

**PHASE I SURVEY/CLASS III INVENTORY,
RICHMOND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL REPLACEMENT
PROJECT, KERN COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

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MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

An intensive Phase I cultural resources survey/Class III inventory was conducted for the Richmond Elementary School Replacement Project, in Kern County, California. This study was conducted by ASM Affiliates, Inc., with David S. Whitley, Ph.D., RPA, serving as principal investigator. Background studies and fieldwork for the survey were completed in February 2020 - March 2020. The study was undertaken to assist with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance.

A records search of site files and maps was completed at the Southern San Joaquin Valley Archaeological Information Center (IC), California State University, Bakersfield. A search of the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) *Sacred Lands File* was also conducted. These investigations determined that the study area had not been previously surveyed in its entirety and that no sacred or archaeological sites or traditional cultural places had been identified within or adjacent to the study area. Tribal contact letters and follow-up emails were sent out to the tribes listed by the NAHC and the Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi-Yokuts responded on February 11th, 2020 stating that they would defer to the Tejon Tribe. No additional responses were received.

The Phase I survey fieldwork was conducted in March 2020, with a 15-meter (m) wide survey transect within the parcel, which is proposed for residential development. The total study area surveyed was approximately 75-acres in size.

No historical resources or historic properties were discovered within the study area. Based on these findings, the proposed project does not have the potential to result in adverse impacts or effects to significant historical resources or properties, and no additional cultural resource studies are recommended. In the unlikely event that cultural resources are identified during the project, work should be halted within a 100-foot radius of the find and a qualified archaeologist be contacted to evaluate the newly discovered resource. Further mitigation, including subsurface testing, may be required to determine the discovery's eligibility for California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) and/or the National Register of Historic Resources (NRHP).

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1. INTRODUCTION AND REGULATORY CONTEXT

ASM Affiliates, Inc. was retained by PlaceWorks, Inc. to conduct an intensive Phase I cultural resources survey/Class III inventory for the Richmond Elementary School Replacement Project (Project), Kern County, California. The purpose of this investigation was to assist with compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

This current investigation included:

- A background records search and literature review to determine if any known archaeological sites were present in the project zone and/or whether the study area had been previously and systematically studied by archaeologists;
- A search of the NAHC *Sacred Lands File* to determine if any traditional cultural places or cultural landscapes have been identified within the area;
- An on-foot, intensive inventory of the study area to identify and record previously undiscovered cultural resources and to examine known sites; and
- A preliminary assessment of any such resources found within the subject property.

This study was conducted by ASM Affiliates, Inc., of Tehachapi, California, February 2020 – March 2020. David S. Whitley, Ph.D., RPA, served as principal investigator and ASM Associate Archaeologist, Robert Azpitarte, B.A., conducted the fieldwork.

This manuscript constitutes a report on the Phase I survey. Subsequent chapters provide background to the investigation, including historic context studies; the findings of the archival records search; a summary of the field surveying techniques employed; and the results of the fieldwork. We conclude with a summary and recommendations for the study area.

1.1 STUDY AREA LOCATION

The study area, consisting of open flat land, is located along the eastern city limits of the City of Ridgecrest, adjacent to the China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station, in Kern County, California (Figure 1). This places study area within the open-flats of the Indian Wells Valley at an elevation range of approximately 2,259-feet (ft) above mean sea level (amsl) to 2,266-ft amsl.

The proposed Project is located at the northeast corner of Ridgecrest Boulevard (California State Route 178) and Gateway Boulevard. More specifically, it is in Section 35, Township 26 South, Range 40 East and Township 27 South, Range 40 East, Mount Diablo Base and Meridian. The Project will involve approximately 75-acres of undeveloped land owned by the United States Navy.

1.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Sierra Sands Unified School District proposes the modernization or replacement of its Richmond Elementary School in Ridgecrest, Kern County, California. The existing Richmond

school structures are in excess of 50 years old, and, therefore, the construction of a new school has been proposed. Three adjacent sites are currently being considered for a replacement Richmond Elementary School. The total combined area of disturbance would encompass approximately 75-acres, which includes all access roads, staging areas, and development construction.

