CULTURAL RESOURCES STUDY FOR THE POLARIS PLACE PROJECT

CITY OF ALISO VIEJO, ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

APNs 623-481-49 to -53

Lead Agency:

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May 1, 2026

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Archaeological Database Information

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Report Date:	May 1, 2026
Report Title:	Cultural Resources Study for the Polaris Place Project, City of Aliso Viejo, Orange County, California (APNs 623-481-49 to -53)
Type of Study:	Phase I Cultural Resources Study
New Site(s):	None
Updated Site(s):	None
Assessor's Parcel Numbers:	623-481-49 to -53
USGS Quadrangle:	Township 7 South, Range 8 West of the San Bernadino Baseline and Meridian on the USGS *San Juan Capistrano, California* (7.5-minute) topographic quadrangle
Acreage:	Approximately 22.5 acres (gross)
Key Words:	Survey; negative; no further archaeological study recommended.

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MANAGEMENT SUMMARY/ABSTRACT

In response to a request from the project applicant, a cultural resources study was conducted by BFSA Environmental Services, a Perennial Company (BFSA), for the proposed approximately 22.5-acre (gross) Polaris Place Project located east of the intersection of Aliso Viejo Parkway and State Route 73, at 1-5 Polaris Way in the city of Aliso Viejo, Orange County, California. The project includes Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 623-481-49 to -53 and is situated within Township 7 South, Range 8 West of the San Bernardino Baseline and Meridian on the United States Geological Survey (USGS) 1:24,000-scale *San Juan Capistrano, California* (7.5-minute) topographic quadrangle map. The subject property is currently developed with Polaris Place, a commercial business park that includes five commercial buildings, a courtyard, and a parking lot with associated landscape, hardscape, and infrastructure. As proposed, the project applicant plans to demolish the existing buildings for the construction of a multi-family residential development, along with associated hardscape, landscape, and infrastructure.

The purpose of this investigation was to locate and record cultural resources present within the project and evaluate any resources that may be impacted by the development as part of the City of Aliso Viejo's environmental review process, conducted in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) criteria. The cultural resources investigation included a review of an archaeological records search conducted at the South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) at California State University, Fullerton (CSU Fullerton), in order to assess previous archaeological studies and identify any previously recorded cultural resources within the project vicinity. The records search identified five resources within one half mile of the project, none of which are located on the property. The records search also identified 27 previous studies conducted within one half mile of the project, seven of which overlap the subject property (Archaeological Research, Inc. 1973; Archaeological Resource Management Corp. 1979; Cottrell 1983; DeBarros and Keorper 1990; McKenna and DeBarros 1993a, McKenna and DeBarros 1993b; Mason and Brechbiel 1997). None of these identified any cultural resources within the property. A Sacred Lands File (SLF) search was also requested from the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). The SLF search results for the presence of recorded Native American sacred sites or locations of religious or ceremonial importance within the project vicinity was received with positive results.

BFSA field archaeologist Mary Chitjian conducted a pedestrian survey of the property on April 9, 2026. The survey did not locate any cultural resources within the project. Further, based upon a review of historic aerial photographs, the entire subject property was cleared, graded, and developed between 1988 and 2000. Due to previous ground-disturbing activities and the absence of identified cultural resources within the project boundaries, the potential for significant cultural resources to be present or impacted by the proposed development is minimal. As such, no further archaeological study or mitigation measures are recommended. A copy of this report will be permanently filed with the SCCIC at CSU Fullerton. All notes, photographs, and other materials related to this project will be curated at the BFSA archaeological laboratory in Poway, California.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Description

The cultural resources study for the Polaris Place Project was conducted in order to comply with CEQA and the City of Aliso Viejo environmental requirements. The approximately 22.5-acre (gross) project is located at 1-5 Polaris Way, east of the intersection of Aliso Viejo Parkway and State Route 73 (APNs 623-481-49 to -53) in the city of Aliso Viejo, Orange County, California (Figure 1.1–1). On the USGS 1:24,000-scale *San Juan Capistrano, California* (7.5-minute) topographic quadrangle map, the project is situated within Township 7 South, Range 8 West of the San Bernardino Baseline and Meridian (Figure 1.1–2). The subject property is currently developed with Polaris Place, a commercial business park that includes five commercial buildings, a courtyard, and a parking lot with associated landscape, hardscape, and infrastructure. The five buildings are associated with addresses 1-5 Polaris Way. As proposed, the project applicant plans to demolish the existing buildings for the construction of a new multi-family residential development, along with associated hardscape, landscape, and infrastructure (Figure 1.1–3).

The decision to request a cultural resources study was based upon the cultural resource sensitivity of the locality, as suggested by known site density and predictive modeling. Sensitivity for cultural resources in a given area is usually indicated by known settlement patterns which, in the Aliso Viejo region, were focused on freshwater resources and food supply.

1.2 Environmental Setting

The project is located in Aliso Viejo, which is situated east of the San Joaquin Hills. The San Joaquin Hills divide San Aliso from the city of Laguna Beach and the Pacific Coast, the latter of which is located approximately 4.5 miles southwest of the property. The project consists of Polaris Place, a commercial business park comprised of five commercial buildings, a central courtyard, and an extensive parking lot. The general area slopes eastward from the San Joaquin Hills towards Aliso Creek located to the east of the property. However, as the project is already completely developed, the majority of the property is relatively flat, with an average elevation of approximately 435 feet above mean sea level. The only exception to this is the periphery of the project, which consists of commercial landscaping that slopes upwards towards Aliso Viejo Parkway in the northern half of the project and downwards towards a neighboring parcel in the southern half of the project. Since the project is completely developed, vegetation within the property consists entirely of maintained commercial landscaping.

Geologically, the subject property has been mapped within the Pliocene to Miocene-aged Monterey Formation (Langenheim et al. 2006). The specific soil types found within the property are characterized as Balcom clay loam, 30 to 50 percent slopes, and Calleguas clay loam, 50 to 75 percent slopes, eroded (NRCS 2019).

