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Acronyms List

- CBDA California Bay-Delta Authority
CCIC Central California Information Center
CDFG California Department of Fish and Game
CEQA California Environmental Quality Act
CHRIS Californian historical Resources Information System
DTR Dredger Tailings Reach
EA Environmental Assessment
HRI Historic Resources Inventory
IS Initial Study
MRR Merced River Ranch
-
- NAHC Native American Heritage Commission
NEPA National Environmental Protection Act
NHPA National Historic Preservation Act
PHI Points of Historical Interest
PRC Public Resources Code
URS URS Corporation
USFWS United States Fish and Wildlife Service

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This cultural resources technical report has been prepared by URS Corporation (URS) as an appendix (Appendix G) to an Initial Study (IS)/Environmental Assessment (EA) for a proposed river restoration project in Merced County, California (Figure 1). Known as the "Merced River Corridor Restoration Plan, Phase IV: Dredger Tailings Reach Project", the project includes the pilot restoration of the floodplain and channel at the Merced River Ranch and gravel augmentation within the Dredger Tailings Reach (DTR). The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is the lead federal agency for purposes of the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) is the lead state agency for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The purpose of this technical report is to inventory cultural resources that the project could potentially affect, assess potential impacts, and provide mitigation recommendations in accordance with NEPA and CEQA. Background research and field surveys were conducted on the project area. No previously recorded archaeological resources are known to exist within the project area. However, the project lies within ½-mile of two historical archaeological resources.

Dredger tailings associated with the operations of the Snelling Gold Dredging Company from 1932 through 1952 were identified within the project area. The dredger tailings do not appear to be eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or the California Register of Historic Places (CRHR). As such, no mitigation measures are required prior to beginning work on the project.

1.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Merced River is a tributary to the San Joaquin River in the southern portion of California's Central Valley. The river, which drains an approximately 1,276-mi² (3,305-km²) watershed, originates in Yosemite National Park and flows southwest through the Sierra Nevada range before joining the San Joaquin River 87 mi (140 km) south of the City of Sacramento. Elevations in the watershed range from 13,000 ft (4,000 m) at its crest to 49 ft (15m) at the confluence with the San Joaquin River. The Merced River Ranch (MRR) is located within the dredger tailings reach (DTR) of the Merced River, which extends from Crocker-Huffman Dam at river mile (RM) 52.0 (83.7 km) to approximately 1.2 mi (1.9 km) downstream of the Snelling Road Bridge at RM 45.2 (72.7 km). The DTR has been extensively modified by gold mining operations which depleted the channel of coarse sediment and raised and covered the adjacent floodplain with dredger tailings. More specifically, the MRR is a 318-acre (128.7-ha) parcel of land owned by CDFG at the upper end of the DTR from RM 51.0 (82 km) to RM 50.0 (80.5 km). Elevations at the MRR range from 276 to 316 ft (84.1 to 96.3 m). The pilot-level restoration project, for which this report was prepared, includes the Merced River channel within the MRR and approximately 500 feet of the upland riparian corridor along both banks. The total floodplain restoration project area is approximately 60 acres.

1.3 PROJECT BACKGROUND

California Department of Fish and Game acquired the MRR in 1998 with the goals of protecting riparian habitat and improving salmonid spawning conditions while providing limited public

access (Brady 2001). CDFG also recognized that, by recovering the gravel in the tailing piles during the floodplain restoration process, the MRR could be a plentiful source of inexpensive gravel for salmonid spawning gravel augmentation projects located in a strategic, central area of the DTR (Loudermilk pers. comm. 2004). The MRR, as part of the DTR, has become a focus for restoration planning because it is now the primary spawning area in the Merced River for fall run Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), a federal Species of Concern, and, potentially, steelhead (*O. mykiss*), which is listed as threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

The current phase of the Merced River Ranch pilot-level restoration project consists of various investigations to characterize the project reach and support pilot restoration design for the 60-acre floodplain of MRR. This report is part of these investigations.

1.4 AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECT

The Merced River Ranch project area of potential effect (APE) for cultural resources is defined as the footprint of the project which compromises the entire proposed pilot floodplain and channel restoration area. The project APE is a 60-acre area located along the Merced River between the town of Snelling to the west and Merced Falls to the east. The site is bordered to the north by Merced Falls Road and Crocker-Huffman Main Canal to the south.

1.5 REGULATORY SETTING

Cultural resources are defined as buildings, sites, structures, or objects, each of which may have historical, architectural, archaeological, cultural, or scientific importance. Numerous laws, regulations, and statutes, on both the federal and state levels, seek to protect and target the management of cultural resources. Depending upon a variety of preconditions such as inclusion of federal monies or significant effects on wetlands, Federal or State law may be the primary governing code. These include the NEPA, the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the CEQA. For the purposes of the environmental documentation for the Merced River Ranch project, cultural resources are considered under NEPA and CEQA of 1970, as amended. Since Federal and California State evaluation criteria for cultural resources are generally consistent, the assessment is also consistent with Section 106 of the NHPA. Application of one set of criteria essentially conforms to the other. The USFWS will act as the lead federal agency for NEPA and the CDFG will act as the lead state agency for CEQA. Thus, resources determined eligible under the NEPA would have similar eligibility to CEQA and the NRHP.