1.3 REGULATORY CONTEXT

1.3.1 California Environmental Quality Act

CEQA is applicable to discretionary actions by state or local lead agencies. Under CEQA, lead agencies must analyze impacts to cultural resources. Significant impacts under CEQA occur when “historically significant” or “unique” cultural resources are adversely affected, which occurs when such resources could be altered or destroyed through project implementation. Historically significant cultural resources are defined by eligibility for or by listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR). In practice, the federal NRHP criteria for significance applied under Section 106 are generally (although not entirely) consistent with CRHR criteria (see PRC § 5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4852 and § 15064.5(a)(3)).

Significant cultural resources are those archaeological resources and historical properties that:

- (A) Are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California’s history and cultural heritage;
- (B) Are associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
- (C) Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represent the work of an important creative individual, or possess high artistic values; or
- (D) Have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Unique resources under CEQA, in slight contrast, are those that represent:

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:

- (1) Contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and that there is a demonstrable public interest in that information.
- (2) Has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type.
- (3) Is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person (PRC § 21083.2(g)).

Preservation in place is the preferred approach under CEQA to mitigating adverse impacts to significant or unique cultural resources.

1.3.2 National Historic Preservation Act Section 106

NHPA Section 106 is applicable to federal undertakings, including projects financed or permitted by federal agencies regardless of whether the activities occur on federally managed or privately-owned land. Its purpose is to determine whether adverse effects will occur to significant cultural resources, defined as “historical properties” that are listed in or determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The criteria for NRHP eligibility are defined at 36 CFR § 60.4 as follows:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and that:

- (A) are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- (B) are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- (C) embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- (D) have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

There are, however, restrictions on the kinds of historical properties that can be NRHP listed. These have been identified by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), as follows:

Ordinarily cemeteries, birthplaces, or graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings, properties primarily commemorative in nature, and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years shall not be considered eligible for the National Register. However, such properties will qualify if they are integral parts of districts that do meet the criteria or if they fall within the following categories:

- (a) A religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or
- (b) A building or structure removed from its original location but which is significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event; or
- (c) A birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no appropriate site or building directly associated with his productive life.

- (d) A cemetery which derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events; or
- (e) A reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived; or
- (f) A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own exceptional significance; or
- (g) A property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance. (<http://www.achp.gov/nrccriteria.html>)

