

The cultural resources management plan was compiled largely on the basis of the data presented in the cultural resources overview (Parts II and III of this report). As a part of the preparation of the overview and the site update and evaluation we visited each of the known cultural resources within the project area. We were able to identify the kinds of adverse impacts which have occurred in the past, and determine the extent to which these or other impacts are still occurring. From this, and from the requirements and limitations which are placed on federal agencies, we compiled a series of management procedures, both short and long term, whereby the significant cultural resources within the project area may be preserved, studied, and developed.

Archaeological Background Research

Before entering the field, we contacted a number of researchers who regularly work in the general study area. These contacts served two basic functions; the first was to let them know that we would be working on a project which might generate data which would be useful to their research. The second was to inquire regarding the current status of their research within the general study area, and to obtain whatever information they could share regarding the current project.

The Regional Information Center of the California Archaeological Inventory, an agency of the California Office of Historic Preservation, was also contacted, and arrangements were made for Gary S. Breschini and R. Paul Hampson to review their site records, files, and maps for information regarding the project area. Copies of all existing site records were obtained, and the locations of all previously recorded sites were transferred to our 7.5 minute USGS field maps.

While at the Regional Information Center we also obtained copies of various reports pertaining to the study area which were not already in our collection and discussed the archaeology of the area with the Director of the Regional Information Center, Dr. L.K. Napton.

During the project contact was also made with numerous individuals who have either worked within the general study area, or who are at agencies or facilities where pertinent data might be archived. These individuals are not listed separately, but are referenced as "personal communication" within the text.

Archaeological Field Research

Field work started on April 4, 1984 with a tour by Trudy Haversat of the Los Banos Office of the Fish and Wildlife Service, and a driving tour of the three refuges. That evening Trudy Haversat and R. Paul Hampson reviewed the data which had been gathered, and began noting the apparent conflicts.

The site recording and evaluation proceeded using a method in which: 1) the general area reported for the site was located, and 2) that area was surveyed for cultural materials. If cultural materials were located, the area in which they occurred was photographed (with a signboard and north arrow appearing in most of the photographs), the site was paced and a rough sketch map was made giving dimensions and bearings to whatever landmarks were available, and notes were taken for use in filling out the site record forms. Exact site boundaries were difficult to establish due to the extremely dense vegetation at the time of the survey (this is illustrated in some of the plates which accompany this report). More details on the evaluation procedures are contained in Chapter 7.

Ethnographic Field Research

In order to carry out the objectives of the project, we used a number of different approaches to gathering data. These included the following:

- 1) Examination of published and unpublished manuscripts. These documents often provide the names and contact avenues of potential consultants.

- 2) Review of previous research conducted by our ethnographic and ethno-historic researcher, Charles R. Smith.
- 3) Interviews or discussions with professional anthropologists (including archaeologists, ethnographers, and linguists) and with historians who have worked or are working within the general study area.
- 4) Interviews or discussions with Indian and non-Indian residents of the study area who have knowledge of native peoples residing within or near the study area.
- 5) Interviews or discussions with Native Americans who are not residents of the study area but who are widely known and active in the California Indian community at large and who are known to possess contacts with elders and religious leaders in many different Indian communities.

The contacts which were made as a part of this project began on the basis of the information gathered during the first two steps outlined above, as well as through the application of standard ethnographic and ethnohistoric research strategies (including plain old knocking on doors and ringing telephones). In actual practice, the process of contacting knowledgeable people, both Indians and non-Indians alike, went as follows:

- 1) Based on previous experience in the study area, contacts were initiated with anthropologists, historians, Native Californians, and other people whom it was felt could provide information. We outlined the project goals, and asked for the names and addresses of Native Californians whom the informants felt might possess the information we were seeking.
- 2) Based on the information gathered in Step 1, phone calls were placed, or personal visits were made, or more rarely, letters were sent to those individuals and groups who were reported to have knowledge pertinent to this study. Based on past field experience, letters were only sent as follow-ups; they were not used as initial contacts. Initial contacts were made by phone or in person. Phone and personal contacts took the form of brief (from less than 15 minutes to two-day visits) unstructured interviews. During these interviews, the project was explained, the goals of the interviewer outlined, and questions were asked and answered by both the interviewer and the informants.
- 3) The interviews were followed up with phone calls, brief notes, or personal interviews soliciting additional information, when and where appropriate.

Once initial contacts were made with Native Californians, it was frequently possible to obtain the names of other native peoples who might have knowledge of traditional practices of the study area's native groups, or knowledge of traditional leaders (religious as well as secular) whose ancestral ties were with lands encompassed in the present study. Information was also solicited concerning the use of lands, plants, or animals within the three National Wildlife Refuges by non-local, indigenous peoples. That is, all Native Californians interviewed, regardless of their ethnic or tribal affiliation, were asked if they, or anyone they knew, viewed the study area as a resource procurement zone, either for food, raw manufacturing materials, or medicines. These individuals were also asked if they, or anyone they knew, used the study area for religious purposes, or if they knew of any sacred sites within the study area.

