OFFICE MEMO

TO: Alexander Tasoff Environmental Scientist	**DATE:** March 11, 2026
FROM: Connor Hendricks Environmental Scientist	**SUBJECT:** Cultural Resources Clearance: CR-NCRO-2026-001 Tracy Sub-Basin SGMA Well

This memo documents a cultural resources review conducted for the Form 77 Environmental Clearance Request/Permit process. This memo also serves as a cultural resources review of the proposed project for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Project Introduction

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) is proposing to install one new groundwater monitoring station in the Tracy sub-basin. The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) was signed into law requiring local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) to monitor groundwater levels within their service area by having an adequate grid of monitoring wells spaced appropriately across the groundwater basin. This Project is to install monitoring wells through DWR's Technical Support Services (TSS) program to address gaps in this data.

Project Location

The proposed groundwater monitoring station is located near the New Jerusalem Airport approximately 8 miles southeast of the city of Tracy in San Joaquin County (Figure 1). It can be found in Township 03 South, 06 East, Section 15 on the *Vernalis* 7.5' USGS topographic quadrangle.

Project Description

A DWR Professional Geologist (PG) will oversee a contractor drill and install the monitoring well. The project footprint will span approximately 100 feet by 200 feet around each well site.

The driller will use a hollow-stem auger rig to drill an 8" diameter boring for the well. The PG will collect drill cutting samples every 5' to review the lithologic and geophysical logs alongside each other and select the final well screen interval. All cuttings will be stored in drums and hauled off-site or spread on site with permission from the property owner.

Each well will consist of a 2" diameter schedule 40 PVC well casing, and the base of each well, from the bottom up, will consist of sand, a filter pack, and a bentonite seal. Cement will be pumped from the support truck to place the sanitary seal in accordance with state and county requirements. A raised well monument and concrete pad, approximately 2 feet by 2 feet and 4 inches tall with four approximately 4-foot-high metal crash posts will be installed at ground level to protect the well from potential damage.

Background Research

CHRIS Records Search

DWR requested a records search from the Central California Information Center (CCaIC) for the project footprint and a 0.25-mile buffer. The request was sent to the CCaIC on February 18, 2026. The results were returned to DWR on February 20, 2026. The CCaIC did not identify any resources within the project footprint nor within 0.25-miles of the project footprint.

Previous Studies

The CCaIC did not identify any records of previous studies taking place within the project

footprint nor within 0.25-miles.

Tribal
The project area lies in the traditional territory of the Northern Valley Yokuts. Broadly defined, Northern Valley Yokuts refers to groups speaking several distinct linguistic dialects who inhabited the lower San Joaquin River watershed and its tributaries. Due to abundant riverine resources, the Northern Valley Yokuts were generally sedentary, occupying the same locations year-round, though there were times of seasonal disbandment for harvesting wild plant resources such as acorns and seeds (Kroeber 1925). Principal settlements were located on top of low mounds on or near riverbanks, where their elevated position prevented inundation during seasonal flooding (Wallace 1978). Northern Valley Yokuts habitation was most common and dense in areas situated in close proximity to rivers and major tributaries, though the drier plains were occupied at lower density, more often on the east side of the river (Kroeber 1925).

Historic Context
California was officially ceded to the United States in 1848, which led to the continued appropriation of Native American territory by ranchers, prospectors, and an increasing number of settlers. By the mid-nineteenth century, Euro–American miners, having failed in the lodes in the Sierras, began to move into the area to try their luck at agriculture, ranching, and to work as farm/ranch hands (Rolle 1998). This large influx of people into Central California resulted in a large demand for meat and animal byproducts and in the early 1850s, entrepreneurs brought large herds of cattle, sheep, and hogs into the large grazing areas of Central Valley and the Sierra Foothills (Caltrans 2007). The completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869 facilitated the shipping of animal products to markets east, further bolstering the importance of ranching in the region (Caltrans 2007).

The beginning of the twentieth century brought the motorized water pump which would come to transform Central Valley into an agricultural center by tapping California's underground aquifer. The aquifer was tapped so heavily that by the 1930s the aquifer was dropping ten feet a year *(*Autobee 2017). This water demand only escalated during World War II when national need for cotton, flax, wheat, and vegetables increased. It was clear a new source of water would be needed. This demand eventually led to the construction of major water infrastructure projects in the region including the Central Valley Project and California State Water Project.

Historic Maps
Early maps (1915 & 1942) of the area show very little development or placenames in the vicinity of the proposed project footprint. An unnamed road is depicted running through the proposed project footprint; however it does not match any modern road alignments. The New Jerusalem School is the nearest structure approximately two miles west of the project footprint.

By 1952, two landing strips are depicted with an annotation reading "Aban'd" on the same alignment as the modern New Jerusalem Airport. Additionally an unnamed road is depicted near the proposed project footprint along the same alignment as the modern farm road connecting to S Kasson Road to the northeast of the site.

<u>Survey</u>
Both proposed work areas were surveyed by DWR archaeologist Connor Hendricks on March

3, 2026. The intensive survey covered a minimum 25-meters around the proposed monitoring well. The survey consisted of transects 5-meter in width (Figure 2). Approximately 80% of the ground in the survey area consisted of graded farm roads with compacted dirt. Special attention was paid to the drainages with disturbed soil on the sides of the roads. No resources were observed or recorded as a result of the survey.

SVBGSA-01
The proposed project footprint is located on the periphery of a pullout off of Lapis Road. The pullout is graded with scattered patches of aggregate road base. Vegetation outside of the pullout was thick grass and bushes. Visibility was approximately 10-20%. Bootscrapes were used intermittently to observe the soil. P-27-002923 was relocated during the survey. No new resources were recorded as a result of the survey.

Results and Recommendations
The cultural investigation for this project did not identify any recorded cultural resources within the proposed project footprint. No further cultural resources studies are required for the project as described above at this time.

Should any of the above project plans be modified to include work that will disturb the ground surface in areas not reviewed by this memo, additional studies will be required. If cultural resources are uncovered while engaging in the work activities, all work will temporarily cease until the findings can be assessed by a qualified archaeologist and an appropriate course of action can be determined. Should human remains be uncovered, all work must stop immediately and the County coroner must be contacted pursuant to California Health and Safety Code 7050.5(b).

Any questions regarding this memo may be directed at the author or any DWR DISE Cultural Resources staff.

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Attachment A: Maps

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Copyright:© 2013 National Geographic Society, i-cubed, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

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Proposed Well

Well Buffer

Tracy Sub-basin SGMA Well

Figure 1: Location Overview

Vernalis 7.5' USGS Topographic Quadrangle

San Joaquin County

0 0.130.25 0.5 0.75 1 Miles

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Proposed Well

Survey

Tracy Sub-basin SGMA Well

Figure 2: Survey Overview
San Joaquin County

0 50 100 200 300 400 Feet

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