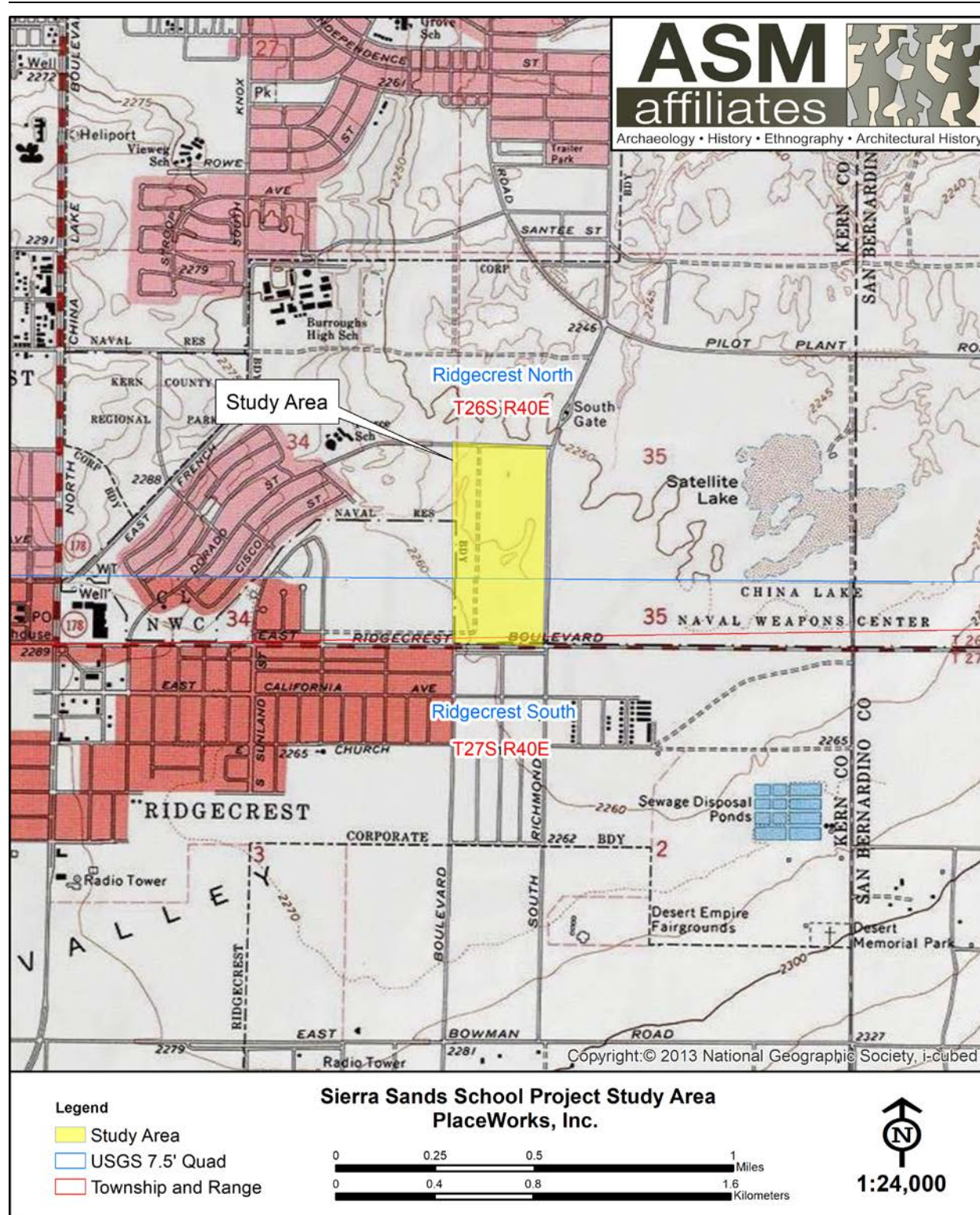


Figure 1. Location of the Richmond Elementary School Replacement Project study area, Kern County, California.

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2. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

2.1 ENVIRONMENTAL BACKGROUND

The Richmond Elementary School Replacement Project is located on currently undeveloped land. The study area lies within the open-flats of the Indian Wells Valley at an elevation range of approximately 2,259-ft to 2,266-ft amsl. The Indian Wells Valley falls within northwestern region of the Mojave Desert. Vegetation is typical of the Upper Mojave Desert and consists of buckwheat, creosote, black bush, and a low density of various non-native grasses and other introduced species.

2.2 ETHNOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

The historic/ethnographic period in the region is generally taken to begin about A.D. 1850. At that time the Ridgecrest region fell near to the boundary between two Uto-Aztecan language branches (Numic and Tubatulabic), three of the Numic languages (Shoshone and Northern and Southern Paiute), and for the Shoshone, between two distinct bands (Whitley et al. 2006)

Steward (1938) records that the Panamint Valley, located east of the Coso Range, was predominantly occupied by Panamint (or Koso) Shoshone (the California Central Numic language) from about Ballarat northwards, with some admixture of Kawaiisu (the California Southern Numic language); while the Kawaiisu were the predominant (but not exclusive) residents from Ballarat southwards (some Panamint Shoshone also being present). Death Valley was occupied by representatives of three Numic languages. The approximately northern one-third was the domain of the Panamint Shoshone. In central Death Valley, around Furnace Creek, a mixture of Panamint Shoshone, Kawaiisu and Southern Paiute (the Nevada Southern Numic language) purportedly lived. Southern Death Valley was apparently the domain of the Southern Paiute. The Kawaiisu residing in central Death Valley and Panamint Valley were known to the Shoshone as the *Paniimiint* (Steward 1938) or, in its Southern Paiute form, *Panamaitsiwi* (Laird 1976), from which the toponymic “Panamint” is derived. This term has been applied to local geographical features, as well as to the language of the locally resident Shoshone, who were actually not “Panamints” at all. All or most of the Coso Range was occupied by the Koso Shoshone, who had villages at Coso Hot Springs, Coso Cold Springs (south of Darwin), Little Lake and Olancha, thereby including the south shore of Owens Lake (Steward 1938). The Northern Paiute occupied Owens Valley from the lake northwards. The El Paso Mountains, which form the southern border of the Indian Wells Valley, were in Kawaiisu territory. The Ridgecrest area falls near the boundary between the Coso Shoshone and Kawaiisu.



