

CULTURAL RESOURCES MONITORING AND POST-REVIEW DISCOVERY PLAN
FOR THE SALTON SEA SPECIES CONSERVATION HABITAT PROJECT, IMPERIAL
COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Prepared by:
California Department of Water Resources
Division of Environmental Services
3500 Industrial Boulevard.
West Sacramento, California 95691

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Salton Sea Species Conservation Habitat Project Cultural Resources Monitoring and Post-Review Discovery Plan

1 INTRODUCTION

The Salton Sea Species Habitat Conservation Habitat Project (Project) site is located at the southern end of the Salton Sea, near the mouth of New River, in Imperial County, California. The project area is a few miles southwest of Obsidian Butte, a valuable tool stone source and sacred place for some Native Americans (Gates and Crawford 2010).

As described in the attached Salton Sea Species Conservation Habitat Project Cultural Resources Survey Report (Cardno Entrix 2012), no archaeological or historical resources were found in the project's area of potential effects (APE; Figure 1). However, the report stated that, "the Salton Sea and its shoreline are sensitive for the presence of buried deposits of cultural resources. Therefore, it is recommended that an inadvertent discovery plan be developed prior to project implementation to address the possibility of the discovery of buried cultural resources." This monitoring and post-review discovery plan is the result of that recommendation.

The modern Salton Sea in Imperial County is located within the lakebed of Pleistocene Lake Cahuilla. In the past, there were several lake filling and lake drying events (Waters 1983; Wilke 1978; Laylander 1995). Native American settlements and fish weirs along the paleo-shorelines mark the levels of old lake stands. As conditions dried and the lake became more saline, it would have supported camps such as hunting and fishing camps down to lower and lower elevations. At some point, the drying lake would have been too saline to support fish, but prehistoric salinity levels are a complicated subject and difficult to model. If the lake supported brine shrimp it may have been an attractive waterfowl hunting location. Brine fly larva are also known to have been an important food source for some Native Americans. These considerations make it difficult to dismiss a shrinking and increasingly saline lake out-of-hand as an inhabitable place for humans.

The recessional lake shores are dotted with fish weirs that have been documented on the western shore of the lake to an elevation of 130 feet below sea level (Rose and Bowden-Rena 1999). Late prehistoric sites have also been documented down to 180 feet below sea level by Laylander (1997), who proposes a late final lake stand around A.D. 1660-1680 at that elevation.

After the lake dried, the Cahuilla people moved from the hills at the edge of the lake and inhabited the former lake bed. In historic times they practiced agriculture, raising squash, beans, corn, and watermelons (Wilke 1978). Most of the documented historic-era Cahuilla site locations are to the north of the Salton Sea (Wilke 1978).

The New River channel existed before the flooding of 1905, but the water it now carries is not a natural flow, but rather agricultural run-off. Prehistoric alluvial fans of New River have been identified at two of the old lake stage elevations indicating it carried water at times in the past (Meltzner and Rockwell 2016).

2 POTENTIAL FOR ENCOUNTERING ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES IN THE CURRENT CONSTRUCTION AREA

The project area on the south end of the Salton Sea at New River is at an elevation far lower than any documented archaeological site in the Salton Sea basin. It is not known if the lack of recorded sites is due to lack of study, recent burial by sediments from the 1905 floods, or if there simply are no sites in that area. The project location would have been far from sources of fresh water when the lake shore was at this low elevation, so it may not have been suitable for anything but a short encampment. The project area appears to be an unlikely spot to encounter archaeological resources, but cannot be entirely dismissed. It is at the same elevation as Obsidian Butte so Native Americans traveling to the obsidian source may have camped near here.

