

APPENDIX 3



**CULTURAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT
FOR THE PHELAN PIÑON HILLS
COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT
WELL NO. 18 DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
IN THE AREA OF PHELAN,
SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

FOR SUBMITTAL TO:
PHELAN PIÑON HILLS COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT
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ABSTRACT

At the request of Tom Dodson and Associates, Mojave Archaeological Consulting, LLC conducted a cultural resources investigation for the Phelan Piñon Hills Community Services District's proposed construction of a new well, which includes two potential locations within the community of Phelan in unincorporated San Bernardino County, California. This study is prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as part of the environmental review process for the proposed capital improvements project.

Phelan Piñon Hills Community Services District (PPHCSD) is planning construction of one new well (Well No. 18) and is also considering a backup location. Well No. 18 would be located on a 2.2-acre parcel (APN 3100-561-14) on the west side of Beekley Road, south of Begonia Road, north of Highway 18. The backup well site is proposed to be located on another 2.2-acre parcel (APN 3101-381-25) at the northeast corner of Barker Road and Camellia Road. Construction at either site would require a pipeline to be installed within the road right-of-way to connect to existing water supply systems. The Well 18 site would require installation of approximately 600 linear feet pipeline from the project site north along Beekley Road to Begonia Road and the backup well site would require installation of approximately 1,800 linear feet of pipeline from the project site west along Camellia Road to Sheep Creek Road. The project is located within Sections 22 and 24, Township 5 North, Range 7 West on the Shadow Mountain SE, CA USGS topographic quadrangle.

This report describes the methods and results of the cultural resources investigation of the project, including a records search, historic research, an SLF search with the NAHC, Native American outreach, and an archaeological survey. The purpose of the investigation was to provide PPHCSD with the information and analysis necessary to determine the potential for the proposed project to impact "historical resources" and "archaeological resources" under CEQA.

The records search completed at the South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) included a 0.5-mile-wide buffer/study area, and indicated four previous cultural resource investigations have been conducted in the study area and nine historic cultural resources are previously documented within the area, none of which are in close proximity to the project or require any further consideration in relation to the proposed project activities. The SLF search with the NAHC was completed with negative results and further Native American outreach likewise did not indicate there are any known cultural resources within or adjacent to the project.

An intensive pedestrian survey of the project, conducted on February 20, 2025, identified scattered and fragmented wood building debris representing the remains of a 1950's recreational homestead cabin with no associated artifacts present. Such remains are ubiquitous throughout the desert area and are representative of numerous mid-century era small tract claims. Given the poor condition of the materials, lack of any associated artifacts or potential for buried refuse deposits, the minor remains do not meet any consideration for historic significance. As such, the field survey did not identify any resources that would be considered "historically significant" or a "historical resource" under CEQA.

In summary, the investigation concludes there are no "historical resources" known to be present within or adjacent to the project. Additionally, the geological context of the project setting and past disturbance suggests that any intact and significant buried archaeological deposits are unlikely to be present. Based on these findings, Mojave Archaeological Consulting recommends to PPHCSD that the proposed project will have no impact on historical or archaeological resources. No further cultural resources work is recommended necessary for the proposed project activities. However, if any buried cultural materials are encountered during ground disturbance, all work should be halted in the vicinity of the discovery until a qualified archaeologist can assess the significance and integrity of the find. If intact and significant archaeological remains are encountered, impacts should be mitigated appropriately. Additionally, Health

and Safety Code Section 7050.5, CEQA Statute & Guidelines Section 15064.5(e), and PRC Section 5097.98 mandate the process to be followed in the unlikely event of the discovery of human remains. Finally, if the project is expanded to include any areas not covered by this survey, or other recent cultural resource investigations, additional cultural resource survey would be required.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

B.P.	before present
ca.	circa
cal	calibrated years
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CCS	cryptocrystalline silica
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CHRIS	California Historical Resources Information System
cm	centimeter
CRHR	California Register of Historical Resources
DPR	California Department of Parks and Recreation
GLO	General Land Office
GPS	Global Positioning System
m	meter
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NPS	National Park Service
OHP	Office of Historic Preservation
PRC	Public Resources Code
PPHCSD	Phelan Piñon Hills Community Services District
SCCIC	South Central Coastal Information Center
SLF	Sacred Lands Files
USGS	United States Geological Survey

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

In order to meet community water supply and distribution needs and in anticipation of compliance with future hexavalent chromium (Chromium-6) maximum contaminant level (MCL) mitigation, Phelan Piñon Hills Community Services District (PPHCSD) is proposing construction of one new well (Well No. 18) and is also considering a backup well location in the community of Phelan, within San Bernardino County.

Well No. 18 would be located on a 2.2-acre parcel (APN 3100-561-14) on Beekley Road, south of Begonia Road, north of Highway 18. The backup well site is proposed to be located on another 2.2-acre parcel (APN 3101-381-25) at the northeast corner of Barker Road and Camellia Road. Construction at either site is expected to potentially include a retention basin, a chlorination building and well, and other features, such as electrical components and drain line. Pipeline connections would also need to be installed within the road right-of-way to connect to existing water supply systems. The Well 18 site would require installation of approximately 600 linear feet pipeline from the project site north along Beekley Road to Begonia Road and the backup well site would require installation of approximately 1,800 linear feet of pipeline from the project site west along Camellia Road to Sheep Creek Road. Ground disturbance using heavy equipment is expected for well drilling, pipeline installation, site preparation, and construction. Both proposed sites consist of currently vacant land and unimproved dirt roads.

The project is subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Initial technical studies to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the project include a cultural resources assessment. Tom Dodson and Associates retained Mojave Archaeological Consulting, LLC, to conduct the cultural resources investigation for the project's compliance with CEQA. PPHCSD is the lead agency, though there may also be several other agencies with possible jurisdiction and/or responsibilities for the proposed project.

Michelle Hart, M.A., meets the Secretary of Interior Standards for Professional Qualifications in the disciplines of Archaeology (Prehistoric and Historic), Architectural History, and History (36 CFR 61), and served as Principal Investigator for the current study. Ms. Hart completed the records search with the South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC), initiated a search with the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), conducted Native American outreach, and completed background research, survey fieldwork, and report writing.

This report presents a site description ([Section 2](#)); the cultural context, which provides a review of the prehistoric and historic background for the project area ([Section 3](#)); the regulatory framework that mandates consideration of cultural resources in project planning ([Section 4](#)); the methods used in the field survey and resource evaluation ([Section 5](#)); the results of the study ([Section 6](#)); conclusions and recommendations ([Section 7](#)); and references cited ([Section 8](#)).

