

4.5 Cultural Resources

The assessment of project impacts on cultural resources under CEQA (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064.5) is a two-step process: (1) determine whether the project site contains cultural resources (defined as prehistoric archaeological, historic archaeological, or historic architectural resources), and, if the project site is found to contain a cultural resource(s), then (2) determine whether the project would cause a substantial adverse change to the resource. Paleontology is also discussed within the cultural resources section, even though fossil resources may be more closely associated with aspects of geology and biology.

Cultural resources are defined as prehistoric and historic sites, structures, and districts, or any other physical evidence associated with human activity considered important to a culture, a subculture, or a community for scientific, traditional, religious or any other reason. For analysis purposes, cultural resources may be categorized into three groups: archaeological resources, historic resources, and contemporary Native American resources.

Archaeological resources are places where human activity has measurably altered the earth or left deposits of physical remains. Archaeological resources may be either prehistoric-era (before the introduction of writing in a particular area) or historic-era (after the introduction of writing). The majority of such places in California are associated with either Native American or Euro-American occupation of the area. The most frequently encountered prehistoric or historic Native American archaeological sites are village settlements with residential areas and sometimes cemeteries; temporary camps where food and raw materials were collected; smaller, briefly occupied sites where tools were manufactured or repaired; and special-use areas like caves, rock shelters, and sites of rock art. Historic-era archaeological sites may include foundations or features such as privies, corrals, and trash dumps.

Historic resources are standing structures of historic or aesthetic significance that are generally 50 years of age or older (i.e., anything built in the year 1958 or before). In California, historic resources considered for protection tend to focus on architectural sites dating from the Spanish Period (1529-1822) through the early years of the Depression (1929-1930), although there has been recent attention paid to WWII and Cold War era facilities. Earlier historic resources are often associated with archaeological deposits of the same age.

Contemporary Native American resources, also called ethnographic resources, can include archaeological resources, rock art, and the prominent topographical areas, features, habitats, plants, animals, and minerals that contemporary Native Americans value and consider essential for the preservation of their traditional values. These locations are sometimes hard to define and traditional culture often prohibits Native Americans from sharing these locations with the public.

Paleontology is a branch of geology that studies the life forms of the past, especially prehistoric life forms, through the study of plant and animal fossils. Paleontological resources represent a limited, non-renewable, and impact-sensitive scientific and educational resource. As defined in this section, paleontological resources are the fossilized remains or traces of multi-cellular invertebrate and vertebrate animals and multi-cellular plants, including their imprints from a

previous geologic period. Fossil remains such as bones, teeth, shells, and leaves are found in the geologic deposits (rock formations) where they were originally buried. Paleontological resources include not only the actual fossil remains, but also the collecting localities, and the geologic formations containing those localities.

4.5.1 Setting

Setting information is drawn primarily from the project-specific cultural resources technical report prepared by Pacific Legacy, Inc. (Armstrong and Jackson, 2008).

Environmental Setting

Much of the study area lies in the fertile southern San Joaquin Valley, characterized by numerous river channels, alluvial plains, old lakebeds, and marshes. Until the reclamation projects of the past century, the San Joaquin Valley alone once supported more than 5000 square kilometers of wetlands (Moratto, 1984). The largest of these were ancient Tulare and Buena Vista Lakes.

Several major vegetation communities are found within the study area: Valley Oak Woodland on the valley floor; Blue Oak Woodland on the slopes; Great Valley Oak Riparian Forest on the margins of streams and rivers; and Valley Needlegrass Grassland. These vegetation communities would have provided a wide range of plant and animal resources for the prehistoric inhabitants of the valley. Tule would have been a vital resource, providing the raw material for baskets, rafts, and mats for the roofs of dwellings. Cattail roots and blossoms, grass nuts, and various seeds and bulbs were important food sources. Trout, squawfish, and suckerfish were found in rivers and streams. Birds included quail, dove, blackbirds, hawks, and perhaps condors. Cottontail, black bear and grizzly bear, mule deer, and the occasional elk were prominent game mammals.

Cultural Resource Setting

Prehistoric Context

The prehistory of the study area can be divided into three major periods: Early Holocene (12,000-7,000 Before Present [B.P.]); Middle Holocene (7,000-4,000 B.P.); and Late Holocene (4,000-150 B.P.), which is further subdivided into Late Holocene I (4,000-2,000 B.P.), Late Holocene II (2,000-1,100 B.P.), and Late Holocene III (1,100-150 B.P.). Each period is described briefly below.

Early Holocene (12,000-7,000 B.P.)

Evidence of human occupation of the region dates back as far as 12,000 B.P. Subsistence in the region was supported by ample resources provided by the numerous rivers and streams, as well as the now-dry Tulare and Buena Vista Lakes. Early Holocene inhabitants were hunters and gatherers, organized in small bands. Material remains of Early Holocene sites, such as stone tools, bone, and lithic debris found at small sites, is reflective of this mobile lifestyle. There is little evidence of Late Pleistocene/Early Holocene big game hunting in the region.

Middle Holocene (7,000-4,000 B.P.)

There are few sites in the region that date to the Middle Holocene. Those that do exist are characterized by handstones and milling stones, indicating an increased reliance on the gathering and processing of plant foods. Sites are generally found along lakeshores. The lack of sites may not, however, indicate an absence of prehistoric habitation during the Middle Holocene; rather, it may be due to fluctuating lake levels and alluviation that may have obscured archaeological evidence from this period.

Late Holocene (4,000-150 B.P.)

While the Middle Holocene was characterized by a warm, dry, climate, the Late Holocene began with a climatic shift to cooler, wetter conditions. During the Late Holocene I (4,000-2,000 B.P.), inhabitants were organized into generally mobile foraging groups, living in seasonal campsites. As with earlier periods, habitation sites tended to be concentrated on lakeshores, due to the presence of water and plant resources. During the Late Holocene II (2,000-1,100 B.P.), lakeshores appear to have been abandoned. However, during the Late Holocene III (1,100-150 B.P.) people returned to the lakes, making more permanent settlements along the shores. This is the most archaeologically visible period in the region, and its archaeological deposits are characterized by freshwater mussel shell and Olivella shell beads, and midden deposits, cemeteries, and house pits.

Ethnographic Context

The study area was historically inhabited by the San Joaquin Valley Yokuts, particularly the Talumne, Wolasi, Gawia, Yokod, and Wukchumni Yokuts (Wallace, 1978:448). Several historic Yokut villages were located in the area, including Yokodo, located near Exeter, south of the Proposed Project alignment, and Dawau Nawshid, located within the Proposed Project alignment.

Yokuts settlements were located on the tops of low mounds, on or near the banks of the larger watercourses. Settlements were composed of single-family dwellings, sweathouses, and ceremonial assembly chambers. Dwellings were small and lightly constructed, semi-subterranean and oval. The public structures were large and covered with earth.

Subsistence for the San Joaquin Valley Yokuts revolved around the waterways and marshes of the lower San Joaquin Valley. Fishing with dragnets, harpoons, and hook and line, yielded salmon, white sturgeon, river perch, and other species of edible fish. Waterfowl and small game attracted to the water also provided a source of protein. Vegetal staples included acorns, tule roots, and seeds.

Goods not available locally were obtained through trade. Paiute and Shoshone groups on the eastern side of the Sierra were suppliers of obsidian (volcanic glass used for tools). Shell beads and mussels were obtained from Salinan and Coastanoan groups. Trading relations with neighboring Miwok groups yielded baskets and bows and arrows. Overland transport was facilitated by a network of trails, and tule rafts were used for water transport.

Most Yokuts groups had their first contact with Europeans in the early 1800s, when the Spanish began exploring the region. The gradual erosion of Yokuts culture began during the mission

period. Epidemics of European diseases played a large role in the decimation of the native peoples, reducing the populations by 1833 to about 25 percent of their pre-epidemic numbers (Wallace, 1978). The final blow to the aboriginal population came with the Gold Rush and its aftermath. In the rush to the southern mines, native populations were pushed out of the way, and out of their existing territories. Ex-miners settling in the fertile valley applied further pressure to the native groups, and altered the landforms and waterways of the valley.

Historical Context

Spanish explorers and missionaries made up the earliest Euro-American presence in the study area. Lieutenant Gabriel Moraga was the first European to explore what is now the interior valley of California. In 1808 Moraga explored the Central Valley in order to scout for potential future mission sites and pursue neophytes that had escaped from the coastal missions.

Euro-American trappers, including Jedediah Strong Smith, entered the region in the 1820s, attracted by the fur-bearing animals that inhabited the Central Valley. Prior to the Gold Rush, the study area was devoted to grazing and hunting, as immense herds of cattle and some horses roamed the valley. With the resulting influx of population during the Gold Rush, the production of food was needed to support the mines, and the San Joaquin Valley developed to become an agricultural supplier. Some of the miners, disappointed in the search for gold, turned to farming in the fertile swamplands in the San Joaquin Valley. In 1850 California achieved statehood.

