

June 2021 | Settings and Trends

BUTTE COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

Prepared for:

Butte County

25 County Center Drive
Oroville, California 95965
530.552.3700

Prepared by:

PlaceWorks

2040 Bancroft Way, Suite 400
Berkeley, California 94704
510.848.3815
info@placeworks.com
www.placeworks.com

9 CULTURAL RESOURCES

This document provides an overview of cultural resources in Butte County, including an overview of the historical themes; a discussion of federal, State, and local regulations pertaining to the management of cultural resources; and a discussion of the types of cultural resources likely to be encountered.

Cultural resource is the term used to describe several different types of properties: prehistoric and historic archaeological sites, buildings, objects, structures, and districts or any other physical evidence associated with human activity considered important to a culture or a community for scientific, traditional, or religious reasons.

Federal regulations (36 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 800) define a *Historic Property* as any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in, or eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). This term includes artifacts, records, and remains that are related to and located within such properties. The term also includes properties of traditional religious and cultural importance to Native American tribes or Native Hawaiian organizations and that meet NRHP criteria.

State regulations, namely the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), have three defined terms that encompass cultural resources: *Historical Resource*, *Unique Archaeological Resource*, and *Tribal Cultural Resource*. Definitions for these terms are provided in Section A.2.a.

A. *Regulatory Setting*

This section presents federal, State, and local laws and regulations pertaining to cultural resources and Native Americans.

1. **Federal Regulations**

a. National Historic Preservation Act

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) defines the responsibilities of federal agencies to protect and preserve Historic Properties. Sections 106 and 110 include specific provisions for the identification and evaluation of these properties for inclusion in the NRHP, such as consulting with interested parties that often include local Native American tribes.

Section 106 requires federal agencies, or those they fund or permit, to consider the effects of any of their undertakings (projects, activities, or programs) on properties that may be eligible for listing or that are listed in the NRHP (i.e., Historic

Properties). Regulations implementing Section 106 (36 CFR 800) lay out procedures for federal agencies to meet their Section 106 responsibilities. Although compliance with Section 106 is the responsibility of the lead federal agency, the work necessary to comply may be undertaken by others.

To determine whether an undertaking could affect Historic Properties, cultural resources (including archaeological, historical, and architectural properties) must be inventoried and evaluated for listing in the NRHP.

The Section 106 process generally follows the basic steps listed below, although all steps may not be necessary in each case.

- ◆ Once an undertaking is established, initiate consultation with the appropriate parties, and plan to involve the public.
- ◆ Identify Historic Properties and determine whether your undertaking has potential to affect them.
- ◆ Assess effects of the undertaking on Historic Properties to determine if effects are adverse.
- ◆ Consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) regarding the identification of Historic Properties, any effects the undertaking may have on Historic Properties, and whether these effects will be adverse.
- ◆ Notify all consulting parties (e.g., Native American or Native Hawaiian tribes and members of the public) of the determinations regarding potential adverse effects to Historic Properties. Any disagreements should be resolved through consultation.
- ◆ Consult on ways to modify the undertaking to avoid, minimize, or resolve adverse effects on Historic Properties.
- ◆ If needed, come to an agreement on measures and steps to resolve adverse effects through the adoption of either a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) or, for larger or phased undertakings, a Programmatic Agreement (PA). These are agreement documents that outline the agreed-upon measures to resolve adverse effects.
- ◆ Proceed in accordance with the MOA or PA.

If all parties agree that there are no Historic Properties identified, or that the undertaking will not have an adverse effect on Historic Properties, an MOA or PA may not be necessary. Regardless, each step of this process should be documented for proof of compliance with the Section 106 process.

b. Federal Historic Significance Criteria

For federal projects, cultural resource significance is evaluated in terms of eligibility for listing in the NRHP. Structures, sites, buildings, districts, and objects over 50 years of age can be listed in the NRHP as significant Historic Properties. However, properties under 50 years of age that are of exceptional importance or are contributors to a historic district can also be included in the NRHP. The NRHP is administered by the National Park Service (NPS) and includes listings of buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts that possess historic, architectural, engineering, archaeological, or traditional cultural significance at the national, state, or local level.

Criteria for listing in the NRHP is outlined in 36 CFR 60.4 and are rooted in the notion that the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects of state and local importance that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and that:

1. Are associated with events that have contributed to the broad pattern of our history;
2. Are associated with the lives of people significant in our past;
3. Embody the distinct characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
4. Have yielded, or are likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history (36 CFR 60.4).

Through amendments to the NRHP in 1992 and their implementing regulations, federal responsibilities for consultations with interested parties, and especially with Indigenous tribes, during the Section 106 process were expanded. The result has been a more focused effort by federal agencies to involve interested parties in identifying Historic Properties of cultural significance and, if warranted, in considering effects that may result from a federal undertaking.

Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs) are often identified as resources during these consultation efforts. TCPs are tangible cultural properties that have historical and ongoing significance to living communities, as evidenced in their traditional cultural practices, values, beliefs, and identity. A TCP must still meet one of the four criteria outlined in 36 CFR Part 60.4, described previously, and must retain integrity. A TCP is simply a different way of grouping or looking at historic resources, emphasizing a place's value and significance to a living community.

As such, the NRHP guidelines describe the types of cultural significance for which properties may be eligible for inclusion in the NRHP. A property with traditional cultural significance will be found eligible for the NRHP because it is associated with cultural practices or beliefs of a living community that:

- a) Are rooted in that community's history, and
- b) Are important in maintaining the continuity of the cultural identity of the community.

This type of significance is grounded in the cultural patterns of thought and behavior of a living community and refers specifically to the association between their cultural traditions and a historic property.

2. State Regulations

a. California Environmental Quality Act

CEQA was passed in 1970 to institute a statewide policy of environmental protection. It requires that public agencies that finance or approve public or private projects must consider the impacts of their actions on the environment, of which, Historical Resources, Unique Archaeological Resources, and Tribal Cultural Resources are a part. A project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a Historical Resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment (California Public Resources Code [PRC] 21084.1). Section 21083.2 requires agencies to determine whether proposed projects would have effects on Unique Archaeological Resources, and Section 21074(a)(1) concerns effects to Tribal Cultural Resources.

CEQA requires that if a project would result in significant impacts on cultural resources that are important or significant, alternative plans or measures must be considered to lessen or mitigate such impacts. Prior to the development of mitigation measures, the importance of cultural resources must be determined. The steps that are generally taken in a cultural resources investigation for CEQA compliance are as follows:

- ◆ Identify cultural resources in a project area;
- ◆ If cultural resources exist in the footprint of a project, evaluate the significance of resources;
- ◆ If significant resources are determined to exist, evaluate the potential impacts of a project on these resources; and
- ◆ Develop and implement measures to mitigate the impacts of the project only on *significant* resources, namely Historical Resources, Unique Archaeological Resources, and Tribal Cultural Resources.

“Historical Resource” is a term with a defined statutory meaning (PRC Section 21084.1). Under CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a), Historical Resources include the following:

- ◆ A resource listed in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) or determined to be eligible for listing in the CRHR by the State Historical Resources Commission (PRC Section 5024.1).
- ◆ A resource included in a local register of Historical Resources, as defined in PRC Section 5020.1(k), or identified as significant in a Historical Resource survey meeting the requirements of PRC Section 5024.1(g), will 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.
- ◆ Any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript that a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California may be considered a historical resource, provided the lead agency’s determination is supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record. Generally, a resource will be considered by the lead agency to be “historically significant” if the resource meets the criteria for listing in the CRHR (PRC Section 5024.1), 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.

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

Historical Resources are usually 45 years or older and must meet at least one of the criteria for listing in the CRHR described previously, in addition to maintaining a sufficient level of integrity.

In addition, CEQA requires lead agencies to determine if a proposed project would have a significant effect on Unique Archaeological Resources. If an archaeological site does not meet the CEQA Guidelines criteria for a Historical Resource, then the site may meet the threshold of PRC Section 21083.2 regarding Unique Archaeological Resources. A Unique Archaeological Resource is an archaeological artifact, object, or site about which it can be clearly demonstrated that, without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that it meets any of the following criteria:

- ◆ Contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and there is a demonstrable public interest in that information.
- ◆ Has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type.
- ◆ Is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.