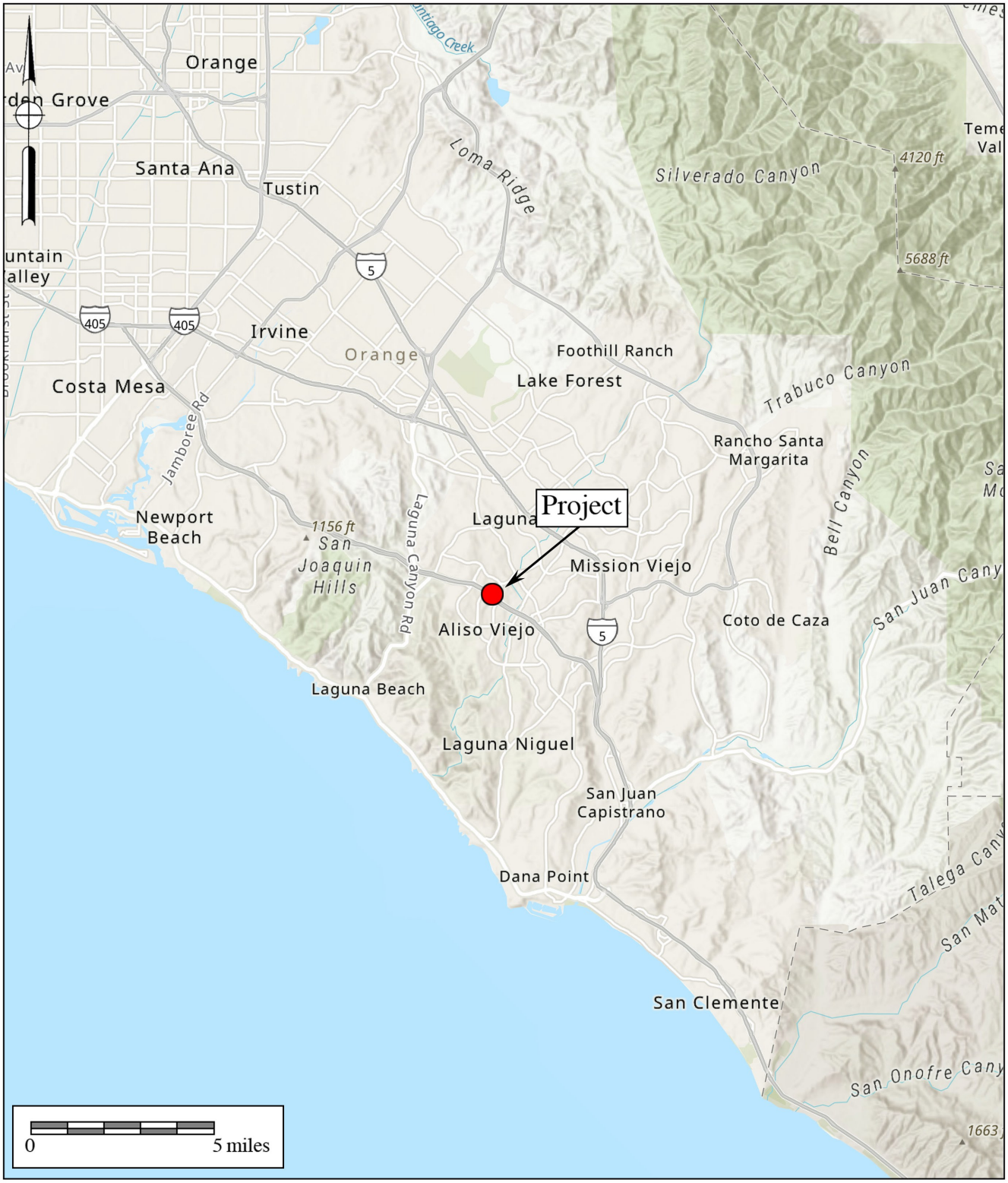

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Figure 1.1–1
General Location Map
The Polaris Place Project
Esri Street Map

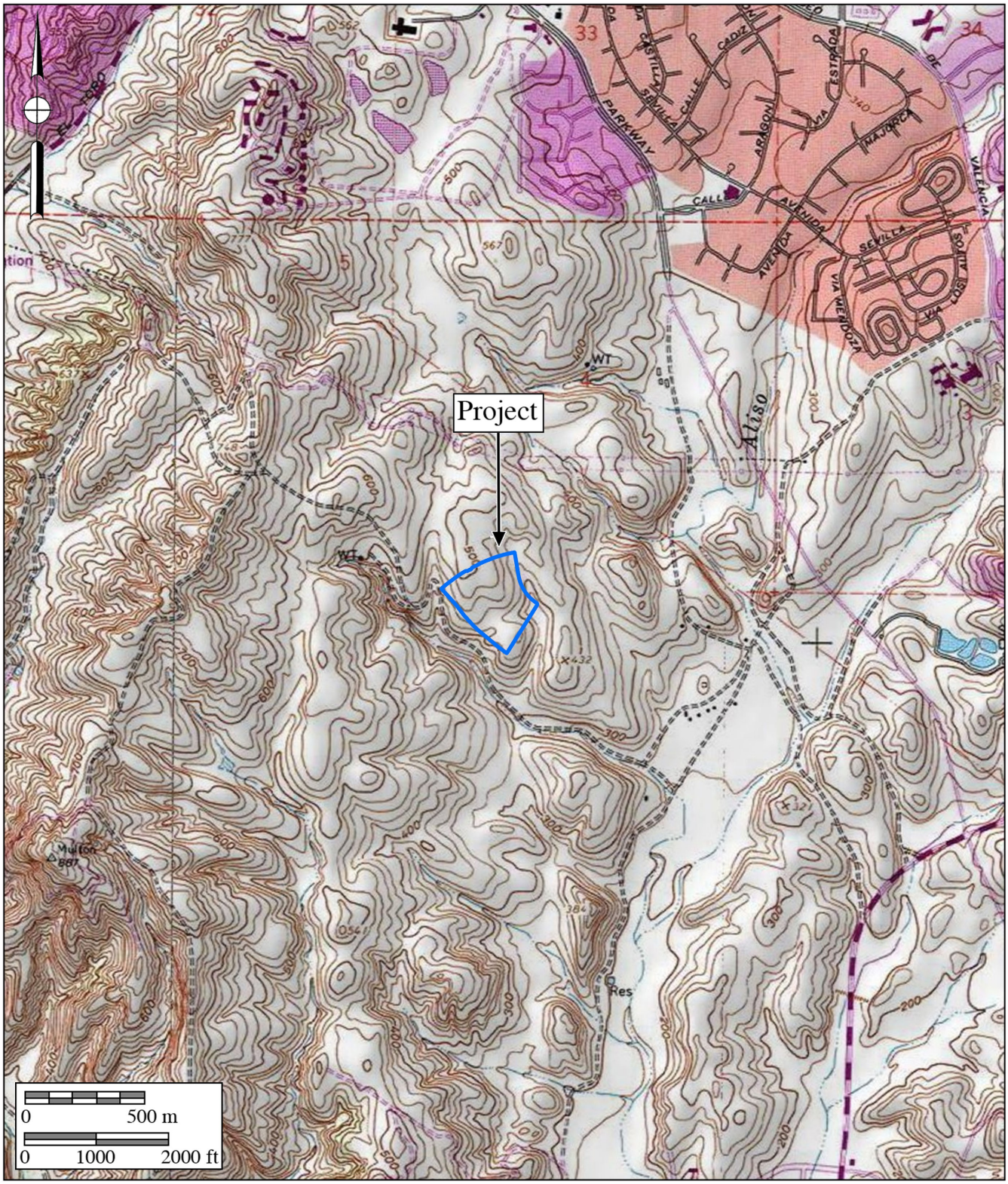

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Figure 1.1–2
Project Location Map