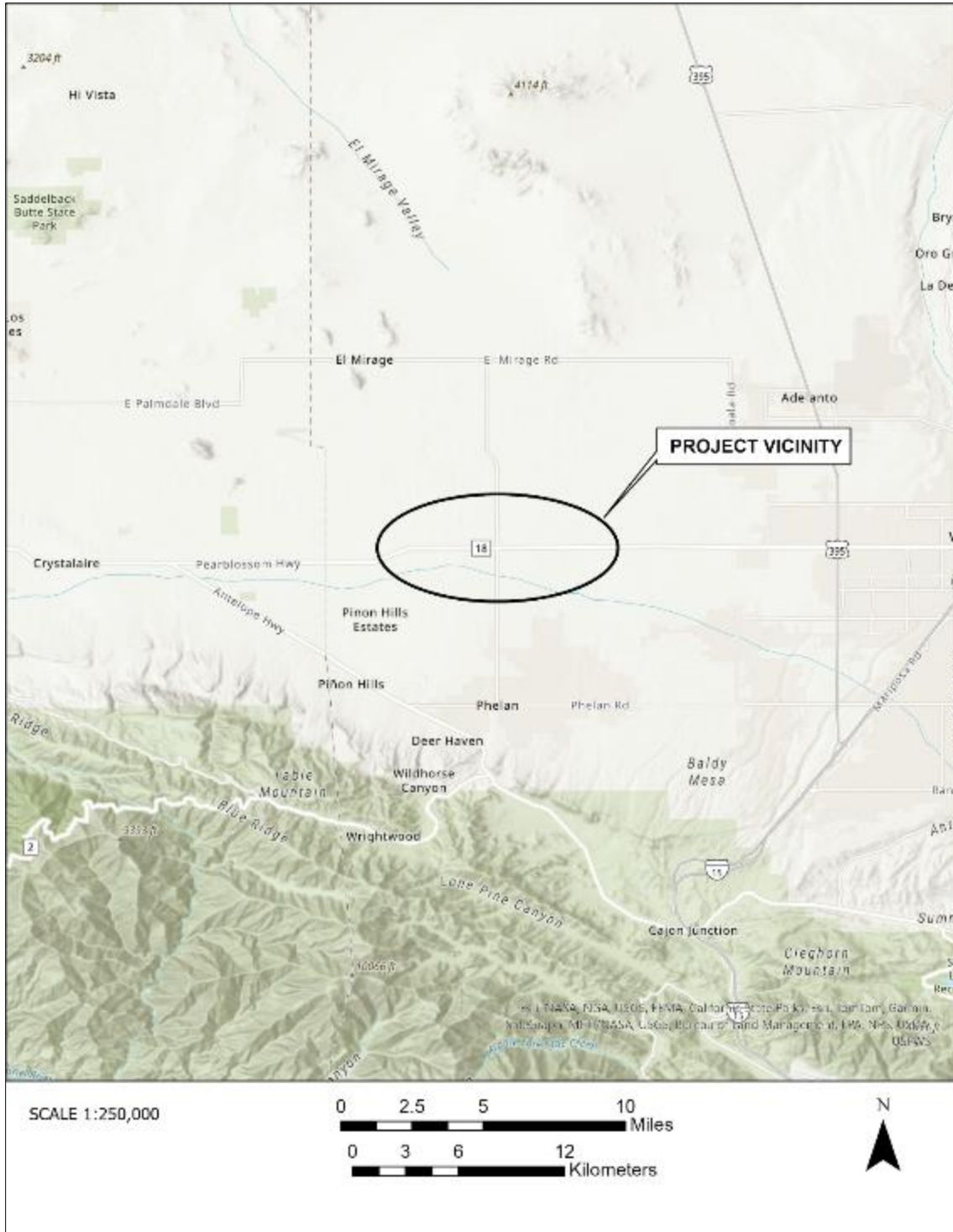


Figure 1: Project Vicinity

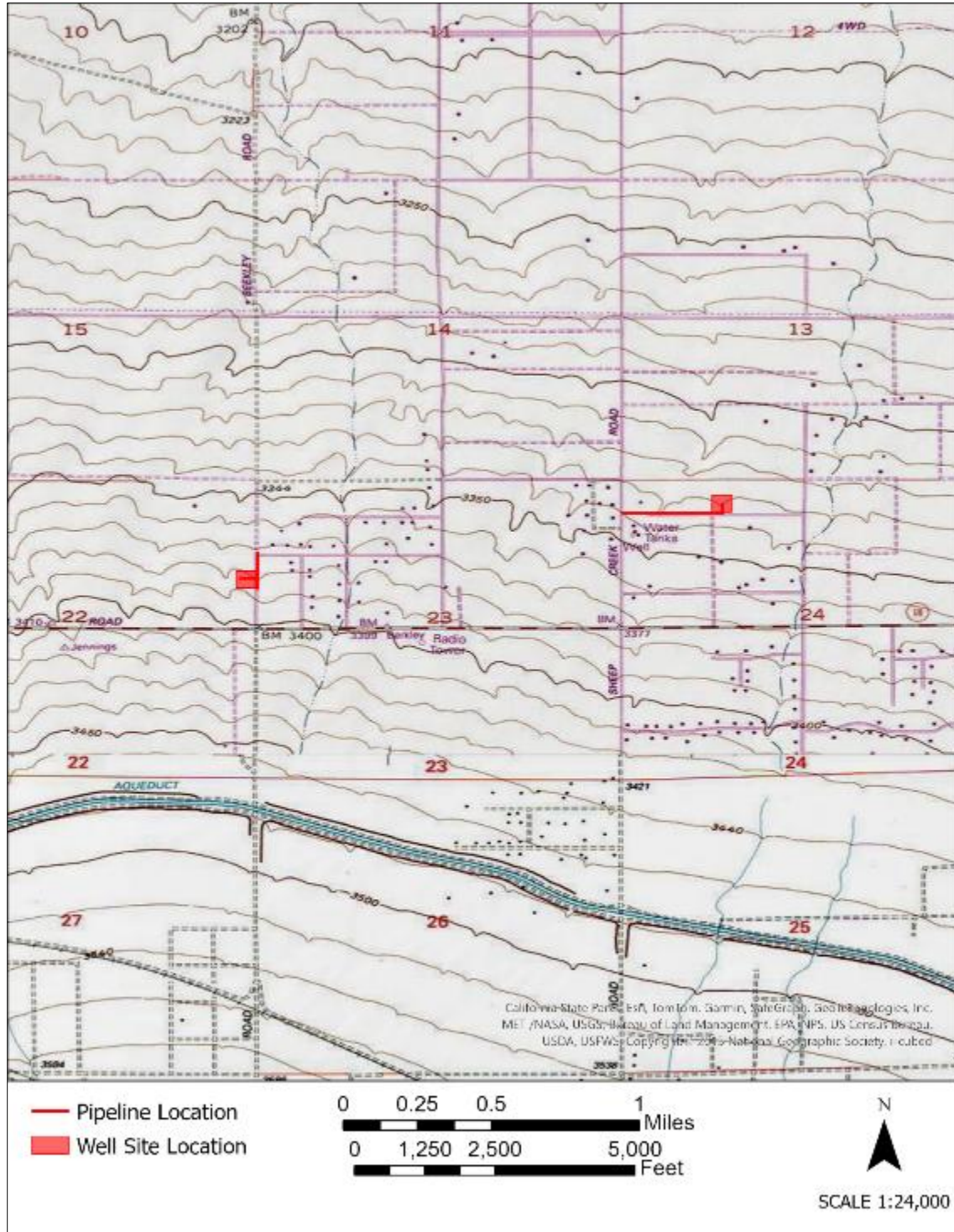


Figure 2: Project Location, USGS 7.5' Topographic Quadrangle: Shadow Mountain SE, CA



Figure 3: Project Location Aerial Imagery

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Current Site Use

The project is located in the Phelan area of unincorporated San Bernardino County. The general area is rural and consists of sparse residences. Both the Well 18 site and the backup well site are currently undeveloped vacant land and contain sparse, mostly native vegetation characteristic of the Mojave desert. The two sites are located less than a half mile north of State Route 18 and are accessed via dirt roads (Beekley Road and Camellia Road).

2.2 Topography and Geology

The project is situated within the Mojave Desert which is generally characterized by interior draining basins and ranges. More specifically, the project is within Victor Valley to the north of the San Gabriel Mountains. The general desert area contains broad alluvial fans, dissected terraces, playas, and scattered small mountains. The project is situated in a relatively flat area with a gentle, two to five percent slope to the northeast. Elevation at the project ranges from approximately 3,300 to 3,400 ft. USGS geological maps define the project site and surrounding vicinity as comprised of unconsolidated and semi-consolidated Quaternary alluvium, lake, playa, and terrace deposits (USGS 2010). Sediments consist of medium-to-coarse grained alluvial sands, and metasedimentary and metavolcanic gravels and cobbles.

2.3 Local Climate and Ecology

Climate in the Phelan area is characterized by low annual humidity, moderate temperature swings, very low rainfall, and frequent windy conditions typical of California's "Upper Desert" subclimate. Temperatures typically range between a low of 20°F or above to a high of about 105°F. Vegetation in the general vicinity of the project site is dominated by the creosote bush scrub community which consists of a variety of shrubs, cacti, and grasses (Sawyer 1994; Vasek and Barbour 1977). Common plant species include creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), Mormon tea (*Ephedra californica*, *Ephedra nevadensis*), brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*) white bursage (*Ambrosia dumosa*), littleleaf ratany (*Krameria erecta*), cholla (*Cylindropuntia bigelovii*), beavertail prickly pear cacti (*Opuntia basilaris*) and galleta grass (*Hilaria rigida*). The region also provides habitat for a variety of fauna including bobcat, desert kit fox, jackrabbits, cottontail rabbits, desert kangaroo rats, ground squirrels, coyote, Gambel's quail, desert tortoise, rattlesnakes, and other species.

Plate 1: Overview of the proposed Well No. 18 site, view to the west.



Plate 2: Beekley Road at the east side of the proposed Well No. 18 site, view to the north.



Plate 3: Overview of the proposed backup well site, view to the north.



Plate 4: Seasonal wash/drainage within backup well site, view to the northeast.