1.6 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The project is located west of the Sierra Nevada Mountain range, along the Merced River. The Merced River is a tributary to the San Joaquin River in the southern portion of California's Central Valley. The river, which drains into a 1,276-square-mile watershed, originates in Yosemite National Park and flows southwest through the Sierra Nevada range before joining the San Joaquin River 87 miles south of the city of Sacramento. Elevations in the watershed range from 13,000 feet at its crest to 49 feet at the confluence of the San Joaquin River. The climate is typically Mediterranean, with wet winters and dry summers. The topography of the general area contains a variety of landforms including ridges; gentle, moderate, and steep slopes, old

floodplains including abandoned stream terraces, and incised drainages. The 60-acre project area is almost entirely covered in dredger tailing piles consisting largely of bare cobbles.

2.1 CULTURAL SETTING

2.1.1 Paleoenvironment

Because the early Native Americans were dependent entirely on natural resources, their lifeways can be understood fully only with reference to the land and climate (Moratto 1984:2). Most of the western United States was subjected to a series of climatic fluctuations over the past millennia, including the central interior valley of California. Generally warm/dry episodes were followed by intermittent cool/moist periods. The Holocene or Recent epoch comprised six cool periods followed by five warm periods. The Altithermal Period, ending about 2,900 years ago, was a warm/dry episode that apparently had wide-ranging implications throughout the west, leading to changes in animal migrations and plant productivity and distribution. For the next 1,400 years a cooler period followed, with yet another warm/dry climate beginning about 600 years ago and remaining to the present day (Moratto 1984).

The San Joaquin Valley region had been subjected to the combined influences of sporadic subsidence of the valley floor, uplift in the area of the Sierra Nevada Range, and worldwide sea level changes. It has provided a record of geologic and biologic history spanning more than 120 million years, starting in the late Cretaceous period. Sediments and fossils of marine and terrestrial organisms have accumulated to produce a significant but incomplete record of past life and geography. This complex record has been intermittently investigated beginning in the 1860s by Anderson (1958), Condit (1939), Gabb (1864), Marchand and Allwaldt (1979), Merrill and Palmer (1984), and Wagner (1975).

Surficial sedimentary units of predominately Cenozoic age may underlie some of the project that has not been previously dredged to bedrock. These sediments include the andesitic mudflow and intervolcanic channel sands of gravels of the Mehrten Formation (*Tm*), the alluvial fan-derived sediments from the North Merced Gravels (*QTnm*), the Riverbank Formation (*Qrb*), and the underlying Laguna Formation (*Ql*). Lithologies include locally derived, coarse pebble to cobble size gravels, with interbedded sands, silts, and clays; all of which are potentially favorable to the preservation of paleontological resources. Geologic map data of Matthews and Burnett (1965), Marchand and Allwaldt (1979), and Clinkenbeard (1999) have been used for reference and analysis.

2.1.2 Prehistory

Since the early 1930s a number of schemes have been set forth by researchers to organize the archaeological data of California into a chronological framework. A scheme that was originally devised for chronologically organizing sites from Central California, the Sacramento Delta, and the northern San Joaquin Valley was refined by Beardsley (1954) and came to be known as the Central California Taxonomic System (Moratto 2004:181). The system relies on identifying certain characteristics such as burial patterns (whether the body is flexed or extended), shell bead types, stone tools, and even where the sites tend to occur (along the San Francisco Bay or inland). These traits and characteristics are used to place a site in a specific time period. The system is still widely used by archaeologists. It organizes the archaeology of the region as follows:

- Paleoindian: earlier than 8,000 years ago
- Early Horizon: 8,000 to 2,500 years ago
- Middle Horizon: 2,500 to 1,100 years ago
- Late Horizon: 1,100 to 200 years ago
- Historic: 200 years ago to modern times

Scholars have debated whether the Early Horizon inhabitants of the Central Valley were culturally related to inhabitants of the San Francisco Bay, or if they developed independently (Bickel 1981; Gerow and Force 1968). The exact dynamics of cultural change and interchange between these two groups is still being unraveled by archaeologists.

The earliest dates for human occupation in this region are unknown. Although sites from the Paleoindian period likely exist (dating from 12,000 to 8,000 B.P.), sites from a Central Valley occupation dating from about 7,000 to 6,000 B.P. are thought to be buried under alluvium, and are therefore not well documented in this part of California (Moratto 2004:214).

It has been suggested that the Early Middle Horizon (4,500 to 2,500 years ago), now referred to as the Windmill, is associated with an influx of peoples from outside of California who brought with them an adaptation to river-wetland environments (Moratto 1984:207). Typical Windmill sites are often situated in riverine, marshland, and valley floors, settings that offer a variety of plant and animal resources. These sites often contain burials that are extended ventrally and oriented to the west. Burial artifacts include a variety of fishing paraphernalia (net weights, spear points, and bone hooks) and large projectile points, as well as large and small mammal remains.