The Polaris Place Project

USGS *San Juan Capistrano* Quadrangle (7.5-minute series)



Legend

1. Recreation Area *(Refer to Enlargement on Sheet L2)*
2. Open Space *(Refer to Enlargement on Sheet L3)*
3. Secondary Entry
4. Primary Entry *(Refer to Enlargement on Sheet L4)*
5. Pedestrian Entry Gate *(Refer to Fence, Wall and Gates Plan on Sheet L13)*
6. Emergency Vehicular Access *(Refer to Fence, Wall and Gates Plan on Sheet L13)*
7. Pedestrian Crossing
8. Private Patio with Low Wall and Gate (Refer to Fence, Wall and Gates Plan on Sheet L13)
9. Side Yard with Privacy Fence and Gates *(Refer to Fence, Wall and Gates Plan on Sheet L13)*
10. Low Perimeter Fence *(Refer to Fence, Wall and Gates Plan on Sheet L13)*
11. Tall Perimeter Fence *(Refer to Fence, Wall and Gates Plan on Sheet L13)*
12. Retaining Wall *(Refer to Fence, Wall and Gates Plan on Sheet L13)*
13. Perimeter Walk
14. Mailboxes

Gross Site Area: ±22.5 ac
Open Space Provided: ±6.0 ac (26.7%)

Building and Parking Count

- 4 STORY DUPLEX - 105 Units
- 3 STORY DUPLEX - 108 Units
- 3 STORY ROWTOWNS - 100 Units
- 3 STORY ROWTOWNS WITH TANDEM - 92 Units

TOTAL = 405 Units
GUEST PARKING - 203 SPACES

Legend
Project boundary

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Figure 1.1–3
Project Development Map
The Polaris Place Project

Aliso Creek is located approximately 0.5 miles east of the subject property. The creek would have provided freshwater resources for both prehistoric and historic peoples as well as an environment conducive for hunting and foraging. Common animal species found within the project vicinity include mammals such as rabbits, squirrels, gophers, mice, rats, deer, and coyotes, in addition to a variety of reptiles and amphibians.

1.3 Cultural Setting

1.3.1 Prehistoric Period

Archaeological investigations in southern California have documented a diverse and rich record of human occupation spanning the past 10,000 years. In northern San Diego, Orange, and Riverside Counties, most researchers organize prehistory into the Paleo Indian, Archaic, and Late Prehistoric Periods and history into the Mission, Rancho, and American Settlement Periods. The San Dieguito Complex, Milling Stone Horizon, La Jolla Complex, Pauma Complex, and San Luis Rey Complex are archaeological manifestations that have been used to describe the Archaic and Late Prehistoric periods in the region.

Paleo Indian Period (Late Pleistocene: 11,500 to circa 9,000 YBP)

The San Dieguito Complex/Paleo Indian Period is associated with the terminus of the late Pleistocene (11,500 to 9,000 years before the present [YBP]). The term "San Dieguito Complex" is a cultural distinction used to describe a group of people that occupied sites in the region between 11,500 and 7,000 YBP. Initially believed to have been big game hunters, the San Dieguito are better typified as wide-ranging hunter-gatherers. The earliest evidence of the San Dieguito Complex sites is known from San Diego County, the Colorado Desert, and further north along the California coast. These people abandoned the drying inland lakes of the present California desert and arrived in San Diego County circa 9,000 YBP, as documented at the Harris Site SDI-149 (Warren 1966); Rancho Park North Site SDI-4392 (Kaldenberg 1982); and Agua Hedionda Sites SDI-210/UCLJ-M-15 and SDI-10,965/SDM-W-131 (Moriarty 1967; Gallegos and Carrico 1984; Gallegos 1991). A San Dieguito component appears to have been present in the lower strata, "Malaga Cove I," at the Malaga Cove site, LAN-138, within the city of Palos Verdes Estates, Los Angeles County (Walker 1951). Other Paleo-Indian Period sites containing San Dieguito components in the coastal region of southern California have been identified at the Irvine Site (ORA-64) (Drover et al. 1983; Macko 1988), Ballona Creek, Angeles Mesa, and the Rancho La Brea sites (Wallace 1955:215-218).

Diagnostic San Dieguito artifacts include finely crafted scraper planes, choppers, scrapers, crescentics, elongated bifacial knives, and intricate leaf-shaped points (Rogers 1939; Warren 1967). This tool assemblage resembles those of the Western Lithic Co-Tradition (Davis et al. 1969) and the Western Pluvial Lakes Tradition (Bedwell 1970; Moratto 1984). Typical San Dieguito sites lack ground stone tools. The San Dieguito Complex is the least understood of the cultures that occupied the southern California region. Debate continues as to whether the San

Dieguito sites are actually different activity areas of the early Encinitas Tradition peoples (Bull 1987; Gallegos 1987), or whether the San Dieguito Complex peoples had a separate origin and culture from the Encinitas Tradition (Hayden 1987; Moriarty 1987; Smith 1987). According to this second scenario, the San Dieguito Complex peoples may have been assimilated into the dominant Encinitas Tradition culture (Kaldenberg 1982; Moriarty 1967). A third possibility is that the San Dieguito Complex gave rise to the Encinitas Tradition (Koerper et al. 1991).

Archaic Period (Early and Middle Holocene: circa 9,000 to 1,300 YBP)

The Archaic Period begins with the onset of the Holocene circa 9,000 YBP. The transition from the Pleistocene to the Holocene was a period of major environmental change throughout North America (Antevs 1953; Van Devender and Spaulding 1979). In southern California, the general climate at the beginning of the early Holocene is marked by cool/moist periods and an increase in warm/dry periods and rising sea levels. The warming trend and rising sea levels generally continued until the late Holocene. Archaeological research indicates that southern California was occupied between 9,000 YBP and 1,300 YBP by population(s) that utilized a wide range of both marine and terrestrial resources. A number of different archaeological manifestations based on geographical setting, tool kit, and/or chronology, are recognized during the Archaic Period, including the San Dieguito, La Jolla, Encinitas, Milling Stone, and Pauma Complexes. Archaic sites generally contain milling tools, especially manos and metates, cobble and flake tools, dart projectile points and the concomitant use of the atlatl, crescents, shell, fish bone, and animal bone representing large and small game. Additionally, Archaic groups buried their dead as flexed inhumations, a religious and cultural practice distinct from the succeeding Late Prehistoric groups.