Visalia was first surveyed in 1852 and became the Tulare County seat. In 1853 the name was changed to Buena Vista, but changed back to Visalia the next year. The town of Farmersville was founded in the 1870s, and the town of Exeter in 1880. Lemon Cove was founded in 1859 and originally named Lime Kiln, in honor of the local limestone.

Historically, the study area has been used for agriculture, particularly citrus orchards. The landscape reflects this history with its many citrus groves and irrigation features, some of which date to the mid-1800s. These include the Tulare Irrigation District Canal, Pennebaker Ditch, Catron Ditch, Friant-Kern Canal, and Foothill Ditch. The Visalia Electric Railroad, which extended from Visalia to Lemon Cove, was a subsidiary of the Southern Pacific Railroad, and operated from 1906 to 1990. For most of its history, the railroad operated primarily as agriculture-related transportation.

Big Creek Hydroelectric System

The Big Creek Hydroelectric System was initiated in 1911 by Henry E. Huntington's Pacific Light & Power Corporation in order to provide electricity for much of Southern California. The system began producing power as early as 1913, and was completed in 1929. In 1917, the Big Creek Hydroelectric System was acquired by Southern California Edison (SCE) when SCE merged with Pacific Light & Power. Along the entire length of the transmission lines from Big Creek to the Eagle Rock Substation near Pasadena, 3,401 steel lattice transmission line towers were constructed: 2,214 suspension towers and 1,187 dead-end towers.

Power was transmitted to Los Angeles along 241 miles of transmission lines. At the time of its development, the Big Creek Hydroelectric System was the largest hydroelectric system in the world. The Rector Substation is one of the original substations.

Paleontological Setting

Paleontological resources are the fossilized remains or traces of multi-cellular invertebrate and vertebrate animals and multi-cellular plants, including their imprints. Fossil remains such as bones, teeth, shells, and leaves are found in the geologic deposits (rock formations) where they were originally buried. Paleontological resources include not only the actual fossil remains, but also the collecting localities, and the geologic formations containing those localities.

According to geologic maps, the Proposed Project and alternatives, where they cross the valley floor, primarily lay in an area of recent alluvium derived from igneous rock sources. Nearer to the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, the Proposed Project and alternatives cross Mesozoic granitic, Mesozoic basic intrusive, and pre- pre-Cenozoic granitic and metamorphic rocks. The Proposed Project and alternatives also cross Pleistocene non-marine sediment in the areas of the Valley floor nearer to the foothills (Matthews and Burnett, 1965). The Pleistocene non-marine sedimentary formations could potentially contain fossils, but a field survey by a qualified paleontologist has not been conducted along the Proposed Project or its alternatives. At present there are no known reported fossil discoveries or locations that have been reported along the Proposed Project or alternative alignments.

Cultural Resources Regulatory Setting

Federal

Section 106 (Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 36 Part 800) of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) would apply to the Proposed Project, because federal permits are anticipated to be required. Therefore, the National Register of Historic Places eligibility criteria are discussed below as they provide the basis for analyzing the significance of cultural resources.

First authorized by the Historic Sites Act of 1935, the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) was established by the NHPA of 1966, as “an authoritative guide to be used by federal, State, and local governments, private groups and citizens to identify the Nation’s historic resources and to indicate what properties should be considered for protection from destruction or impairment” (CFR 36 Section 60.2). The National Register recognizes both historical-period and prehistoric archaeological properties that are significant at the national, state, and local levels.

To be eligible for listing in the National Register, a resource must be significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture. Districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects of potential significance must meet one or more of the following four established criteria (U.S. Department of the Interior 1995):

- A. Are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- B. Are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- 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.

Unless the property possesses exceptional significance, it must be at least 50 years old to be eligible for National Register listing (U.S. Department of the Interior 1995).

In addition to meeting the criteria of significance, a property must have integrity. Integrity is defined as “the ability of a property to convey its significance” (U.S. Department of the Interior 1995). The National Register recognizes seven qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity. To retain historic integrity a property must possess several, and usually most, of these seven aspects. Thus, the retention of the specific aspects of integrity is paramount for a property to convey its significance. The seven factors that define integrity are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

State

The State implements the NHPA through its statewide comprehensive cultural resources surveys and preservation programs. The California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), as an office of the California Department of Parks and Recreation, implements the policies of the NHPA on a statewide level. The OHP also maintains the California Historic Resources Inventory. The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) is an appointed official who implements historic preservation programs within the State’s jurisdictions.

California Register of Historical Resources

The California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) is “an authoritative listing and guide to be used by State and local agencies, private groups, and citizens in identifying the existing historical resources of the State and to indicate which resources deserve to be protected, to the extent prudent and feasible, from substantial adverse change.” (California Public Resources Code [PRC] § 5024.1[a]). The criteria for eligibility for the California Register are based upon National Register criteria (California PRC § 5024.1[b]). Certain resources are determined by the statute to be automatically included in the California Register, including California properties formally determined eligible for, or listed in, the National Register of Historic Places.

To be eligible for the California Register, a prehistoric or historical-period property must be significant at the local, State, and/or federal level under one or more of the following criteria:

- 1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California’s history and cultural heritage;

2. Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
3. 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
4. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

A resource eligible for the California Register must meet one of the criteria of significance described above, and retain enough of its historic character or appearance (integrity) to be recognizable as a historical resource and to convey the reason for its significance. It is possible that a historic resource may not retain sufficient integrity to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register, but it may still be eligible for listing in the California Register.

Additionally, the California Register consists of resources that are listed automatically and those that must be nominated through an application and public hearing process. The California Register automatically includes the following:

- California properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places and those formally Determined Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
- California Registered Historical Landmarks from No. 770 onward.
- Those California Points of Historical Interest that have been evaluated by the OHP and have been recommended to the State Historical Commission for inclusion on the California Register.

Other resources that may be nominated to the California Register include:

- Historical resources with a significance rating of Category 3 through 5 (Those properties identified as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, and/or a local jurisdiction register).
- Individual historical resources.
- Historical resources contributing to historic districts.
- Historical resources designated or listed as local landmarks, or designated under any local ordinance, such as an historic preservation overlay zone.

California Environmental Quality Act

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is the principal statute governing environmental review of projects occurring in the State. CEQA requires lead agencies to determine if a proposed project would have a significant effect on archaeological resources. CEQA is codified at Public Resources Code sec 21000 et seq. As defined in Section 21083.2 of CEQA 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.

In addition, the CEQA Guidelines recognize that certain historical resources may also have significance. The Guidelines recognize that a historical resource includes: (1) a resource in the California Register of Historical Resources; (2) 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); and (3) any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California by the lead agency, provided the lead agency's determination is supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record.

If a lead agency determines that an archaeological site is a historical resource, the provisions of Section 21084.1 of CEQA and Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines apply. If an archaeological site does not meet the criteria for a historical resource contained in the CEQA Guidelines, then the site is to be treated in accordance with the provisions of CEQA Section 21083, which is a unique archaeological resource. The CEQA Guidelines note that if an archaeological resource is neither a unique archaeological nor a historical resource, the effects of the project on those resources shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(c)(4)).

Senate Bill 18

Effective January 2005 and in conformance with Senate Bill 18, which was signed into law by the Governor of California in September 2004, on or after March 1, 2005, local governments are required to consult with tribes before making certain planning decisions and to provide notice to tribes at certain key points in the planning process. The intent is to "provide California Native American tribes an opportunity to participate in local land use decisions at an early planning stage, for the purpose of protecting, or mitigating impacts to, cultural places" (OPR, 2005).

According to the *Tribal Consultation Guidelines: Supplement to General Plan Guidelines*, the contact and notification responsibilities of local governments are as follows:

- Prior to the adoption or any amendment of a general plan or specific plan, a local government must notify the appropriate tribes (on the contact list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission [NAHC]) of the opportunity to conduct consultations for the purpose of preserving, or mitigating impacts to, cultural places located on land within the local government's jurisdiction that is affected by the proposed plan adoption or amendment. Tribes have 90 days from the date on which they receive notification to request consultation, unless a shorter timeframe has been agreed to by the tribe (Government Code §65352.3).

- Prior to the adoption or substantial amendment of a general plan or specific plan, a local government must refer the proposed action to those tribes that are on the NAHC contact list and have traditional lands located within the city or county's jurisdiction. The referral must allow a 45-day comment period (Government Code §65352). Notice must be sent regardless of whether prior consultation has taken place. Such notice does not initiate a new consultation process.
- Local government must send a notice of a public hearing, at least 10 days prior to the hearing, to tribes who have filed a written request for such notice (Government Code §65092).

(OPR, 2005).