Figure 2. Overview of the Richmond Elementary School Replacement Project study area, looking southeast.

Complicated though this pattern may seem, Fowler et al. (1995) have recently pointed out that, due to the low population density and band marriage exogamy, familial ties were quite widespread. The result was that while specific language and band territories might be fairly well defined, any given individual's ties to and associations with the regional landscape were broad and typically exceeded the bounds of the band territory. This circumstance points to the fact that territorial boundaries in this sense had little direct bearing on many aspects of indigenous life.

Despite these language and band territorial differences, there were a series of cultural similarities between the various tribes. The ethnographic life-ways of the area's inhabitants can then be sketched in general Numic terms. Relevant ethnographies, from which a synthesis for this region may be drawn, have been published by Steward (e.g., 1933, 1938, 1941, 1943), Kelly (1939), Laird (1976, 1984) and Zigmond (1986), among others. Based on these and other sources, ethnographic patterns in the region can be summarized as follows.

As regards subsistence, the Numic seasonal round involved alternating periods of aggregation into winter villages, and then dispersal into nuclear families. Winter village aggregation was predicated on stockpiling the fall pinyon harvest, combined with rabbit hunting. Winter aggregation typically occurred at major springs on the valley floors, where a band would congregate and live in pit houses. In the Coso Range there were four of these. Steward (1938) also has noted that Panamint Valley was so arid that it effectively had no winter aggregation villages; the historical rancheria and reservation at Indian Ranch, in the northern part of the valley, was only established historically, once a well had been dug.

Following winter aggregation, usually around April, nuclear families dispersed in the early spring, initially in search of ripening seeds and greens on open alluvial fans. Seed collecting continued into the summer, with families moving to progressively higher elevations, likely including into the upland areas of the Coso Range, in search of ripening plants. By late summer (July through August), families were concentrated in the higher elevations of local mountain ranges. By early fall, pinyon exploitation had begun again at the higher elevations. With the return to the winter villages following the pinyon harvest, the seasonal round was completed. Steward (1938) noted that the Coso and Panamint ranges were exploited for seeds, roots, tubers and pinyon nuts. These were primarily areas used by dispersed, single family groups during the summer and fall. Contemporary Timbisha Shoshone peoples, residing in Death Valley, continue to remember the quality of the pinyon nuts from the Coso Peak area (Fowler et al. 1995).

The social organization of the Numic has been a point of controversy. Although it is clear that regional bands and headmen existed during the Historical Period, Julian Steward (1938, 1955) argued that this was a recent development resulting from contact, emanating from the Euro-Americans need to have a single Native American spokesman and leader with whom they could interact. Omer Stewart (1939, 1966), in contrast, contended that Numic bands were the true aboriginal organizational system, and that they therefore had prehistoric time depth.

Bands were named regional land-holding groups that fell under the nominal leadership of a headman-shaman. This individual was responsible for organizing and scheduling group subsistence activities such as rabbit drives, and ceremonies such as the Round Dance. In his role as shaman/healer, he conducted curing rituals. Although these are often viewed as primarily medical in nature, they also served as a form of social conflict resolution in that they alleviated social disharmony and stress instead of providing pharmacological cures for perceived ailments (Laird 1976, 1984).