The CEQA Guidelines note that if a resource is neither a Unique Archaeological Resource nor a Historical Resource, the effects of the project on that resource shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment (14 California Code of Regulations [CCR] Section 15064[c][4]). Considerations under CEQA for Tribal Cultural Resources are discussed in Section A.2.e.

b. California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5(b) and CEQA Section 15064.5

Section 7050.5(b) of the California Health and Safety Code specifies protocol when human remains are discovered during activities involving ground disturbance. If human remains are discovered or identified in any location other than a dedicated cemetery, there should be no further disturbance or excavation nearby until the county coroner has determined the area is not a crime scene that warrants further investigation into the cause of death and made recommendations to the persons responsible for the work in the manner provided in Section 5097.98 of the PRC. This section provides guidance for proceeding when human remains associated with Native American burials and associated items are encountered.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(e) requires that excavation activities stop whenever human remains are uncovered during a project or activity, and that the county coroner be called in to assess the remains. If the county coroner determines that the remains are Native American, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) must be contacted within 24 hours. At that time, the lead agency must consult with the appropriate Native American descendants, if any, as identified by the NAHC. Under certain circumstances, the lead agency (or applicant), is required to develop an agreement with the Native American descendants for the treatment and disposition of the remains.

In addition to the mitigation provisions pertaining to accidental discovery of human remains, Section 15064.5(f) of the CEQA Guidelines also requires that a lead agency make provisions for the accidental discovery of historical or archaeological resources, generally. These provisions should include an immediate evaluation of the find by a qualified archaeologist. If the find is determined to be a Historical Resource or Unique Archaeological Resource, avoidance measures should be implemented or appropriate mitigation should be available.

c. Public Resources Code Section 5097.9

California PRC Section 5097.9 states that no public agency or private party on public property shall interfere with the free expression or exercise of Native American Religion. The code further states that:

...nor shall any such agency or party cause severe or irreparable damage to any Native American sanctified cemetery, place of worship, religious or ceremonial site, or sacred shrine located on public property, except on a clear and convincing showing that the public interest and necessity so require.

County and city lands are exempt from this provision, except for parklands larger than 100 acres.

d. Government Code 65352.3-5 (Senate Bill 18), Local Government – Tribal Consultation

California Government Code Section 65352.3-5, formerly known as Senate Bill (SB) 18, states that prior to the adoption or amendment of a city or county’s general plan, or specific plans, the city or county shall consult with California Native American tribes that are on the contact list maintained by the NAHC. The intent of this legislation is to preserve or mitigate impacts on places, features and objects, as defined in PRC 5097.9 and PRC 5097.993, that are located within the city or county’s jurisdiction. The bill also states that the city or county shall protect the confidentiality of information concerning the specific identity, location, character and use of those places, features and objects identified by Native American consultation. Government Code 65362.3-5 applies to all general and specific plans and amendments proposed after March 1, 2005.

e. Assembly Bill 52

Effective July 1, 2015, Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52) amended CEQA to require that: (1) a lead agency provide notice to those California Native American tribes that requested notice of projects proposed by the lead agency; and (2) the lead agency consult with any tribe that responded to the project notice within 30 days of receipt with a request for consultation. Topics that may be addressed during consultation include Tribal Cultural Resources, the potential significance of project impacts, the type of environmental document that should be prepared, and possible mitigation measures and project alternatives.

A California Native American tribe is defined as “a Native American tribe located in California that is on the contact list maintained by the NAHC for the purposes of Chapter 905 of the Statutes of 2004.” This includes both federally and non-federally recognized tribes.

Section 21074(a) of the PRC defines Tribal Cultural Resources for the purpose of CEQA as:

Sites, features, places, cultural landscapes (geographically defined in terms of the size and scope), sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that are any of the following:

- a. Included or determined to be eligible for inclusion in the CRHR; and/or
- b. Included in a local register of historical resources as defined in subdivision (k) of Section 5020.1; and/or
- c. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Section 5024.1 for the purposes of this paragraph, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

Because criteria a and b also meet the definition of a Historical Resource under CEQA, a Tribal Cultural Resource may also require additional consideration as a Historical Resource. Tribal Cultural Resources may or may not exhibit archaeological, cultural, or physical indicators.

Recognizing that California tribes are experts in their tribal cultural resources and heritage, AB 52 requires that CEQA lead agencies provide tribes that request notification an opportunity to consult at the commencement of the CEQA process to identify Tribal Cultural Resources. Furthermore, because a significant effect on a Tribal Cultural Resource is considered a significant impact on the environment under CEQA, consultation is used to develop appropriate avoidance, impact minimization, and mitigation measures.

f. Assembly Bill 168

AB 168 was signed in 2020 and extends the responsibility of a development proponent to consult with Native American tribes to streamlined ministerial approvals for affordable multifamily housing developments under SB 35. A development with streamlined ministerial approval under SB 35 is not subject to CEQA, allowing for such developments to occur without going through a CEQA review or screening process to determine if they would affect Tribal Cultural Resources.

AB 168 requires a development proponent to submit notice of its intent to apply for streamlined approval to the local government prior to the actual application submittal. The local government is then required to provide formal notice to each California Native American tribe that is culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the proposed development and to engage in a “scoping consultation” regarding

the potential effects the proposed development could have on a potential Tribal Cultural Resource (California Code Section 65913.4(b)).

The scoping consultation must commence within 30 days after the proponent submits a notice of intent to apply for ministerial approval and concluded before the proponent can submit the application.

This bill deems a project ineligible for the streamlined, ministerial approval process and require it be subject to CEQA if:

- (A) The site of the proposed development is a Tribal Cultural Resource that is on a national, State, tribal, or local historic register list;
- (B) The local government and the California Native American tribe do not agree that no potential Tribal Cultural Resource would be affected by the proposed development; or
- (C) The local government and California Native American tribe find that a potential Tribal Cultural Resource could be affected by the proposed development and the parties do not document an enforceable agreement regarding the methods, measures, and conditions for treatment of those tribal cultural resources, as provided.

3. Local Regulations

a. Butte County Code

Cultural resources are not separately addressed in the Butte County Code but are incorporated into various sections of it. The County Code provides for the protection of cultural resources in Chapter 20, Subdivision, and Chapter 24, Zoning.

Chapter 24-85 requires provisions for clustered development to retain open space for the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas, including important cultural resources (24-85(B)). It also lists sensitive archaeological sites as areas not suited for development (24-90(A)(4)) and requires telecommunications facilities to be located more than 500 feet from any building or feature listed as culturally significant (24-181-A(3)(c)). It also prohibits locating such facilities in areas of historical or cultural importance unless there are no feasible alternatives, in which case the Northeast Information Center at California State University (CSU) Chico and the Butte County Historical Society would review and comment on the application (24-181-O). It sets standards for unanticipated discoveries of archaeological resources during construction activities in the sports and entertainment zones, requiring

construction to cease in the event an archaeological resource is discovered until an archaeologist is brought in to assess and treat the discovery (24-24(F)).

Additionally, Chapter 24-34.1 outlines land use and development standards specific to the Butte Creek Canyon Overlay Zone intended to protect and preserve the historical and ecological resources important to Butte County, and specifically mandates consulting the California Historical Resources Information System and CSU Chico for recommendations and mitigations necessary to preserve historic, cultural, and archaeological sites (24-34.1D(5)).

Finally, Chapter 20 mandates more restrictive setbacks in areas where structural development would destroy historic and archaeological sites (20-121.1(3)). It also requires submittal of an archaeological survey along with a vesting tentative map when filing for a build (20-255(b)(8)).

b. Municipal General Plans

California land use law requires that every city, town, and county adopt a general plan. Individual cities and towns in Butte County that currently have adopted General Plans that consider a cultural resources element include Oroville, Chico, Biggs, and Paradise. Cultural resource provisions in these individual plans typically include goals and policies to preserve archaeological and historic resources, conduct current inventories of cultural resources and historic landmarks in the city or town jurisdiction, and develop or adhere to guidelines to ensure that potential impacts to cultural resources are minimized.

These individual general plans can be updated up to four times per year, and their mandates and provisions are regularly in the process of being re-worked, updated, and finessed to apply to relevant and up-to-date community concerns about land use. Any planning or land use development that occurs within the limit of a city or town will be subject to the individual goals, policies, provisions, and procedures of the most current city-specific or town-specific General Plan.

