5.10 Cultural Resources

5.10.1 Introduction

The cultural resources section of this EIR/EA compiled information about properties in the project vicinity and their status as related to cultural resources. This section analyzes the potential short-term, long-term, and cumulative impacts resulting from the construction and operation of the Proposed Project and alternatives. The following discussion will analyze the cultural and historic conditions in the proposed Shingle Springs Interchange area.

5.10.2 Environmental Setting

Prehistory

The earliest residents in the Great Central Valley and adjacent lands along the Valley margin are represented by the Fluted Point and Western Pluvial Lakes Traditions, which date from about 11,500 to 7,500 years ago (Moratto 1984). Within portions of central California, fluted projectile points have been found at Tracy Lake (Heizer 1938) and around the margins of Buena Vista Lake in Kern County. Similar materials have been found to the north, at Samwel Cave near Shasta Lake and near McCloud and Big Springs in Siskiyou County. These early peoples are thought to have subsisted using a combination of generalized hunting and lacustrine exploitation (Moratto 1984).

These early cultural assemblages were followed by an increase in Native population density after about 7,500 years ago. One of the most securely dated of these assemblages in north-central California is from the Squaw Creek Site located north of Redding. Here, a charcoal-based C-14 date suggests extensive Native American presence around 6,500 years ago, or 4,500 B.C. Most of the artifactual material dating to this time period has counterparts further south, around Borax (Clear) Lake northwest of Sacramento, and the Farmington Area in a Valley setting east of Stockton. Important artifact types from this time period include large wide-stemmed projectile points and manos and metates.

In the Central Valley of California and adjacent foothills of the Sierra Nevada, aboriginal populations continued to expand between 6,500 and 4,500 years ago, with the possibility that Macro-Penutian-speaking arrivals (including Miwok, Yokuts and Nisenan) introduced more extensive use of bulbs and other plant foods, animal and fishing products more intensively processed with mortars and pestles, and perhaps the bow and arrow and associated small stemmed- and corner-notched projectile points. The peoples occupying the project area at the time of initial contact with European American populations were the Penutian-speaking Nisenan.

Historic Context

There is clear historic evidence that Spanish and Mexican expeditions and early fur trapping ventures visited the northern Sacramento Valley area, including the drainages of the Feather, Yuba, Bear, and American Rivers, during the early 19th century. However, the first major incursion by Euroamerican populations occurred during and just prior to the Gold Rush period. Trappers employed by the Hudson's Bay Company visited the region between 1830 and 1841. These early travelers helped scout the route for an overland trail from the Mississippi River to California. Later emigrants arrived via several early trails, including the California Emigrant Trail and the Carson Emigrant Trail.

In 1848, John Marshall discovered gold at Coloma, setting in motion a series of changes which would dramatically alter the face of California. Mining along virtually every stream within the vicinity of the project area was underway by 1950, including Slate Creek and its tributaries. Placer mining continued to yield large quantities of gold through the next several years, and by 1855 supporting industry in parts of El Dorado and surrounding counties included stores, transportation companies, saloons, toll roads and stage lines, foundries, lumber mills, and water companies. Continued exploration and limited mining operations continued through several decades of the 20th Century, activities which account for most if not all of the components which define historic site CA-ELD-241-H, the series of mining-related landscape modifications and features located within the 160-ac Rancheria property north of the present project area.

Transportation, ranching, agriculture, logging, and subsequently water storage and water diversion projects represent additional major historic themes for this area near Shingle Springs, resulting in construction of a wide range of structure and feature types, many of which remain intact or partially intact throughout this portion of El Dorado County.

Ethnography

The project area is located within territory which was occupied by the Nisenan (Wilson and Towne 1978:), Native American peoples who are also referred to as "Southern Maidu." These Penutian-speaking peoples occupied the drainages of the southern Feather River and Honcut Creek in the north, through Bear River and the Yuba and American River drainages in the south, extending from the crest of the Sierra Nevada westerly to the Sacramento River. The basic social unit for the numerous Nisenan tribelets which comprised the Nisenan peoples was the family, although the village may also be considered a social, as well as a political and economic, unit. Villages were frequently located on flats adjoining streams, and were inhabited mainly in the winter as it was usually necessary to go out into the hills and higher elevation zones to establish temporary camps during food gathering seasons (i.e., spring, summer and fall). Villages typically consisted of a series of bark houses, numbering from four or five to several dozen or more in

larger villages, each house containing a single family of from three to seven people. Larger villages, with from twelve to fifteen or more houses, might also contain an earth lodge.

Economic life for the Nisenan revolved around hunting, fishing and the collecting of plant foods. The collection and processing of these various food resources was accomplished with a wide variety of wooden, bone and stone artifacts. These people were very sophisticated in terms of their knowledge of the uses of local animals and plants, and of the availability of raw material sources which could be used in manufacturing an immense array of primary and secondary tools and implements. Based on the results of previous survey work within the general and immediate project area, a range of site types is known to be present within the general vicinity, including habitation areas with and without associated middens, bedrock milling stations, lithic scatters, occasional petroglyphs, trails, mortuary sites usually associated with major habitation areas, and isolated artifacts.