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Plate 5: Camellia Road at the south side of the backup well site, view to the west.



Plate 6: Camellia Road near intersection with Sheep Creek Road, view to the east.



3 CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

The following presents a cultural context for the project vicinity. This overview addresses the broader perspective of prehistoric and historic use in the area and is based upon numerous past reports and synthesis that summarize the history of human occupation in the Mojave Desert as a whole, with specific focus on the San Bernardino County area. This context was summarized from recent reports as well as cultural frameworks and synthesis from several decades of past regional archaeological research, including that of Rogers (1939), Sutton et al. (2007); Warren (1980, 1984); and Warren and Crabtree (1986), among others, as cited below.

3.1 Prehistoric Chronology

The prehistoric cultural chronology for the region is most often based on the Mojave Desert chronology. One of the most commonly-cited prehistoric cultural frameworks for the California deserts was proposed by Claude Warren (1980, 1984; Warren and Crabtree 1986). Warren's outline for human occupation in the Mojave Desert divided prehistory into five distinct archaeological periods. Warren associated these periods with changes in climate related to the terminal Pleistocene and Holocene epochs. These include Lake Mojave, Pinto, Gypsum, Saratoga Spring, and Shoshonean (Late Prehistoric) periods. Some studies have asserted the presence of archaeological assemblages dating to periods earlier than Lake Mojave; however, as discussed by Warren and Crabtree (1986), the validity of these studies is controversial and they have little or no relationship to later cultural developments in the region. In 2007, Sutton et al. expanded on Warren's framework (1984) to include elements more closely aligned to prehistoric cultural complexes of the Central Mojave Desert. Sutton et al. (2007) use the term "complex" to emphasize cultural rather than temporal association, deferring temporal association to the term "period," which they associate with geologic time. Subdivisions of the Mojave Desert cultural framework proposed by Sutton et al. (2007) include hypothetical "Pre-Clovis" and "Paleo-Indian" complexes, and the Lake Mojave, Pinto, Dead Man Lake, Gypsum, Rose Spring, and Late Prehistoric complexes.

3.1.1 Terminal Pleistocene (12,000 to 10,000 cal B.P.)

During the Terminal Pleistocene, glaciers retreated under comparatively warm conditions and vegetation and animals began to move to higher elevations. Paleoenvironmental and geomorphologic investigations indicate that the climate, vegetation, and landscape across the North American continent, including the inland Southern California region, changed dramatically at the end of the Pleistocene. The climate changed from wet and cool conditions to a drier and warmer regime (Anderson 2001). In general terms, the desert interior may have been more ecologically productive and more attractive to prehistoric groups than the inland areas farther to the west and south during the Early Holocene (ca. 10,000–8000 B.P.).

3.1.2 Paleo-Indian Complex

The Paleo-Indian complex within the Mojave Desert has generally been represented exclusively by Clovis point; however, the relationship with later stemmed points is also a consideration. Some early research has proposed the theory of two different traditions relating to interior and coastal adaptation during the Late Pleistocene to Early Holocene transition. Based on work in the Panamint Valley, Davis (1970) posited the theory of "Paleo-Desert," a geographic distinction from Paleo-Indian sites of the "Paleo-Coastal" tradition. In the Paleo-Desert geographic region, Paleo-Indian sites are generally located along the shorelines of ancient pluvial lakes (Davis 1970). One common theme among nearly all known Paleo-Indian complex sites in North America is the tool assemblage, which includes fluted spear points, typically made from fine-grained lithic material. Fluted points, defined as a component of the Clovis material

culture in California, have been found throughout most of the state from coastal estuary environments to ancient Pleistocene lakeshores, which are now in desert areas. Near Cajon Pass at least five sites that contained fluted projectile points have been identified. These sites suggest an early occupation of approximately 12,000 B.P., which corresponds to the “hypothetical Pre-Clovis” (pre-10,000 B.P.) complex (Sutton et al. 2007). In addition to fluted points, the Paleo-Indian tool assemblage was composed mainly of scrapers, burins, awls, and choppers, which were used for processing animals and other food resources.

3.1.3 Early Holocene (10,000 to 8500 cal B.P.)

During the Early Holocene, a changing climate altered the distribution of floral and faunal communities. Human economic activities of the Early Holocene were focused on the pluvial lakes and their environs where people could fish, take waterfowl and their eggs, harvest aquatic plants and mollusks, and hunt for large and small game. A small number of ground stone artifacts suggest limited grinding of hard seeds, representing a shift to a more diversified and generalized economy (Sutton 1996). Milling slabs and manos for seed processing are rare in Early Holocene sites relative to their abundance in later periods, suggesting the milling of vegetation seems not to have been very important (Grayson 2011). A high incidence of imported materials (including marine shell) evidences wider spheres of interaction than what was seen previously. As interpreted by Sutton et al. (2007), collectively, the data indicate a “forager-like” strategy organized around relatively small social units.

3.1.4 Lake Mojave Complex

Ground stone implements in the material culture are seen in low frequency during this time, from which limited hard seed grinding activities can be inferred. This has been interpreted as representative of a shift toward a more diversified and generalized economy (Sutton 1996; Sutton et al. 2007). The high incidence of non-local materials and marine shell is interpreted as wider spheres of interaction than previously seen. Cultural materials dating from this complex encompass the Playa cultures, as described by Rogers (1939), the San Dieguito complex (Warren 1967), and the Lake Mojave complex (Warren and Crabtree 1986). This phase is considered ancestral to the Early Archaic cultures of the Pinto complex. Campbell et al. (1937) describe Lake Mojave assemblages as including Lake Mojave series projectile points (leaf-shaped, long-stemmed points with narrow shoulders) and Silver Lake points (short-bladed, stemmed points with distinct shoulders). Other diagnostic items include flaked stone crescents; abundant bifaces; and a variety of large, well-made scrapers, graters, perforators, and heavy core tools (Sutton et al. 2007).

3.1.5 Middle Holocene (8500 to 4000 cal B.P.)

During the Middle Holocene, climatic conditions were warmer and drier than during the Ice Age or Early Holocene. Terms including “Altithermal,” “Hypsithermal,” and “Mid-Holocene Climatic Optimum” have been proposed since the 1940s to refer to the long periods of sustained drought. Lake levels declined; marshes, streams, and other wetland habitat dried up; the range of xeric shrublands expanded; and hardwood vegetation communities retreated to higher elevations. The cumulative result was that the land’s carrying capacity for wildlife and humans declined substantially. Some parts of the Desert West may have been abandoned by people for long periods, while other areas witnessed a marked reduction of population density (Grayson 2011).

3.1.6 The Pinto Complex

The Pinto complex represents a broad continuity in the use of flaked stone technology, including less reliance on obsidian and cryptocrystalline silicates (CCS), as well as the prevalence of ground stone implements in the material culture, which distinguishes this complex from the earlier Lake Mojave complex (Sutton et al. 2007). Warren (1984) proposed that cultural adaptation to the changing desert

environment between 7500 and 5000 B.P. may account for the material characteristics of the Pinto complex, which gradually replaced those of the Lake Mojave complex. The age and catalysts for the technological adaptations noted in the Pinto complex remain a topic of dispute. Sutton et al. (2007) cite work conducted at the military installations of Fort Irwin and Twentynine Palms that produced radiocarbon dates as early as 8820 B.P. associated with Pinto complex assemblages. These dates push back the beginnings of the complex as coincidental with the Lake Mojave complex. The Pinto complex is marked by the appearance of Pinto-series projectile points, which are characterized as thick, and shouldered with expanding stem and concave bases. Pinto points were typically produced by percussion reduction and demonstrate limited pressure retouch. Other characteristics of the Pinto assemblage are bifacial and unifacial core tools, and an increase in milling stones.

According to Sutton et al. (2007), the Dead Man Lake complex is local variation of the Pinto complex. Sutton et al. (2007) cite archaeological discoveries within the Twentynine Palms area as associated with the Dead Man Lake complex. The complex is defined by small to medium-sized contracting stemmed or lozenge-shaped points, battered cobbles, bifaces, simple flaked tools, milling implements, and shell beads (Sutton et al. 2007).

3.1.7 Late Holocene (4000 cal B.P. to Contact)

Current archaeological data indicate there may have been a hiatus of occupation within the inland desert regions between the Middle and Late Holocene periods, as few sites have been found that date between 5000 and 4000 B.P. It is believed that climatic changes during this period resulted in hotter and drier conditions, which may have led to the abandonment of the region for approximately 1,000 years when people migrated to areas with more suitable climates (Sutton et al. 2007).