Regional Shoshone bands within the general area included the Coso, with a band territory known as *Kuhwiji*, and whose headman at least until 1874 was Malarango (Chalfant 1933). (Malarango is presumably the origin for the local toponym “Maturango” Peak.) Another band may have been present in northern Death Valley, with Dock as a headman in the historical period. The Kawitch (or *Kauyaichits*) Shoshone from Ash Meadows in western Nevada comprised a third band whose territory may also have extended into Death Valley. According to military records, in 1871 “Cowitch” was the headman of the Kawitch (Cragen 1975). No data on political organization were collected for the Kawaiisu, although they were the resident group in the El Paso Mountains, which borders Indian Wells Valley on the southwest. Southern Death Valley apparently fell within the domain of the Las Vegas Southern Paiute band (Kelly 1939).

Beyond the band as an autonomous land-holding unit, Numic social organization was patrilineal and patrilocal, although temporary matrilineal residence, serving as a form of bride-service, was practiced for about one-year following marriage.

2.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The following summary provides a brief overview of the prehistory of the Ridgecrest region, which can be divided into seven time periods, as follows.

Pre-Clovis Period (before 12,000 Y.B.P.)

The initial occupation of North America is still a topic of research and debate, with the date of initial human entry onto the continent not yet known, and little understood about the lifeways of the earliest occupants. This Late Pleistocene occupation is generally referred to as the Pre-Clovis (cultural) Period, dated at earlier than 12,000 years before present (Y.B.P.). During this period, many of the valley floors of the Mojave Desert and the Great Basin were filled with a large lake system, including Pleistocene Lake China on the Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS). Although a number of claims have been made for Pre-Clovis sites in the Mojave Desert generally, including in the Coso region specifically (see Davis 1978), these are as yet unverified. Possible Pre-Clovis petroglyph dates for the Coso Range, on China Lake NAWS, have been proposed by Whitley and Dorn (e.g., 1993, 2010; Whitley 2013).

Paleoindian Period (12,000–9,000 Y.B.P.)

The reduction of the Pleistocene lakes to shallow sloughs and swamps during the Terminal Pleistocene corresponds to the start of the Paleoindian Period, dating from about 12,000 to 9,000 Y.B.P. The hallmarks of this cultural period are fluted, collaterally-flaked and basally-thinned and -ground Clovis and Folsom spear points initially, followed by a series of large, well-flaked but unfluted, lanceolate points, some of which are stemmed. Substantial evidence of Paleoindian use of eastern California has been found in a number of areas, including NAWS China Lake (e.g., Davis 1978; Giambastiani and Bullard 2010). Paleoindian sites in the Great Basin and Mojave Desert are commonly (though not exclusively) found immediately above the lake bottoms, signaling the fact that adaptation to the drying lake system was an important aspect of early prehistoric lifeways. Currently there is no firm evidence indicating that eastern California Paleoindian peoples significantly relied on big-game hunting (or scavenging).

A conservative interpretation of the chronometric results on Coso petroglyphs indicates that 18% date during the Paleoindian Period (Whitley and Dorn 2010; Whitley 2013), suggesting that the regional rock art tradition began during this interval.

Early Archaic (9,000–6,000 Y.B.P.)

The Early Archaic period (sometimes called the Western Pluvial Lakes Tradition, Lake Mojave, San Dieguito or Death Valley I) represents the early Holocene in paleoenvironmental terms. Its hallmark is generally considered to be the widely dispersed but ambiguously dated Western Stemmed Tradition spear points. These include the local variants known as Lake Mohave and Silver Lake points. Davis (1978; Davis, Brott and Weide 1969) identified and discussed the importance of a number of Early Archaic sites in the Coso region. These are located in both the China Lake Basin and the Panamint Valley in former lacustrine environments, and are indicative of lakeshore use if not occupation. Work at Early Holocene central Mojave Desert sites, primarily at Fort Irwin, in contrast has revealed considerable variability in lithic assemblages and materials,

while also documenting relative continuity between early and middle Holocene faunal assemblages (Basgall 1993).

Middle Archaic (6,000–4,000 Y.B.P.)