Clearly, it was not expected that all of these site types would be present within the project area, but rather that these represent the most likely *types* to be present if any sites were identified at all.

5.10.3 Regulatory Setting

Since the project will involve a break in access to Highway 50 and construction work within the Highway 50 right-of-way, studies must be undertaken in consultation with the Caltrans. As well, the Proposed Project is being overseen by the BIA, as a result, the Proposed Project must therefore conform with federal and state guidelines for assessing the effects of an “undertaking” to cultural resources, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and its implementing regulations (36 CFR Part 800), Section 2(b) of Executive Order 11593, Section 101(b)(4) of the National Environmental Policy Act, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act, the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990, California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, Public Resources Code, Section 21000, et seq. (CEQA), California Administrative Code, Section 15000 et seq. (Guidelines, a amended October 1998).

5.10.4 Impacts And Mitigation Measures

Significance Criteria

Cultural resource preservation and criteria for the identification of important resources focus on a cultural property’s research potential, uniqueness and integrity (relative to other cultural resources similar in kind). A resource is considered to have integrity when it retains sufficient physical character to convey to the viewer an association with prehistoric or historic patterns, persons, designs, or technologies. A significant property must have the potential to contribute

important information towards scholarly research, which can then be conveyed to the general public.

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. In this area of California, archaeological findings are often associated with Native American habitation, such as food processing sites, village sites and encampments, and burial grounds.

An important archaeological resource is one that meets one or more of the following criteria:

- Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
- Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
- 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
- Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Methodology

Records Searched

Prior to conducting the field survey, the official El Dorado County archaeological records maintained by the North Central Information Center at CSU-Sacramento were examined for any existing recorded prehistoric or historic sites (Information Center File #'s ELD-99-86 [conducted 1999] and ELD-00-98 [conducted 2000]), with the following results:

North Central Information Center Records: A small portion of the project area within the Highway 50 road right-of-way has been subjected to formal archaeological survey (Report by Fernandez and Fryman 1999).

Other Sources Consulted: In addition, to examining the official records of El Dorado County as maintained by the North Central Information Center at CSU-Sacramento, the following sources were consulted:

- The National Register of Historic Places (1986, Supplements to 12/00);

- The California Inventory of Historic Resources (State of California 1976);
- The California Historical Landmarks (State of California 1990);
- 1870 GLO Plat; El Dorado County Map 1895;
- Mr. Jeff Murray, Shingle Springs Rancheria, representing Nisenan;
- Mr. Sam Starkey, Auburn Rancheria, representing Nisenan;
- The El Dorado County Historical Museum, Placerville;
- The El Dorado County Pioneer Cemeteries Commission, Cameron Park;
- The Native American Heritage Commission re. sacred lands files; and,
- Existing published and unpublished documents relevant to prehistory, ethnography, and early historic developments in the vicinity.

Research Approach

Compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA requires completion of projects in conformity with the standards, guidelines, and principles in the *Advisory Council's Treatment of Archaeological Properties: A Handbook* (1980), and *Archaeology and Historic Preservation: Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines* (1983) (Jensen & Associates, 2000). Based on these several publications, the following specific tasks were performed:

- Conduct a records search at the North Central California Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System at CSU-Sacramento to determine if any previously recorded sites exist within the project area, and consult with Native American representatives and the Native American Heritage Commission. Collectively, the goals of the records search and consultation are to determine (a) the extent and distribution of previous archaeological surveys, (b) the locations of known archaeological sites, historic resources, traditional cultural properties, sacred lands and recorded archaeological districts within or adjacent to the project area, and (c) the relationships between known sites and environmental variables. This step is designed to ensure that, during field survey work, all properties considered eligible or potentially eligible for inclusion on the National Register are discovered, correctly identified, and properly interpreted.

- Conduct a pedestrian survey of the project area in order to identify and locate any previously unidentified cultural resources. Based on map review and the results of previous studies in the immediate vicinity, a complete coverage, but variable-intensity survey was considered appropriate.

  The purpose of the pedestrian survey is to ensure that previously recorded sites which may have been identified during the records search are re-located. For previously undocumented

sites discovered, the field survey will involve documenting site size, location, and general type. For both previously identified and newly identified sites, the level of field work will be sufficient to recommend measures designed to avoid, minimize or mitigate potential adverse effects of the proposed undertaking.

- Upon completion of the records search and the field survey, prepare an inventory survey report which identifies prehistoric and historic archaeological sites within the property and which could be affected by the undertaking, recommend which if any such sites might be eligible for inclusion on the National Register, and outline treatment commensurate with the significance or importance of the identified sites.

The remainder of the present document constitutes the Final Inventory Survey Report for this project, detailing the results of the records search and field work, and providing recommendations for treatment of sites which might be affected by the undertaking. All field work procedures followed guidelines provided by the State Historic Preservation Office (Sacramento) and are in conformity with accepted professional standards.