3.1.8 The Gypsum Complex (4000 to 1800 B.P.)

Technologically, the artifact assemblage of the Gypsum complex was similar to that of the preceding Pinto complex, although new tools were added either as innovations or “borrowed” from other cultures as adaptations to the desert environment. Gypsum complex sites are characterized by medium- to large-stemmed and corner-notched projectile points (these include Elko series, Humboldt Concave Base, and Gypsum styles). In addition, rectangular-based knives, flake scrapers, and occasionally, large scraper planes, choppers, hammerstones, handstones, and milling tools become relatively common, and the mortar and pestle appear for the first time. It is believed that ritual activities became important, evidenced by split-twig figurines and petroglyphs depicting hunting scenes. Finally, increased contact with neighboring groups likely provided the desert occupants important storable foodstuffs during less productive seasons or years, in exchange for high-quality lithic materials such as obsidian and CCS. Archaeological assemblages attributed to the Gypsum complex have been radiocarbon dated to roughly 4000 to 1800 B.P.

The Gypsum complex is characterized by population increases and broadening economic activities. While hunting continued to be an important subsistence focus, the processing of plant foods took on greater importance. It is suggested that because of these new adaptive mechanisms, the increase in aridity during the Late Gypsum complex (after ca. 2500 B.P.) had relatively little consequence on the distribution and increase in human populations (Warren 1984; Warren and Crabtree 1986). While open camp sites remain common, the use of rock shelters appears to have increased at this time. Base camps with extensive midden development are a prominent site type in well-watered valleys and near concentrated subsistence resources (Warren and Crabtree 1986). Additionally, evidence of potential ritualistic behavior during this time exists through the presence of rock art, quartz crystals, and paint pigments (Sutton et al. 2007). Rock art motifs suggest that bighorn sheep hunting was important during the Gypsum complex (Grant et al. 1968). The faunal remains of bighorn sheep and deer, rabbits and hares, rodents, and reptiles are reported from Gypsum complex sites in the central Mojave Desert (Hall and Basgall 1994).

The archaeological record suggests there was a major population increase within the California desert ca. 3000 to 2300 B.P. (Gilreath and Hildebrandt 1991; Sutton 1988). A shift in subsistence orientation and mobility near the end of the Gypsum complex is suggested, with increased emphasis on the hunting of smaller mammals, possibly coinciding with the introduction of bow and arrow technology (Basgall et al. 1986; Sutton 1996).

3.1.9 The Rose Spring Complex (1800 to 900 B.P.)

The Rose Spring complex is characterized by small projectile points, including Eastgate and Rose Spring types. These smaller projectile point types appear to mark the introduction of a bow and arrow technology and the decline of the atlatl and spear (Sutton 1996). Flaked stone knives, drills, bone awls, pipes, various milling implements, and marine shell ornaments are also characteristic of the Rose Spring complex, as is the prevalent use of obsidian. Sutton (1996) notes that Rose Spring complex sites are common in the California desert and are often found near springs, washes, and lakeshores. Subsistence practices during the Rose Spring complex appear to have shifted to the exploitation of medium and small game, including rabbits and rodents, with a decreased emphasis on large game. At the Rose Spring archaeological site, numerous bedrock milling features, including mortar cups and slicks, are associated with rich midden deposits, indicating that the milling of plant foods had become an important activity. In addition, evidence of permanent living structures is found during this time (Sutton et al. 2007).

Warren (1984) asserts that the Rose Spring complex was marked by strong regional cultural developments especially in the Southern California desert regions, which were heavily influenced by technology and style originating from the lower Colorado River area. Warren (1984) divided the Rose Spring (Saratoga Springs) into at least three regionally distinct cultural developments deduced from pottery types and projectile point styles; these include northwestern Mojave, eastern Mojave, and southern desert (Warren 1984). Cultural change derived from influences from lower Colorado River groups is evidenced by the introduction of Buff and Brown Ware pottery and Cottonwood and Desert Side-notched projectile points. The initial date for this influence remains unknown; however, it does appear that by 1200 to 1000 B.P., the Mojave Desert region was heavily influenced by lower Colorado River peoples. This influence apparently continued well after the Rose Spring/Saratoga Spring period (Warren 1984).

3.1.10 The Late Prehistoric Period (900 B.P. to Contact)

Late Prehistoric sites contain a significantly different cultural assemblage than that seen in the preceding archaeological complexes. Characteristic artifacts of the Late Prehistoric period include Desert-series projectile points (Desert Side-notched and Cottonwood Triangular), Brownware ceramics, Lower Colorado Buff Ware, higher frequencies of milling implements (unshaped manos, milling slabs, mortars and pestles), incised stones, and shell beads (Warren and Crabtree 1986). Faunal assemblages found within Late Prehistoric archaeological sites typically contain deer, rabbits, reptiles, and rodents. The use of obsidian dropped off during this time with the increased use of CCS. Evidence of large occupation sites, representing semi-permanent and permanent villages, characterizes Late Prehistoric settlement patterns.

The Late Prehistoric period marks an era of increased linguistic complexity within the Mojave Desert. One of the most important regional developments of the Late Prehistoric period was the apparent expansion of Numic-speakers (Shoshonean groups) throughout most of the Great Basin and Mojave Desert region. Many researchers accept the idea that sometime around 1000 B.P., Numic-speakers spread westward from the southwestern Great Basin, possibly from Death Valley and the Owens Valley (Bettinger and Baumhoff 1982). Regional cultural developments established during the preceding Rose Spring complex continued with some modifications. In the Colorado Desert and southeastern Mojave Desert, Brown and Buff Ware pottery first appears on the lower Colorado River at about 1200 B.P., and spreads across the

California deserts by about 1100 B.P. (Warren 1984). Associated with the diffusion of this pottery were Desert Side-notched and Cottonwood Triangular projectile points dating to about 850 to 800 B.P., suggesting a continued spread of influence from Southwestern and Colorado River peoples. The presence of Lake Cahuilla, a large freshwater lake, which last occupied the Salton Basin of the Colorado Desert Region during the Late Prehistoric period, was a likely catalyst in the spread of cultural traditions and technological advances throughout the California Desert region.

3.2 Ethnographic Setting

The area of Phelan is part of the traditional homeland of the Serrano People. The Serrano refer to themselves as Maara'yam (Serrano) and Yuhaaviatam (a clan of the Serrano), which means "People of the Pines". Historically, they occupied a wide-ranging territory, centered out of the San Bernardino Mountains, and including portions of the desert to the east, and the San Bernardino Valley to the south (Kroeber 1925). Estimates of the pre-contact populations of most native groups in California vary substantially between sources, but Lowell John Bean suggested that the Serrano may have had a population of perhaps 2,500 people (Bean and Smith 1978). There were multiple localized clans of Serrano across the San Bernardino Mountains and within the Mojave Desert region.

Traditionally, the Serrano relied on hunting, gathering, and fishing. Game for hunting included mountain sheep, deer, antelope, rabbits, rodents, and various birds. Plant staples consisted of acorns, pine nuts, bulbs and tubers, berries, mesquite pods, various cacti, and yucca. Diverse materials were used for foraging and processing food, as well as shelter clothing, and other items. These materials included shell, wood, bone, stone, plant materials, animal skins, and features to make basketry, pottery, blankets, mats, nets, clothing, cordage, bows, arrows, drills, pipes, musical instruments, and other specialized items (Bean and Smith 1978). Reliable water sources dictated settlement locations and most villages were situated near water sources such as springs and streams. Houses and other structures were generally round and constructed of poles covered with bark and tule mats (Kroeber 1925). Serrano villages also often had a ceremonial house which served as a central gathering place, other structures included granaries and sweatshouses (Bean and Smith 1978).

Although contact with Europeans may have occurred as early as the 1770s, European influence on Serrano lifeways was negligible until at least the early 1800's in part due to their remote and rugged inland territory. Beginning around 1819, the Spanish/Mexican mission system expanded to the edge of Serrano territory. Between then and the end of the mission era in 1834, many of the Serrano were forced to relocate to the San Gabriel Mission and other California missions and *asistencias* (sub-missions or outposts). During the late 1800s, the Serrano experienced increasing conflict with encroaching prospectors and settlers in the area. The San Manuel Band of Mission Indians states that many Serrano men, women, and children were killed by a state-government-sanctioned armed militia during a 32-day campaign in 1866 (<https://sanmanuel-nsn.gov/culture/about-smbmi>). By the early 20th century, the majority of the small remaining Serrano population had relocated to reservations. Today, most Serrano descendants are represented by the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians (Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation), the Morongo Band of Mission Indians, and the Serrano Nation of Mission Indians.