Regardless of date of initial occupation of the region, substantial habitation did not occur until later, with the start of the Middle Archaic (or Pinto) Period, lasting from about 6,000 to 4,000 Y.B.P. The Middle Archaic corresponds to the Altithermal paleoenvironmental period, an extended time of dry climatic conditions.

Handstones and millingsstones are much more abundant in Middle Archaic assemblages than previously, represented by bulky, well-worn, shaped variants that were routinely transported and maintained. In eastern California and the Mojave Desert, Middle Archaic population densities overall remained low. Subsistence focused partly on game procurement but the importance of plant resources increased substantially. Faunal assemblages from many Pinto sites indicate that large artiodactyls were taken whenever possible, but hunting emphasized small game such as rabbits, hares, rodents, and reptiles (Basgall 1994). The fact that milling implements are comparable in frequency to later assemblages implies that Middle Archaic populations had already become broad-spectrum foragers.

Late Archaic (4,000-1,500 Y.B.P.)

The Late Archaic Period (also called Elko, Gypsum or Newberry) lasted from about 4,000 to 1,500 years Y.B.P. This correlates with improved and wetter environmental conditions across the far west. The start of the Late Archaic in the Coso region is posited to represent the initial establishment of the primary settlement and subsistence systems that are currently archaeologically visible (Whitley 1994, 1998). The Late Archaic also witnessed the beginning of the intensive exploitation of the Coso Sugarloaf obsidian quarry, an event that apparently correlates with the beginning of the inland-to-coastal obsidian trade in south-central California. The primary temporal diagnostics for the Late Archaic are Elko and Gypsum series projectile points.

Hildebrandt and McGuire (2002; McGuire and Hildebrandt 2005) suggest that this period included intensive big game hunting and that the Coso petroglyphs represent a hunting cult associated with this subsistence emphasis, reflecting an example of costly signaling theory.

Haiwee (1,500-800 Y.B.P.)

The Haiwee (also called the Rose Spring or Saratoga Springs) Period is differentiated from the earlier Late Archaic/Elko Period by the introduction of the bow and arrow and a change from spear points to arrow points at circa A.D. 500 (cf. Yohe 1992). According to Hildebrandt and McGuire (2002; McGuire and Hildebrandt 2005; Gilreath and Hildebrandt 2008), and Garfinkel (2006, 2007; Garfinkel et al. 2010), this technological change increased the efficiency of big game hunting leading to over-hunting and a reduction in bighorn herd size, and a resulting intensification in the hunting cult rituals that produced Coso rock art. These archaeologists suggest that, due to the extirpation of the herds from overkill, the creation of pecked petroglyphs ended circa A.D. 1200 – 1300. Whitley (1994, 1998), in contrast, hypothesizes that petroglyph-making rituals also intensified during this period, but that this intensification was associated with rain shamanism

resulting from droughts due to the Medieval Climatic Anomaly, a period of global climatic instability.

Numic (800-140 Y.B.P.)

The Numic (Late Prehistoric, Shoshone or Marana) Period runs from about 800 Y.B.P. to the Historic Period, and corresponds to the Little Ice Age. It is distinguished from the previous Haiwee interval by the introduction of brown-ware ceramics and a change in projectile points: from Rose Spring to Desert Side-notched and Cottonwood Triangular types. The Numic Period is considered to represent the appearance of the historical/ethnographic aboriginal pattern of life-ways.

The relationship between the Numic and the earlier Haiwee period inhabitants is controversial, and no consensus has been achieved on this topic among archaeologists (see papers in Madsen and Rhode 1994). Based on one linguistic reconstruction, the eastward spread of the Numic languages (Shoshone and Northern and Southern Paiute) across the Great Basin is hypothesized to have occurred roughly 1000 or more years ago. Some archaeologists have interpreted the theorized language change in terms of population movements and ethnic group replacements, and have linked this perspective to observable prehistoric subsistence changes (e.g., Bettinger and Baumhoff 1982; Garfinkel 2007). The resulting Numic spread hypothesis suggests that Numic-speaking peoples migrated out of eastern California at about A.D. 1200 – 1300, out-competing and replacing an earlier Pre-Numic population in the remainder of the Great Basin. Archaeologists who support the hunting cult interpretation of the Coso petroglyphs (Hildebrandt and McGuire 2002; McGuire and Hildebrandt 2005; Gilreath and Hildebrandt 2008; Garfinkel (2006, 2007; Garfinkel et al. 2010) view their argument as a component of the Numic spread theory. These researchers suggest that Scratched style petroglyphs (i.e., fine-lined incisions) were made by Numic peoples to cancel the power or deface the earlier pecked engravings