Local

Tulare County General Plan (Proposed Project and Alternatives 2, 3 and 6)

The Tulare County General Plan does not include any goals, objectives, and policies related to cultural resources that would be applicable to the Proposed Project and alternatives (Tulare County, 2001).

Fresno County General Plan (Proposed Project and Alternatives 2, 3 and 6)

The following goals and policies have been identified in the General Plan that may be applicable to the Proposed Project and alternatives:

Goal OS-J: To identify, protect, and enhance Fresno County's important historical, archeological, paleontological, geological, and cultural sites and their contributing environment.

Policy OS-J.1: The County shall require that discretionary development projects, as part of any required CEQA review, identify and protect important historical, archeological, paleontological, and cultural sites and their contributing environment from damage, destruction, and abuse to the maximum extent feasible. Project-level mitigation shall include accurate site surveys, consideration of project alternatives to preserve archeological and historic resources, and provision for resource recovery and preservation when displacement is unavoidable.

Policy OS-J.3: The County shall solicit the views of the local Native American community in cases where development may result in disturbance to sites containing evidence of Native American activity and/or sites of cultural importance.

Policy OS-J.8: The County shall support efforts of other organizations and agencies to preserve and enhance historic resources for educational and cultural purposes through maintenance and development of interpretive services and facilities at County recreational areas and other sites.

(Fresno County, 2000).

City of Visalia General Plan (Proposed Project and Alternatives 2, 3 and 6)

The following (goals, policies, and objectives) have been identified in the Conservation, Open Space, Recreation and Parks Element of the City of Visalia General Plan would be applicable to the Proposed Project and alternatives:

Objective: The City's primary objective is to preserve and protect historic features and archaeological resources of the Visalia Planning Area including its agricultural surroundings for aesthetic, scientific, education, and cultural values

Policy 1.5.4: Preserve archaeological sites in the Visalia Planning Area

Policy 1.5.5: Comply with State and Federal requirements for protecting archaeological resources

In addition, the City's municipal code allows resources to be placed on the City of Visalia Local Register and requires review of projects within historic districts before implementation (City of Visalia, 1989).

City of Farmersville General Plan (Proposed Project)

The Farmersville General Plan does not include any goals, objectives, and policies related to cultural resources that would be applicable to the Proposed Project (City of Farmersville, 2002).

Paleontological Resources Regulatory Setting

Federal

A variety of federal statutes specifically address paleontological resources. They are generally applicable to a project if that project includes federally owned or federally managed lands or involves a federal agency license, permit, approval, or funding. Federal legislative protection for paleontological resources stems from the Antiquities Act of 1906 (PL 59-209; 16 United States Code 431 et. seq.; 34 Stat. 225), which calls for protection of historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest on federal lands.

State

Paleontological resources are also afforded protection by CEQA. Appendix G (Part V) of the CEQA Guidelines provides guidance relative to significant impacts on paleontological resources, stating that a project will normally result in a significant impact on the environment if it will "...disrupt or adversely affect a paleontologic resource or site or unique geologic feature, except as part of a scientific study." Section 5097.5 of the Public Resources Code specifies that any unauthorized removal of paleontological remains is a misdemeanor. Further, the California Penal Code Section 622.5 sets the penalties for the damage or removal of paleontological resources.

Professional Standards

The Society for Vertebrate Paleontology (SVP) has established standard guidelines for acceptable professional practices in the conduct of paleontological resource assessments and surveys,

monitoring and mitigation, data and fossil recovery, sampling procedures, and specimen preparation, identification, analysis, and curation. Most practicing professional paleontologists in the nation adhere closely to the SVP's assessment, mitigation, and monitoring requirements as specifically provided in its standard guidelines. Most California State regulatory agencies accept the SVP standard guidelines as a measure of professional practice.

Local

Tulare County General Plan (Proposed Project and Alternatives 2, 3 and 6)

The Tulare County General Plan does not include any goals, objectives, and policies related to paleontological resources that would be applicable to the Proposed Project and alternatives (Tulare County, 2001).

Fresno County General Plan (Proposed Project and Alternatives 2, 3 and 6)

In addition to Goal OS-J and Policies OS-J.1, OS-J.3, and OS-J.8 above, the following goals and policies have been identified in the General Plan that may be applicable to the Proposed Project and alternatives:

Policy OS-J.9: In approving new development, the County shall ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, that the location, siting, and design of any project be subordinate to significant geologic resources.

(Fresno County, 2000).

City of Visalia General Plan (Proposed Project and Alternatives 2, 3 and 6)

The Visalia General Plan does not include any goals, objectives, and policies related to paleontological resources that would be applicable to the Proposed Project and alternatives (City of Visalia, 1989).

City of Farmersville General Plan (Proposed Project)

The Farmersville General Plan does not include any goals, objectives, and policies related to paleontological resources that would be applicable to the Proposed Project (City of Farmersville, 2002).

Methods

A cultural resource study was conducted to identify and evaluate cultural resources within the cultural resources study area in 2007 and 2008 (Armstrong and Jackson, 2008). The cultural resources assessment included a records search, archival research, pedestrian surveys, and evaluations of the built environment for the Proposed Project and alternatives.

Project Area

For the purpose of this analysis, the project area is defined as the area within 0.5 miles of the Proposed Project, alternatives, and the four substations that would be subject to modifications.

Records Search

A project-specific records search of the California Historical Resources Information System – Southern San Joaquin Valley Information Center (SSJVIC) was performed for the project area and alternatives in February 2007, January 2008 and April 2009. These records searches included an examination of previous survey coverage and reports, historic maps, and known cultural resources within a 0.5-mile radius of the Proposed Project alignment as well as Alternatives 2, 3, and 6. Other sources that were reviewed included the California Points of Historical Interest, the California Historical Landmarks, the California Register, the National Register, and the California State Historic Resources Inventory.

Native American Contact

Contact was made with the NAHC in November 2005 and April 2007, in order to request a search of their Sacred Lands File (SLF) for the Proposed Project alignment. The NAHC responded that there were no known sacred sites within the Proposed Project area. In January 2008, a search of the SLF was requested for the Proposed Project and alternatives. The NAHC responded that there were sacred sites within the project area, but could not specify whether the sites were located near the Proposed Project or an alternative. In April 2009, a search of the SLF was requested for Alternative 6. The NAHC responded that no sacred sites were located within the Alternative 6 project area.

In April 2008, SCE contacted a list of Native American contacts as suggested by the NAHC. Two contacts, Lalo Franco of the Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi Tribe, and Kenneth Woodrow, of the Eshow Valley Band of Michahai and Wuksachi Indian, responded to the initial contact letters, expressing interest in meeting with SCE and discussing impacts to cultural resources, including a village and burial site within the project area. Mr. Woodrow toured the area with the SCE in August 2008 and expressed concern about the proximity of the Proposed Project to a possible unmarked cemetery near Cameron Creek Colony and to Rocky Hill, a place of special interest to local Native American peoples. SCE continues to coordinate Native American involvement.

Other Sources of Information

In a letter to the CPUC dated May 2008, Mary Gorden noted that the Kaweah River area was one of the most densely settled in the San Joaquin Valley in prehistoric times. The area along the Proposed Project was also densely settled during historic times. State Route 198 was the main east-west route in Tulare County and passes near a historic sawmill, the Broder Colony, Deep Creek School and Cemetery, and several irrigation ditches. Ms. Gorden also noted the presence of the Yokut village of *Dawau Nawshid* (CA-TUL-16) within the Proposed Project area, along with another ethnographic village site near Merriam Ranch. The Proposed Project, as it runs east from Lindcove, also passes along a Native American (Wukchumni) trail between the hills. Several Yokut ethnographic places are located near this portion of the Proposed Project, including the Hogwallow Preserve, a hill called *Kahchau* (“basket place”), the hill *Sananhenta’o*, several unrecorded prehistoric habitation sites, and Wukchumna Hill, a Wukchumni creation site. Ms. Gorden also emphasized the historic nature of the agricultural landscape in relation to the history of citrus growing.

On December 8, 2008, Manuel Andrade of the Archaeological Conservancy, who is the Site Steward for Rocky Hill, called to express concern about the Proposed Project's effects on Rocky Hill. He insisted that proper archaeological fieldwork be conducted prior to project construction. He was informed that archaeological fieldwork is ongoing and that the CPUC would continue to consult with all interested parties.

Archaeological Survey

A field survey was conducted for each project component in November and December 2007. Field survey consisted of an intensive pedestrian survey performed in transects of 40-50 feet for all project areas located within open and accessible terrain. The goal of this survey was to relocate any previously recorded cultural resources and identify and record any and all cultural resources within the Proposed Project and alternative alignments. Known sites were relocated and recorded. All cultural resources encountered in the field were individually recorded using GPS and assigned temporary field numbers. A Department of Parks and Recreation primary form was completed for each resource.