B. Cultural Setting

1. Prehistoric Context

Butte County encompasses the Sacramento Valley, northern Sierra Nevada foothills, and southern Cascades areas. Although the history of human occupation in these three areas differs archaeologically, it is generally characterized by a number of related trends throughout the last 10,000 years. Patterns of cultural change that can be seen in the archaeological record are a result of prehistoric

populations responding to gradual changes in climate, population growth, and availability of needed resources, such as food and shelter. The cultural responses to these changes include focusing on using specific types of resources and fully exploiting such resources, settlement in one place for longer periods of time, and trading goods with other groups in the region. The following summary of the prehistory of Butte County describes the cultural patterns in the three archaeological environments.

a. Central Valley

This summary of the archaeology of the Central Valley (which includes the Sacramento Valley) is split into three general timelines of human history: The Early, Middle, and Late Horizons. The archaeological trends attributed to these time periods are known as the Windmill, Berkeley, and Augustine Patterns, which show a continuous and gradual cultural response to both environmental and social constraints.

Archaeological evidence of humans in the Central Valley from the Pleistocene era (circa 10,000–8,000 B.C.) is scarce. A few sites have been found south of Butte County in the Mokelumne River area and at Rancho Murrieta.^{1,2,3} Although humans were living in the Central Valley during the Pleistocene era, sites from this time are deeply buried in the gravels and silts that have accumulated in the Central Valley from erosion and river flooding over the last 5,000 years, or they have eroded away.

¹ Johnson, J.J., 1967. The Archaeology of the Camanche Reservoir Locality, California. Paper 6. Sacramento, CA: Sacramento Anthropological Society.

² Johnson, J.J., 1967. The Archaeology of the Camanche Reservoir Locality, California. Paper 6. Sacramento, CA: Sacramento Anthropological Society.

³ Peak & Associates, Inc., 1981. Archaeological Investigation of CA-SAC-370 and CA-SAC-379, the Rancho Murieta Early Man Sites in Eastern Sacramento County. Sacramento, CA: Ann S. Peak and Associates.

The Central Valley gradually became both warmer and drier at the end of Pleistocene era and beginning of the Holocene era, which led people to change their food-procurement strategies to make use of a more diverse range of smaller plants and animals.

i. Early Horizon: 6,000–2,000 BC

This era is generally characterized by people living in small groups and moving around expansive territory to access a wider range of smaller resources that were seasonally available in different ecozones. Specialized tools were necessary to procure and process the wider range of plants and animals that were being used. As population increased around 4,000 BC, it became difficult to access enough food to maintain good health, and people started to find ways to increase the amount of food that could be procured from smaller areas of land.⁴ This intensification of resources is known as the Windmiller Pattern.⁵

Artifacts and faunal remains at Windmiller sites show that a diverse range of resources was exploited, including seeds and a variety of small game and fish. Fish spears, fishhooks, baked clay cooking balls, and ground stone items such as mortars and pestles are typical Windmiller pattern artifacts. People buried their dead in formal cemeteries and conducted burial rituals.⁶

ii. Middle Horizon: 2,000 BC–AD 500

Central Valley inhabitants became even more specialized in procuring needed resources during this period in response to population pressure, focusing on marshlands of the Delta area where the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers meet because of its rich food resources. The acorn also became a predominant food source. People began to settle in long-term villages around permanent sources of water to collect and intensely process nearby resources.

The Berkeley Pattern is the cultural trend marking the Middle Horizon. This pattern is reflected in the archaeological record by numerous ground stone artifacts used for exploiting the acorn as a staple, and stone tool technology that had

⁴ Moratto, M.J., 1978. *Archaeology and California's Climate*. California Indian Library Collections, Berkeley, CA.

⁵ Fredrickson, D.A., 1973. *Early Cultures of the North Coast Ranges, California*. Ph.D. dissertation. Davis, CA: Department of Anthropology, University of California, Davis.

⁶ Moratto, M.J., 2004. *California Archaeology*. Orlando, FL: Coyote Press, Salinas, CA.

become more specialized. A more localized population and resource base led to more trade relationships, evidence of which is seen in shells and certain types of stone tools.

iii. *Late Horizon: AD 500–1769*

The late horizon shows the results of the ever-increasing population and localized settlement patterns. Group territories continued to become smaller and more defined, and social patterns in the activities, relationships, belief systems and material culture continued to develop during this period, taking forms similar to those described by the first Europeans that entered the area.

The dominant cultural pattern in the Late Horizon is the Augustine Pattern.⁷ Archaeological sites representing the Augustine Pattern show more specialized technology, such as artifacts of composite materials, detailed stone and shell work, basketwork, and ceramic production. Small figurines, smoking pipes, and clam shell disk beads (which were traded as currency) are evidence of complex social and economic institutions. Small projectile points represent the use of the bow and arrow.

b. Southern Cascades

Researchers have defined the cultural sequence based on the archaeological record for the Southern Cascade foothills in the northern portion of Butte County to include five phases that span 4,000 years: Deadman, Kingsley, Dye Creek, Mill Creek, and Ethnographic.^{8,9} Like the Central Valley phases, as time went on, the material culture reflected increased complexity.

The Deadman Complex (circa 3,450–2,450 before present [BP]) is characterized by large side-notched, leaf-shaped and stemmed basalt projectile points and the presence of manos and metates. The Kingsley Complex (2,450–1,450 BP) is generally represented by large stemmed and corner-notched projectile points made primarily out of basalt, scoop *Olivella* shell beads, flat bone tools, and a greater

⁷ Fredrickson, D.A., 1973. *Early Cultures of the North Coast Ranges, California*. Ph.D. dissertation. Davis, CA: Department of Anthropology, University of California, Davis.

⁸ Johnson, J.J., no date. *Archaeological Investigations in Northeastern California (1939–1979)*. Master's thesis. Sacramento, CA: California State University, Sacramento.

⁹ Johnson, J.J., no date. *Archaeological Investigations in Northeastern California (1939–1979)*. Master's thesis. Sacramento, CA: California State University, Sacramento.

variety of groundstone tools for plant processing. The Dye Creek Complex (1,450–450 BP) is characterized by an increased variety of shell beads and ornaments; the groundstone assemblage is similar to that of the Kingsley Complex. Projectile points included large, serrated points of obsidian and basalt. The Mill Creek Complex (450–100 BP) is characterized by the presence of even greater shell bead varieties, as well as twined basketry and more ubiquitous groundstone tools. Projectile point types include small triangular points of obsidian and occasionally silicates.

The Ethnographic Complex (1845–1911 AD) consists of a large majority of the items of the prehistoric Mill Creek Complex and miscellaneous artifacts of Euro-American manufacture. A type of rock art called pitted boulder petroglyphs are frequently found in association with ethnographic village sites of the Yana and Konkow, existing descendant communities in the area.

c. Northern Sierra Nevada

The cultural chronology first developed for the northern Sierra Nevada in the eastern portion of Butte County identified two time periods marked by different cultural complexes: the Martis Complex and the Kings Beach Complex.¹⁰ The earlier Martis Complex was characterized by large spear points made almost exclusively of basalt, millstone and mortar and pestle technology, and food sources of large game and seeds. The later Kings Beach Complex was marked by the use of obsidian and chert for smaller flaked-stone tools, the use of bedrock mortars for processing acorns and other plant resources, and greater reliance on fishing and collecting nuts and seeds rather than hunting.¹¹

Later researchers refined the cultural sequence of the Martis-Kings Beach Complexes.¹² The Washoe Lake Phase (before 10,000 BP) is the earliest known evidence of humans in the area, represented by fluted projectile points. People were thought to have been highly mobile during this time. The Tahoe Reach Phase

¹⁰ Elsasser, A. B., 1960. *The Archaeology of the Sierra Nevada in California and Nevada*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Archaeological Survey Report 51:1–93..

¹¹ Jackson, R.J., T.L. Jackson, C. Miksicek, K. Roper, and D. Simons, 1994. *Framework for Archaeological Research and Management on the National Forests of the North-Central Sierra Nevada*. Unit 1, Volume B. BioSystems Analysis, Inc. Submitted to the U.S. Forest Service, Eldorado National Forest.

¹² Elston, R.G., 1979. *The Archaeology of U.S. 395 Right-of-Way Corridor Between Stead, Nevada and Hallelujah Junction, California*. Report submitted to the

(10,000–8,000 BP) is characterized by large-stemmed points used to hunt a variety of mammals and only occasional groundstone artifacts, indicating more focus on hunting than on plant resources. The Spooner Phase (8,000–5,000 BP) has very few artifacts that can be definitively dated to the time period. The Early (5,000–3,000 BP) and Late (3,000–1,300 BP) Martis Phases are well-defined in the archaeological record, implying a significant increase in human population in the region. While grinding artifacts and house pits remain similar through the two phases, the differences are marked by changes in projectile point styles. The Early Kings Beach Phase (dates vary) marks the introduction of the bow and arrow to the region, while the Late Kings Beach Phase is represented by a decrease in archaeological sites and features, possibly indicating a change in settlement patterns.