Other archaeologists, partly based on different historical linguistic reconstructions, reject the Numic spread hypothesis and argue that Numic-speaking peoples have been in-place, throughout the Great Basin, for a much longer period of time (e.g., Aikens and Witherspoon 1986; Loendorf 1999; Whitley et al. 1999a, 1999b). They argue that the petroglyph tradition has been continuous, into the historic period.

2.4 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The discovery of gold in northern California in 1848 resulted in a dramatic increase of population, consisting in good part of fortune seekers and gold miners, who began to scour other parts of the state. After 1851, when gold was discovered in the Sierra Nevada Mountains in eastern Kern County, the population of the area grew rapidly (JRP Historical Consulting 2009).

Ridgecrest's origins extend back to 1912, when it was the small farming village Crumville, named after a local dairy farmer. The town grew slowly with the first post office not opening until 1941, and with the population still under 200 residents. The Naval Ordnance Test Station (NOTS, precursor to NAWS), opened in 1943, during World War II, and the town has been closely allied with the Department of the Navy specifically, and the defense industry generally, since that time. Ridgecrest was incorporated in 1963, and it currently has approximately 27,000 residents.

3. ARCHIVAL RECORDS SEARCH

An archival records search was conducted at the California State University, Bakersfield, Southern San Joaquin Valley Archaeological Information Center (IC), by IC staff members to determine: (i) if prehistoric or historical archaeological sites had previously been recorded within the study area; (ii) if the study area had been systematically surveyed by archaeologists prior to the initiation of this field study; and/or (iii) whether the region of the field project was known to contain archaeological sites and to thereby be archaeologically sensitive. Additionally, a search of the NAHC *Sacred Lands File* was conducted in order to ascertain whether traditional cultural places or cultural landscapes had been identified within or adjacent to the study area. The results of this archival records search are summarized here (see Confidential Appendix A for details).

According to a records search, two previous block studies had covered small portions of the study area (Table 1). No cultural resources were identified within the study area as a result of those surveys. An additional five previous surveys had been completed within 0.5-miles of the study area (Table 2), and eight cultural resources were identified within 0.5-miles of the study area as a result of those studies (Table 3). Due to the age of the previous field surveys within the study area, which exceed the limits for baseline data under CEQA, those areas were re-surveyed for the current proposed project.

Table 1. Survey Reports within the Study Area

Report No.	Year	Author (s)/Affiliation	Title
KE-00144	1992	RA Weaver/ Caltrans	Negative archaeological survey report DOT-9- KERN-178, PM 0.0/0.16, 103.51/104.6, Charge Unit 140, EA 212300
KE-02976	2004	RW Deis et al/ Individual Consultants	Cultural Resources Survey and Evaluation, South Range and Mainsite Management Unit, Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, California

Table 2. Survey Reports within 0.5-miles of the Study Area

Report No.	Year	Author (s)/Affiliation	Title
KE-04199	2009	M Baskerville/ Naval Air Weapons Station, China Lake	South China Lake Solar Farm Project NAWS Cultural Project Number: NAWS-2009-16
KE-04384	2010	CA Duran et al/ Epsilon Systems Solutions, Inc.	Volume I: Report and Appendices A and D: Downs Substation Cultural Resources Survey, San Bernardino and Kern Counties, California
KE-04416	2013	JA McKenna/ McKenna et al.	Archaeological Survey Report Public Safety Improvements for Three School Sites in the City of Ridgecrest, Kern County, California
KE-04481	2010	JK Sander / Chambers Group, Inc.	Archaeological Survey Report for Southern California Edison's Idle Facilities Removal Project: Naval Air Weapons Station, China Lake Ridgecrest, Kern County, California
KE-05128	2014	AL Martinez et al / Epsilon Systems Solutions, Inc.	Fiber Optic Transmission System (FOTS) Fy17 Cultural Resource Inventory, NAWS China Lake, Kern and San Bernardino Counties, California

Table 3. Resources within 0.5-miles of the Study Area.