Survey Strategy

In view of variable sensitivity zones within the project area, a mixed survey strategy was employed. Intensive-level field survey was undertaken within the land area located between the Rancheria to the north and Highway 50 to the south. Within this area, which has been partially developed for residential use, survey transects were maintained at approximate 45-60 feet (15-20 meter) intervals. Much of the native vegetation has been removed from this area, and ground surface visibility was not obstructed.

Within the existing highway right-of-way, which includes heavily disturbed lands, a zig-zag transect pattern was walked along both sides of the roadway, between the edge of the roadway and highway fencing. In this area, virtually all of the native vegetation has been removed, and highway maintenance has kept re-growth to a minimum. Ground surface visibility was unobstructed.

In searching for cultural resources, the surveyors took into account the results of background research, and were alert for any unusual contours, soil changes, distinctive vegetation patterns, exotic materials, artifacts, feature or feature remnants and other possible markers of cultural sites.

Field Work

Field work for the present project was undertaken on October 25, 2000, and December 12, 2000 by Sean M. Jensen and Peter M. Jensen. No special problems were encountered during the course of field work, and all survey objectives are considered to have been satisfactorily achieved.

Impact/ Mitigation

Impact 5.10-1 Discovery of Prehistoric, Archaeological and Paleontological Resources

AA Under the No Project/Action Alternative, the interchange would not be constructed, therefore, ***no impact*** upon prehistoric, archaeological, or paleontological resources would occur on or around the project site.

AB, AC Construction of the proposed on- and off-ramps for Flyover Interchange Design Alternative and Diamond Interchange Design Alternative would require hillside excavation and grading which could result in the possibility that some prehistoric, archaeological, or paleontological resources could be uncovered. No prehistoric or historic-period sites or features have been formally recorded within or adjacent to the project area. Several sites have been identified within the vicinity, but none of these previously recorded sites will be affected by the interchange project. Additionally, no evidence of prehistoric presence was identified during the pedestrian survey. These negative results are attributed in part to the absence of a suitable surface water source within the project area, and to the extensive disturbance to which most of the project area has been subjected. ***The Flyover Interchange Design Alternative and the Diamond Interchange Design Alternative have the potential to uncover undiscovered prehistoric, archaeological, or paleontological resources.***

Mitigation 5.10-1 Discovery of Prehistoric, Archaeological and Paleontological Resources

The following mitigation will assure that the proposed project will result is a ***less than significant impact***.

(A) In the event that any prehistoric, archaeological, or paleontological resources are discovered during construction-related activities, work near the resources shall be halted and a qualified archaeologist or paleontologist shall be commissioned to assess the significance of the find. If any find were determined to be significant, by the qualified

archaeologist or paleontologist, then the qualified archaeologist and/or paleontologist would meet with Caltrans and BIA officials to determine the appropriate course of action.

Impact 5.10-2 Disturbance to Historic Cultural Material

AA Under the No Project/Action Alternative, the interchange would not be constructed, therefore, no impact upon cultural resources would occur on or around the project site. The No Project/Action Alternative will result in ***no impact*** to the environment as related to historic cultural material.

AB, AC Construction of the proposed on- and off-ramps for fly-over interchange design alternative and diamond interchange design alternative would require disturbance to the ground surface ranges within the project area. A portion of the 5-acre parcel between Highway 50 and the Rancheria has been partially developed for residential use. An existing house and associated outbuildings are located within this location, however were constructed in 1982 and are not considered historic.

No evidence of demonstrably historic-period homesteading, occupation, ranch use, mining or other activities was observed within the project area. Again, these negative results may be attributed at least in part to the extensive disturbance and prior development to which most of the project area has been subjected. ***The Flyover Interchange Design Alternative and the Diamond Interchange Design Alternative are not expected to result in a significant impact to historic cultural material.***

Mitigation 5.10-2 Disturbance to Historic Cultural Material

None Required.

Impact 5.10-3 Cumulative Cultural Resource Impacts

AA Under the No Project/Action Alternative, the interchange would not be constructed, therefore, no cumulative impact upon cultural resources would occur on or around the project site. ***No impact*** will result under the No Project/Action Alternative.

AB, AC The analysis conducted for the proposed interchange concluded that no prehistoric archaeological or historic period sites or features have been formally recorded within or adjacent to the project area. Additionally, no evidence of prehistoric presence was identified during the survey. Lastly, the analysis concluded that the

project would not result in an impact to historic cultural material. Therefore, the only effect potentially associated with the proposed interchange is the loss of undiscovered artifacts. Implementation of Mitigation 5.10-1(A) will assure that the proposed interchange project will not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to cultural resources. ***The Flyover Interchange Design Alternative and the Diamond Interchange Design Alternative* may *contribute to the cumulative loss of previously undiscovered artifacts.***

Mitigation 5.10-3 Cumulative Cultural Resource Impacts

The following mitigation will assure that the proposed project will result is a ***less than significant impact***.

(A) Implement Mitigation 5.10-1(A).