2. Ethnographic Context

Butte County includes the territories of four Native American groups, the Maidu (mountain Maidu), the Nisenan (southern Maidu), the Konkow (northwestern Maidu) and the Yana. While there is some overlap, their territories are generally well-defined in the Butte County area, based on the areas each tribe occupied up to Euro-American contact. The Maidu territory is located at the approximate boundary between the northern Sierra Nevada and southern Cascade Range and includes mountain valleys from Honey Lake to Lassen Peak. To the south, the Nisenan territory extends from the banks of the Sacramento River across the lower Feather River drainages to the crest of the Sierra. The Konkow territory includes Feather River area west of Richbar and extends to the southwest almost to the Sutter Buttes, and the Sacramento River area from about Butte City on the south to Butte Meadows on the north. The Yana territory extends from the edge of the Sacramento Valley east to the crest of the Cascades and northern Sierra.¹³

¹³ Johnson, J.J., 1978. Yana. In R. F. Heizer, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians*. Vol. 8, *California*:361–369. (W. C. Sturtevant, general ed.) Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution.

a. Maidu

Maidu society was focused at the village level, with a village generally containing about seven households.¹⁴ Village communities consisted of several adjacent villages and usually occupied a single valley. Where winter weather allowed it, permanent villages were established. In other areas, villages were occupied on a seasonal basis. An individual's connection was to the village community, and group differentiation was primarily determined by geographical location. Community boundaries were guarded and defended. Warfare could take place between individual villages or between village communities and generally consisted of raiding or ambushes.¹⁵

The community leader of the main village was a headman with no strict political control, chosen for maturity, wealth, ability, and generosity.¹⁶ A large assembly chamber, or dance house, was located within the headman's village to accommodate members of the community for ceremonial and subsistence activities.¹⁷

Each village was self-sufficient and used a seasonal hunter-gathering strategy to exploit a wide range of plant and animal resources to provide for the needs of the village. Plant food sources included acorns, seeds, roots, berries, and bulbs; the acorn was the most important of these foods. Both individual hunts and group hunts were organized for bear or deer. Additional food sources included large and small game, fish, eel, and various insects. Other resources included materials for manufacturing tools and weaving basketry. Generally, all land was communally

¹⁴ Riddell, F.A., 1978. Maidu and Konkow. In R. F. Heizer, volume ed., *Handbook of North American Indians*. Vol. 8, California:370–386. Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution.

¹⁵ Kroeber, A.L., 1925. *Handbook of the Indians of California*. (Bulletin No. 78.) Washington, DC: Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution. Reprinted in 1976. New York: Dover Publications.

¹⁶ Kroeber, A.L., 1925. *Handbook of the Indians of California*. (Bulletin No. 78.) Washington, DC: Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution. Reprinted in 1976. New York: Dover Publications.

¹⁷ Kroeber, A.L., 1925. *Handbook of the Indians of California*. (Bulletin No. 78.) Washington, DC: Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution. Reprinted in 1976. New York: Dover Publications.

owned and accessible to all members of the community for gathering and hunting purposes.¹⁸

b. Nisenan

Nisenan villages were usually located on low rises along major watercourses, and ranged in size from three houses to 40 or 50. Houses were domed structures covered with earth and tule or grass. Brush shelters were used in the summer and at temporary camps during food-gathering rounds. Larger villages often had semi-subterranean dance houses that were covered in earth and tule or brush. Another common village structure was a granary used for storing acorns.¹⁹

The Nisenan groups that lived in permanent settlements set out seasonally to gather resources from the surrounding ecosystem. The acorn crop from the blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*) and black oak (*Q. kelloggii*) was so carefully managed that its management served as the equivalent of agriculture. Acorns were stored in anticipation of winter shortfalls. Deer, rabbit, and salmon were the chief sources of animal protein, but many other insects and animals were used as well.

Religion played an important role in Nisenan life. The Nisenan believed that all natural objects were endowed with supernatural powers. Two kinds of shamans existed: curing shamans and religious shamans. Curing shamans had limited contact with the spirit world and diagnosed and healed illnesses. Religious shamans gained control over the spirits through dreams and esoteric experiences.²⁰

c. Konkow

Konkow groups were organized by tribelet. A tribelet was composed of several villages. When needed for group decisions or group activities, the headman of one of the villages in a tribelet was selected to be the leader of all the villages

¹⁸ Kroeber, A.L., 1925. *Handbook of the Indians of California*. (Bulletin No. 78.) Washington, DC: Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution. Reprinted in 1976. New York: Dover Publications..

¹⁹ Wilson, N.L. and A.H. Towne, 1978. Nisenan. In R. F. Heizer, ed., *The Handbook of North American Indians*. Vol. 8, *California*:387–397. (W. C. Sturtevant, general ed.) Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution.

²⁰ Wilson, N.L. and A.H. Towne, 1978. Nisenan. In R. F. Heizer, ed., *The Handbook of North American Indians*. Vol. 8, *California*:387–397. (W. C. Sturtevant, general ed.) Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution.

composing the tribelet. Headmen primarily acted as advisors and were chosen by a shaman for qualities such as wealth, maturity, ability, and generosity.²¹

The basic subsistence strategy of the Konkow was seasonally mobile hunting and gathering. Acorns, the primary staple, were gathered in the valley, along with seeds, buckeye, salmon, insects and a wide variety of other plants and animals. During the warmer months, people moved to mountainous areas to hunt and collect food resources from higher elevations, such as pine nuts.²²

d. Yana

Yana territory was divided among numerous tribelets, each consisting of a major village with a principal chief and assembly house and several allied villages. The chief's position was hereditary, but the chief's authority was limited to making suggestions, without the power of control or command. The southern Yana lived in single-family dwellings consisting of a conical framework of poles covered with slabs of bark built over a shallow, oval depression in the earth.²³

The Yana gathered a wide variety of resources and ate a variety of plant foods, including acorns, berries, seeds, roots, tubers, and bulbs. The acorn, harvested in September and October, was the most important of all resources. Of the various game animals hunted, deer were the most important. Rodents and some insects were a part of the Yana diet, as were fish such as salmon, trout, and suckers.²⁴

²¹ Riddell, F.A., 1978. Maidu and Konkow. In R. F. Heizer, volume ed., *Handbook of North American Indians*. Vol. 8, California:370–386. Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution.

²² Riddell, F.A., 1978. Maidu and Konkow. In R. F. Heizer, volume ed., *Handbook of North American Indians*. Vol. 8, California:370–386. Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution.

²³ Johnson, J.J., 1978. Yana. In R. F. Heizer, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians*. Vol. 8, California:361–369. (W. C. Sturtevant, general ed.) Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution.

²⁴ Johnson, J.J., 1978. Yana. In R. F. Heizer, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians*. Vol. 8, California:361–369. (W. C. Sturtevant, general ed.) Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution.

Despite feuds with neighboring tribes, trade did take place between the Yana and their adjacent neighbors. Goods acquired by the Yana included obsidian, arrows, quivers, buckskin, and arrow points. In trade, the Yana supplied deer hides, salt, buckskin, and baskets.²⁵

3. Historic Context

a. Butte County

Butte County is situated on the east side of the Sacramento Valley and is bounded by the Sacramento River to the west and the Sierra Nevada to the east.²⁶ Butte was one of the original 27 counties created when California became a state in 1850. The County initially included all the lands of Plumas County, as well as large portions of Lassen and Tehama Counties. The present county limits, established in 1923, abut Glenn and Colusa Counties to the west, Tehama County to the north and northwest, Plumas County to the east, Sutter County to the south, and Yuba County to the southeast.²⁷ The original county seat was located in Hamilton, a former mining town. In 1853, the seat moved to Bidwell's Bar (another mining camp and now under Lake Oroville); in 1856, it moved again to the current location of Oroville.²⁸

Butte County is basically a rural county, with Biggs, Chico, Gridley, Durham, Paradise, and Oroville representing (roughly) six of the largest communities. The lack of any real major mineral deposits, such as coal or iron, as well as the county's distance from major commercial centers, has contributed to the overall rural development of the county. Residents historically have relied on agriculture, lumber, and some mining to subsist.