Primary #	Type	Description
P-15-013824	Structure	Historic Inyokern-Searles-McGen 115kV Transmission
P-15-014687	Site	Multicomponent; Lithic scatter and historic refuse
P-15-017203	Site	Multicomponent; Single flake and historic refuse
P-15-018980	Structure	Historic Lauritsen Road
P-15-019191	Structure	Historic Pilot Plant Road
P-15-019192	Structure; Site	Historic Refuse and road
P-15-019201	Structure; Site	Historic Refuse and Culverts
P-15-019215	Structure; Site	Historic Refuse and roads

A records search was also conducted at the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) Sacred Lands Files by NAHC staff to determine whether sacred sites or tribal cultural resources are present within the study area (Confidential Appendix A). No such resources had been identified within the Project study area. Tribal organizations on the NAHC-provided list were contacted to determine whether additional information or concerns existing with respect to the proposed project. The Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi-Yokut Tribe responded stating they would be deferring to the Tejon Tribe for the Project.

Based on the records searches, the Richmond Elementary School Replacement Project study area appeared to have relatively low archaeological sensitivity.

4. METHODS AND RESULTS

The Richmond Elementary School Replacement Project study area is approximately 75-acre in size. Prior to survey, historical topographic maps were consulted to identify any potential historic resources located within the study area. The study area was then examined with the field crew walking parallel transects spaced at 15-m wide across the parcel, in order to identify surface artifacts, archaeological indicators (e.g., shellfish or animal bone), and/or archaeological deposits (e.g., organically enriched midden soil). Special attention was paid to rodent burrow back dirt piles, in the hope of identifying sub-surface soil conditions that might be indicative of archaeological features or remains. No cultural resources were collected during the survey.

The study area was surveyed in March 2020. The Project area is bisected by multiple dirt roads and has been previously disturbed. This area has been impacted by off-highway vehicle traffic and illegal trash dumping. Apartment complexes, commercial properties, and a parking lot border the southwest, south, and southeast edges of the Project. The Project abuts mostly undeveloped flat land. Soils throughout the study area are sandy-silty colluvium with very few lithic clasts. The Project APE accommodates stands of creosote bush and saltbush and a few Tamarisk trees. Vegetative cover was moderate and ground surface visibility overall can be considered good and adequate for Phase I coverage.

4.1 INVENTORY RESULTS

No cultural resources of any kind were identified during the intensive survey of the Richmond Elementary School Replacement Project study area.

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5. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An intensive Phase I archaeological survey/Class III inventory was conducted for the Richmond Elementary School Replacement Project, Ridgecrest, Kern County, California. A records search of site files and maps was conducted at the Southern San Joaquin Valley AIC and a search of the NAHC *Sacred Lands File* was completed. These investigations determined that no sites had been recorded within or near it. No Native American sacred sites or cultural landscapes had been identified within or immediately adjacent to the study area. Tribal contact letters and follow-up emails were sent out to the tribes listed by the NAHC and the Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi-Yokuts responded on February 11th, 2020 stating that they would defer to the Tejon Tribe. No additional responses were received.

No cultural resources of any kind were identified as a result of the intensive field survey.

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

An archival records search, background studies, and an intensive, on-foot surface reconnaissance of Richmond Elementary School Replacement Project, Ridgecrest, Kern County, California, were conducted as part of a Phase I cultural resources survey/Class III inventory. No cultural resources were identified during the survey. The development of this property does not have the potential to result in adverse effects or impacts to historical properties or resources, and no additional archaeological work is recommended.

In the unlikely event that cultural resources are encountered during construction of the fence or during any other grading within the parcel, it is recommended that an archaeologist be contacted to evaluate the discovery.

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