

Administrative Draft

CULTURAL RESOURCES SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS REPORT

**North of Delta Offstream Storage/Sites Reservoir
Feasibility Geotechnical Investigation
Colusa and Glenn Counties, California**

May 2019

Prepared for:

Sites Project Authority
122 Old Highway 99 West
Maxwell, CA 95955

Prepared by:



Horizon Water and Environment, LLC
P.O. Box 2727
Oakland, CA 94612
Janis Offermann, RPA
Cultural Resources Practice Lead

shells from the San Francisco Bay were traded for skins, yew wood, and obsidian that would be passed down from the north (Goldschmidt 1978:345).

Contemporary Tribes

Today's descendants of the ethnographic-era Patwin and Nomlaki tribes continue to live and thrive in the region around the Sites Reservoir project area. Federally recognized tribes in the vicinity include the Cachil Dehe Band of Wintun (Colusa Indian Community) in Colusa; the Kletsel Dehe Wintun Nation (Cortina Indian Rancheria) west of Williams; the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation (Rumsey Indian Rancheria) in Brooks; the Grindstone Indian Rancheria of Wintun-Wailaki Indians at Elk Creek; and the Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians (Nomlāqa Bōda) near Corning. Several of these tribes have developed successful gaming venues that have allowed their members to experience economic stability, and through which they have made substantial contributions to their surrounding communities such as providing grants to schools and building medical facilities. All of the tribes invest considerable time and energy into maintaining their cultural heritage by sponsoring and supporting language and arts programs.

2.3 Historic-Era Context

The following text has been based on information presented in the 2013 URS documents (URS 2013a, 2013b). Indented paragraphs are direct quotes, as referenced.

The history of culture contact between indigenous and non-native populations in the northern Sacramento Valley began with the Spanish explorer Gabriel Moraga in 1808 and ended suddenly with the devastating smallpox epidemic in 1833. In this 25-year span, the river tribes and their neighbors met non-Native Americans for the first time. No formal European or Euro-American outposts or long-term footholds were secured on indigenous lands before 1833, and there is no clear evidence of pandemics or significant social or economic upheaval.

A number of overland fur trapping and trading expeditions visited the Central Valley in the late 1820s and early 1830s. These included two trips by trapper Jedediah Smith, of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, who led parties of trappers through California in 1827 and 1828. Beginning in 1829, the Hudson's Bay Company sent trapping expeditions into the northern portion of California from Oregon, and other trapping parties followed suit. By 1833 the hunting parties reportedly encountered depleted game. The fur trapper's journals also comment on the great number of native peoples encountered in the Sacramento Valley through the winter of 1832. However, in spring and summer 1833, traditional Native American lifeways came to a sudden and somber end when smallpox, introduced by the trappers, swept through and decimated the Sacramento Valley tribes, including the River Patwin.

Euro-American colonists arrived in the Sacramento Valley in the early 1840s when Mexican-era land grants were issued in quick succession in territory now found in Tehama, Butte, Glenn, and Colusa Counties. Three of the land grants, Rancho Larkin's Children, Rancho Jimeno, and Rancho Colus, were located along the Sacramento River, upstream and downstream from the current city of Colusa in the project vicinity.

The Rancho Colus was purchased by Charles Semple from John Bidwell in 1849 on the recommendation of his brother, Robert, who had visited the area in 1847. Together, the brothers established the town of Colusa and developed a thriving riverboat trade. Use of the river for transporting goods and people allowed for rapid growth of the northern Sacramento Valley.

Colusa County (initially called Colusi County) was one of the original 27 counties established in 1850 when California became absorbed into the United States. At that time, the county also included all of what is now Glenn County and a portion of Tehama County. The modern boundary was delineated in 1891.

Use of foothills on the west side of the Sacramento Valley for livestock grazing was an important element of California's economy prior to the discovery of gold, as the raising of cattle was the primary focus of the ranchos. Early settlers were impressed with the region's valleys that were covered with verdant fields of head-high clover, abundant water, and highly productive range. These areas of northern California, which were some of the first exploited for rangeland purposes, experienced a boom between 1850 to 1860 as the Gold Rush created an enormous demand for meat and other animal products. The cattle industry declined as the Gold Rush waned, and the valley ranchers turned to using the valley for the dry farming of crops, primarily wheat.