New River became an active channel during the flooding of 1905 that filled the Salton Sea. The APE for the current phase of construction (Figure 1) will be confined to work in the alluvial fan of New River except for a saline pump station that will be located in the Sea to the northeast of New River. The saline pump station will be constructed in water. The alluvial fan deposits are of historic age and do not have the potential to contain prehistoric archaeological material. According to the geotechnical report for the project, recent sea sediments are up to eight feet thick in the areas explored near New River (Hultgren-Tillis Engineers 2014). The report states, “These sediments likely accumulated within the last 60 years during the Sea’s most recent rise above Elevation -240 feet.” It also reports that reddish brown clay, silt and clayey sand were encountered below the recent sea sediment and may represent Holocene lacustrine deposits from former high stands of the Sea predating the 1905-1907 Sea filling. If archaeological material was present in the project APE, it would be in those lacustrine deposits. The saline pump station will also penetrate lacustrine deposits, but it will not be monitored because the excavation will occur underwater with a suction dredger. Therefore monitoring for cultural resources is only necessary in the pump location near New River where excavation will unearth lacustrine deposits.

3 COMPONENTS OF THE CULTURAL RESOURCES MONITORING AND DISCOVERY PLAN

This Monitoring and Discovery Plan details the steps the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) will make in order to identify whether potential Historic Properties are present within the APE and outlines the steps to minimize and mitigate adverse effects if potential Historic Properties are found. These steps include:

- Instructing the construction personnel in Cultural Resources Awareness.
- Monitoring pump station construction for archaeological materials, as detailed in the Monitoring Plan (Section 2).

- If previously unidentified archaeological resources are discovered in the APE, DWR will follow steps outlined the Post-Review Discovery and Treatment Plan outlined below (Section 5).

4 MONITORING PLAN

Every member of the construction crew will be given cultural resources awareness training. The training materials will be prepared by DWR archaeologists for this project and will be presented by a DWR Environmental Scientist or qualified DWR contractor.

The current construction elevations do not penetrate into pre-flood or Pleistocene deposits except at the pump locations. Excavation at the New River pump location must be monitored for archaeological material. The pump will be constructed in depths down to 24 feet below surface.

Every construction crew member will be responsible for monitoring the job site for archaeological material along with the DWR Environmental Monitors. If crew or environmental monitors find material that may be archaeological, they must halt construction within 100 feet of the find and follow the notification procedures in Section 4.1.

4.1 NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

The DWR Environmental Monitor (EM) for the project who will be giving the Cultural Resources Awareness Training and who will be on-site during the construction will be the point of contact for anyone who discovers or thinks they may have discovered prehistoric or historic-era archaeological material or human remains. The EM will also be responsible for immediately shutting down work within 100 feet of the find and calling and emailing the DWR Project Manager and Corps cultural staff. The email shall contain the details of the discovery including the location and photographs with a scale, if possible.

Following a discovery, the Corps is responsible for satisfying the requirements of Section 106 under 36 CFR 800.13. The Corps archaeological staff will be responsible for determining the eligibility of the find and coordinating with the SHPO. If the find is Native American, the Corps will contact the Native American representatives as stated in permit General Condition 3 (See Section 5).

If the discovery contains human remains, the EM will also immediately contact the Imperial County Coroner, as required by law. If the coroner determines that the human remains are Native American, the coroner will contact the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). The NAHC will designate and notify the Most Likely Descendant (MLD). By law, the MLD has 24 hours after notification to inspect the find and issue recommendations as to the treatment of the remains. The EM will keep a log of the notifications and who and when they were contacted. The DWR Project Manager will also keep a record of who was contacted and when.

It will be the responsibility of the DWR Environmental Monitor to report discoveries or possible discoveries to the Corps.

5 DISCOVERY PLAN

This project is being constructed under a USACE permit. The permit **General Condition 3** states, “If you discover any previously unknown historic or archaeological remains while accomplishing the activity authorized by this permit, you must immediately notify this office of what you found. We will initiate the Federal and state coordination required to determine if the remains warrant a recovery effort or if the site is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.”

The permit’s **Special Condition 26**, concerning the National Historic Preservation Act, states:

“Pursuant to 36 CFR section 800.13, in the event of any discoveries during construction of either human remains, archaeological deposits, or any other type of historic property, the permittee shall notify the Corps’ Archaeology Staff within 24 hours (Steve Dibble at 213-452-3849 or John Killeen at 213-452-3861). The permittee shall immediately suspend all work in any areas where potential cultural resources are discovered. The permittee shall not resume construction in the area surrounding the potential cultural resources until the Corps Regulatory Division re-authorizes project construction, per 36 CFR section 800.13.”