3.3 Historical Setting

The first known written account of European travels through the Mojave Desert region is that of Lieutenant Pedro Fages, who accompanied a 1772 expedition from San Diego (Abdo 2019). Fages' travel journal describes the party's route along the western side of the San Jacinto Mountains to present-day Riverside, into the San Bernardino Valley, and on to the Mojave Desert via Cajon Pass. Another documented early travel account is that of Father Francisco Garcés in 1776 (Earle 2005, Warren et al. 1980). His trip was a trading and missionary expedition that diverged from the major Juan Bautista de Anza expedition, seeking a direct land route from Arizona and the Colorado River to Monterey, California.

Garcés traveled through the Victor Valley along a Native American trading route known as the Mojave Trail and noted Native populations living in villages along the Mojave River. Subsequent and intersecting travel routes including the Old Spanish Trail and Mormon Trail (Salt Lake Trail) also crossed the Mojave Desert. The settlement and development of the Victor Valley is directly tied to its history as a travel corridor. By the late 1800's the Santa Fe Railway was established through the area followed by the construction of Route 66 and eventually Interstate Highway 15.

With the availability of plentiful land and abundant ground water, attempts at agriculture began in the Victor Valley area during the late 19th century through 20th century (McGinnis 1988). Alfalfa, deciduous fruits, and poultry were grown with limited success. Near present-day Phelan, several ranches were established in the early 20th century along the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains. The Phelan post office was built in 1916, and the community was named after James Phelan, a U.S. Senator who had political influence in the area (Gudde 1998). Large deposits of limestone and granite were discovered in the mountains and foothills of the San Gabriels and cement manufacturing became a leading industry in the valley by the early 1900's (City of Victorville n.d.).

There was a minor boom in homesteading in the California desert during the 1920s when World War I veterans returned, particularly those who were suffering from tuberculosis and the effects of mustard gas exposure, came to the desert seeking the therapeutic benefits of the Mojave's warm, dry climate. The popularity of desert homesteading increased following World War II and into the mid-century, as urban and suburban dwellers of the more populated areas of Southern California sought weekend getaways in the desert. The Small Tract Act of 1938 was a desert homestead program in which five acres of land could be purchased for \$10 per acre and permitted for recreational residence purposes. By 1955, approximately 25,000 5-acre homestead permits had been issued in the rural desert areas of San Bernardino County, including the Victor Valley area (Ainsworth 1955). Reflective of this history, many small homestead and recreational cabins built during this era are still present within the area today.

Growth in Victor Valley was also supported by the George Air Force Base, established in 1941 and originally known as the Victorville Airfield. The base employed several thousand military and civilian workers during and after the World War II period. In the early 1990's the base was deactivated and converted for civilian use as the Southern California Logistics Airport. In modern periods, development in the Victor Valley area, which includes Victorville, Hesperia, Adelanto, and Apple Valley and other communities, has been characterized by suburban housing developments and industrial and commercial areas supporting Greater Los Angeles and the Inland Empire (Tang and Hogan 2024). The Phelan area, at the western extent of Victor Valley, in contrast, has largely remained outside the influence of nearby fast-growing suburban expansion and still retains much of its rural character today.

4 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The project is subject to the requirements of CEQA. The *CEQA Statute & Guidelines* (Association of Environmental Professionals 2021) direct lead agencies to determine whether a project will have a significant impact on historical resources. Under CEQA, a cultural resource considered “historically significant” is a “historical resource” if it is included in a local register of historical resources, listed in or determined eligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), or meets the requirements for listing on the CRHR under any one of the criteria of historical significance (see Section 4.2).

Compliance with CEQA’s cultural resource provisions typically involves several steps. Archival research and field surveys are conducted, and identified cultural resources are inventoried and evaluated in prescribed ways. A prehistoric and historical archaeological site, standing structure, building, or object deemed by the lead agency to be a historical resource must be considered in project planning and development. A project with an impact that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource is a project that may have a significant impact on the environment. The lead agency is responsible for identifying potentially feasible measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate significant impacts in the significance of historical resources.

4.1 California Environment Quality Act

The *CEQA Statute & Guidelines* include procedures for identifying, analyzing, and disclosing potential adverse impacts to historical resources, which include all resources listed in or formally determined eligible for the CRHR, or local registers. CEQA further defines a “historical resource” as a resource that meets any of the following criteria of historical significance:

- A resource listed, or determined to be eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission for listing, in the CRHR (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 5024.1, Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 4850 et seq.)
- A resource included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in PRC Section 5020.1(k), public agencies must treat any such resource as significant unless the preponderance of evidence demonstrates that it is not historically or culturally significant.
- A resource identified as significant (i.e., rated 1-5) in a historical resource survey meeting the requirements of PRC Section 5024.1(g) (California Department of Parks and Recreation [DPR] 523 Form), unless the preponderance of evidence demonstrates that it is not historically or culturally significant.
- Any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript that a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California, provided the determination is supported by substantial evidence. Generally, a resource is considered “historically significant” if it meets the criteria for listing on the CRHR (PRC Section 5024.1, Title 14 CCR Section 4852), as outlined below.

4.2 California Register of Historical Resources Criteria of Evaluation

Under CEQA, a resource may be considered “historically significant” if it meets one or more of the following criteria:

1. It is associated with events or patterns of events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California; or
2. It is associated with the lives of persons important in our past; or

3. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values; or
4. It has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

The fact that a resource is not listed, or determined eligible for listing, in the CRHR, not included in a local register of historical resources (pursuant to PRC Section 5020.1(k)), or identified in an historical resources survey (meeting the criteria in PRC Section 5024.1(g)) does not preclude a lead agency from determining that the resource may be a historical resource as defined in PRC Section 5020.1(j) or 5024.1

4.3 Regulations Concerning Discovery of Human Remains

Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5-7055

California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5-7055 requires that, in the event of discovery or recognition of any human remains in any location other than a dedicated cemetery, there shall be no further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent remains until the coroner of the county in which the human remains are discovered has determined that the remains are not subject to the provisions of Section 27491 of the Government Code or any other related provisions of law concerning investigation of the circumstances, manner and cause of any death, and the recommendations concerning the treatment and disposition of the human remains have been made to the person responsible for the excavation, or their authorized representative, in the manner provided in PRC Section 5097.98. The coroner shall make their determination within two working days from the time the person responsible for the excavation, or their authorized representative, notifies the coroner of the discovery or recognition of the human remains. If the coroner determines that the remains are not subject to their authority and if the coroner recognizes the human remains to be those of a Native American or has reason to believe that they are those of a Native American, they should contact the NAHC by telephone within 24 hours.

California Public Resources Code Section 5097.98

This code mandates that the lead agency adhere to certain regulations when a project results in the identification or disturbance of Native American human remains, including:

a) Whenever the Native American Heritage Commission receives notification of a discovery of Native American human remains from a county coroner pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code, it shall immediately notify those persons it believes to be most likely descended from the deceased Native American. The descendants may, with the permission of the owner of the land or his or her authorized representative, inspect the site of the discovery of the Native American remains and may recommend to the owner or the person responsible for the excavation work means for treating or disposing of, with appropriate dignity, the human remains and any associated grave goods. The descendants shall complete their inspection and make their recommendation within 24 hours of their notification by the commission. The recommendation may include the scientific removal and nondestructive analysis of human remains and items associated with Native American burials.

b) Whenever the Native American Heritage Commission is unable to identify a descendent, or the descendent identified fails to make a recommendation, or the landowner or his or her authorized representative rejects the recommendation of the descendent, and the mediation provided for in subdivision (k) of Section 5097.94 fails to provide measures acceptable to the landowner, the landowner or his or her authorized representative shall reinter the human remains and items associated with Native American burials with appropriate dignity on the property, in a location not subject to further subsurface disturbance.

c) Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 5097.9, the provisions of this section, including those actions taken by the landowner or his or her authorized representative to implement this section, and any action taken to implement an agreement developed pursuant to subdivision (l) of Section 5097.94, shall be exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act [Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000)]

4.4 Assembly Bill 52

Assembly Bill 52 was enacted to guarantee that tribal cultural resources are protected to the largest extent possible throughout the development process. Tribal cultural resources are defined by PRC Section 21074 as follows:

(1) Sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that are either of the following:

(A) Included or determined to be eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources.

