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13.0 CULTURAL RESOURCES

This section describes the cultural resources in the vicinity of the Middle Fork American River Project (MFP or Project). The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC's) content requirements for this section are specified in Title 18 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Chapter I § 5.6(d)(3)(x).

This section provides an overview of available information regarding archaeological, ethnographic, and historical resources in and near the FERC Project boundary. The information presented in this section is based on research performed in 2005 and field work conducted in 2006 as part of a two-phase Cultural Resources Inventory Study.

During 2005, PCWA collected, reviewed and compiled existing information regarding the cultural resources known to occur within an "expanded study area", defined as the area within one mile of the existing Project facilities. The results of this effort are documented in PCWA's 2005 Cultural Resources Inventory Study Report (PCWA 2006) which is included in Supporting Document G (SD G) for reference. During 2006, PCWA conducted field work to verify the location and condition of known cultural resources and to identify previously unidentified and/or unreported cultural resources in the study area. For the purposes of field studies, the study area is defined as the area within the existing FERC Project boundary and within a 200-foot area of any Project facility or feature or Project recreation facility. The 2006 field work focused on the area surrounding French Meadows and Hell Hole reservoirs and is documented in PCWA's 2006 Cultural Resources Inventory Study Report (PCWA 2007) which is included in SD G for reference. The remaining areas within the study area were surveyed in 2007 and surveys will continue in 2008.

13.1 INFORMATION SOURCES

Existing information regarding the cultural resources pertaining to prehistoric Native Americans, historic Native Americans, and historic Euroamericans was obtained from the following agencies, tribes, and organizations:

- United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USDA-FS), Eldorado National Forest (ENF)
- USDA-FS, Tahoe National Forest (TNF)
- California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS)
- United Auburn Indian Community (UAIC)
- Shingle Springs Rancheria
- Washoe Tribe of California and Nevada
- Todd Valley Miwok-Maidu Cultural Foundation
- Colfax-Todd Valley Consolidated Tribe
- Placer County Historical Society

- California State Library (CSL)
- The Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley
- Miwok Tribe of the El Dorado Rancheria

Specific data sources reviewed included; historic General Land Office (GLO), United States Geological Survey (USGS), USDA-FS, and county assessors maps; land records; archaeological site records; published and unpublished local histories; unpublished and published academic theses, dissertations, and journal articles; historic aerial photographs; and oral histories. Data regarding archaeological resources was augmented and will continue to be augmented based on the results of field studies conducted in 2007 and 2008. Information from tribes and other Native American sources is preliminary and will be augmented through further tribal participation in the MFP relicensing.

13.2 DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

The inventory of cultural resources in the Project vicinity is known to include prehistoric and historic archaeological sites and artifacts, as well as remains associated with gold mining (e.g., tailings, tunnels, mines, walls, ditches, building foundations, etc.). A deliberate inventory of cultural resources (which would include resources of interest to contemporary Native Americans and others) within the entire FERC Project boundary has not yet been completed.

13.2.1 Cultural History of the Project Vicinity

Prehistoric Period

Overviews of the archaeology and prehistory of the Forest Hill Divide and Georgetown Divide areas of the American River drainage are presented in numerous archaeological reports but three significant studies are the basis for this synopsis. They include Baker et al. (1999), Jackson and Ballard (1999), and Jackson et al. (1994). While there is general consensus regarding the broad cultural patterns expressed in the archaeological record, there is less agreement among researchers regarding the interpretation of the record.

A chronological sequence of prehistoric cultural periods in the Forest Hill Divide (after Baker et al. 1999) and for Georgetown Divide (after Jackson and Ballard 1999) is summarized in Table 13-1. The Forest Hill Divide sequence is above the Georgetown sequence in the "Culture Period" and "Age" columns of the table. A "Late Pleistocene" period (>8000 B.C.) discussed by Jackson and Ballard (1999) is not included because as of yet, no evidence of human use of the region exists in this period. Difference in assigned ages of cultural periods derives, in part, from a greater reliance by Jackson and Ballard on obsidian hydration dating.