Where the Proposed Project and alternatives would traverse the Big Creek 1-Rector and Big Creek 3-Rector 220 kV transmission line right-of-way (ROW), the survey corridor was 300 feet wide (150 feet on either side of the transmission line). For the Proposed Project and alternative alignments outside of the Big Creek 1-Rector and Big Creek 3-Rector transmission line ROW, the survey corridor was 200 feet wide (100 feet on either side of the alignment's centerline). Proposed access roads and existing, unpaved access roads were surveyed in 150 feet wide corridors. All survey corridors were surveyed by archaeologists walking parallel to each other and spaced not more than 50 feet apart.

All of the existing Big Creek 1-Rector and Big Creek 3-Rector transmission line ROW was surveyed, except for a small 0.25 mile segment south of Stokes Mountain. Portions of Alternative 3 and the majority of the alignment for the Proposed Project and Alternative 2 could not be surveyed due to lack of landowner permission to access private property. Some of Alternative 3 was characterized by extremely steep slopes and could not be surveyed safely; survey of these areas was limited to those areas that personnel could safely access. Alternative 6 has not yet been systematically surveyed because it was added as a project alternative by the EIR team after the field work had been completed.

Those portions of the Proposed Project and alternative alignments that could not be surveyed due to lack of landowner permission were subject to light reconnaissance survey. This consisted of vehicle-based survey and observation from public roads near the alignments, in order to characterize the land and record any cultural resources visible from the roadways.

Records Search and Archaeological Survey Results

Proposed Project

According to the SSJVIC records search, five cultural resources (three archaeological sites and two historic structures) were previously recorded as being within 0.5 miles of the Proposed

Project. Two of these, CA-TUL-16 and P-54-3400, may be within the alignment and could potentially be impacted by the Proposed Project. The archaeological survey crew was not able to access this area to confirm the location these sites due to lack of landowner permission.

CA-TUL-16 (the “Broder Mound”) is a large prehistoric occupation mound, about 1,200 feet in diameter, possibly the Yokut village and ancestral creation place named *Dawau Nawshid*. This village was said to have been “on the north of Cameron Creek and about four hundred yards east of the old Broder Home” (Latta 1977:190). The Broder family, who settled in that area in the 1850s, noted several hundred Yokut Indians living on the site of the mound. The site was leveled in the late 1920s, but numerous burials and artifacts were collected during a salvage excavation before the site’s destruction (Latta 1977). An estimated 800-1,000 burials were exposed during site leveling. The site was last recorded in the 1930s, and it is unknown if any of the site remains or, if so, the extent of the remaining site.

P-54-3400, the Wylie Hinds Ranch, was the site where Wylie Hinds, a freed African American slave, settled in the 1860s. Hinds became a prosperous rancher and agriculturalist and made significant contributions to the area’s fruit industry. The exact location of this site is unknown.

During the 2007 field survey, ten other cultural resources were recorded within the 200- to 300-foot-wide survey corridor, including five that are located in the Proposed Project area. These are:

- PL-30: Cameron Creek channel, levees and bridge (1951). This resource is within the existing Big Creek 1-Rector and Big Creek 3-Rector ROW;
- PL-41: Remains of a drive-in theater and parking lot (Sequoia Auto Theater; constructed in the 1950s or 1960s);
- PL-42: Tulare Irrigation Canal (date of construction unknown, but appears to have been modified in the late 20th century). This resource is within the existing Big Creek 1-Rector and Big Creek 3-Rector ROW;
- PL-44: Small segment of the Visalia Electric Railroad tracks (1908);
- PL-46: Davis Ditch (this segment constructed sometime between 1950 and 1969).

The Pacific Legacy surveyors suggest that the western unsurveyed portions of the Proposed Project are likely to contain resources related to the agricultural history of the area (historic buildings, farming facilities, railroads, debris scatters), while the eastern portion is likely to contain more prehistoric resources (bedrock mortars, rock art, midden) and should be considered more sensitive.

Alternative 2

According to the SSJVIC records search, eight cultural resources were previously recorded as being within 0.5 miles of Alternative 2. All of these previously recorded sites are prehistoric milling stations or occupational sites. None of these sites appear to be within the Alternative 2 alignment.

During the 2007 field survey, eighteen other cultural resources were recorded within the 200- to 300-foot-wide survey corridor, including fourteen that are located in the Alternative 2 alignment and may be impacted. In addition to PL-30 and PL-42, described above, these are:

- PL-1: A historic debris scatter
- PL-2: Matthews Ditch
- PL-3: Historic garage
- PL-7: St. John's River Levee
- PL-9: Watchumna Ditch
- PL-10: Mill Creek Levees
- PL-11: Prehistoric bedrock milling site
- PL-13: Prehistoric bedrock milling site
- PL-15: Remains of a historic ranch house
- PL-17: Prehistoric bedrock milling site
- PL-18: Prehistoric bedrock milling site
- PL-45: Cottonwood Creek Levee

Alternative 3

According to the SSJVIC records search, two cultural resources were previously recorded as being within 0.5 miles of Alternative 3. Both of these previously recorded sites are prehistoric milling sites. Neither of these appear to be within the Alternative 3 alignment.

During the 2007 field survey, thirty other cultural resources and two isolated artifacts were recorded within the 200- to 300-foot-wide survey corridor, including twenty-one sites that are located in the Alternative 3 alignment. In addition to PL-1, PL-2, PL-3, PL-7, PL-9, PL-10, PL-30, PL-42, and PL-45, described above, these are:

- PL-4: Sontag Ditch
- PL-5: Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad Grade
- PL-8: A drainage ditch
- PL-20: Hilltop soil berms of undetermined age
- PL-21: Prehistoric bedrock milling site and historic debris
- PL-22: Prehistoric bedrock milling site
- PL-23: Prehistoric bedrock milling site
- PL-26: Prehistoric bedrock milling site
- PL-28: Prehistoric bedrock milling site
- PL-29: Prehistoric bedrock milling site
- PL-33: Prehistoric bedrock milling site
- PL-35: Prehistoric bedrock milling site

Alternative 6

According to the SSJVIC records search, one cultural resource and six historic resources were previously recorded as being within 0.5 miles of Alternative 6. Cultural resource CA-TUL-1976

is a large prehistoric site with extensive bedrock milling features, midden, and pictographs. It does not appear to be within the Alternative 6 alignment. Two of the six historic resources, PL-30 (Cameron Creek Channel), PL-42 (Tulare Irrigation Canal), are within the Alternative 6 alignment. No archaeological survey has yet been conducted for Alternative 6.

Big Creek Hydroelectric System

The Proposed Project and alternatives would replace a portion of the Big Creek 1-Rector and Big Creek 3-Rector 220 kV Transmission line, and ties into the Big Creek 3-Springville 220 kV Transmission line, which are part of the Big Creek Hydroelectric System Historic District (BCHSHD). The generation and transmission facilities of the Big Creek system dating between 1911 and 1929, the period of significance for the BCHSHD, are eligible for listing in the National Register per eligibility Criteria a, b, and c (SCE, 2008). The historic transmission system has remained substantially intact along its entire 241-mile length, and even though conductors and insulators on the lines may have been changed in the past century, this has not diminished the historical integrity of the system.

Rector Substation was constructed at the same time as the Big Creek 1-Rector and Big Creek 3-Rector 220 kV transmission lines and is part of the BCHSHD. Facilities at Rector Substation have been modernized over the years, and modifications, such as upgrading control systems or modernizing transformers and switchyard equipment, are considered part of the historic use of the substation. Therefore, the substation, particularly the main substation building and layout of the station facilities, retains adequate integrity of setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association to meet the California Register criteria for listing.

Historic Agricultural Landscape

The agricultural landscape, inclusive of all the orchard land on the valley floor, and contributing elements through which the Proposed Project or alternatives would be constructed, have been evaluated as eligible for listing in the California Register per Criterion 1 because of their contribution to the historic development of the California citrus industry, for which the Visalia area is known (SCE, 2008). The landscape includes citrus groves and other cultivated landscape, transportation infrastructure, and water infrastructure, as well as other historically agricultural buildings and structures. The water-transport features in the Proposed Project ROW may be eligible for listing in the California Register per Criterion 3 because some of these features were created in the context of rural cooperatives formed to construct and maintain irrigation drainage systems in the area, and they represent a type of construction distinctive to the agricultural industry that developed. In the vicinity of the Proposed Project, these features retain integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The Proposed Project would be located in the vicinity of number of irrigation and water-transport structures that are essential to the agricultural industry on the east side of the San Joaquin Valley and made possible the agricultural industry in the greater Visalia area, including Tulare Irrigation District Canal, Davis Ditch, and the Cameron Creek channel and levees. Project Alternatives 2, 3, and 6 would also be located in the vicinity of these and other water transport structures, including Cottonwood Creek Levee, Mill Creek Levees, Watchumna Ditch, St John's river levee, the

Matthews Ditch and the Sontag Ditch. The agricultural landscape of the general vicinity of the Proposed Project and the alternatives can be regarded as an historic resource per CEQA, of which these water features are contributing elements. The development of transportation and water systems and related modification of the natural landscape for the planting of citrus groves has resulted in a historic landscape which date to at least the last half of the 19th century.