(B) Included in a local register of historical resources as defined in subdivision (k) of Section 5020.1.

(2) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Section 5024.1 for the purposes of this paragraph, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

(3) A cultural landscape that meets the criteria of subdivision (a) is a tribal cultural resource to the extent that the landscape is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape.

(4) A historical resource described in Section 21084.1, a unique archaeological resource as defined in subdivision (g) of Section 21083.2, or a “nonunique archaeological resource” as defined in subdivision (h) of Section 21083.2 may also be a tribal cultural resource if it conforms with the criteria of subdivision (a).

If tribal cultural resources are identified within a project area, impacts must be avoided or mitigated to the extent feasible. Assembly Bill 52 protects these resources by requiring that lead agencies seek tribal consultation prior to the release of any CEQA documentation. Lead agencies must notify tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with a potential project area within 14 days of a development application being complete. Upon this initial notification, tribes would confirm consultation within 30 days of notification.

5 METHODS

The study was conducted in accordance with the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) *Archaeological Resource Management Reports Guidelines* (California OHP 1990), the *Guidelines For Archaeological Research Designs* (California OHP 1991), and *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation* [48 Federal Register 44716-44740] (NPS 1983).

5.1 Literature and Records Search

A literature and records search was conducted at the South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS), at California State University, Fullerton on January 30, 2025. Maps and records on file were reviewed to identify any previously recorded cultural resources or reports for prior cultural resource investigations within a half mile radius of the project. The results of the records search are summarized in Sections 6.1 and 6.2. Additional historic background research was conducted by reviewing sources including published historic literature, archival records, and historic maps and aerial imagery (summarized in Section 6.3).

5.2 Sacred Lands File Search and Native American Outreach

Mojave Archaeological Consulting contacted the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) on January 29, 2025, to request a review of their Sacred Lands Files (SLF) to determine if any known Native American cultural properties (e.g., cultural resources, traditional use or gathering areas, places of religious or sacred activity) are present within or adjacent to the project. The NAHC responded on February 5th, stating the SLF search results were negative. They provided a list of Native American individuals and organizations who may also have information about cultural resources within the project area. As recommended by the NAHC, all individuals on the Native American contact list were then contacted to elicit further information about cultural resources within the area. Additionally, in accordance with past requests, an invitation to visit the project locations or to participate in the field survey was included for local tribes including the Morongo Band of Mission Indians and the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians (Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation).

Outreach via email that included an information letter, and a map of the project, was sent on February 11th to the following individuals:

- Anne Brierty, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Morongo Band of Mission Indians
- Robert Martin, Chairperson, Morongo Band of Mission Indians
- Jill McCormick, Historic Preservation Officer, Quechan Indian Tribe of the Fort Yuma Reservation
- Jordan Joaquin, President, Quechan Tribal Council, Quechan Indian Tribe of the Fort Yuma Reservation
- Alexandra McCleary, Senior Manager of Cultural Resources Management, San Manuel Band of Mission Indians
- Donna Yocum, Chairperson, San Manuel Band of Mission Indians
- Wayne Walker, Co-Chairperson, Serrano Nation of Mission Indians
- Mark Cochrane, Co-Chairperson, Serrano Nation of Mission Indians
- Nicolas Garza, Cultural Resources Specialist, Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians
- Christopher Nicosia, Cultural Resources Manager/THPO Manager, Cultural Resources Specialist, Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians

- Sarah O'Brien, Tribal Archivist, Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians

Responses were received from two individuals and their respective tribal organizations. Jill McCormick responded on behalf of the Quechan Indian Tribe of the Fort Yuma Reservation on February 11th and stated they do not wish to comment on the project and would defer to more local tribes. Eunice Ambriz responded on behalf of the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians (Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation) on February 20th and stated they had already begun consultation with PPHCSD concerning the project. They request a copy of this report for their review. Mr. Ambriz advised the area is culturally sensitive to the Yuhaaviatam but noted that “the proposed project area has a low sensitivity for cultural resources with a couple of ephemeral waterways nearby, but we still need to review the cultural report”.

A representative copy of the outreach letter that was sent and copies of all replies received to date are included in Attachment A along with the SLF search results and corresponding Native American contact list to further assist PPHCSD with government-to-government consultation under Assembly Bill 52.

5.3 Field Methods

Mojave Archaeological Consulting's Principal Investigator, Michelle Hart, performed an intensive pedestrian field survey of the project site on February 20, 2025. The survey included the entirety of the Well 18 parcel, the backup well parcel, and the linear pipeline connection corridors within the right-of-way of Beekley Road and Camelia Road (see Section 1, Figures 2 and 3). The locations were inspected for cultural resources using survey transects spaced less than 15-meters apart. A handheld Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver, maps, and digital mapping files (i.e. kml/kmz files), were used to ensure complete survey coverage. The potential for buried cultural deposits was also assessed by examining soil profiles along road cuts, drainage/wash banks, rodent burrows, any previously excavated soils, and other natural and artificial exposures. Ground surface visibility was generally very good (approximately 80-to-90%) throughout the area, dependent on the density of vegetation cover and level of previous ground disturbance. Section 6.4 summarizes the results of the field survey.

6 RESULTS

6.1 Previous Investigations

Based on the results of the SCCIC search data, which included a 0.5-mile-wide buffer (study area), four previous cultural resource investigations have been completed in the area (Table 6.1-1), none of which covered any portion of project.

Table 6.1-1: Previous Surveys within 0.5-Miles of the Project

Number	Year	Author(s)	Title	Within Project ?
SB-06333	2005	Melinda C. Horne	Cultural Resources Survey for the Mojave Water Agency Banking Project	No
SB-07915	2015	Antonina Delu	Archaeological Survey Report for the State Route 18 Widen Shoulders and Install Centerline and Shoulder Rumble Strips Between State Route 395 and L.A. County Line Within and Near the Cities of Adelanto and Victorville, San Bernardino County, California	No
SB-07982	2013	Sara Dietler, Elizabeth Denniston, and Steven Treffers	Cultural Resources Impact Mitigation Analysis for the Adelanto North 2035 Sustainable Community Plan, City of Adelanto, San Bernardino County, California	No
SB-04482	1996	Bruce Love	Identification and Evaluation of Historic Properties: Copper Mountain Mesa Water Pipeline Rights-of-Way Assessment District 87-1, Joshua Basin Water District, San Bernardino County, California	No

6.2 Previously Identified Resources

Nine cultural resources have been previously recorded within the 0.5-mile study area (Table 6.2-1). These resources include State Route 18 (historic road/highway located south of the project), and eight historic trash dumps or trash scatters. No prehistoric or Native American cultural resources have been previously identified within the 0.5-mile study area, and no cultural resources, either historic or prehistoric, have been previously recorded within the project.

Table 6.2-1: Previously Recorded Resources within 0.5-Miles of the Project

Resource Number	Resource Description	Within Project?
P-36-028821 CA-SBR-28821H	Historic trash scatter	No
P-36-028822 CA-SBR-28822H	Historic trash scatter	No
P-36-028823 CA-SBR-28823H	Historic trash scatter	No
P-36-023968 CA-SBR-15153H	Historic trash scatter	No
P-36-023969 CA-SBR-15154H	Historic trash scatter	No

Resource Number	Resource Description	Within Project?
P-36-023978 CA-SBR-15163H	Historic trash scatter	No
P-36-023979 CA-SBR-15164H	Historic trash scatter	No
P-36-024785 CA-SBR-15826H	Historic trash scatter	No
P-36-012189 CA-SBR-12181H	Historic road (State Route 18)	No

6.3 Historic Maps and Aerial Imagery

Maps and aerial imagery were also reviewed to determine the historic land uses in the general study area and to identify the potential for historic cultural features within the project (Table 6.3-1). Sources included General Land Office (GLO) survey plat maps dating to 1856; USGS topographic maps dating to 1937, 1942, 1953, 1955, and 1969; and aerial imagery dating from 1952, 1954, 1959, 1968, 1984 and 1985 through present (gloreCORDS.blm.gov, earthexplorer.usgs.gov, and netronline.com, accessed February 19, 2025).