In short, if a suspected artifact or site is found, the DWR Environmental Monitor must call Steve Dibble or John Killeen of the USACE in compliance with Special Condition 26.

This Discovery Plan sets forth the conditions triggering the discovery plan and actions to be taken should discovery of archaeological materials occur during Project implementation.

5.1 CONDITIONS TRIGGERING THE DISCOVERY PLAN

If archaeological remains or human remains are discovered within the APE, the EM shall signal an immediate halt to work within 100 feet of the discovery. The EM will implement the notification procedures outlined above. A Temporary Exclusion Zone (TEZ) will be established encompassing the find and a 100 foot buffer, and maintained until the necessary treatment measures are completed. No construction activities are allowed inside the TEZ until the archaeological assessment and treatment measures have been completed and the Corps has issued written notification that work may proceed. If human remains are present in the TEZ, they will be respectfully covered and the requirements of the California Health and Safety Code 7050.5(b) will be followed and the MLD notified, as outlined below in Section 5.1.1.

5.1.1 Treatment of Human Skeletal Remains

If human remains or suspected human remains are discovered the requirements of California Health and Safety Code 7050.5(b) and PRC 5097.98 must be followed. A potential find of human remains must be reported immediately, following the notification procedures outlined in Section 2.1. The Procedures in the event of such a discovery should include the following:

- If human remains or suspected human remains are found within the APE, work in the immediate area (within 100 feet/~30 meters) shall cease immediately and a TEZ will be established. Appropriate notifications will be made following Section 2.1, the find will be

covered, protected from further disturbance, until a qualified archaeologist from the Corps or the coroner makes an assessment.

- If the find is confirmed as Native American human remains, the coroner will notify the NAHC as required by law; and the DWR Project Manager will also coordinate with the MLD designated by the NAHC.
- The MLD will be contacted by DWR or the Corps to facilitate a site visit and consultation. The find will remain protected and work in the immediate vicinity will not restart until the MLD responds, or until the MLD has failed to respond for at least 48 hours.
- If the MLD fails or is unwilling to respond and become involved within 48 hours, or an agreement cannot be reached, treatment may proceed following the standard protocols presented below.
- If avoidance and protection in place is not feasible, the remains will be exhumed by a qualified archaeologist. All soil removed from around the burial will be sifted with fine mesh screen (1/8-inch or finer). All human remains will be treated with sensitivity and respect.
- Burial information that can be recorded using visual non-destructive methods will be collected at the time of excavation. This information includes an inventory of associated artifacts, detailed information regarding the grave pit or internment style, body position within the grave, preliminary age and sex assessments, field measurements for stature estimation, and an inventory of visually apparent skeletal and dental pathology.
- Additional analysis may occur if agreed upon by the Corps, and the MLD. If the MLD requests, all work will be conducted in the presence of the MLD or a monitor designated by the MLD. The MLD may also make recommendations as to the appropriate cultural treatment of the remains during and after exhumation.
- Final disposition of the remains will be negotiated between the Corps, the landowner, and the MLD, with input from the NAHC if needed. If an agreement cannot be reached, the landowner has final say pursuant to PRC 5097.98 (e) and the remains will be interred with dignity on the property in a location not subject to further and future subsurface disturbance.

6 ADDITIONAL PHASES OF CONSTRUCTION

This discovery plan only covers the areas outlined in Figure 1, the first phase of construction. Additional phases of construction, especially if they are located off of the alluvial fan in older sediments, may require a reassessment of the archaeological sensitivity and a modification of the monitoring and discovery plan. See Section 2 Potential for Encountering Archaeological Resources in the Current Construction Area and in Section 4, the Monitoring Plan.

7 REFERENCES

California Department of Water Resources and California Department of Fish and Game
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APE Elements




-  Pump
-  Forcemain
-  Salton Sea SCH Ponds APE



Figure 1. Construction Footprint (APE)