Ethnographic Period

The Middle Fork American River and Rubicon River canyons are situated in a vastly varied topographical area where resources were sought and procured by two major Native American groups, the Foothill Nisenan (Maidu) and the Washoe. As shown in Figure 13-1, claimed tribal territories overlap. In particular, both groups used the river corridors and divides for travel to procure plant and animal resources and to trade; occasionally the Washoe would reside over a winter in a Nisenan village or within Nisenan territory.

The Nisenan inhabited the drainages of the Yuba, Bear, and American rivers, and also the lower reaches of the Feather River, extending from the east banks of the Sacramento River on the west to the mid to high elevations of the western flank of the Sierra Nevada (Wilson and Towne 1978). Washoe historically inhabited the region east of the crest of the Sierra Nevada into Carson Valley, extending from the Walker River in the south to Honey Lake in the north, with peripheral territory extending to the midelevations of the west Sierra slope (d'Azevedo 1986). Both ethnographic groups fully exploited their territories following a semi-sedentary lifeway. They resided at one or two established locations during most of the year, but occupied temporary encampments during part of the year to acquire different resources across a range of elevations and environments.

There are no named ethnographic villages in the Project vicinity. Known ethnographic Nisenan village locations tend to be out of the river canyons, on benches along the canyon walls or on the summits of the divides between the rivers. Places immediately along the rivers seem to have been used seasonally.

Historic Period

Spanish Commander Gabriel Moraga and his party were the first Europeans to see the American River during their 1808 exploration of the Sacramento Valley. He named the river "Rio de las Llagas" (River of Sorrows). This name was changed to "Rio de los Americanos" (American River) by Mexican Governor Alvarado in 1837 because the river was so popular with American fur traders. Indians served as guides for fur traders and pioneer emigrants of the 1830s and 1840s, and the major trading route over the Sierra between the Nisenan on the American River and the Washoe of Tahoe/Carson Valley area traversed the Middle Fork, approximately following the path along Mosquito Ridge (Myer 2002:15-16). Jedediah Smith may have been the first of these fur traders along the American River and also the first non-Native American credited with crossing the Sierra Nevada, sometime in the 1820s.

John Marshall's discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in January, 1848 had repercussions that shook the world and of course dramatically transformed the Project vicinity. Claude Chana, a Frenchman living at Sigard's ranch on the Bear River, discovered gold in Auburn Ravine (between today's Ophir and old town Auburn) on May 16, 1848, while being led by Indian guides on a short-cut to Sutter's Mill (Coloma). The North Fork Dry

Diggings Company soon was formed and reports of \$1,000-\$1,500 daily yields spawned a rush of miners north from Coloma (Myer 2002).

Gold miners at Rector's Bar and Stony Bar (immediately upstream from Oxbow) were operating on the Middle Fork American River in 1848. The total non-Native population of what is now known as the Forest Hill Divide in 1848 was estimated at 50 (Steele 1861). While not much placer gold was found in the higher mountain areas, prospectors in the early 1850s searched diligently. Thomas Duncan, for whom Duncan Canyon is named, hired himself out to show newly arrived miners the gold diggings he had observed crossing the Sierra in 1848.

Horseshoe Bend, located on the Middle Fork American River just downstream of the confluence with the North Fork of the Middle Fork American River, proved to be one of the most productive placer mining regions in California. The Middle Fork American River was the most productive of all the branches of the American River. By the fall of 1849, \$10 million in gold already had been mined in the area (Sanborn 1974). "Mad Canyon and American Bar [Oxbow/Ralston Powerhouse area] are credited with \$3 million apiece, and Horseshoe Bend ...with runs ranging down to \$1 million...." (Sanborn 1974:141). The Middle Fork "stampede" of 1850 brought thousands of miners to the area, not only in the Horseshoe Bend region but up-river as well. Gold is still being mined in the area today.

Yankee Jims and Todds Valley (founded by a relative of Mary Todd Lincoln) were established in 1849 to service the lucrative placer mines of Shirttale Canyon, north of the western part of the study area. Birds Valley grew into a temporary town as a result of the 1850 stampede. Also as a result of this huge influx of humanity in 1850, Foresthill, Michigan City, and Bath were founded to serve miners along the Middle Fork American River. By 1852 there were enough miners farther upriver to stimulate the formation of two new towns, Last Chance and Deadwood. The Forest Hill Divide area was one of the most prosperous and densely inhabited in California in the 1850s, so much so that the Democratic Convention was held at Yankee Jims in 1857 (Myer 2002).