In 1856 no cultural features were depicted as lying within the project or the surrounding area. By 1937, "Palmdale Victorville Road" (State Route 18) was present to the south of the project as the primary east-west trending route through the area and several other unnamed routes had been laid out including north-south trending roads corresponding to present day Sheep Creek Road and Beekley Road. By 1955, additional roads are present, including a short alignment corresponding to present Camellia Road. A water tank, well, radio tower, and small unnamed structures (homestead cabins) are also mapped in the area. Aerial imagery demonstrates large swaths of acreage in the area that were cleared of native vegetation in the 1950's, including the parcel comprising the proposed Well 18 site. Presumably the vegetation may have been cleared for grazing, agriculture or planned residential development that never materialized.

In 1959 imagery, sparse additional small homestead cabin structures are visible in the area of Section 24 including a small possible structure on the eastern edge of the parcel comprising the backup well site on the north side of Camellia Road. In general, the construction of the structure and numerous other small structures in the area during the midcentury era can be tied to the Small Tracts Act of 1938, a desert homestead program in which a small parcel of several acres could be purchased cheaply at public auction for recreational residence purposes (Ainsworth 1955). Starting in the 1950's, homesteaders were required to improve their properties by constructing a small dwelling within three years (Flannagan 2022). In most cases, such dwellings were never occupied on a full-time basis and were only sporadically utilized as seasonal weekend recreational getaways that were often abandoned after several years or decades. General Land Office records demonstrate that more than 30 land patents were issued within the vicinity of the backup well site within Section 24 from 1954 through 1961 (gloreCORDS.blm.gov). By the early 1980's the small possible homestead cabin at the backup well site had been abandoned and likely destroyed or dismantled as it is no longer apparent at the location in any subsequent aerial imagery. In modern decades modular homes and small ranches were constructed on some nearby parcels, but the area remained largely undeveloped open desert, with both the proposed Well 18 site and the backup well site appearing as vacant land.

Table 6.3-1: Historic Map and Aerial Imagery Features within 0.5-Mile of the Project

Year	Map/Source	Description	Within Project?
1937, 1942	USGS 1:48,000 Shadow Mountains, California	"PALMDALE VICTORVILLE ROAD"	No
		Unnamed Roads	Yes
1953	USGS 1:250,000 San Bernardino, California	Unnamed Roads	Yes
1955, 1969	USGS 1:24,000 Shadow Mountains SE, California	"PALMDALE ROAD"	No
		"SHEEP CREEK ROAD"	No
		Unnamed Roads	Yes
		Water Tanks	No
		Well	No
		Radio Tower	No
1950's	USGS Aerial Imagery	Unnamed Structures	No
		Small Structures (Homestead Cabins)	Yes

6.4 Newly Recorded Resources – Intensive Pedestrian Inventory Results

During the pedestrian field survey, the remnants of one small midcentury era homestead structure were observed on the north side of Camellia Road, including a small concrete slab foundation situated on private land west of the backup well site, with a scatter of associated wood building debris extending to the right-of-way at Camellia Road (Plate 7). No other artifacts were found at the location. Within the backup well site parcel it was noted that a minor seasonal drainage is present, and the majority of the parcel is disturbed from erosion resulting from past flood events. At the Well 18 site parcel, the ground surface appears previously disturbed from older mechanical vegetation clearing and possible agricultural disking (circa 1950's or earlier, see Section 6.3). Dispersed modern trash, several non-diagnostic crushed sanitary cans and a few other fragmented metal items of indeterminate age and lacking any historic interest were observed on the ground surface within the parcel and along the Beekley Road right-of-way. Overall, sediments at all locations were found to consist of loose mixed alluvial sands and gravels that have been previously disturbed and appear to have a low potential for any intact and potentially significant buried cultural deposits.

Plate 7: Dispersed remains of a 1950's recreational cabin as seen from Camellia Road, west of backup well site, view to the northeast.



7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Mojave Archaeological Consulting, LLC has prepared this cultural resources assessment on behalf of Tom Dodson and Associates, for the Phelan Piñon Hills Community Services District's proposed construction of a new well, which includes two potential locations (Well 18 and Backup Well site) within the community of Phelan in unincorporated San Bernardino County. In accordance with CEQA, to determine the potential for the proposed project to impact historical/archaeological resources eligible for or listed on the CRHR, Mojave Archaeological Consulting's assessment included a records search, historic research, an SLF search with the NAHC, Native American outreach, and an archaeological survey.

The records search completed at the South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) included a 0.5-mile-wide buffer/study area, and indicated four previous cultural resources investigations had been conducted in the study area and nine historic cultural resources (small trash dumps and a road/highway) are previously documented within the area, none of which are in close proximity to the project or require any further consideration in relation to the proposed project activities. The SLF search with the NAHC was completed with negative results and further Native American outreach likewise did not yield any responses that would suggest there are any known cultural resources within proximity to the project.

Historic research that included a review of historic land patents, maps, and aerial imagery suggests the Well 18 site was previously cleared of vegetation for agriculture or other unknown purposes and the Backup Well site was briefly used for recreational homesteading during the mid-century era. An intensive pedestrian survey demonstrated moderate levels of ground disturbance at each site. The only historic materials observed included scattered and fragmented wood building debris representing the remains of a former 1950's recreational homestead cabin with no associated artifacts present. Such remains are ubiquitous throughout the desert area and are representative of numerous mid-century era small tract claims. Considering the poor condition of the materials, lack of any associated artifacts or potential for buried refuse deposits, the minor remains would not meet any consideration for historic significance. As such, the field survey did not identify any resources that would be considered "historically significant" or a "historical resource" under CEQA.

In summary, the investigation concludes there are no "historical resources" known to be present within or adjacent to the project and the geological context of the project setting and level of past disturbance suggests that any intact and significant buried archaeological deposits are unlikely to be present. Based on these findings, Mojave Archaeological Consulting recommends to PPHCSD that the proposed project will have no impact on historical or archaeological resources. No further cultural resources work is recommended necessary for the proposed project activities. However, if any buried cultural materials are encountered during ground disturbing activities, all work should be halted in the vicinity of the discovery until a qualified archaeologist can assess the significance and integrity of the find. If intact and significant archaeological remains are encountered, impacts should be mitigated appropriately. Additionally, Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, *CEQA Statute & Guidelines* Section 15064.5(e), and PRC Section 5097.98 mandate the process to be followed in the unlikely event of the discovery of human remains. Finally, if the project is expanded to include any areas not covered by this survey, or other recent cultural resource investigations, additional cultural resource survey would be required.

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APPENDIX A

**SACRED LANDS FILE SEARCH AND NATIVE AMERICAN
CORRESPONDENCE**



NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION

February 5, 2025

Michelle Hart
Mojave Archaeological Consulting

Via Email to: Michelle@mojavearchaeology.com

Re: Phelan Pflon Hills Community Services District Well 18 Project, San Bernardino County

To Whom it May Concern:

As requested, a record search of the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) Sacred Lands File (SLF) was completed based on information submitted for the above referenced project. The results were **negative**. Please note that tribes do not always record their sacred sites in the SLF, nor are they required to do so. As such, a SLF search is not a substitute for consultation with all tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with a project's geographic area.

Attached is a list of Native American tribes who may also have knowledge of cultural resources in the project area. This list should provide a starting place in locating areas of potential adverse impact within the proposed project area. Please contact all of those listed; if they cannot supply information, they may recommend others with specific knowledge. If within two weeks of notification, a response has not been received, the Commission requests that you follow-up with a telephone call or email to ensure that the project information was received.

If you receive notification of a change of address or phone number from a tribe, please notify the NAHC so that we can assure that our lists contain current information.