By the 1880s, wheat farming in the valley had become less profitable for several reasons. First, the intensive dry farming depleted the soil and, second, the transcontinental railroad achievement reduced the West's dependence on locally grown wheat. Because the region was so arid and only suitable for grazing livestock and dry farming, irrigation was prompted by local citizens. The first efforts to organize farmers and build a canal to deliver water from the Sacramento River to parched fields occurred in 1883 with little success. However, passage of the Wright Irrigation District Act of 1887 encouraged the formation of irrigation districts by giving them power similar to those of municipalities. This quickly led to the founding of the Central Irrigation District in November 1887. The irrigation district extended along the west edge of the Sacramento Valley from Jacinto in the north, south to Berlin. The main canal followed the west boundary of the district and was fed by Salt Creek, Stone Corral Creek, Funk Slough, Hunter Slough, and Logan Creek, in addition to water taken from the Sacramento River. As was common for the times, the Central Irrigation District went through numerous owners, and the construction of the main canal and laterals progressed in a sporadic manner. A significant reorganization of the local water districts took place in 1918 - 1919. As a result, in 1920 the Central Canal was renamed the Glenn-Colusa Canal, managed by the Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District; the canal was also completed this same year. Today the Glenn-Colusa Canal extends for 65 miles and there are approximately 900 miles of lateral canals and drains.

The Tehama-Colusa Canal was constructed by the Bureau of Reclamation and the Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority, which was organized in 1965 as part of the Central Valley Project. The Tehama-Colusa Canal was completed in 1980. It is a 122-mile concrete-lined canal that extends from the Red Bluff Diversion Dam in Tehama County through Glenn County, to Yolo County.

Antelope Valley and the Town of Sites

Granville Perry Swift was the first recorded settler in Antelope valley. He arrived in California in 1844 and went to work as a hunter and furrier for John Sutter (Hobart 2001) in present-day Sacramento. Swift's cousin, Franklin Sears, joined Swift in 1844, and the two men formed a partnership harvesting hides and other products from tule elk, deer, and the large herds of feral cattle which had strayed northward from Mexican ranchos and were common on the central Sacramento Valley frontier (Wilkes 1958 [1841]). In 1847, Swift and Franklin Sears moved their cattle operation to a new frontier in Colusa County, and built a headquarters along what would be later known as Stone Corral Creek, approximately 0.67 miles east of Antelope Valley. Swift and Sears built an adobe and a corral, the latter made from local sandstone boulders and nestled into a nook in a large boulder outcrop overlooking the creek.

The location of their homestead later became known locally as “Swift’s Stone Corral,” and it is presently State Historical Landmark #238.

The Sites Ranch, at the center of Antelope Valley and the proposed Sites Reservoir, was founded by John Sites in 1858 after stints in gold mining and operating a cattle ranch in Yolo County. Over the years, Sites made improvements to the land, and expanded both ranch and farm operations to include 7,000 acres (Rogers 1891:30; Johnson 1981:57). Land for the town of Sites was purchased from John Sites by the railroad to establish a depot station in Antelope Valley. In addition to the town itself, Sites Cemetery, a 1-acre parcel east of the town, is on the ranch property. The cemetery contains markers that document deaths as early as 1868. Three deeds for the Sites Cemetery, that transferred land title from W. F. Sites to the Trustees of the Sites Cemetery Association, were filed in 1904. The town of Sites was established in 1887 as the railhead for the new narrow gauge train line, the Colusa and Lake Railroad (C&LRR), was extended from Maxwell to Antelope Valley (URS 2013a:5-10).