4.5.2 Significance Criteria

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, an impact resulting from the Proposed Project would be considered significant if it would cause:

- A substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource that is either listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, or a local register of historic resources;
- A substantial adverse change in the significance of a unique archaeological resource;
- Disturbance or destruction of a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature; or
- Disturbance of any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.

CEQA provides that a project may cause a significant environmental effect where the project could result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource (Public Resources Code, Section 21084.1). CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 defines a “substantial adverse change” in the significance of a historical resource to mean physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of a historical resource would be “materially impaired” (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064.5[b][1]).

CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064.5(b)(2), defines that the significance of a historic resources is “materially impaired” when a project:

- (A) Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion in, or eligibility for, inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources; or
- (B) Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics that account for its inclusion in a local register of historical resources pursuant to Section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code or its identification in an historical resources survey meeting the requirements of Section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code, unless the public agency reviewing the effects of the project establishes by a preponderance of evidence that the resource is not historically or culturally significant; or
- (C) Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of a historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its eligibility for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources as determined by a lead agency for purposes of CEQA.

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b)(3), a project that follows the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings* or *Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* is considered to have mitigated impacts to historic resources to a less than significant level.

Historic resources are usually 50 years old or older and must meet at least one of the criteria for listing in the California Register (such as association with historical events, important people, or architectural significance), in addition to maintaining a sufficient level of physical integrity (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5[a][3]).

Finally, CEQA Section 15126.4(b)(2) states that, "(2) In some circumstances, documentation of an historical resource, by way of historic narrative, photographs or architectural drawings, as mitigation for the effects of demolition of the resource will not mitigate the effects to a point where clearly no significant effect on the environment would occur." This is supported by recent CEQA case law which finds that documentation will not mitigate the loss of an historic resource to a less than significant level, and that demolition of historic resources would have a significant unmitigable impact on the environment.

4.5.3 Applicant Proposed Measures

SCE proposes the following Applicant Proposed Measure (APM) to minimize impacts to cultural resources from the Proposed Project. The impact analysis which follows in this EIR assumes that this APM would be implemented to reduce cultural resource impacts as discussed below.

APM-CUL-01: Documentation and Recordation of Affected Components of the Big Creek Hydroelectric System Historic District. SCE shall document the affected components of the BCHSHD to National Park Service Historic American Building Survey/Historic American Engineering Record/Historic American Landscape Survey (HABS/HAER/HALS) Level II or Level III standards prior to their removal.

4.5.4 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Analysis Approach

Impacts on cultural resources could result from ground-disturbing activities and/or damage, destruction, or alteration of historic structures. Ground-disturbing activities include project-related excavation, grading, or other sub-surface disturbance that could damage or destroy buried archaeological resources including prehistoric and historic remains or human burials.

Mechanisms that would cause damage, destruction, or alteration of historic structures includes project-related demolition, damage, or alteration of historic structures or their immediate surroundings that could impair the significance of an historic resource or adversely alter those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance. Large transmission lines could also alter landscapes and viewsheds which may adversely affect the integrity of setting of some districts or historic landscapes.

Impact Mechanisms

Impacts on cultural resources could result from the following project-related activities or project design elements:

Ground-disturbing activities. Project-related excavation, grading, or other surface and sub-surface disturbance could damage or destroy buried or surficial archaeological resources including prehistoric and historic remains or human burials.

Damage, destruction, or alteration of historic structures. Project-related demolition, damage, or alteration of historic structures or their immediate surroundings could impair the significance of a historic resource or adversely alter those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance.

Construction of modern and large scale transmission towers. The installation of large and modern transmission poles and towers could significantly alter the historic landscape.

Impact Assessment

a) Would project implementation result in change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?

Impact 4.5-1: Implementation of the Proposed Project could adversely affect elements of the BCHSHD (i.e., Rector Substation and Big Creek 1-Rector and Big Creek 3-Rector 220 kV transmission lines), which has been determined eligible by consensus for the National Register of Historic Places and is therefore also eligible for the California Register of Historic Resources; and the Rector Substation, which is a contributing element to the BCHSHD and is considered eligible for listing on the California Register of Historic Resources. *Significant unmitigable (Class I)*

Construction of the Proposed Project within the Big Creek 1-Rector and Big Creek 3-Rector 220 kV transmission lines ROW would require demolishing and removing approximately 26 original single-circuit lattice towers built during the BCHSHD period of significance (1911-1929). In addition, the Proposed Project would demolish and remove original Big Creek 1-Rector and Big Creek 3-Rector 220 kV transmission line towers from the Rector switchyard, install a tubular steel pole and add a pre-fabricated metal mechanical and electrical equipment room adjacent to the substation building. These proposed activities would materially alter, in an adverse manner, those physical characteristics of the resource that qualify it as eligible for inclusion in the California Register.

Implementation of **APM CUL-01** would document the adversely affected components of the BCHSHD prior to their removal which would lessen the impacts to historic resources. However, it would not reduce overall impacts to less than significant as described under CEQA Guidelines Section 151246.4(b)(2). As such these impacts would remain significant unmitigable after implementation of the Applicant Proposed Measure.

Significance after Mitigation: Significant unmitigable.

Impact 4.5-2: Implementation of the Proposed Project could adversely affect known and unknown historic resources along the Proposed Project alignment. *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II)

There are 12 historical built resources located within 0.5 miles of the Proposed Project. Five of these, sites PL-30, PL-41, PL-42, PL-44, and PL-46, are within the existing ROW or ROW to be acquired for the Proposed Project. However, only three of these may be impacted by construction of the Proposed Project. Based on information in Chapter 2, *Project Description*, PL-30 would be within a construction set-up area and would be impacted by clearing and grading of the area. PL-41 would be impacted by clearing of a tension site. PL-44, a segment of the Visalia Electric Railroad would be impacted by the construction of a new lattice tower. PL-42, the Tulare Canal, and PL-46, the Consolidated People's Ditch, would probably not be impacted by construction of the Proposed Project due to their distance from construction activities; however, these resources should be avoided during construction, implementation, and maintenance of the transmission lines as detailed in Mitigation Measure 4.5-2a described below.

In addition, previously unknown historical resources may be present within the unsurveyed portions of the Proposed Project alignment. These portions should be surveyed prior to project commencement in order to identify and locate any cultural resources within the project area as described in Mitigation Measure 4.5-2b, below. The Pacific Legacy surveyors suggest that the western unsurveyed portions of the Proposed Project are likely to contain resources related to the agricultural history of the area (historic buildings, farming facilities, railroads, debris scatters), while the eastern portion is likely to contain more prehistoric resources (bedrock mortars, rock art, midden) and should be considered more sensitive.

Operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project would not have an adverse effect on historic resources. However, project-related construction could adversely affect known and unknown historic resources. Implementation of Mitigation Measures 4.5-2a, and 4.5-2b would reduce impacts to historic resources from construction of the Proposed Project to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measure 4.5-2a: SCE and/or its contractors shall draft and complete a Historic Properties Treatment Plan (HPTP) in consultation with the CPUC, and the Office of Historic Preservation, prior to construction of the Proposed Project. The HPTP shall document all historic properties within the ROW of the Proposed Project and evaluate previously unevaluated properties for significance. Properties to be evaluated shall include, but are not limited to: the Big Creek Hydroelectric System Historic District; the historic agricultural landscape of the Southern San Joaquin Valley; and other known historic resources that may be impacted by project construction. The HPTP shall also address the treatment of the Historic Landscape, and describe documentation measures to record and preserve the landscape. Measures may include video or photographic recording that can be used as an educational tool for the public. For other properties found to be significant, if those resources cannot be avoided, treatment shall be detailed to lessen any adverse impacts. The HPTP shall include analysis of data in a regional context, curation of artifacts such as historic machinery (except from private land) and data (maps, field notes, archival materials, recordings, reports, photographs, and analysts' data), and dissemination of reports to local and State repositories, libraries, and interested professionals. The HPTP

shall specify that historians, historic architects, archaeologists and other discipline specialists conducting the studies meet the Secretary's Standards (per 36 CFR 61).

Mitigation Measure 4.5-2b: Additional Cultural Resources Survey. SCE and/or its contractors shall retain a qualified archaeologist (defined as an archaeologist meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for professional archaeology) to survey those portions of the final selected project alignment that have not been previously subjected to systematic pedestrian cultural resources survey, including areas within private ownership. Newly discovered cultural resources shall be recorded on the appropriate Department of Parks and Recreation forms. Newly discovered cultural resources that may be adversely affected shall be evaluated for significance prior to construction of the Proposed Project; resources found to be significant shall be avoided during construction. If appropriate, prior to construction, a qualified archaeologist shall mark exclusion zones around known archaeological sites that can be avoided to ensure they are not impacted by construction. If avoidance is not feasible, prior to any ground disturbing activity, a site Treatment Plan specifying additional measures such as data recovery shall be prepared and submitted to the CPUC for review prior to construction.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than Significant.