In addition to engaging in tribal consultation, you should consult the appropriate regional California Historical Research Information System (CHRIS) archaeological information Center to determine whether it has information regarding the presence of recorded archaeological sites within the project area.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at melina.carlos@nahc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Melina Carlos

Melina Carlos
Cultural Resources Analyst

Attachment

CHAIRPERSON
Reginald Pogodin
Chumash

VICE-CHAIRPERSON
Buffy McCullen
Yokayo Pomo, Yuki,
Nomlaki

SECRETARY
Sara Dutschke
Miwok

PARLIAMENTARIAN
Wayna Nelson
Llano

COMMISSIONER
Isaac Bojorquez
Ohlone-Costanoan

COMMISSIONER
Stanley Rodriguez
Kumeyaay

COMMISSIONER
Laurana Belden
Serano

COMMISSIONER
Reid Afanavich
Cahuilla

COMMISSIONER
Bennie Calac
Paiute-Yuma Band of
Llano

ACTING EXECUTIVE
SECRETARY
STEVEN QUINN

NAHC HEADQUARTERS
1550 Harbor Boulevard
Suite 100
West Sacramento,
California 95691
(916) 373-3710
nahc@nahc.ca.gov

**Native American Heritage Commission
Native American Contact List
San Bernardino County
2/5/2025**

Tribe Name	Fed (F) Non-Fed (N)	Contact Person	Contact Address	Phone #	Fax #	Email Address
Morongo Band of Mission Indians	F	Robert Martin, Chairperson	12700 Pumarra Road Banning, CA, 92220	(951) 755-5110	(951) 755-5177	
Morongo Band of Mission Indians	F	Ann Brierty, THPO	12700 Pumarra Road Banning, CA, 92220	(951) 755-5259	(951) 572-6004	abrierty@morongo-nsn.gov
Quechan Indian Tribe of the Fort Yuma Reservation	F	Jill McCormick, Historic Preservation Officer	P.O. Box 1899 Yuma, AZ, 85366-1899	(928) 261-0254		abrierty@morongo-nsn.gov historicpreservation@quechantribe.com
Quechan Indian Tribe of the Fort Yuma Reservation	F	Jordan Joaquin, President, Quechan Tribal Council	P.O. Box 1899 Yuma, AZ, 85366-1899	(760) 919-3600		executivesecretary@quechan
San Fernando Band of Mission Indians	N	Donna Yocum, Chairperson	P.O. Box 221838 Newhall, CA, 91322	(503) 539-0933	(503) 574-3308	dyocum@sfbmi.org
San Manuel Band of Mission Indians	F	Alexandra McCleary, Senior Manager of Cultural Resources Management	26569 Community Center Drive Highland, CA, 92346	(909) 633-0054		alexandra.mccleary@sanmanuel-nsn.gov
Serrano Nation of Mission Indians	N	Wayne Walker, Co-Chairperson	P. O. Box 343 Patton, CA, 92369	(253) 370-0167		serranonation1@gmail.com
Serrano Nation of Mission Indians	N	Mark Cochrane, Co-Chairperson	P. O. Box 343 Patton, CA, 92369	(909) 576-2598		serranonation1@gmail.com

Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians	F	Nicolas Garza, Cultural Resources Specialist	46-200 Harrison Place Coachella, CA, 92236	(760) 863-2486		nicolas.garza@29palmsbomi-nsn.gov
Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians	F	Christopher Nicosia, Cultural Resources Manager/THPD Manager	46-200 Harrison Place Coachella, CA, 92236	(760) 863-3972		christopher.nicosia@29palmsbomi-nsn.gov
Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians	F	Sarah O'Brien, Tribal Archivist	46-200 Harrison Place Coachella, CA, 92236	(760) 863-2460		sobrien@29palmsbomi-nsn.gov

ent only as of the date of this document. Distribution of this list does not relieve any person of statutory responsibility as defined in Section 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code, Section 5097.94 of the Public Resources Code.

This list is only applicable for contacting local Native Americans with regard to cultural resources assessment for the proposed Phelan-Piñon Hills Community Services District Well 18 Project.

Alexandra McCleary, Senior Manager of Cultural Resources Management
San Manuel Band of Mission Indians
26569 Community Center Drive
Highland, CA, 92346
Transmitted via email to alexandra.mccleary@sanmanuel-nm.gov

RE: Pbelan Piñon Hills Community Services District Well No. 18 Development Project

Good Morning,

Mojave Archaeological Consulting, LLC, is conducting a cultural resources assessment for the Pbelan Piñon Hills Community Services District Well No. 18 Development. The project is located at two locations within the Pbelan Piñon Hills Community in the High Desert region of San Bernardino County. Pbelan Piñon Hills Community Services District (PPHCSD) is the Lead Agency for CEQA compliance.

PPHCSD is proposing construction of one new well (Well No. 18) and is also conducting analysis of a backup location. Well No. 18 would be located on a 2.2-acre parcel (APN 3100-561-14) on Beekley Road, south of Begonia Road, north of Highway 18. The backup well site is proposed to be located on another 2.2-acre parcel (APN 3101-361-25) at the northeast corner of Barker Road and Camellia Road. Construction at either site is anticipated to include a retention basin, a chlorination building and well, and other features, such as electrical components and drain line. At each of the locations, 600 to 1,800 linear feet of pipeline would also need to be installed within roadways to connect to existing supply systems. Ground disturbance using heavy equipment is expected for well drilling, pipeline installation, site preparation, and construction. The attached map depicts the project sites, located within Section 22 and Section 24, Township 5 North, Range 7 West on the Shadow Mountain SE, CA USGS topographic quadrangle.

As part of the cultural resources investigation, a CHRIS records search was completed at the South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC), and a search of the Native American Heritage Commission's (NAHC's) Sacred Lands Files was requested. The SCCIC search results indicate the project sites have not been previously surveyed for cultural resources. Nine historic resources have been recorded within a half mile of the project sites (refuse scatters, trash dumps and Palmdale Road Hwy 18). No prehistoric or Native American cultural resources have been previously recorded within the search area. The NAHC responded on February 5th that the SLF search results for the area were negative but advised contacting a list of Native American tribes.

I am reaching out to you to seek any information you may wish to provide regarding potential Native American cultural resources in or near the project area and would welcome any input to consider during the cultural resources investigation. Please respond at your earliest convenience with any information or knowledge you may wish to share to inform the cultural resources assessment report. Any requests for documentation or information I cannot provide will be forwarded to our client or the lead agency (PPHCSD). As the cultural resources consultant for the project, Mojave Archaeological Consulting is not involved in government-to-government consultation or AB 52 compliance; rather, this letter is intended as early outreach to seek your input concerning cultural resources in or near the project area to help assess the cultural resource sensitivity of the project. I look forward to your input and appreciate your time and effort to review this request.

Please note that we will be conducting a pedestrian survey of the project sites soon. Should the Tribe wish to participate in the upcoming survey or coordinate a field visit, please let me know.

Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "MHart". The letters are stylized and connected.

Michelle Hart, M.A.

Cultural Resources Consultant Principal Investigator

Mojave Archaeological Consulting, LLC

Email: michelle@mojavearchaeology.com, Phone: (760) 821-7061

Attachments:

Native American Heritage Commission Response Letter

Project Location Map

RE: Phelan Piñon Hills Community Services District Well No. 18 Development Project [SD-PPHCSD-2025-1]

Eunice Ambriz <Eunice.Ambriz@sanmanuel-rsn.gov>
To: "michelle@mojavearchaeology.com" <michelle@mojavearchaeology.com>

Thu, Feb 20, 2025 at 2:33 PM

Dear Michelle,

We have already started consultation on this project. We received the Initial Notice back in January. We informed the Lead Agency that this project is culturally sensitive, and we are awaiting the cultural report. I can inform you that the proposed project area has a low sensitivity for cultural resources with a couple of ephemeral waterways nearby, but we still need to review the cultural report.

Best,

Eunice

3 attachments



Phelan_Well_18_Tribal_Outreach_San_Manuel.pdf
100K



SLF No Phelan Piñon Hills Community Services District Well 18 Project 02.05.2025.pdf
183K



Project_Area_Map.pdf
716K

**Re: [EXTERNAL]:Phelan Piñon Hills Community Services District Well No. 18
Development Project**

1 message

Jill McCormick <historicpreservation@quechantribe.com>
To: Mojave Archaeological Consulting <michelle@mojavearchaeology.com>

Tue, Feb 11, 2025 at 3:17 PM

Good morning,

This email is to inform you that the Historic Preservation Office does not wish to comment on this project. We defer to the local Tribes and support their determinations on this matter.

Email correspondence is the preferred method of communication with this office. Hard copies of project letters are not required if an email containing the project documents has been sent to the Historic Preservation Office.

Also, please update your contact information for the Quechan Tribe per recent changes to our NAHC contact list. All project-based correspondence should be sent to this email address (historicpreservation@quechantribe.com).

Please remove the culturalcommittees@quechantribe.com and scottmanfred@yahoo.com from the distribution list for the Quechan Tribe.

Jill

H. Jill McCormick, M.A.
Historic Preservation Office
Ft. Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe
P.O. Box 1899
Yuma, AZ 85366-1899
Office: 760-919-3631
Cell: 928-920-6521



From: Mojave Archaeological Consulting <michelle@mojavearchaeology.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 11, 2025 10:19 AM
To: Jill McCormick <historicpreservation@quechantribe.com>