The French Meadows and Hell Hole areas were used in the 19th century primarily for seasonal grazing by valley ranchers. Seasonal grazing was already underway in the 1850s as revealed in memoirs of two silver miners journeying from Nevada to California over the Washoe Trail in the winter of 1856 and 1857. The Hell Hole area is so remote and its terrain so difficult that 19th century maps show it as not surveyed.

Because the Hell Hole area is so difficult to access, relatively little logging has occurred there, except in the Forest Hill Divide area, along the ridge tops, and in flats like French Meadows. During the second half of the 19th century, small scale saw mills popped up from time to time as needed to mill logs to build flumes and other mining features. In 1860, there were some 20 saws on the North and Middle forks of the American River (Lardner 1924). But until the construction of the Forest Hill and the Mosquito Ridge roads by the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) in the early 20th century, the higher elevation areas surrounding the Project were not logged.

Since 1905 most of the land in the upper portions of the Watershed has been administered by the USDA-FS. The USDA-FS administers grazing, logging, recreation and other land uses within the National Forests. USDA-FS policy largely has dictated land use in the Project vicinity since the Eldorado and Tahoe forests were created. PCWA was formed in 1957 and is charged with maintaining reliable and affordable water and energy for Placer County's present and future needs. Construction of the MFP began in 1963 and was completed in 1967. Today, PCWA owns and operates five interconnected hydroelectric power plants, four reservoirs, three smaller diversions, and 24 miles of tunnels. It is the eighth-largest public power project in California.

13.2.2 Cultural Resources Inventory

Previous inventories of archaeological sites in the Project vicinity are limited (Table 13-2). Among the earliest studies in the Project vicinity were those conducted for the MFP (Rackerby 1965) and for the Auburn Dam Project (e.g., True et al. 1978; True ca. 1980). Most of the existing information is derived from USDA-FS records. Known cultural resources include historic era mining-related sites, features, and artifacts, as well as Native American sites, features, and artifacts.

13.2.3 Recorded Cultural Resources and Historic Properties

During the 2006 field work, three previously recorded sites were relocated and examined. One of these sites (FS 05-17-54-228) was determined to be a natural feature and not a cultural resource and the site record was updated accordingly. A second site, a historic gold mining ditch referred to as FS 05-17-54-476, was not fully evaluated in 2006 but was evaluated in 2007. The third site (FS 05-03-55-201) was relocated and the site record was updated. Site FS-05-03-55-201 is near Hell Hole Reservoir and is comprised of a scatter of flakes, two bedrock mortars and four pestles. No apparent impacts to the site were noted, although there is a slight amount of erosion in the trail that bisects the site. The overall site condition is good.

One new site (PL-01) and two isolated cultural resources (ISO-01 and ISO-02) were also found during the 2006 field surveys. These three sites are concentrated near the upper end of Hell Hole Reservoir, and are briefly described in the following.

Site PL-01 is located above Hell Hole Reservoir. This is a multi-component site consisting of a sparse lithic scatter and a historic tobacco tin. The lithic scatter is comprised of a single basalt biface fragment and 3 basalt flakes. One tobacco tin is on the southern boundary of the site.

Isolate 1 (ISO-01) is a large basalt core on a bench near the upper end of Hell Hole Reservoir. Isolate 2 (ISO-02) is a rough basalt uniface on the north side of the main Rubicon tributary in the eastern portion of the study area near Hell Hole Reservoir.

None of the resources documented to date has been evaluated for eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

13.2.4 Current Cultural Resource Management

Current cultural resource management is consistent with the FERC license and applicable USDA-FS permits. Before conducting activities that have the potential to affect cultural resources, PCWA consults with the FERC and/or the USDA-FS to determine the appropriate course of action to identify cultural resources and, to the extent feasible, avoid impacts to cultural resources.