Impact 4.5-3: Implementation of the Proposed Project could alter the historic agricultural landscape of the Southern San Joaquin Valley, but not to an extent to where it would no longer be eligible for the California Register of Historic Resources. *Less than significant (Class III)*

Construction of the Proposed Project would alter the agricultural landscape of the Southern San Joaquin Valley because it would permanently remove citrus trees which are considered character-defining features of the historic agricultural landscape. The Proposed Project is not anticipated to alter other character-defining features of the agricultural landscape, such as transportation infrastructure, water infrastructure, or historically-significant agricultural buildings and structures.

The Proposed Project would permanently remove approximately 31.1 acres of Farmland, as described in Section 4.2, *Agricultural Resources*. Of this amount, 14.9 acres are currently in citrus production. Considering there are approximately 111,000 acres currently in citrus production in Tulare County (Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner, 2008), the permanent loss of this character-defining feature would represent about 0.01 percent of all citrus trees. This extremely small amount of citrus tree loss would be an imperceptible visual change from existing conditions. Considering that the vast majority of the citrus trees would remain unaffected by the Proposed Project, no significant adverse material impacts to citrus trees as a character-defining feature of the agricultural landscape of the Southern San Joaquin Valley would be anticipated. Therefore, since the agricultural landscape would remain eligible for the California Register after completion of the Proposed Project, impacts are less than significant. Also, implementation of Mitigation Measure 4.5-2a (see above) would further reduce the effects of the Proposed Project.

Mitigation: None required.

b) Would project implementation result in change in the significance of a unique archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?

Impact 4.5-4: Implementation of the Proposed Project could adversely affect archaeological resources, including previously undocumented archaeological resources. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II)*

Two archaeological resources, CA-TUL-16 and P-54-3400, could potentially be located within the Proposed Project alignment. Site CA-TUL-16 was an important prehistoric occupational mound site and is known to have contained numerous burials. P-54-3400 is the remains of a historic ranch. The exact locations of CA-TUL-16 and P-54-3400 are unknown. To determine whether these resources would be impacted by project construction, the location of the sites would have to be identified and mapped as described in Mitigation Measure 4.5-4a, below. If these resources are within the Proposed Project alignment, they could be adversely impacted by construction activities.

In addition, previously unknown archaeological resources may be present within the unsurveyed portions of the Proposed Project alignment. Implementation of Mitigation Measures 4.5-4a and 4.5-4b in addition to Mitigation Measures 4.5-2a and 4.5-2b (see above), would reduce impacts from construction of the Proposed Project to archaeological resources to less than significant. Operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project would not have an adverse effect on archaeological resources.

Mitigation Measure 4.5-4a: Identify the Locations of Known Archaeological Sites.

Prior to the commencement of project construction, SCE and/or its contractors shall re-identify and document the site locations of all previously recorded archaeological sites within the final selected project alignment, including pull and tension sites, access roads, and any other areas to be disturbed. If it is determined that a site would be impacted by project construction, the affected site(s) shall be evaluated by a qualified archaeologist (defined as an archaeologist meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for professional archaeology) for their eligibility for listing in the California Register of Historic Resources or for their qualification as a unique archaeological resource under CEQA. If a resource is determined to be eligible, a site Treatment Plan shall be developed by a qualified archeologist in consultation with the CPUC and the SHPO. If the site evaluation results in an assessment that a resource is not eligible, no further work or protective measures shall be necessary.

Mitigation Measure 4.5-4b: Cease Work if Subsurface Archaeological Resources are Discovered During Ground-Disturbing Activities. If archaeological resources are encountered, SCE and/or its contractors shall cease all activity in the vicinity of the find until the find can be evaluated by a qualified archaeologist (an archaeologist meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for professional archaeology). If the archaeologist determines that the resources may be significant, the archaeologist shall notify the CPUC and shall develop an appropriate site Treatment Plan for the resources. The archaeologist

shall consult with Native American monitors or other appropriate Native American representatives in determining appropriate treatment for unearthened cultural resources if the resources are prehistoric or Native American in nature.

In considering any suggested mitigation proposed by the archaeologist in order to mitigate impacts to cultural resources, SCE shall determine whether avoidance is necessary and feasible in light of factors such as the nature of the find, project design, costs, and other considerations. If avoidance is infeasible, other appropriate measures (e.g., data recovery) shall be instituted in accordance with the site Treatment Plan. Work may proceed on other parts of the project site while mitigation for cultural resources is being carried out.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than Significant.

c) Would project implementation directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

Impact 4.5-5: Implementation of the Proposed Project could adversely affect paleontological resources. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II)*

Fossil remains are found in the geologic deposits (sedimentary rock formations) within which they were originally buried. A paleontologically important deposit is one that has a high probability of producing unique, scientifically important fossils. This is determined by the abundance and densities of fossil specimens and/or previously recorded fossil sites in exposures of the deposit. Therefore, the potential paleontological sensitivity of the Proposed Project area can be assessed by identifying the paleontological importance of geologic deposits within the Proposed Project area.

According to the geologic base maps, the majority of the Proposed Project lies on recent alluvium from granitic rock sources (Matthews and Burnett, 1965). This type of soil has a low sensitivity for paleontological resources. The eastern end of the Proposed Project crosses Pleistocene non-marine sedimentary deposits and Mesozoic basic intrusive rocks, and Mesozoic granitic rocks near Lemon Cove. Granitic, basic intrusive and metamorphic rocks do not have the potential to yield fossils because the processes of their formation are not conducive to preserving biological remains. However, some possibility exists that the Pleistocene non-marine sedimentary deposits present at the eastern end of the Proposed Project could yield fossils, although fossils have not been previously recorded in this area.

Therefore, Proposed Project construction activities could result in the accidental destruction of unrecorded paleontological resources. This would be a significant impact. However, operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project would not have a significant impact to paleontological resources as disturbance to bedrock would not be required. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 4.5-5, below, would reduce construction impacts to paleontological resources to less than significant.

Mitigation Measure 4.5-5: SCE and/or its contractors shall conduct a paleontological assessment of the Proposed Project area prior to construction of the Proposed Project. The

assessment shall be completed by a paleontologist meeting the Society for Vertebrate Paleontology's standards for professional vertebrate paleontology. If sensitive paleontological resources are identified within the Proposed Project area, a Paleontological Resources Treatment and Monitoring Plan shall be developed and implemented in consultation with the CPUC.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than Significant.

d) Would project implementation disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

Impact 4.5-6: Implementation of the Proposed Project could result in the disturbance of human remains. *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II)

The high level of both historic and prehistoric activity in the area, evidenced by the large number of historic and prehistoric sites near or within the Proposed Project area, suggests that burials could be present. In the event that human remains were discovered during subsurface activities, the human remains could be inadvertently damaged, which could be a significant impact. However, with implementation of Mitigation Measure 4.5-6, in conjunction with Mitigation Measures 4.5-2b, 4.5-4a, and 4.5-4b, this impact would be reduced to less than significant. Operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project would not have an adverse effect on human remains as earth disturbing activities would not be required.

Mitigation Measure 4.5-6: Halt Work if Human Skeletal Remains are Identified During Construction. If human skeletal remains are uncovered during project construction, SCE and/or its contractors shall immediately halt all work, contact the Tulare County coroner to evaluate the remains, and follow the procedures and protocols set forth in Section 15064.5 (e)(1) of the CEQA Guidelines. If the County coroner determines that the remains are Native American, SCE shall contact the NAHC, in accordance with Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, subdivision (c), and Public Resources Code 5097.98 (as amended by AB 2641). Per Public Resources Code 5097.98, SCE shall ensure that the immediate vicinity, according to generally accepted cultural or archaeological standards or practices, where the Native American human remains are located, is not damaged or disturbed by further development activity until the SCE has discussed and conferred, as prescribed in this section (PRC 5097.98), with the most likely descendents regarding their recommendations, if applicable, taking into account the possibility of multiple human remains.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than Significant.

4.5.5 Cumulative Impacts

The Proposed Project would add to the cumulative impacts on cultural resources in the Southern San Joaquin Valley.

As discussed above, activities associated with the construction and operation of the Proposed Project would significantly alter the BCHSHD, which would result in a significant unmitigable impact to historic resources. Impacts to other historic resources, including historic landscapes, archaeological, and paleontological resources, would be less than significant with mitigation.