During this project contact was made with more than 50 individuals of Native Californian ancestry, including members of the Yokuts, Mono, Miwok, Costanoan, and Salinan groups. Members of the last four groups were contacted because the historic records indicate that if any Yokuts from the study area remained alive after the cataclysmic upheavals of the nineteenth century, they probably found refuge among not only their cultural kin, but their neighbors as well. However, as discussed in Chapter 5, the effects of missionization, secularization, Hispanization, and finally Americanization, were such that by the beginning of the twentieth century perhaps less than 1% of the Northern San Joaquin Valley Yokuts were still alive; none is known to have been within the study area since at least 1860, perhaps even earlier—all have disappeared. This is not to say that all Northern Valley Yokuts are dead, but rather that most are, and the few who are left have been absorbed into the mixed Native Californian communities still to be found in the Sierran Foothills or in small isolated spots on the Valley floor.

Of course, it must be remembered that not only had these people undergone severe and rapid population decline, but there was also a breakdown in the transmission of traditional cultural knowledge and values. After all, no one Yokuts was fully conversant with all aspects of Yokuts life and culture. When people began to die, much of their personal as well as public knowledge died with them. As more people died, more knowledge passed out of this world. And when whole villages were wiped out, as during the epidemics of 1833, whole blocks of cultural knowledge disappeared. The cultural continuity of a hundred generations in all aspects of life (food preferences, settlement patterns, menstrual taboos, language, patterns of interpersonal relationship, religious beliefs and practices, etc.) was broken and this knowledge lost.

The effects of this discontinuity are apparent today. The people who allowed themselves to be interviewed had no knowledge of the groups who once lived in the study area and its immediate environs. They had no knowledge of any descendants of the study area's native peoples. They had no knowledge of any places in or adjacent to the study area which might once have had religious significance for the native peoples of the area.

For example, while there are several centers of Yokuts population concentration, such as the Santa Rosa Rancheria (Tachi Yokuts), Tule River Indian Reservation (Yaudanchi Yokuts, Mono, Tubatulabal, Paiute, and others), Table Mountain Rancheria (Chukchansi Yokuts), and Picayune (Chukchansi Yokuts), none of the people or tribal leaders contacted at these centers knew of any persons anywhere who could claim ancestral ties to the study area. Furthermore, none of these people knew of any person(s) who might know the study area, its people, and its history, or who currently used the study area in ways consonant with traditional Yokuts cultural practices. Interestingly enough, at several of the Chukchansi population centers, older individuals who were interviewed said that "maybe" they could remember someone their parents and grandparents, uncles and aunts, mentioned if we could supply a family or tribal name. Unfortunately the presently available literature does not contain family names of those study area Yokuts who were taken to the various coastal missions and the tribal names found in archival and published sources held no meaning for those Yokuts and other Indians interviewed by us.

None of the many twentieth century researchers who carried out research on the Yokuts has recorded the presence of any Yokuts who claim to have ancestral ties to the study area. All previous researchers who have worked in or near the study area have noted the absolute lack of information concerning any Northern Valley Yokuts, groups or individuals, past or present. Frank Latta, the preeminent Yokuts historian-ethnographer, told us (personal communication 1982) that he had been unable to locate any Yokuts with ancestral ties to the entire west side of the San Joaquin Valley, including adjacent stretches of the San Joaquin River, despite the fact that he had been working

intimately with Yokuts in the Sierran Foothills and the southern San Joaquin Valley for more than 50 years. Marjorie Cunningham, who worked extensively with the Tachi Yokuts of the southern San Joaquin Valley found only Tachi and Chukchansi Yokuts living in the Valley and adjacent Foothills (personal communication 1982). These findings have been mirrored by all other field investigators who have studied Northern Valley Yokuts history and ethnohistory, from Stephen Powers in the 1870s, through Harrington, Merriam, Kroeber, and Latta during the first half of the twentieth century, to those archaeologists and ethnographers currently working with Yokuts and neighboring Indian peoples (such as Arguelles, Moratto, Durbin, Hagedorn, Ostrander, Nelson, Wren, and Pimental). The results of our own investigations, given below, mirror the findings of those who have gone before us.

Besides the standard ethnographic, ethnohistoric, archaeological, and archival sources used in preparing this report, three additional categories of living data sources were also employed. These three were: 1) professional anthropologists, historians, and others who are now working, or have recently worked, in the San Joaquin Valley on projects related to Yokuts; 2) tribal and religious leaders among extant Yokuts, Mono, Miwok, and Costanoan groups; and 3) Native Californians who, either because of their prominence in Indian affairs statewide or in their local community as traditional or non-traditional leaders (both secular and religious), were suggested by other Indians as potential sources of knowledge and information relative to the current study. The individuals contacted are listed in Appendix F.