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TABLES

Table 13-1. Prehistoric Cultural Chronology of the Forest Hill and Georgetown Divides.

Culture Period	Age	Cultural Characteristics		
PaleoIndian	9000 B.C. – 6500 B.C.	Highly mobile populations, subsistence focus on		
Early Holocene	8000 B.C. – 6000 B.C.	hunting		
Archaic/Millingstone	6500 B.C. – 3500 B.C.	Mobile populations, diversified subsistence pattern with increase use of seed resources		
Archaic	6000 B.C. – 1200 B.C.	indicated by millingslab/ handstone tool kit		
Early Sierran	3500 B.C. – 600 B.C.	Mobile populations, diversified subsistence pattern, advent of mortar/pestle technology,		
Early Sierran	1200 B.C. – 600 A.D.	evidence of more regular settlement/subsistence patterns in Sierra Nevada		
Middle Sierran	600 B.C. – A.D. 1000	Period of cultural fluorescence through-out the region, extensive inter-regional trade, large semi-		
Middle Sierran	A.D. 600 – A.D. 1400	permanent settlements, atlatl/dart technology supplemented by bow/arrow ca. A.D. 600		
Late Prehistoric	A.D. 1000 – A.D. 1500/	Rapid population growth, intensification subsistence pattern, complex settlement patterns with permanent villages and seasonal camps, primary use of mortar/ pestle and bow/arrow, tribelet territories maintained, inter-regional trade declines, "monetary" shell bead exchange; European settlement indirectly affects Sierra Nevada Native American cultures		
Sierran/ Protohistoric	A.D. 1500 – A.D. 1769			
Late Sierran (including Protohistoric)	A.D. 1400 A.D – A.D. 1769			

Table 13-2. Inventory of Previously Recorded Archaeological Sites in the Expanded Study Area.

Site Number	Forest	Description
05-17-54-01	Tahoe	Uncertain (historic?)
05-17-54-02	Tahoe	Old Stamp Mill site; mill removed
05-17-54-03	Tahoe	Foundations of 6 miners cabins
05-17-54-06	Tahoe	Lithic scatter, bedrock mortar
05-17-54-10	Tahoe	Historic tunnel
05-17-54-16	Tahoe	Rock wall cabin foundation
05-17-54-92	Tahoe	Rock outcropping with 5 bedrock mortars
05-17-54-116	Tahoe	Flake scatter (w/ projectile points and bedrock mortar)
05-17-54-117	Tahoe	Flake scatter
05-17-54-133	Tahoe	Historic mining site
05-17-54-136	Tahoe	Rock outcrop with 2 bedrock mortars
05-17-54-214	Tahoe	Historic trash dump
05-17-54-228	Tahoe	bedrock mortars w/ 13 cups
05-17-54-254	Tahoe	Small lithic scatter
05-17-54-255	Tahoe	Lithic scatter, 2 grinding slicks
05-17-54-256	Tahoe	Lithic scatter, bedrock mortars, grinding slick
05-17-54-257	Tahoe	bedrock mortar, light lithic scatter
05-17-54-265	Tahoe	Light lithic scatter
05-17-54-266	Tahoe	Small lithic scatter
05-17-54-267	Tahoe	Small lithic scatter
05-17-54-279	Tahoe	Light density lithic scatter, 3 bedrock mortars, pestles
05-17-54-308	Tahoe	2 bedrock mortars
05-17-54-322	Tahoe	Light lithic scatter
05-17-54-370	Tahoe	Sparse lithic scatter
05-17-54-400	Tahoe	bedrock mortar, flake scatter with midden
05-17-54-427	Tahoe	Historic ditch
05-17-54-432	Tahoe	Historic bridge
05-17-54-437	Tahoe	Sparse lithic scatter
05-17-54-440	Tahoe	2 bedrock mortars on a large boulder
05-17-54-441	Tahoe	2 bedrock mortars
05-17-54-442	Tahoe	2 bedrock mortars

Table 13-2. Inventory of Previously Recorded Archaeological Sites in the Expanded Study Area (continued).