The Sites town plat map was filed with the Colusa County Recorder’s Office on January 14, 1887 (Deed Book I, Page 443) by John Sites. The town was named in his honor (Green 1880:145). The plan featured streets and avenues up to 80 feet wide, and alleys up to 30 feet wide. The main thoroughfare, named Stone Corral Avenue, was 200 feet wide and paralleled the railroad. The original plat map shows a large central square and 11 blocks, numbered one through four and six through 12. The town square was originally planned as the location of the railroad roundhouse. There were 121 building lots shown on the 1887 plat map.

The first buildings constructed in 1886 were related to the railroad: a warehouse, water tower, and railroad station. A general store was also established that year. By the end of 1887, there was a hotel, livery stable, post office, and a new school to replace the first school built in Antelope Valley in 1871. The town continued to grow and thrive into the early 1900s, but by 1910 the economic prosperity of the region was beginning to wane. The area experienced a rapid economic decline between 1910 and 1915, and local businesses were forced to close as people left the area.

The decline in wheat production, decreases in stone orders at the quarries, new competition with automobiles for personal transportation and trucks for commercial business, and a demographic shift away from the foothills to urban centers in the Sacramento Valley during the early 20th century also meant the end of Colusa and Lake Railroad. The Railroad Commission agreed to discontinue the operation of passenger service to Sites, and service was halted in August 1914. Freight operations met a similar fate, and in May 1915, the C&LRR ceased all service; in July 1917, C&LRR assets were sold at public auction.

The remaining population of Sites and Antelope Valley found success in farming and stock-raising after the end of the Great Depression, and these ventures continue to the present day. The town of Sites took a final hit when most of its remaining historic structures were erased in a major wildfire in 1965. The fire burned six buildings and erased traces of several streets. When unification with the Maxwell School District occurred in 1965, a new bus route was established to bring students from the Lodoga, Leesville, and Sites areas to Maxwell to attend school. The Sites post office was discontinued in 1968 (Durham 2000). By 1987, the town had a population of just 17.

The school buildings, train depot, railroad warehouse, church buildings, stores, and hotels have been burned or razed, and only a few of the original landmarks of the old town still exist (URS 2013a:5-11, 5-12).

6 References

- California State Lands Commission. 2019. California State Lands Commission Shipwreck Information. Accessed May 2, 2019 at <https://www.slc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/ShipwreckInfo.pdf>.
- Carper, M. 2019. Personal communication received from Mark Carper, archaeologist with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation on March 23, 2019 about the eligibility status of the Tehama-Colusa Canal.
- Meyer, J. 2019. Detailed geoarchaeological mapping for the Sites Reservoir Geotechnical Field Investigations Project. Personal communications via email on March 14 and 20, 2019.
- Meyer, J., and J. S. Rosenthal. 2008. A Geoarchaeological Overview and Assessment of Caltrans District 3. Report on file at the California Department of Transportation, District 3, Marysville, California.
- Rosenthal, J., G. G. White, and M. Q. Sutton. 2010. The Central Valley: A View from the Catbird's Seat. In *California Prehistory: Colonization, Culture, and Complexity*, pp. 215-227. Edited by Terry L. Jones and Kathryn A. Klar. Lanham, MD: Altamira Press.
- Sites Project Authority and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation [Authority and Reclamation]. 2017. Sites Reservoir Project Draft Environmental Impact Report/Draft Environmental Impact Statement.
- URS Corporation (URS). 2013a. North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage Project Draft Archaeological Inventory Technical Report. Report prepared for the California Department of Water Resources and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Mid-Pacific Region.
- 2013b. North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage Project Draft Built Environment Identification & Evaluation Technical Report. Report prepared for the California Department of Water Resources U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Mid-Pacific Region.
- West, J., V. Levulett, and D. L. True. 1975. Archaeological Investigations in Colusa County, California, Funks Reservoir. Manuscript on file at the Northwest Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California.
1976. Archaeological Investigations in Colusa County, California Funks Reservoir. Report prepared for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.
- White, G. G. 2003. Testing and Mitigation at Four Sites on the Level (3) Long Haul Figer Optic Alignment, Colusa County, California. Report on file at the Northeast Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System, California State University, Chico.