The project area contains a significant archaeological and historical record that, in many cases, has not been well documented or recorded. Thus, there is the potential for ongoing and future development projects in the vicinity, particularly in and around the cities of Visalia and Farmersville, to disturb landscapes that may contain known or unknown cultural resources. The historic agricultural landscape could be particularly affected in these areas. Environmental analysis is either underway or completed for many of these projects and several are presently under construction.

The potential construction impacts of the Proposed Project, in combination with other projects in the area, could contribute to a cumulatively significant impact on cultural resources. However, Section 4.5.4 includes several mitigation measures to reduce potential project impacts to cultural resources during construction of the Proposed Project, including the creation of a Historic Properties Treatment Plan, further archaeological and historic resources surveys, further paleontological study, and provisions for the accidental discovery of cultural resources. Future projects with potentially significant impacts to cultural resources would be required to comply with federal, State, and local regulations and ordinances protecting cultural resources through implementation of similar mitigation measures during construction. Therefore, with implementation of Mitigation Measures 4.5-2a and 4.5-2b, 4.5-4a and 4.5-4b, 4.5-5 and 4.5-6, the Proposed Project would not have a cumulatively considerable contribution to impacts to archaeological and paleontological resources (Class II).

When considered in combination with other future projects, the Proposed Project's incremental contribution to impacts to the BCHSHD (i.e., the Rector Substation and the Big Creek 1-Rector and Big Creek 3-Rector 220 kV transmission lines), even with proposed mitigation, would be considered significant unmitigable (Class I). The Proposed Project's incremental contribution to other known and unknown historic resources in the project area would not be cumulatively considerable, because impacts would be mitigated to a less than significant level through documentation and avoidance of historically-significant resources (Class II). Finally, the Proposed Project's incremental impact to the historic agricultural landscape of the Southern San Joaquin Valley by permanently removing 14.9 acres of citrus trees would be an imperceptible change to the character-defining feature of the area, and the Proposed Project would not alter other character-defining features of the agricultural landscape, such as transportation infrastructure, water infrastructure, or historically-significant agricultural buildings and structures. Consequently, the Proposed Project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to the historic agricultural landscape of the Southern San Joaquin Valley (Class III).

4.5.6 Alternatives

No Project Alternative

Under the No Project Alternative, the Proposed Project would not be implemented; therefore there would be no impacts related to Cultural Resources.

Alternative 2

Historic Resources

Impacts to the BCHSHD related to the implementation of Alternative 2 would likely be similar to those related to the Proposed Project. The first 10.8 miles of Alternative 2 would be located within the Big Creek 1-Rector 220 kV transmission line (a component of the BCHSHD) ROW. Therefore impacts to this component of the BCHSHD from implementation of Alternative 2 are anticipated to be similar to the impacts of the Proposed Project and would be significant unmitigable (Class I).

Other than the BCHSHD, nine built historic resources are within the Alternative 2 alignment, which is four more known historic resources than would be in the Proposed Project alignment.

Impact 4.5-ALT2-1: Implementation of Alternative 2 could adversely affect known and unknown historic resources along the Alternative 2 alignment. *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II)

There are 13 historical built resources located within 0.5 miles of Alternative 2. Nine of these, PL-2 (Matthews Ditch), PL-3 (Historic garage), PL-7 (St. John's River Levee), PL-9 (Watchumna Ditch), PL-10 (Mill Creek Levees), PL-15 (Remains of a historic ranch house), PL-30 (Cameron Creek Channel), PL-42 (Tulare Irrigation Canal), and PL-45 (Cottonwood Creek Levee), are within the Alternative 2 project area.

In addition, previously unknown historical resources may be present within the unsurveyed portions of the Alternative 2 project area. These portions should be surveyed prior to project commencement in order to identify and locate any cultural resources within the project area as described in Mitigation Measure 4.5-ALT2-1b, below. The Pacific Legacy surveyors suggest that the western unsurveyed portions of Alternative 2 are likely to contain resources related to the agricultural history of the area (historic buildings, farming facilities, railroads, debris scatters), while the eastern portion is likely to contain more prehistoric resources (bedrock mortars, rock art, midden) and should be considered more sensitive.

Operation and maintenance of Alternative 2 would not have an adverse effect on historic resources. However, project-related construction could adversely affect known and unknown historic resources. Implementation of Mitigation Measures 4.5-ALT2-1a, and 4.5-ALT2-1b would reduce impacts to historic resources from construction of Alternative 2 to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measure 4.5-ALT2-1a: Implement Proposed Project Mitigation Measure 4.5-2a.

Mitigation Measure 4.5-ALT2-1b: Implement Proposed Project Mitigation Measure 4.5-2b.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than Significant.

The historic agricultural landscape traversed by Alternative 2 is the same landscape as would be traversed by the Proposed Project. Implementation of Alternative 2 would result in the removal of approximately 10.3 acres of citrus trees. Therefore, impacts to character-defining features of the historic agricultural landscape, such as removal of citrus trees, would be similar to or slightly less than the Proposed Project and would be an imperceptible visual change from existing conditions. Considering that the vast majority of the citrus trees would remain unaffected by Alternative 2, no significant adverse material impacts to citrus trees as a character-defining feature of the agricultural landscape of the Southern San Joaquin Valley would be anticipated (Class III).

Archaeological Resources

Impacts to archaeological resources related to the implementation of Alternative 2 would be similar to or slightly greater than those related to the Proposed Project. There are five known archaeological resources within or near the Alternative 2 ROW that may be impacted, three more archaeological resource than are known to exist in the Proposed Project ROW. A greater portion of Alternative 2 runs through the more sensitive foothill areas than the Proposed Project. In addition, Alternative 2 runs through less developed land and therefore may contain a greater number of unrecorded archaeological resources.

Impact 4.5-ALT2-2: Implementation of Alternative 2 could adversely affect archaeological resources, including previously undocumented archaeological resources. *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II)

There are 13 archeological resources recorded within 0.5 miles of the Alternative 2 alignment. Five of these, PL-1 (historic debris scatter), PL-11 (Prehistoric bedrock milling site), PL-13 (Prehistoric bedrock milling site), PL-17 (Prehistoric bedrock milling site), and PL-18 (Prehistoric bedrock milling site), could potentially be located within the Alternative 2 project area. To determine whether these resources would be impacted by project construction, the location of the sites would have to be identified and mapped as described in Mitigation Measure 4.5-ALT2-2a, below. If these resources are within the Alternative 2 project area, they could be adversely impacted by construction activities.

In addition, previously unknown archaeological resources may be present within the unsurveyed portions of the Alternative 2 project area. Implementation of Mitigation Measures 4.5-ALT2-2a and 4.5-ALT2-2b in addition to Mitigation Measures 4.5-ALT2-1a and 4.5-ALT2-1b (see above), would reduce impacts from construction of Alternative 2 to archaeological resources to less than significant. Operation and maintenance of Alternative 2 would not have an adverse effect on archaeological resources.

Mitigation Measure 4.5-ALT2-2a: Implement Proposed Project Mitigation Measure 4.5-4a.

Mitigation Measure 4.5-ALT2-2b: Implement Proposed Project Mitigation Measure 4.5-4b.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than Significant.

Human Remains

Given the high archaeological sensitivity, the potential to encounter and impact buried human remains for Alternative 2 would be similar to or slightly greater than the Proposed Project. However, as with the Proposed Project, implementation of Mitigation Measure 4.5-6 would reduce impacts to human remains from construction of Alternative 2 to a less than significant level (Class II).

Paleontological Resources

Impacts to paleontological resources would be similar to those for the Proposed Project. Therefore, as with the Proposed Project, implementation of Mitigation Measure 4.5-5 would reduce impacts to paleontological resources from construction of Alternative 2 to a less than significant level (Class II).

Alternative 3

Historic Resources

Impacts to the BCHSHD related to the implementation of Alternative 3 would likely be similar to those related to the Proposed Project. Approximately 14.6 miles of Alternative 3 would be located within the Big Creek 1-Rector 220 kV transmission line (a component of the BCHSHD) ROW. Therefore impacts to this component of the BCHSHD from implementation of Alternative 3 are anticipated to be similar to the impacts of the Proposed Project and would be significant unmitigable (Class I).

Other than the BCHSHD, eleven built historic resources are within the Alternative 3 alignment that may be impacted by construction, which is six more known historic resources than would be in the Proposed Project alignment.

Impact 4.5-ALT3-1: Implementation of Alternative 3 could adversely affect known and unknown historic resources along the Alternative 3 alignment. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II)*

There are 16 historical built resources located within 0.5 miles of Alternative 3. Eleven of these, PL-2 (Matthews Ditch), PL-3 (Historic garage), PL-4 (Sontag Ditch), PL-5 (Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad Grade), PL-7 (St. John's River Levee), PL-8 (a drainage ditch), PL-9 (Watchumna Ditch), PL-10 (Mill Creek Levees), PL-30 (Cameron Creek Channel), PL-42 (Tulare Irrigation Canal), and PL-45 (Cottonwood Creek Levee), are within the Alternative 3 project area.