Site Number	Forest	Description
05-17-54-443	Tahoe	Historic trash dump
05-17-54-445	Tahoe	Lambert Ditch
05-17-54-450	Tahoe	Historic mining site: 2 ditches and an artifact scatter
05-03-53-02	Eldorado	Prehistoric rock shelter
05-03-53-04	Eldorado	Prehistoric midden, historic placer mining
05-03-53-49	Eldorado	Historic homestead
05-03-53-51	Eldorado	Historic mining complex
05-03-53-64	Eldorado	bedrock mortar and lithic scatter
05-03-53-65 (Big Meadow)	Eldorado	13 bedrock mortars (39 cups, 3 slicks) petroglyphs, dense lithic scatter
05-03-53-67	Eldorado	Segment of Ralston Ditch (see Star Fire TS-12 and P-31-1304)
05-03-53-74	Eldorado	Historic log cabin, prehistoric flake scatter
05-03-53-77	Eldorado	Historic hardrock mining site and trash dump
05-03-53-78	Eldorado	Historic stamp mill/placer mine and prehistoric bedrock mortar
05-03-53-79	Eldorado	Small flake scatter
05-03-53-113	Eldorado	Lithic scatter, 2 loci, no midden
05-03-53-116	Eldorado	bedrock mortar and sparse lithic scatter
05-03-53-117	Eldorado	bedrock mortar, lithic scatter with groundstone fragments
05-03-53-119	Eldorado	bedrock mortars, 2 pestles
05-03-53-121	Eldorado	1 bedrock mortar, 1piece debitage
05-03-53-123	Eldorado	1 bedrock mortar, excavated in 2000
05-03-53-165	Eldorado	Lithic scatter with some groundstone
05-03-53-192	Eldorado	"Core reduction" site
05-03-53-199	Eldorado	Lithic scatter (1 projectile point)
05-03-53-205	Eldorado	Historic trail
05-03-53-209	Eldorado	Daggett Ditch
05-03-53-224	Eldorado	Lithic scatter
05-03-53-225	Eldorado	Lithic scatter
05-03-53-341	Eldorado	Remnants of historic camp
05-03-53-342	Eldorado	Historic camp with artifact scatter
05-03-53-237	Eldorado	Lambert Ditch (see 17-54-445)
05-03-53-284	Eldorado	Small ditch segment

Table 13-2. Inventory of Previously Recorded Archaeological Sites in the Expanded Study Area (continued).

Site Number	Forest	Description
05-03-55-19	Eldorado	bedrock mortar, no lithic scatter
05-03-55-122	Eldorado	Dense lithic scatter
05-03-55-201	Eldorado	2 bedrock mortars, 4 pestles, lithic scatter
05-03-55-204	Eldorado	Historic stone foundation
P-09-2204-H		Volcanoville ditch segment
P-09-2256-H		Mikalauskas Ditch
No#		Pyshora Property ditch
No#		Wood THP ditch
No#		Mt. Gregory Cemetery
P-31-1367 (CA- PLA-1058)	Eldorado	Lithic scatter, projectile point
P-31-1369 (CA- PLA-1060)	Eldorado	Lithic scatter, projectile point
P-31-1370 (CA- PLA-1061)	Eldorado	3 historic mining prospects
P-31-1371 (CA- PLA-1062)	Eldorado	1 historic mining prospect
P-31-1252	Eldorado	Grinding slick
P-31-1304	Tahoe	Ralston Ditch
No#		"Long Chip #1" large mining ditch
No#		"Long Chip #2" small ditch
FGS Co. #1		2 bedrock mortars, 1 milling slick
Lower Meadow Site		2 bedrock mortars, 1 possible milling slick
Star Fire TS-7	Tahoe	2 short segments of ditch
Star Fire TS-9	Tahoe	Hydraulic/sluice mined area
Star Fire TS-10	Tahoe	Wooden flume remnants
Star Fire TS-11	Tahoe	3 bedrock mortars, sparse lithic scatter
Star Fire TS-12	Tahoe	Remnants of ditch, may have been part of Ralston ditch (see P-31-1304)
Star Fire TS-13	Tahoe	bedrock mortar and historic debris

FIGURES