²⁵ Johnson, J.J., 1978. Yana. In R. F. Heizer, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians*. Vol. 8, *California*:361–369. (W. C. Sturtevant, general ed.) Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution.

²⁶ Phillips, E. and J.H. Miller, 1915. *Sacramento Valley and Foothill Counties of California: An Illustrated Description of All the Counties Embraced in this Richly Productive Geographical Subdivision of the Golden State*. Sacramento, CA: Sacramento Valley Expositions Commission.

²⁷ Coy, O.C., 1923. *California County Boundaries*. California Historical Survey Commission, Berkeley, CA.

²⁸ Gudde, E.G., 1969. *California Place Names: the Origin and Etymology of Current Geographical Names*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

b. Early Exploration

Spaniards explored parts of Butte County as early as 1808. Gabriel Moraga guided an expedition up north, along the Calaveras, Mokelumne, Cosumnes, American and Sacramento Rivers, in search of potential inland mission sites. In 1820, a party led by Luis Arguello passed through the region as far north as the Columbia River.²⁹

During the early 1800s, hunters and trappers, such as Jedediah Strong Smith and a group of Hudson's Bay Company trappers, explored the present-day Butte County. The hunters found the banks of the rivers and streams rich with beavers, otters, and other animals whose pelts were highly valuable commodities in the worldwide trade of the time. The region remained outside the mainstream of both Mexican and American settlement until the California gold rush of 1848.³⁰

c. Mining

The discovery of gold in 1848 brought an influx of gold seekers to the region. Thousands of miners descended upon the area and set up transitory encampments, such as Bidwell Bar, Long Bar and Hamilton, along the Feather River where some gold was discovered. During the next 70 years, gold mining in some form remained the primary economic activity in Butte County.

The Feather River was largely the site of placer mining in the mid-19th century, but as time wore on, mining techniques changed and evolved. More labor-intensive methods such as river mining, drift mining, hydraulic mining and dredging soon replaced simple placer mining. Quartz mining also occurred but to a lesser degree. The more labor-intensive mining techniques necessitated the building of dams, ditches, and flumes that in turn required extensive labor. Mining and ditch companies soon established themselves in the area to oversee the construction of major mining activities, including the building of numerous ditch systems. Mining continued until the 1880s, when the number of miners throughout the county

²⁹ McGie, J.F., 1982a. *History of Butte County, Volume I: 1840–1919*. Oroville, CA: Butte County Board of Education.

³⁰ McGie, J.F., 1982a. *History of Butte County, Volume I: 1840–1919*. Oroville, CA: Butte County Board of Education.

decreased largely as a result of the end of hydraulic mining. This, along with the collapse of the wheat industry, led to a general depression and decline in the county's overall population.³¹

During the early 20th century, dredge mining became popular in the Feather River near the City of Oroville and farther south. At the height of dredge mining, more than 40 dredges were operating in the river and bringing prosperity to Oroville. As a result, the Town enjoyed a population boom, increasing from 1,787 to 3,859 persons between 1890 and 1910. Mining activity gradually declined during the following decades as deposits began to be played out. Gold mining continued until 1942, when the War Production Board closed all mines in the region.³²

d. Settlement

Prior to the gold rush of 1848, only a handful of ranches scattered on the Mexican land grants in the Sacramento Valley area comprised the few settlements in the region. During the 1850s and 1860s, much of Butte County was settled with small farms, where settlers raised wheat; vegetables; livestock; and cultivated orchards that included apples, peaches, pears, figs, citrus, and olives. Wheat became the prevalent crop during this period and dominated the agriculture of the county for much of the remainder of the century until the state experienced an overall decline in the 1890s as a result of the wheat bust.³³

³¹ Walker, M., M. Selverston, and M. Markwyn, 2005. Archaeological and Historical Resources Inventory Report, Oroville Facilities Relicensing, FERC Project 2100. Rohnert Park, CA: Anthropological Studies Center, Sonoma State University. Prepared for the Department of Water Resources, the Resources Agency, State of California.

³² Walker, M., M. Selverston, and M. Markwyn, 2005. Archaeological and Historical Resources Inventory Report, Oroville Facilities Relicensing, FERC Project 2100. Rohnert Park, CA: Anthropological Studies Center, Sonoma State University. Prepared for the Department of Water Resources, the Resources Agency, State of California.

³³ Walker, M., M. Selverston, and M. Markwyn, 2005. Archaeological and Historical Resources Inventory Report, Oroville Facilities Relicensing, FERC Project 2100. Rohnert Park, CA: Anthropological Studies Center, Sonoma State University. Prepared for the Department of Water Resources, the Resources Agency, State of California.

By the early 20th century, Butte County served as a major fruit and nut-producing region. During this period, land holdings increased in number yet declined in overall acreage. While the number of farms increased from 1,179 to 2,603, the average farm decreased from 574.3 to 238 acres.³⁴

i. Oroville

Oroville (originally Ophir) was built on flat land below the junction of the forks of the Feather River. It was originally established as a mining camp during the Gold Rush and gradually developed into a trading center for mining and then for lumbering and agricultural goods. In 1856, state officials designated Oroville as the county seat. As the local economy shifted from mining-based activities to agricultural-based activities, numerous canneries and processing plants opened in town. By the 1880s, Oroville was home to numerous establishments, including a grocery store, a dry-goods store, a drug store, a bank, a brewery, and several saloons.³⁵ Oroville continues to serve as a steady economic and social focal point into the present day, with a 2020 population of approximately 19,400.³⁶

ii. Chico

The City of Chico is named after Rancho Chico, which John Bidwell, a prominent California politico, purchased from William Dickey and Edward A. Farwell, the original grantees, in the late 1840s. In 1860, Bidwell founded the town of Chico and later donated land for the Northern Branch State Normal School. The school became California State University, Chico and, as it was when it was founded, remains the center of the community. After Bidwell's death, his wife, Annie, donated 1,900 acres of the ranch to the City of Chico, which became Bidwell Park.³⁷ Today, Chico has a population of approximately 110,300.³⁸

³⁴ Walker, M., M. Selverston, and M. Markwyn, 2005. Archaeological and Historical Resources Inventory Report, Oroville Facilities Relicensing, FERC Project 2100. Rohnert Park, CA: Anthropological Studies Center, Sonoma State University. Prepared for the Department of Water Resources, the Resources Agency, State of California.

³⁵ Walker, M., M. Selverston, and M. Markwyn, 2005. Archaeological and Historical Resources Inventory Report, Oroville Facilities Relicensing, FERC Project 2100. Rohnert Park, CA: Anthropological Studies Center, Sonoma State University. Prepared for the Department of Water Resources, the Resources Agency, State of California.

³⁶ Butte County Association of Governments 2020: <http://www.bcag.org/Planning/Socio-Economic-Data/Population-Estimates---2020/index.html>.

³⁷ Kyle, D.E., 1990. *Historic Spots in California*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

iii. Paradise

The area surrounding the Town of Paradise was first settled during the Gold Rush by miners searching for gold along the Feather River and Butte Creek. It was not until 1877, when a post office with the name of Paradise was established where the present town is located, that the small agriculturally focused settlement began to have the features of a town. By 1880, the United States Census listed the small community as “Paradise Ridge.” After the Butte County Railroad was completed in 1902, the town’s population began to expand, and it became the center of the apple industry in Butte County.³⁹

In the 1910s, additional development occurred in Paradise and more families settled there to begin farming. The Paradise Irrigation District was formed in 1916 due to lack of a reliable water supply during the summers. The irrigation district built the Magalia Dam on Little Butte Creek. Farmers grew apples, prunes, and pears, and the town’s location on the Butte County Railroad helped farmers transport their produce to market.⁴⁰ Currently, the population is approximately 4,600, reduced from 26,300 following the 2018 Camp Fire.⁴¹

iv. Gridley

The early settlement of Gridley was surrounded by dry farms of wheat, oats, and barley in the 1850s and 1860s. The town of Gridley was officially established after the California and Oregon Railroad constructed an alignment through the area in 1870. The town was constructed on property owned by George W. Gridley, a prominent agriculturalist in Butte County.⁴² Citizens created a canal system in 1902 that tapped into the Feather River and brought water for irrigation to the farms and ranches. This new irrigation system allowed farming in the area to diversify and provided for farming on a smaller scale by individual families. A population influx

³⁸ Butte County Association of Governments 2020: <http://www.bcag.org/Planning/Socio-Economic-Data/Population-Estimates---2020/index.html>

³⁹ McDonald, Lois, 2000. *This Paradise We Call Home* Paradise: Gold Nugget Museum, 2000.