The La Jolla Complex is regionally associated with the Encinitas Tradition (Warren 1968) and shared cultural components with the widespread Milling Stone Horizon (Wallace 1955). The coastal expression of this complex, with a focus on coastal resources and development of deeply stratified shell middens primarily located around bays and lagoons, appeared in the southern California coastal areas. Some of the older sites associated with this expression are located at Topanga Canyon, Newport Bay, Agua Hedionda Lagoon, and several of the Channel Islands. Radiocarbon dates from sites attributed to this complex span a period of more than 7,000 years in this region, beginning more than 9,000 YBP.

The Encinitas Tradition is best recognized for its pattern of large coastal sites characterized by shell middens, grinding tools closely associated with the marine resources of the area, cobble-based tools, and flexed human burials (Shumway et al. 1961; Smith and Moriarty 1985). While ground stone tools and scrapers are the most recognized tool types, coastal Encinitas Tradition sites also contain numerous utilized flakes, which may have been used to pry open shellfish. Artifact assemblages at coastal sites indicate a subsistence pattern focused on shellfish collection and nearshore fishing, suggesting an incipient maritime adaptation with regional similarities to more northern sites of the same period (Koerper et al. 1986). Other artifacts associated with

Encinitas Tradition sites include stone bowls, doughnut stones, discoidals, stone balls, and stone, bone, and shell beads.

By 5,000 YBP, an inland expression of the La Jolla Complex, which exhibits influences from the Campbell Tradition from the north, is evident in the archaeological record. These inland Milling Stone Horizon sites have been termed "Pauma Complex" (True 1958; Warren et al. 1961; Meighan 1954). By definition, Pauma Complex sites share a predominance of grinding implements (manos and metates), lack mollusk remains, have a greater tool variety (including atlatl dart points, quarry-based tools, and crescentics), and seem to express a more sedentary lifestyle with a subsistence economy based on the use of a broad variety of terrestrial resources. Although originally viewed as a separate culture from the coastal La Jolla Complex (True 1980), it appears that these inland sites may be part of a subsistence and settlement system utilized by the coastal peoples.

Late Prehistoric Period/San Luis Rey Period (Late Holocene: 1,300 YBP to 1790)

The Late Prehistoric period, sometimes referred to as San Luis Rey I and II, begins approximately 1,300 YBP. Cremation, ceramics, bow and arrow, small triangular points, use of Obsidian Butte obsidian, and reliance on the acorn as a main food staple are the defining characteristics of the Late Prehistoric period (Chartkoff and Chartkoff 1984; Gallegos 2002; Moratto 1984). These characteristics are thought to represent the movement of Shoshonean-speaking groups into northern San Diego, Orange, Riverside, and Los Angeles Counties. Economic systems diversified and intensified during this period with the continued elaboration of trade networks, the cremation of the dead, the use of shell-bead currency, and the appearance of more labor-intensive, but effective, milling technologies such as the bedrock mortar for use in acorn processing.

Protohistoric Period (Late Holocene: 1790 to Present)

The ethnographic period begins with the Hispanic intrusion into southern California and the founding of the Mission San Juan Capistrano, south of Aliso Viejo, in 1776. Ethnohistorical and ethnographic evidence indicates that three Shoshonean-speaking groups that occupied the southern and eastern portions of Orange County were the Luiseño, Gabrielino, and the Acjachemen (Juaneño), each culturally similar but possessing slight dialectic differences. Along the coast, the groups made use of the marine resources available by fishing and collecting mollusks for food. Seasonally available terrestrial resources, including acorns and game, were also sources of nourishment for these groups. The elaborate kinship and clan systems between these groups facilitated a wide-reaching trade network that included trade of Obsidian Butte obsidian, resources from the eastern deserts, and steatite from the Channel Islands. All three groups also shared a distinct world view that stemmed from use of the hallucinogen datura, and an elaborate religion that included ritualized sand paintings of the sacred being, "Chingichngish" (Bean and Shipek 1978; Kroeber 1976). Some notable differences, however, can be seen in the material culture

between the three groups. For example, the Gabrielino used containers made from steatite, which is a soapstone material from the Santa Catalina Islands, instead of pottery, which was the preferred material for the Juaneño and the Luiseño (Kroeber 1976).

The Luiseño, Gabrielino, and Juaneño occupied sedentary villages most often located in sheltered areas in valley bottoms, along streams, or along coastal strands near mountain ranges. Villages were located near water sources to facilitate acorn leaching and in areas that offered thermal and defensive protection. Villages were composed of areas that were both publicly and privately, or family, owned. Publicly owned areas included trails, temporary campsites, hunting areas, and quarry sites. Inland groups had fishing and gathering sites along the coast, which were particularly utilized from January to March, when inland food resources were scarce. During October and November, most of the village would relocate to mountain oak groves to harvest acorns. For the remainder of the year, most would remain at the village sites, where food resources were within a day's travel (Bean and Shipek 1978; Kroeber 1976).

The Aliso Creek watershed has been reported to be the ethnohistoric boundary between the Luiseño, Gabrielino, and Juaneño. The Gabrielino occupied territory northwest of Aliso Creek, the Juaneño occupied territory to the south, and the Luiseño occupied territory to the southeast and east. However, there is evidence indicating that the Juaneño territory extended farther north, possibly past the Santa Ana River into modern-day Huntington Beach (Boscana 1978 [1933]).

1.3.2 Historic Period

Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, commanding two Spanish exploring vessels traveling north from Mexico, arrived in the area known then as Alta (or "Upper") California on September 28, 1542. Upon arrival, Cabrillo named the harbor to the south of San Clemente (now known as San Diego) "San Miguel" (Bolton 1959). The next European arrival to the southern California area was not for another 60 years, when an expedition commanded by Sebastian Vizcaíno made an extensive and thorough exploration of the Pacific coast, arriving in San Clemente in 1602 (Engstrand 1980; San Clemente Historical Society 2019). During this visit, Vizcaíno named San Clemente Island for St. Clement, the third pope (San Clemente Historical Society 2019), and renamed San Miguel as San Diego.