In addition, previously unknown historical resources may be present within the unsurveyed portions of the Alternative 3 project area. These portions should be surveyed prior to project commencement in order to identify and locate any cultural resources within the project area as described in Mitigation Measure 4.5-ALT3-1b, below. The Pacific Legacy surveyors suggest that the western unsurveyed portions of Alternative 3 are likely to contain resources related to the agricultural history of the area (historic buildings, farming facilities, railroads, debris scatters), while the eastern portion is likely to contain more prehistoric resources (bedrock mortars, rock art, midden) and should be considered more sensitive.

Operation and maintenance of Alternative 3 would not have an adverse effect on historic resources. However, project-related construction could adversely affect known and unknown historic resources. Implementation of Mitigation Measures 4.5-ALT3-1a, and 4.5-ALT3-1b would reduce impacts to historic resources from construction of Alternative 3 to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measure 4.5-ALT3-1a: Implement Proposed Project Mitigation Measure 4.5-2a.

Mitigation Measure 4.5-ALT3-1b: Implement Proposed Project Mitigation Measure 4.5-2b.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than Significant.

The historic agricultural landscape traversed by Alternative 3 is the same landscape as would be traversed by the Proposed Project. Implementation of Alternative 3 would result in the removal of approximately 5.4 acres of citrus trees. Therefore, impacts to character-defining features of the historic agricultural landscape, such as removal of citrus trees, would be similar to or slightly less than the Proposed Project and would be an imperceptible visual change from existing conditions. Considering that the vast majority of the citrus trees would remain unaffected by Alternative 3, no significant adverse material impacts to citrus trees as a character-defining feature of the agricultural landscape of the Southern San Joaquin Valley would be anticipated (Class III).

Archaeological Resources

Impacts to archaeological resources related to the implementation of Alternative 3 would potentially be greater than those related to the Proposed Project. There are nine known archaeological resources within the Alternative 3 ROW that may be impacted, which is seven more archaeological resources than are known to exist within the Proposed Project ROW. In addition, a greater portion of the Alternative 3 alignment runs through the more sensitive foothill areas and through less developed land than the Proposed Project alignment and therefore may contain a greater number of unrecorded archaeological resources.

Impact 4.5-ALT3-2: Implementation of Alternative 3 could adversely affect archaeological resources, including previously undocumented archaeological resources. *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II)

There are 16 archaeological resources recorded within 0.5 miles of the Alternative 3 alignment, nine of these, PL-20 (Hilltop soil berms of undetermined age), PL-21 (Prehistoric bedrock milling

site and historic debris), PL-22 (Prehistoric bedrock milling site), and PL-23, PL-26, PL-28, PL-29, PL-33, PL-35 (Prehistoric bedrock milling sites), could potentially be located within the Alternative 3 project area.

To determine whether these resources would be impacted by project construction, the location of the sites would have to be identified and mapped as described in Mitigation Measure 4.5-ALT3-2a, below. If these resources are within the Alternative 3 alignment, they could be adversely impacted by construction activities.

In addition, previously unknown archaeological resources may be present within the unsurveyed portions of the Alternative 3 project area. Implementation of Mitigation Measures 4.5-ALT3-2a and 4.5-ALT3-2b in addition to Mitigation Measures 4.5-ALT3-1a and 4.5-ALT3-1b (see above), would reduce impacts from construction of Alternative 3 to archaeological resources to less than significant. Operation and maintenance of Alternative 3 would not have an adverse effect on archaeological resources.

Mitigation Measure 4.5-ALT3-2a: Implement Proposed Project Mitigation Measure 4.5-4a.

Mitigation Measure 4.5-ALT3-2b: Implement Proposed Project Mitigation Measure 4.5-4b.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than Significant.

Human Remains

Given the high archaeological sensitivity, the potential to encounter and impact buried human remains for Alternative 3 would be similar to or slightly greater than the Proposed Project. However, as with the Proposed Project, implementation of Mitigation Measure 4.5-6 would reduce impacts to human remains from construction of Alternative 3 to a less than significant level (Class II).

Paleontological Resources

Impacts to paleontological resources would be similar to those for the Proposed Project. Therefore, as with the Proposed Project, implementation of Mitigation Measure 4.5-5 would reduce impacts to paleontological resources from construction of Alternative 3 to a less than significant level (Class II).

Alternative 6

Historic Resources

Impacts to the BCHSHD related to the implementation of Alternative 6 would likely be similar to those related to the Proposed Project. Approximately 8.1 miles of Alternative 6 would be located within the Big Creek 1-Rector 220 kV transmission line ROW (a component of the BCHSHD). Therefore impacts to this component of the BCHSHD from implementation of Alternative 6 are

anticipated to be similar to the impacts of the Proposed Project and would be significant unmitigable (Class I).

Other than the BCHSHD, two built historic resources are within the Alternative 3 alignment that may be impacted by construction, which is three fewer known historic resources than would be in the Proposed Project alignment.

Impact 4.5-ALT6-1: Implementation of Alternative 6 could adversely affect known and unknown historic resources along the Alternative 6 alignment. *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II)

There are six historic resources located within 0.5 miles of Alternative 6. Two of these, PL-30 (Cameron Creek Channel) and PL-42 (Tulare Irrigation Canal), are historic built resources and within the Alternative 6 ROW. In addition, previously unknown historical resources may be present within the Alternative 6 ROW, which has not been surveyed for cultural resources. The alignment should be surveyed prior to project commencement in order to identify and locate any cultural resources within the project area as described in Mitigation Measure 4.5-ALT6-1b, below.

Operation and maintenance of Alternative 6 would not have an adverse effect on historic resources. However, project-related construction could adversely affect known and unknown historic resources. Implementation of Mitigation Measures 4.5-ALT6-1a, and 4.5-ALT6-1b would reduce impacts to historic resources from construction of Alternative 6 to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measure 4.5-ALT6-1a: Implement Proposed Project Mitigation Measure 4.5-2a.

Mitigation Measure 4.5-ALT6-1b: Implement Proposed Project Mitigation Measure 4.5-2b.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than Significant.

The historic agricultural landscape traversed by Alternative 6 is the same landscape as would be traversed by the Proposed Project. Implementation of Alternative 6 would likely result in permanent removal of a greater number of citrus crops than the Proposed Project. Therefore, impacts to character-defining features of the historic agricultural landscape, such as removal of citrus trees, would be similar to or slightly greater than the Proposed Project. Similar to the Proposed Project, there would be an imperceptible visual change from existing conditions. Considering that the vast majority of the citrus trees would remain unaffected by Alternative 6, no significant adverse material impacts to citrus trees as a character-defining feature of the agricultural landscape of the Southern San Joaquin Valley would be anticipated (Class III).

Archaeological Resources

Impacts to archaeological resources related to the implementation of Alternative 6 would be similar to or slightly greater than those related to the Proposed Project. There is one known archaeological resource within 0.5 miles of the Alternative 6 ROW. This resource, CA-TUL-

1976, is not within the Alternative 6 ROW. However, most of the Alternative 6 alignment has never been archaeologically surveyed, and a greater portion of Alternative 6 runs through the more sensitive foothill areas than the Proposed Project. In addition, Alternative 6 runs through less developed land and therefore may contain a greater number of unrecorded archaeological resources.

Impact 4.5-ALT6-2: Implementation of Alternative 6 could adversely affect archaeological resources, including previously undocumented archaeological resources. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II)*

While no archaeological resources are present within the Alternative 6 alignment, one resource, CA-TUL-1976, lies less than 0.5 miles from the alignment. In addition, previously unknown archaeological resources may be present within the Alternative 6 alignment, which has not been surveyed for cultural resources. Implementation of Mitigation Measures 4.5-ALT6-2a and 4.5-ALT6-2b in addition to Mitigation Measures 4.5-ALT6-1a and 4.5-ALT6-1b (see above), would reduce impacts from construction of Alternative 6 to archaeological resources to less than significant. Operation and maintenance of Alternative 6 would not have an adverse effect on archaeological resources.

Mitigation Measure 4.5-ALT6-2a: Implement Proposed Project Mitigation Measure 4.5-4a.

Mitigation Measure 4.5-ALT6-2b: Implement Proposed Project Mitigation Measure 4.5-4b.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than Significant.

Human Remains

Given the high archaeological sensitivity, the potential to encounter and impact buried human remains for Alternative 6 would be similar to or slightly greater than the Proposed Project. However, as with the Proposed Project, implementation of Mitigation Measure 4.5-6 would reduce impacts to human remains from construction of Alternative 6 to a less than significant level (Class II).

Paleontological Resources

Impacts to paleontological resources would be similar to or slightly greater than those for the Proposed Project. However, as with the Proposed Project, implementation of Mitigation Measure 4.5-5 would reduce impacts to paleontological resources from construction of Alternative 6 to a less than significant level (Class II).

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