⁴⁰ Colby, Robert. 2006. *Images of America: Paradise*. Published by Arcadia Publishing Incorporated, South Carolina.

⁴¹ State of California, Department of Finance, E-5 Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State — January 1, 2011-2020. Sacramento, California, May 2020.

⁴² Wells, Harry L. and W.L., 1882. *Chambers, History of Butte County California* San Francisco: Harry L. Wells.

followed; many of these early settlers and farmers were members of the Mormon Church. By the early twentieth century there was a large Mormon community in Gridley that settled south of present-day Little Street. Gridley was incorporated in 1906.⁴³ The current population is approximately 6,400.⁴⁴

v. Biggs

Like the town of Gridley, the town of Biggs was established when the California and Oregon Railroad constructed an alignment through the area in 1870. In that year, a post office and store were located in the town, and the town's namesake, Marion Biggs, shipped the first grain out. The town grew slowly but, by the 1880s, was the third biggest town in Butte County.⁴⁵ The current estimated population is 1,900.⁴⁶

e. Development

i. 19th Century

Throughout the latter part of the 19th century, Butte County enjoyed a steady growth in population, largely because of the establishment of lumber, mining (primarily gold and diamond), and hydroelectric power industries. The continued growth and success of agriculture and the introduction of fruit-canning operations in particular, contributed to the economic development of the region. Crops produced in the county included hay, citrus fruits, vegetables, nuts (primarily almonds), grapes, berries, apples, plums, pomegranates, figs, melons, cherries, and olives.⁴⁷

⁴³ The Reunion Committee. 1980. *History of the LDS Church in the Gridley, California Area*. Mc Dowell Printing, Gridley, California.

⁴⁴ Butte County Association of Government. 2020. <http://www.bcag.org/Planning/Socio-Economic-Data/Population-Estimates---2020/index.html>

⁴⁵ Wells, Harry L. and W.L., 1882. *Chambers, History of Butte County California*. San Francisco: Harry L. Wells.

⁴⁶ Butte County Association of Government. 2020. <http://www.bcag.org/Planning/Socio-Economic-Data/Population-Estimates---2020/index.html>

⁴⁷ Phillips, E. and J.H. Miller, 1915. *Sacramento Valley and Foothill Counties of California: An Illustrated Description of All the Counties Embraced in this Richly Productive Geographical Subdivision of the Golden State*. Sacramento, CA: Sacramento Valley Expositions Commission.

A major employer in the area was the Diamond Match Company, which opened a plant in Chico in 1902 to make matches and other wood products. The company established a lumber mill east of Magalia, in the mountains, and constructed the Butte County Railroad in 1903 to transport lumber from the mill to Chico. Although established primarily to transport lumber, the passenger and freight service offered by the Butte County Railroad stimulated growth in the communities along the route.⁴⁸ The construction of the Northern Electric Railroad (later the Sacramento Northern Railroad) in 1905 and the Western Pacific Railroad (part of the transcontinental railroad system) in 1910 further stimulated the region's growth and development.⁴⁹

ii. 20th Century

Manufacturing and service industries continued to flourish during the early 20th century as Butte County struggled to meet the demands of World War I. The influx of people to the area also created pressure to construct new housing. Butte County's economy suffered through the Depression years with the rest of the nation, later to be rejuvenated by the onset of World War II. During those years, the county poured its energies into the war effort, and, once the conflict ended, Butte County citizens redirected their attention to the home front. Beginning in the late 1940s and into the 1950s, Butte County embarked on a long-postponed construction project that involved building churches, schools, and housing, as well as improving the infrastructure for the growing population.⁵⁰

By the 1950s, the economy throughout the county was booming with the continued success of the Diamond Match Company; the construction of the Oroville Dam (completed in 1968); and the thriving agriculture, canning, lumber, and wood-processing enterprises. Other local industries included the manufacture of lead tube containers and prefabricated houses, structural steel fabrication, olive processing, sugar manufacturing, rice milling, walnut and almond processing and dairy processing. Agriculture continued to be the primary industry of the county in terms of production and growth. Major crops produced were almonds, olives, walnuts, citrus fruits, and rice, as well as peaches, prunes, grain, and hay. Overall,

⁴⁸ Mansfield, G., 1918. *History of Butte County*. Historic Record Company, Los Angeles, CA.

⁴⁹ Robertson, D., 1998. *Encyclopedia of Western Railroad History*. Volume IV, *California*. Caldwell, IN: Caxton Publishing.

⁵⁰ McGie, J.F., 1982b. *History of Butte County, Volume II: 1920–1980*. Oroville, CA: Butte County Board of Education.

during the postwar period, Butte County experienced a 30-percent growth in business. The county's population grew from 42,840 in 1940 to 82,030 by 1960.⁵¹

f. Transportation

i. U.S. Highway 99

Historic U.S. Highway 99 traveled from the Mexican border north toward Sacramento, where it split into U.S. Highway 99W and U.S. Highway 99E. The two parts rejoined in Red Bluff and generally followed the current Interstate 5 (I-5) route north toward the Oregon/California border. It was originally a dirt and gravel road, but highway officials paved the alignment by the late 1920s when it became one of the first highways commissioned in the nation. U.S. Highway 99 functioned as the main artery along the West Coast until it was largely bypassed in the 1960s by the newly constructed I-5. Between the late 1960s and early 1970s, U.S. Highway 99 was decommissioned and relegated to secondary highway status.

Although U.S. Highway 99 traveled through the Central Valley as early as 1926, for many years it skirted Chico by traveling up to, but not through, the city. By 1955, the State had relocated U.S. Highway 99E through Chico. This newer segment traveled southwest of the current route along the historic Esplanade. Despite public opposition, the state rerouted the highway again in the early 1960s, to alleviate traffic congestion. Chico residents hotly disputed the new highway because it bisected Bidwell Park and traveled through an established residential district. The new alignment (which travels through the project area) is supported by a 20-foot-high earth-filled dike and cuts through 8 acres of parkland.⁵²

g. Hydroelectric Power

Mining spurred the initial development of hydroelectric power facilities in California; many mining operations used water-generating plants to operate equipment powered by electricity, including hoists and dredges. Large hydropower interests such as Great Western Power began investing in hydroelectric infrastructure development; in 1930, PG&E bought the company and its interests such as Big Bend Powerhouse.⁵³ The Feather River was widely considered an ideal

⁵¹ McGie, J.F., 1982b. *History of Butte County, Volume II: 1920–1980*. Oroville, CA: Butte County Board of Education.

⁵² California Department of Transportation 1918, 1936, 1963; San Francisco Examiner 1962; Sheridan 1955.

⁵³ Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. 2006. *Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Hydropower License, Oroville Facilities – FERC Project No. 2100*. September. FERC

waterway to house hydropower facilities, and in the mid-twentieth century, plans were laid by State government and agencies to construct these facilities near Oroville.

i. Oroville Dam and Thermalito Water Diversion and Power Generation Structures

In order to meet the power and water needs of the expanding regional population and Butte County economy, the State of California proposed the construction of the Oroville Dam and associated facilities in 1951; they were completed by 1968.^{54,55} The Oroville facilities consist of: the Oroville Dam and reservoir; Hyatt Pumping-Generating Plant; Thermalito Diversion Dam, Power Plant, and Power Canal; fish barrier dam and Feather River Fish hatchery; Thermalito Forebay, Dam, and Thermalito Pumping-Generating Plant; Thermalito Afterbay Dam and outlet; and transmission lines. An average of 2.2 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity are produced by the Oroville Facilities annually.⁵⁶ The Lake Oroville storage reservoir has a capacity of approximately 3.5 million acre-feet of water and is host to a range of recreational activities.

h. Wildfire Management and Wildfire Impacts to Cultural Resources in Butte County

In November 2018, a wildfire began on Camp Creek Road in Pulga, approximately 10 miles east of Paradise. The wildfire, known as the Camp Fire, burned approximately 153,000 acres, consuming parts of the communities of Butte Creek Canyon, Concow, Magalia, and Upper Ridge in unincorporated northern Butte

⁵⁴ California Department of Water Resources: <https://water.ca.gov/Programs/State-Water-Project/SWP-Facilities/Oroville>. Accessed February 5, 2021.