For the next 167 years following Vizcaíno's voyage, the Spanish made no other expeditions to Alta California. The Spanish eventually developed a plan for the occupation of the claimed territory of Alta California during the reign of King Carlos III of Spain. In 1769, a joint sea and land expedition set out from Mexico to meet up at San Diego Bay. Captain Vicente Vila led three ships, and Gaspar de Portolá and Father Junípero Serra commanded the land expedition (Rolle 1969). Portolá left the San Diego area on July 14 and arrived at what would later become San Clemente on July 22. It was on this date that the first recorded baptism took place in California (Historic Resources Group 2006). However, the area remained virtually uninhabited until 1776, when Father Junipero Serra established Mission San Juan Capistrano less than six miles south of present-day Aliso Viejo (San Clemente Historical Society 2019; Rolle 1969).

Mission San Juan Capistrano was the seventh California mission and is located in what is now the city of San Juan Capistrano (City of San Juan Capistrano n.d.). The native Juaneño people were conscripted to work for the mission, which resulted in an increase in nearby settlements for both Native Americans and Spaniards. The rise in population would soon prove fatal, however, as the new mission church at San Juan Capistrano was destroyed by an earthquake in 1812. As a result of the earthquake, 40 Native Americans attending mass were killed by the collapsing bell tower (Engelhardt 1922).

As settlers arrived in the area over time, land grants were deeded to those who filed an application, but many tracts reverted back to the government due to lack of use. By 1821, Mexico had gained independence from Spain, and in the ensuing 25 years, 700 land grants were formalized throughout southern California. Don Juan (John) Forster, an English sea captain who became a Mexican citizen in 1837, obtained a land grant of over 100,000 acres from California Governor Pio Pico in 1845, which included Mission San Juan Capistrano (San Clemente Historical Society 2019). The region of Aliso Viejo was granted to Juan Avila in 1842, and the area was primarily used for sheep herding during the Rancho period (Aliso Viejo General Plan).

The signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 resulted in the incorporation of California as a United States territory (City of San Juan Capistrano n.d.). In 1874, American settler Lewis Fenno Moulton arrived in southern California, and by 1890, Moulton had purchased 21,723 acres of land north of San Juan Capistrano, including present-day Laguna Hills, Laguna Niguel, Laguna Woods, and Aliso Viejo (City of San Juan Capistrano n.d.; Moulton Museum n.d.). This purchase established the Moulton Ranch, which operated a sheep and cattle herding business. Over time, portions of the ranch were sold, leading to the development of new cities within southern Orange County. In 1976, the last remaining portion of the Moulton Ranch was sold to the Mission Viejo Company, and plans were prepared for the development of the Aliso Viejo community (City of San Juan Capistrano n.d.). The master-planned community was approved by the county in 1979 (City of San Juan Capistrano n.d.).

1.4 Results of the Archaeological Records Search

BFSA conducted an archaeological records search at the SCCIC at CSU Fullerton on April 15, 2025 (Appendix B). The SCCIC records search identified five resources within a half-mile radius of the project, none of which are located on the subject property (Table 1.4–1). Of the five recorded resources, four were prehistoric and one is multicomponent. The prehistoric resources included one lithic scatter and three sites with associated shell and lithic scatters. The multicomponent site consists of the historic Moulton Ranch and a prehistoric isolate.

Table 1.4–1
Cultural Resources Recorded Within One-Half Mile
of the Polaris Place Project

Site Number(s)	Resource Type
ORA-17, ORA-388, and ORA-414	Prehistoric lithic and shell scatter
ORA-420	Prehistoric lithic scatter
P-30-177508	Multicomponent site includes the historic Moulton Ranch and a prehistoric isolate

The records search also identified 27 previous studies conducted within one half mile of the project, seven of which overlap the subject property (Archaeological Research, Inc. 1973; Archaeological Resource Management Corp. 1979; Cottrell 1983; DeBarros and Keorper 1990; McKenna and DeBarros 1993a, 1993b; Mason and Brechbiel 1997). The Archaeological Research, Inc. (1973) and Archaeological Resource Management Corp. (1979) studies are large overviews conducted during the initial development planning for the City of Aliso Viejo that did not directly address the subject property. Likewise, the Cottrell (1983), DeBarros and Keorper (1990), McKenna and DeBarros (1993a, 1993b), and the Mason and Brechbiel (1997) studies consisted of large overviews for the San Joaquin Transportation Corridor that did not directly address the subject property. None of these studies identified resources within the project.

In addition, BFSA reviewed the following historic sources:

- The National Register of Historic Places Index
- The Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), Archaeological Determinations of Eligibility
- The OHP, Built Environment Resource Directory
- The Bureau of Land Management General Land Office records
- 1942 *Santiago Peak, California* (15-minute) USGS map
- 1948, 1949, 1968, and 1974 *San Juan Capistrano, California* (7.5-minute) USGS maps
- Historic aerial photographs (1938 to 2026)

These sources did not identify any potential resources within the property. Based upon historic maps and aerial photographs, the entire property was vacant until the development of the surrounding community in 1988. Prior to 1976, the community of Aliso Viejo was part of the Moulton Ranch, which operated as a large-scale sheep and cattle ranch. Historic aerial photographs between 1938 and 1985 demonstrate that during this period, the property and the surrounding area were cleared of natural vegetation and consisted of disked, vacant land that was likely used for ranching activities. To the southwest of the project, a dirt road leading from Aliso Creek to the San Joaquin Hills is visible traversing through the region. During the late 1980s, the

rural setting of the subject property and the surrounding area transformed into large commercial and residential developments. By 1988, the entire subject property, in addition to the neighboring parcels, was cleared and graded. Between 1988 and 1992, the area was further developed, and a paved road was built within the project. Subsequent aerial photographs demonstrate that the paved road within the property was replaced with the extant Polaris Place commercial business park between 1997 and 2000. The Polaris Place commercial business park includes five commercial buildings associated with the addresses 1-5 Polaris Way, a central courtyard area, and a large parking lot. Since the development of Polaris Place, historic aerial photographs show that little to no change has occurred within the property since its initial development.

BFSA also requested a SLF search from the NAHC. The SLF search results for the presence of recorded Native American sacred sites or locations of religious or ceremonial importance within the project vicinity were received with positive results. The NAHC suggested contacting local Native American groups, specifically the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians Acjachemen Nation, for further information. This request is not part of any Assembly Bill (AB) 52 Native American consultation. All correspondence is provided in Appendix C.

1.5 Applicable Regulations

Resource importance is assigned to districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess exceptional value or quality illustrating or interpreting the heritage of Orange County in history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. A number of criteria are used in demonstrating resource importance. Specifically, the criteria outlined in CEQA provide guidance for making such a determination. The following sections detail the criteria that a resource must meet in order to be determined important.

1.5.1 California Environmental Quality Act

According to CEQA (§15064.5a), the term "historical resource" includes the following:

1) A resource listed in, or determined to be eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) (Public Resources Code [PRC] SS5024.1, Title 14 CCR [California Code of Regulations]. Section 4850 et seq.).
2) A resource included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in Section 5020.1(k) of the PRC or identified as significant in an historical resource survey meeting the requirements of Section 5024.1(g) of the PRC, shall be presumed to be historically or culturally significant. Public agencies must treat any such resource as significant unless the preponderance of evidence demonstrates that it is not historically or culturally significant.
3) Any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript, which 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 may be considered to be an historical resource, provided the lead agency's determination is supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record. Generally, a resource shall be considered by the lead agency to be "historically significant" if the resource meets the criteria for listing on the CRHR (PRC SS5024.1, Title 14, Section 4852) including the following:

a) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
b) Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
c) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or
d) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

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

According to CEQA (§15064.5b), a project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect upon the environment. CEQA defines a substantial adverse change as:

1) Substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource means physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of an historical resource would be materially impaired.
2) The significance of an historical resource is materially impaired when a project:

a) Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion in or eligibility for inclusion in the CRHR; or
b) Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics that account for its inclusion in a local register of historical resources pursuant to Section 5020.1(k) of the PRC or its identification in an historical resources survey meeting the requirements of Section 5024.1(g) of

the PRC, unless the public agency reviewing the effects of the project establishes by a preponderance of evidence that the resource is not historically or culturally significant; or,

c) Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its eligibility for inclusion in the CRHR as determined by a lead agency for purposes of CEQA.

Section 15064.5(c) of CEQA applies to effects upon archaeological sites and contains the following additional provisions regarding archaeological sites:

1. When a project will impact an archaeological site, a lead agency shall first determine whether the site is an historical resource, as defined in subsection (a).
2. If a lead agency determines that the archaeological site is an historical resource, it shall refer to the provisions of Section 21084.1 of the PRC, Section 15126.4 of the guidelines, and the limits contained in Section 21083.2 of the PRC do not apply.
3. If an archaeological site does not meet the criteria defined in subsection (a) but does meet the definition of a unique archaeological resource in Section 21083.2 of the PRC, the site shall be treated in accordance with the provisions of Section 21083.2. The time and cost limitations described in PRC Section 21083.2 (c-f) do not apply to surveys and site evaluation activities intended to determine whether the project location contains unique archaeological resources.
4. If an archaeological resource is neither a unique archaeological nor historical resource, the effects of the project upon those resources shall not be considered a significant effect upon the environment. It shall be sufficient that both the resource and the effect upon it are noted in the Initial Study or Environmental Impact Report, if one is prepared to address impacts upon other resources, but they need not be considered further in the CEQA process.

Sections 15064.5 (d) and (e) contain additional provisions regarding human remains. Regarding Native American human remains, paragraph (d) provides:

(d) When an Initial Study identifies the existence of, or the probable likelihood of, Native American human remains within the project, a lead agency shall work with the appropriate Native Americans as identified by the NAHC as provided in PRC SS5097.98. The applicant may develop an agreement for treating or disposing of, with appropriate dignity, the human remains and any items associated with Native American burials with the appropriate Native Americans as identified by the NAHC. Action implementing such an agreement is exempt from:

1) The general prohibition on disinterring, disturbing, or removing human remains from any location other than a dedicated cemetery (Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5).
2) The requirements of CEQA and the Coastal Act.

2.0 RESEARCH DESIGN

The primary goal of the research design is to attempt to understand the way in which humans have used the land and resources within the project through time, as well as to aid in the determination of resource significance. For the current project, the study area under investigation is in western Orange County. The scope of work for the cultural resources study conducted for the Polaris Place Project included a survey of the approximately 22.5-acre (gross) property. Given the area involved, the research design for this project was focused upon realistic study options. Since the main objective of the investigation was to identify the presence of and potential impacts to cultural resources, the goal is not necessarily to answer wide-reaching theories regarding the development of early southern California, but to investigate the role and importance of identified resources. Nevertheless, the assessment of the significance of a resource must take into consideration a variety of factors, as well as the ability of a resource to address regional research topics and issues.

Although elementary resource evaluation programs are limited in terms of the amount of information available, several specific research questions were developed that could be used to guide the initial investigations of any observed cultural resources. The following research questions consider the size and location of the project discussed above.

Research Questions:

- Can located cultural resources be associated with a specific time period, population, or individual?
- Do the types of any located cultural resources allow a site activity/function to be determined from a preliminary investigation? What are the site activities? What is the site function? What resources were exploited?
- How do located sites compare to others reported from different surveys conducted in the area?
- How do located sites fit existing models of settlement and subsistence for valley environments of the region?

Data Needs

At the survey level, the principal research objective is a generalized investigation of changing settlement patterns in both the prehistoric and historic periods within the study area. The overall goal is to understand settlement and resource procurement patterns of the project occupants. Therefore, adequate information on site function, context, and chronology from an archaeological perspective is essential for the investigation. The fieldwork and archival research were undertaken with the following primary research goals in mind:

1) To identify cultural resources occurring within the project;
2) To determine, if possible, site type and function, context of the resource(s), and chronological placement of each cultural resource identified;
3) To place each cultural resource identified within a regional perspective; and
4) To provide recommendations for the treatment of each cultural resource identified.

3.0 ANALYSIS OF PROJECT EFFECTS

The cultural resources study of the project consisted of an institutional records search, an intensive cultural resources survey of the entire approximately 22.5-acre project, and the preparation of this technical report. This study was conducted in conformance with the City of Aliso Viejo environmental requirements, Section 21083.2 of the California PRC, and the CEQA. Statutory requirements of CEQA (Section 15064.5) were followed for the identification and evaluation of resources. Specific definitions for archaeological resource type(s) used in this report are those established by the State Historic Preservation Office (1995).

3.1 Survey Methods

The survey methodology employed during the current investigation followed standard archaeological field procedures and was sufficient to accomplish a thorough assessment of the project. BFSA field archaeologist Mary Chitjian conducted an intensive pedestrian survey of the property on April 9, 2026. As the entire property is developed, field methodology consisted of inspecting all landscaped areas. Aerial photographs and maps permitted orientation and location of the project boundaries. The entire approximately 22.5-acre (gross) project was covered by the survey process, and a survey form, field notes, and photographs documented the survey work undertaken.