⁵⁵ Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. 2006. *Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Hydropower License, Oroville Facilities – FERC Project No. 2100*. September. FERC Office of Energy Projects, Division of Hydropower Licensing, 888 First St. NE, Washington, DC 20426.

⁵⁶ Department of Water Resources. 2021. *Oroville Facilities*. <https://water.ca.gov/Programs/State-Water-Project/SWP-Facilities/Oroville/HLPCO-Oroville-Facilities-Project-2100>, accessed February 5, 2021.

County and almost completely destroying the Town of Paradise.⁵⁷ The wildfire destroyed over 14,500 structures and was responsible for the deaths of 87 people.⁵⁸

In August 2020, the North Complex Fire was sparked during a lightning storm. The North Complex Fire ravaged the southeast portion of the county and caused the death of 16 people and destruction of 2,445 additional structures, primarily in the Berry Creek and Feather Falls communities.⁵⁹

Prior to the Camp Fire, twelve additional formidable wildfires burned within the same area as the Camp Fire since 1999.⁶⁰ As drought, beetle infestation, and disease have intensified across Sierra Nevada Mountain forests, wildfires have become increasingly more frequent and larger since 1950.⁶¹

The effects of wildfire on cultural resources, while variable by environmental context, are largely more severe due to the combined effects of unchecked high-temperature flames and flame suppression methods.⁶² An unknown number of cultural resources were destroyed as a result of the Camp and North Complex Fires alone.

⁵⁷ Hagerty, Colleen. 2019. The Camp Fire, one year later. Article published October 23, 2019. Vox. <https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/10/16/20908291/camp-fire-wildfire-california-paradise-survivors>., accessed February 5, 2021.

⁵⁸ Butte County District Attorney, *The Camp Fire Public Report: A Summary of the Camp Fire Investigation*, June 16, 2020, <https://www.buttecounty.net/Portals/30/CFReport/PGE-THE-CAMP-FIRE-PUBLIC-REPORT.pdf?ver=2020-06-15-190515-977>

⁵⁹ U.S. Forest Service, Plumas National Forest, North Complex Fire Update, December 4, 2020, <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/6997/>

⁶⁰ Gafni, Matthias. 2018. *Rebuild Paradise? Since 1999, 13 large wildfires burned in the footprint of the Camp Fire*. The Mercury News, December 3.

⁶¹ Butte County. 2018. *Community Demographics and Fire History Map*. <https://www.buttecounty.net/fire> Accessed February 5, 2021.

⁶² Winthrop, Kate. No Date. *Bare Bones Guide to Fire Effects on Cultural Resources, for Cultural Resource Specialists*. Produced for Bureau of Land Management. Published by National Parks Service. [https://www.nps.gov/archeology/npsGuide/fire/docs/8%20Bare%20Bones%20Guide%20to%20Fire%20Effects%20on%20CR-BLM\(Winthrop\).pdf](https://www.nps.gov/archeology/npsGuide/fire/docs/8%20Bare%20Bones%20Guide%20to%20Fire%20Effects%20on%20CR-BLM(Winthrop).pdf), Accessed February 6, 2021.

C. Existing Conditions

1. Known Cultural Resources

A general countywide record search was requested and conducted at the Northeast Information Center (NEIC) of the California Historical Resources Information System at California State University, Chico. Specifically, the NEIC keeps records of known archaeological and architectural sites and studies on U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle maps. All of the USGS maps covering Butte County were consulted by NEIC staff. This information provided the basis for the basic archaeological-sensitivity assessment of Butte County, discussed later in this report. Additionally, NEIC consulted the following sources: Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) historic property listings, California State Archaeological Determinations of Eligibility, NEIC historic resources maps, California Inventory of Historic Resources, *California Place Names*,⁶³ *California Gold Camps*,⁶⁴ Caltrans Historic Bridge Inventory, California Historical Landmarks (1996), California Points of Historical Interest (1992) *Historic Spots in California*,⁶⁵ and the Butte County Built Environment Resources Directory.

a. Archaeological Resources

Of the 4,008 archaeological sites recorded in Butte County, 2,155 sites are either prehistoric archaeological resources or include a prehistoric archaeological component. There are 1,853 sites that are historic period sites. According to 2012 data from the California Office of Historic Preservation, a total of 40 archaeological sites are listed on or have been formally recommended eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (and therefore by default on the California Register of Historical Resources). Of these, 31 are prehistoric archaeological sites, 3 are historic period archaeological sites, and 6 are archaeological sites that contain both prehistoric and historic period components. The most current Archaeological Determinations of Eligibility listing dates to 2012.

⁶³ Gudde, E.G., 1969. *California Place Names: the Origin and Etymology of Current Geographical Names*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

⁶⁴ Gudde, E.G., 1969. *California Place Names: the Origin and Etymology of Current Geographical Names*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

⁶⁵ Kyle, D.E., 1990. *Historic Spots in California*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

i. Prehistoric Archaeological Resources

Previous studies in the general region provide reasonable expectations for the range of archaeological property types likely to occur in Butte County. Prehistoric site types include habitation sites, limited occupation sites, hunting/processing camps, lithic reduction stations, milling stations, quarries/single reduction locations, rock-art sites, bedrock milling features and burial locations. Sites may fall into more than one category. For example, habitation sites may be associated with rock art. Therefore, sites may be classified as more than one site type.

Habitation sites are locations of long-term occupation. These sites were typically located near streams and springs, which are abundant in Butte County. Habitation sites are characterized by midden deposits and a variety of artifacts (flaked-stone debitage, bifaces, unifaces, other flaked-stone tools, ground-stone implements and fire-affected rock).

Temporary camps are distinguished from habitation sites by the absence or limited development of midden deposits. Archaeological deposits at temporary camps are typically shallow or restricted to the surface and are limited principally to ground-stone tools, flaked-stone tools and debitage (in approximate descending order of frequency).

Lithic scatters are collections of flaked- or ground-stone debris, including tools and debitage that relate to post-quarry reduction and tool manufacturing efforts. They are perceived primarily as daily or overnight task-oriented camps where a limited range of activities was conducted.

The most common prehistoric site type found in the Butte County area is temporary occupation sites. Other site types found in the area include hunting/processing camps, lithic scatters, milling stations sites, habitation sites, quarry/single reduction loci and rock art sites.

The overall prehistoric archaeological sensitivity of Butte County is generally considered high, particularly in those areas near water sources or on terraces along watercourses. In particular, the Sacramento River and Feather River watersheds among the Sierra foothills possess river terraces that are rich in archaeological resources. In the Oroville area where the forks of the Feather River converge, the archaeological site density is some of the highest in California; at least 500 sites have been recorded in this area between 2005 and 2006 alone and reported to the NEIC. In general, the lands on the margins of the Sacramento River and other major waterways are sensitive for prehistoric archaeological resources. Prehistoric

archaeological sites often are located along riverbanks in the Sacramento Valley, although they usually are found on natural rises that protected the inhabitants from frequent floods. Sites along the Sacramento River and other major drainages in Butte County do exist, and the possibility remains that additional prehistoric deposits may be buried in similar locations, in natural buried contexts (such as under alluvial deposits) as well as cultural buried contexts (such as below constructed levees or mixed in as a portion of levee fill material).

ii. Historic-Period Archaeological Resources

Historic site types include old transportation corridors and alignments, remnants of activities associated with historic homesteading, ranching and agriculture, mining, and commerce. The overall historic archaeological sensitivity of Butte County area is generally considered moderately high in those areas where historic records indicate transportation routes, agricultural settlements and mining occurred.

b. Built Environment

Historic cultural resources generally include buildings, roads, trails, bridges, canals, and railroads usually associated with the time period beginning with the first EuroAmerican contact. Because settlement of Butte County dates to the 1840s, the county is rich in historic cultural resources. In general, concentrations of historic resources in the county are expected to occur adjacent to transportation corridors (historic highways, railroads, navigable waterways); on historic ranches; in areas of historic rock, soil, mineral and timber extraction; and within historic neighborhoods and business districts.

i. Historic Properties in State Database and the Built Environment Resources Directory

The Historic Property Data File Historic Resources Inventory (HRI), which is maintained by the State Office of Historic Preservation, identifies properties that have been recorded and whether those properties are considered eligible or ineligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The listing for Butte County indicates that over 1,000 properties within the county have been inventoried at some level. This includes several hundred archaeological or built environment resources that are listed or appear to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register. In general, listing a property in the NRHP involves submission of a formal nomination form that requires concurrence from SHPO, the State Historical Resources Commission and the Keeper of the National Register. Properties that are evaluated and found, with SHPO concurrence, to be eligible for listing under one or more of the NRHP criteria but are never nominated, are afforded the same protections for federally funded projects as listed properties. As noted previously, properties listed or found eligible for listing are also automatically

eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources. The HRI also includes buildings that have been identified as historically significant by local government agencies.