3.2 Results of the Field Survey

The survey confirmed that the entire subject property has been graded and developed for commercial use (Plates 3.2–1 to 3.2–4). At present, the property contains five commercial buildings, a central courtyard area, a large parking lot, associated hardscape, and maintained commercial landscaping. The five commercial buildings are associated with the addresses 1-5 Polaris Way and comprise the Polaris Place commercial business park. Given the current commercial development within the project, little exposed ground was visible. However, landscaped planters within the property and landscaped areas along the perimeter of the project were inspected for any archaeological materials. Vegetation within the project entirely consists of maintained commercial landscaping. The survey did not identify any archaeological resources within the project.



Plate 3.2–1: Overview of the project from the northern entrance into the Polaris Place commercial business park, facing southeast.



Plate 3.2–2: Overview of the 5 Polaris Way building from the western corner of the project, facing southeast.



Plate 3.2–3: Overview of the 3 and 4 Polaris Way buildings from the southern corner of the project, facing north.



Plate 3.2–4: Overview of the 2 and 3 Polaris Way buildings from the southeast corner of the project, facing west.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

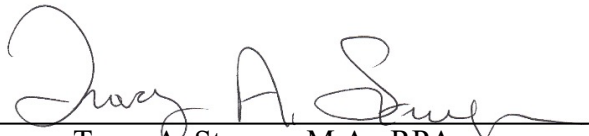
The cultural resources study for the Polaris Place Project was completed in accordance with City of Aliso Viejo environmental policies and CEQA regulatory requirements. No cultural resources were identified within the project during the survey. Further, based upon a review of historic aerial photographs, the entire subject property was cleared, graded, and developed between 1988 and 2000. Due to the previous ground-disturbing activities and the absence of identified cultural resources within the project boundaries, the potential for any significant cultural resources to be present or impacted by the proposed project is minimal. Given that no archaeological sites, features, or artifacts have been identified within or directly adjacent to the project, no potential impacts to cultural resources associated with the proposed development are anticipated. Based upon the results of this study, no further archaeological study or mitigation measures are recommended. A copy of this report will be submitted to the SCCIC at CSU Fullerton.

5.0 LIST OF PREPARERS AND ORGANIZATIONS CONTACTED

The archaeological survey program for the Polaris Place Project was directed by Principal Investigator Tracy A. Stropes, M.A., RPA. The archaeological fieldwork was conducted by BFSA field archaeologist Mary Chitjian. The report text was prepared by Kathleen A. Krogh and Tracy A. Stropes. Kathleen A. Krogh conducted the records search at the SCCIC at CSU Fullerton and created the report graphics. Technical editing and report production was conducted by Payton Swanson.

6.0 CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the statements furnished above and in the attached exhibits present the data and information required for this archaeological report, and that the facts, statements, and information presented are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.



May 1, 2026

Tracy A. Stropes, M.A., RPA — Date
Director/Principal Archaeologist

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APPENDIX A

Resumes of Key Personnel

Tracy A. Stropes, MA, RPA

Vice President of Cultural Resources/ Principal Archaeologist
BFSA Environmental Services, a Perennial Company
14010 Poway Road • Suite A •
Phone: (858) 484-0915 • Fax: (858) 679-9896 • Email: tstropes@bfsa.perennialenv.com

Education

Master of Arts, Anthropology **2007**

San Diego State University, California

Bachelor of Science, Anthropology **2000**

University of California, Riverside

Professional Memberships

Register of Professional Archaeologists
Society for California Archaeology
Archaeological Institute of America
Association of Oregon Archaeologists

Experience

Vice President of Cultural Resources/Principal Archaeologist **March 2009–Present**
BFSA Environmental Services, a Perennial Company
Poway, California

Tracy A. Stropes has over 35 years of experience in cultural resource management, with experience in project management, report authorship, lithic analysis, laboratory management, Native American consultation, and technical report editing for numerous projects throughout the western United States. Mr. Stropes has conducted cultural resource surveys, archaeological site testing and evaluations for National Register eligibility and CEQA compliance, mitigation of resources through data recovery for archaeological sites, budget and report preparation, and direction of crews of all sizes for projects ranging in duration from a single-day site visit to multiple years. Mr. Stropes is a Registered Professional Archaeologist (RPA) and is on the list of archaeological consultants qualified to conduct archaeological investigations in the city and county of San Diego, county of Riverside, State of Oregon, State of Arizona, and on Arizona and California BLM lands. He has served as project archaeologist for hundreds of projects and composed data recovery and preservation programs for sites throughout the western United States for both CEQA- and NEPA-level compliance.

Archaeological Principal Investigator **June 2008–February 2009**
TRC Solutions **Irvine, California**

Cultural resource segment of Natural Sciences and Permitting Division; management of archaeological investigations for private companies and local, state, and federal agencies, personnel management, field and laboratory supervision, lithic analysis, Native American consultation and reporting, NRHP and CEQA site evaluations, and authoring/coauthoring cultural resource management reports.

Principal Investigator **June 2006–May 2008**
Archaeological Resource Analysts **Oceanside, California**

As a sub consultant, served as Principal Investigator and Project Archaeologist for several projects for SRS Inc., including field direction, project and personnel management, lab analysis, and authorship of company reports.

Project Archaeologist **September 1996–June 2006**
Gallegos & Associates **Carlsbad, California**

Project management, laboratory management, lithic analysis, field direction, Native American consultation, report authorship/technical editing, and composition of several data recovery/preservation programs for both CEQA and NEPA level compliance.

Project Archaeologist **September 1993–September 1996**
Macko Inc. **Santa Ana, California**

Project management, laboratory management, lithic analysis, field supervision, and report authorship/technical editing.

Archaeological Field Technician **January 1993–September 1993**
Chambers Group Inc. **Irvine, California**

Archaeological excavation, surveying, monitoring, wet screen facilities management, and project logistics.

Archaeological Field Technician **May 1992–September 1992**
John Minch and Associates **San Juan Capistrano, California**

Archaeological excavation, surveying, monitoring, wet screen facilities management, and project logistics.

Selected Reports/Papers

Principal Author

2023 A Section 106 (NHPA) Historic Resource Study for the Oak Creek Canyon Project, City of Wildomar, Riverside County, California. Prepared for Ambient Pacific OCC, LLC.

2023 A Section 106 (NHPA) Historic Resource Study for The Questhaven 76 Project, San Diego County, California (APNs 223-070-007, 223-070-008, and 223-080-046). Prepared for ColRich.

2023 A Phase I Cultural Resources Survey for the Bermuda Dunes Self Storage Project, PAR220053, Riverside County, California. Prepared for FAMA Dairy.

2023 A Cultural Resources Study for 4846 Pacifica Drive, City of San Diego. Prepared for Colliers International.

2023 A Section 106 (NHPA) Historical Resources Study for the Maison's Sierra Project, City of Lancaster, California (Tract No. 27099). Prepared for Ravello Holdings, Inc.

2023 Cultural Resource Survey and Evaluation Program for the Omni Hotel Driving Range/Parking Lot Project, City of Carlsbad, California. Prepared for TRT Holdings, Inc.

2022 A Class III Historic Resources Study for the Anna Avenue Project for Section 106 Compliance, City of San Diego, California. Prepared for John Smith Earthworks, Inc.

2022 A Section 106 (NHPA) Historic Resource Study for the Grand Avenue Project, Riverside County, California (APN 379-060-005). Prepared for TriPointe Homes

2022 A Section 106 (NHPA) Historic Resources Study for the Boulder Springs North Project, Riverside County, California (TTMs 31243, 31244, and 31245; APNs 321-020-027, -028, -029, and -030 and 321-130-047 and -048). Prepared for KB Home.

2022 A Section 106 (NHPA) Historical Resources Study for the Alpine Rancho Palo Verde Project, San Diego County, California (SPL-219-00698-CJA). Prepared for Schindler Real Estate Services, Inc.

2022 A Section 106 (NHPA) Historic Resource Study for the Cumming Ranch Project, San Diego County, California (APNs 282-010-08, -30, -34, and -43; 283-011-06; 283-021-01 and -02; 283-022-02; 283-041-25 and -26; and 283-051-01). Prepared for 805 Properties.

2021 A Section 106 (NHPA) Historic Resources Study for the Gatchell Road Project, San Diego County, California (Project No. 100203). Prepared for the National Park Service.

2021 A Section 106 (NHPA) Historic Resources Study for Site CA-SDI-11,934/H, San Diego County, California (APN 532-520-15). Prepared for the National Park Service.

2021 A Section 106 (NHPA) Historical Resources Study for the Renaissance Ranch Project, Riverside County, California (SPL-2004-01431-JPL). Prepared for Richland Developers, Inc.

2021 A Phase I Cultural Resource Survey for the Coppel Remodel & Addition Project, La Jolla, California. Prepared for Marengo Morton Architects, Inc.

2021 A Section 106 (NHPA) Historic Resources Study for CAB-20-1, San Diego County, California (APN 532-520-15). Prepared for the National Park Service.

2021 Cultural Resources Study for 7951 Paseo Del Ocaso, La Jolla, California. Prepared for Aidlin Darling Design.

2021 Cultural Resources Study for the Secret Hills Ranch Project, San Diego County, California (PDS2020-LDGRMJ-30253, APN 520-060-18)

2021 Cultural Resources Study for the UCLA Cedar Suites and Willow Creek Staff Housing Project, Lake Arrowhead, San Bernardino County, California. Prepared for T&B Planning, Inc.

2021 A Section 106 (NHPA) Historic Resources Study for CA-SDI-13,884, San Diego County, California (APN 532-520-13). Prepared for the National Park Service.

2021 A Cultural Resources Study for the UCLA Glamping Facility Project, Lake Arrowhead, San Bernardino County, California. Prepared for UCLA Capital Programs.

2021 Archaeological Test Results for 2596 Chalcedony Street, San Diego, California. Prepared for Colliers International.

2021 Cultural Resources Study for the 12247 Elliott Avenue Project, Los Angeles County, California. Prepared for EPD Solutions.

2021 A Section 106 (NHPA) Historic Resources Study for the Roquet Ranch Project, City of Colton, San Bernardino County, California (Tentative Tract Map No. 19983; APNs 116-701-101, -102, 116-702-101, -105, -121, -122, -123, and 116-703-118). Prepared for Sunmeadows, LLC.

2020 A Section 106 (NHPA) Historical Resources Study for the Ocean Breeze Ranch Project, Bonsall, San Diego County, California (SPL-2020-00176). Prepared for Ocean Breeze Ranch, LLC.

2020 Cultural Resource Monitoring Report for the Encinitas Beach Hotel Project, Encinitas, California. Prepared for JMI Realty, LLC

2020 A Section 106 (NHPA) Historic Resources Study for the Pacifica Estates Project, Fallbrook, San Diego County, California. Prepared for Jose Islas.

2020 A Section 106 (NHPA) Historic Resources Study for the Hidden Valley Ranch Project, SPL-2004-01124, City of Poway, California. Prepared for Barbara Malone.

2020 A Section 106 (NHPA) Historic Resource Study for The Farms in Poway Project, Poway, San Diego County, California (APNs 273-110-070, -080, and -180). Prepared for Kevin McNamara.

2020 A Phase I and II Cultural Resources Assessment for the Hansen Lot Split Project, TPM 37655, Riverside County, California. Prepared for Forest Hansen.

2020 Cultural Resources Study for the West Coast Cold Storage Project, City of Jurupa Valley, County of Riverside (APNs 178-140-010 and -018). Prepared for

2020 Cultural Resources Study for the 340 East Bradley Avenue Project, San Diego County, California (PDS2021-LDGRMJ-30346). Prepared for A N1-Mart, LLC.

2019 Archaeological Monitoring Report for the Atwell Phase 1A Project (formerly Butterfield Specific Plan), City of Banning, Riverside County, California. Prepared for Pardee Homes.

2019 A Cultural Resource Assessment for the Glen Circle Project, Poway, California. Prepared for MDD Homes.

2019 Cultural Resources Survey for the Highlands at Warner Springs and Off-Site Fire Access Road Project, Warner Springs, San Diego County, California. Prepared for Warner Springs Estates, LLC.

2019 A Cultural Resources Assessment for the 8801 East Marginal Way Project, City of Tukwila, King County, Washington. Prepared for CenterPoint Properties Trust.

2019 Cultural Resource Monitoring Report for the 7980 Park Village Road Emergency Repair Project, San Diego, California. Prepared for Orion Construction Corporation.

2019 Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Harmony Grove Village, San Diego County, California. Prepared for Lennar – San Diego Division.

2019 Cultural Resource Monitoring Report for the Price-Cohen Residence Project, 2045 Lowry Place, La Jolla, California 92037. Prepared for Lena Price and Thomas Cohen.

2019 A Section 106 (NHPA) Historic Resources Study for the Melrose Drive Widening Project, City of Oceanside, California. Prepared for California West Communities.

2019 A Cultural Resources Study for the Majestic Chino Heritage Project, City of Chino, San Bernardino County, California. Prepared for T&B Planning, Inc.

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Contributing Author

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APPENDIX B

Archaeological Records Search Results

(Deleted for Public Review; Bound Separately)

APPENDIX C

NAHC Sacred Lands File Search

(Deleted for Public Review; Bound Separately)