The Built Environment Resources Directory (BERD) provides information regarding non-archaeological resources in the Office of Historic Preservation's Inventory. The listing for Butte County indicates that 993 built environment resources have been inventoried at some level; many of these overlap with the HRI listings. Eligibility status listed in the BERD is current as of 2020. An overview of the total numbers and types of properties recorded by region in Butte County, and of properties determined or presumed eligible for the NRHP, CRHR, or local listing in Butte County is discussed briefly below.

a) Oroville Area

Surveys have identified 108 buildings and structures in the Oroville area, including several in the Old Oroville Commercial District; 73 are listed in the BERD and meet the criteria for listing in the NRHP, the CRHR, or have local designation. Among these are buildings that comprise the Berkeley Olive Association Historic District, located in the vicinity of Coal Canyon Road and Rocky Lane, that was listed in the National Register in 2000. Notable individually eligible buildings in and around Oroville (listed between 1979 and 2007) include:

- ◆ Oroville Chinese Temple (1500 Broderick Street)
- ◆ State Theatre (1489 Myers Street)
- ◆ Old Oroville Commercial District Building (Montgomery Street)
- ◆ Governor Perkins Building (1864 Montgomery Street)
- ◆ The Fong Lee Company (address restricted)
- ◆ Oroville Carnegie Library (1675 Montgomery Street)
- ◆ Oroville Inn (2066 Bird Street)
- ◆ Main US Post Office (1735 Robinson Street)
- ◆ Biggs Ranch and associated structures and buildings (1359 Oroville Highway)
- ◆ Gem Saloon Building (1337 Huntoon Street)

- ◆ Bloomer Hill Fire Lookout Station
- ◆ Washington Block Building (1975 Montgomery Street)
- ◆ Table Mountain Boulevard Bridge

b) Chico Area

Chico includes some of the most important cultural resources in the entire county. Surveys have identified 579 buildings and structures in the Chico area; of these, 123 have been evaluated and have been listed or found to meet the criteria for listing in the NRHP, the CRHR, or have local designation. . Among these are buildings that make up the South of Campus Neighborhood Historic District. Located in the vicinity of Cherry Street and 2nd through 6th Streets, this historic district was listed in the National Register in 1991. Notable individually eligible buildings in and around Chico include the Southern Pacific Depot (5th Street); the Chester Cole Residence (334 Normal Avenue); the Bidwell Mansion (Sowilleno Avenue); the Patrick Rancheria (SR99); the Patrick Ranch House; the A. H. Chapman House (256 E. 12th Street); the Silberstein Park Building (426 – 434 Broadway); St. John’s Episcopal Church (230 Salem Street); and the Stansbury House (307 W. 5th Street).

c) Paradise Area

The HRI and BERD together list 33 buildings and structures in and around Paradise that have been surveyed. Four of these have been evaluated and found to meet the criteria for listing in the NRHP, the CRHR, or have local designation. Among these, the Centerville Schoolhouse was nominated and listed in the National Register in 1972. The Honey Run Covered Bridge, listed in 1988, was destroyed by the 2018 Camp Fire, though local efforts are underway to rebuild the bridge.

d) Gridley Area

The town of Gridley includes 68 built environment properties that have been surveyed; of these, two have been evaluated and found to meet the criteria for listing in the NRHP, the CRHR, or have local designation. The Hazel Hotel (850 Hazel Street) was listed in the National Register in 2001.

e) Biggs Area

Twenty-three buildings and structures in the vicinity of Biggs have been surveyed. One of these, the Biggs Rice Experiment Station, has been evaluated and found to meet the criteria for listing in the NRHP, the CRHR, or have

local designation. None have been formally nominated and listed in the National Register.

f) Other Areas

In areas located in Butte County other than those listed above, 237 buildings and structures have been surveyed and recorded; of these, 12 have been evaluated and found to meet the criteria for listing in the NRHP, the CRHR, or have local designation. Among these built environment resources, the following have been formally nominated and listed in the NRHP: the W.W. Durham House in Durham, the Magalia Dam and the Magalia Community Church in Magalia, Big Bear Mountain Lookout and Brush Creek Standard Office in Plumas National Forest, Bridge #12-38 on SR70 in Pulga, the Inskip Hotel near Stirling City, and the Hyatt Power House Switching Yard near the Oroville Dam.

ii. California State Historical Landmarks

The State of California officially began commemorating sites important to the history of the state in 1932. Originally, the California Historical Landmarks emphasized well-known places and events including the missions, early settlements, and the Gold Rush. Over the years, the program has been refined to include only those sites that are of statewide historical importance and must be the first, last, only, or most significant of a type in a large geographical area.

The following lists the 10 resources in Butte County that the state has designated as California Historical Landmarks:

- ◆ Hooker Oak (Landmark No. 313), Bidwell Park, Chico
- ◆ Old Suspension Bridge (Landmark No. 314), Lake Oroville State Recreation Area, Oroville
- ◆ Rancho Chico and Bidwell Adobe (Landmark No. 329), Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park, Chico
- ◆ Bidwell's Bar (Landmark No. 330), Lake Oroville State Recreation Area, Oroville
- ◆ Chinese Temple (Landmark No. 770), town of Magalia
- ◆ Dogtown Nugget Discovery Site (Landmark No. 771), Town of Magalia
- ◆ Oregon City (Landmark No. 807), Diggins Drive between cities of Oroville and Cherokee

- ◆ Discovery Site of the Last Yahi Indian (Landmark No. 809), City of Oroville
- ◆ Chico Forestry Station and Nursery (Landmark No. 840-2), Bidwell Park, Chico
- ◆ Mother Orange Tree of Butte County (Landmark No. 1043), near the toll bridge at Bidwell's Bar, Lake Oroville State Recreation Area, Oroville

iii. California Points of Historical Interest

California Points of Historical Interest are sites, buildings, features, or events that are of local (city or county) significance and have anthropological, cultural, military, political, architectural, economic, scientific or technical, religious, experimental, or other value. No historical resource may be designated as both a Landmark and a Point of Historical Interest. If a Point of Historical Interest is subsequently granted status as a Landmark, the Point designation will be retired. To be eligible for designation as a Point of Historical Interest, a resource must meet at least one of the following criteria: the first, last, only, or most significant of its type in the State or within the local geographic region (city or county); association with an individual or group having a profound influence on the history of the local area; a prototype of, or an outstanding example of, a period, style, architectural movement or construction; or is one of the more notable works or the best surviving work in the local region of a pioneer architect, designer or master builder.

There are 20 California Points of Historical Interest in Butte County. They are:

- ◆ Lott Museum, Oroville
- ◆ Manzanita School, east of Gridley
- ◆ Chico flour Mill, Chico (Bidwell's Mill Site, Bidwell Mill Stones)
- ◆ Garrott's Sawmill, Oroville
- ◆ California-Oregon Railroad Depot, Gridley
- ◆ Centerville Schoolhouse, northeast of Chico
- ◆ Old Chinese Cemetery, vicinity of Oroville
- ◆ Townsite of Cherokee and Spring Valley Mine, near Oroville
- ◆ Little Chapman Mansion, Chico
- ◆ Butte County Railroad Depot, Paradise

- ◆ Long's Bar, near Oroville
- ◆ Oroville Cemetery, vicinity of Oroville
- ◆ Chinese Cemetery, vicinity of Oroville,
- ◆ Jewish Cemetery, vicinity of Oroville
- ◆ Site of 14-Mile House, Toll Station and Wayside Inn, Vicinity of Chico
- ◆ Richardson Springs Resort, northeast of Chico
- ◆ Odd Fellows Home (Bella Vista Hotel) Site, vicinity of Thermalito
- ◆ The Fagan House, east of Gridley
- ◆ Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Chico
- ◆ Gianella Bridge, vicinity of Chico

BUTTE COUNTY GENERAL PLAN
SETTING AND TRENDS
CULTURAL RESOURCES

This page intentionally left blank.