The subsequent Middle Horizon or Berkeley Pattern covers a period from 2,500 to 1,500 years ago in Northern California. This pattern overlaps somewhat with Windmill attributes at the beginning and with late Prehistoric artifacts at the end. Berkeley Pattern sites are much more common and well documented; therefore, they are better understood than the Windmill sites. The sites are distributed in more diverse environmental settings, although a riverine focus is common. As described by Allan et al. (1997:9), sites from this period include deeply stratified midden deposits containing large assemblages of milling and grinding stones for the processing of vegetal resources as well as smaller, lighter projectile points. Further distinguishing traits from earlier patterns include artifacts such as slate pendants, steatite beads, stone tubes, and ear ornaments. A shift in burial patterning is also evident with variable directional orientation, flexed body positioning, and a general reduction in mortuary goods (Fredrickson 1973; Moratto 1984).

Fredrickson (1973) has defined the later prehistoric period, which ranges from 1,500 to 150 years ago, as the Augustine Pattern. The pattern is characterized by intensive hunting, fishing, and gathering, a focus on acorn processing, large population increases, intensified trade and exchange networks, more complex ceremonial and social attributes, and the practice of cremation in addition to flexed burials. As pointed out by Allan et al. (1997:9), certain artifacts also typify the pattern: bone awls for use in basketry manufacture, small notched and serrated projectile points, the introduction of the bow and arrow, occasional pottery, clay effigies, bone whistles, and stone pipes. The Augustine Pattern and the late prehistoric period can be characterized as the apex of Native American cultural development in this part of California.

2.1.3 Ethnography

The project straddles the boundaries of the Southern Sierra Miwok and Northern Valley Yokuts territories, at the northeastern end of the San Joaquin Valley, near the Merced River. Tribal groups within these territories interacted with each other along those boundaries, and as such the tribal boundaries are not considered permanent. Presented below are discussions of the ethnography of both regions.

2.1.3.1 *Southern Sierra Miwok*

The “Miwok” (alternatively known as the “Miwuk”) refer to the people that occupied a vast region of central and northern California, from the Pacific Coast, east through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and south to the Sierra Nevada mountain range. There are six sub-groups of Miwok in Northern California; two of them are the “Coast Miwok” and the “Eastern Miwok”, which include the Bay Miwok, the Plains Miwok, the Northern Sierra Miwok, the Central Sierra Miwok, and the Southern Sierra Miwok.

The Coastal Miwok territory was centered in Marin and Sonoma counties. The Bay Miwok occupied the eastern portions of Contra Costa County (near Walnut Creek). The Plains Miwok inhabited the lower Mokelumne and Consumnes rivers and both banks of the Sacramento River from Rio Vista to Freeport. The Northern Sierra Miwok occupied the foothills and mountains of the Mokelumne and Calaveras River drainages. The Central Sierra Miwok occupied the foothill and mountain portions of the Stanislaus and Tuolumne River drainages. The Southern Sierra Miwok territory included the upper drainages of the Merced and Chowchilla Rivers (Levy 1978:398).

Based upon their history and similarities, the Northern, Central, and Southern Sierra Miwok groups form a Sierra Miwok language group, different than the language groups of the Coastal, Bay and Plains Miwok (Callaghan 1971; Levy 1978:398). According to Freeland (1951:9), the Central Miwok language group can be further subdivided into two dialects, the West Central and East Central Miwok. Lexicostatic data suggests that the division between Eastern and Western Miwok languages may have occurred as far back as 2,500 years ago (Levy 1978:398).

The principal political unit of the Miwok was the tribelet. According to Levy (1978:398), “each tribelet was an independent and sovereign nation that embraced a defined and bounded territory exercising control over the natural resources contained therein”. Each tribelet consisted of several semi-permanent inhabited settlements and a larger number of annually inhabited seasonal campsites. Lineage was an important political element to Miwok society. Lineages were named specifically for their locality, and in most cases, a lineage was a permanent element of a tribelet. The population of the Southern Sierra Miwok settlements averaged 25 individuals. Trade occurred throughout the region, with the Southern Sierra Miwok trading salt and obsidian from the Great Basin to the east to the Plains Miwok in the west, and to the Northern Valley Yokuts to the south.

Information on the prehistory of the Miwok varies from group to group, though there is more information available on the Plains Miwok than the Sierra Miwok as whole (Northern, Central and Southern). The occupation of the Sierra Nevada appears to be more recent, and probably occurred after the beginning of the Late Horizon. The Mariposa archaeological complex can be attributed to the Sierra Miwok (Northern, Central, and Southern) and appears to be

“chronologically contemporaneous” with Late Horizon sites found throughout Central California (Levy 1978:399-400).

According to Levy, the Sierra Miwok (Northern, Central, and Southern) “lacked both cultivated plants (except tobacco) and domesticated animals (other than the dog)” (Levy 1978:402). Subsistence patterns included gathering wild plant foods and hunting animals. Annual burning insured an abundance of seed-producing annuals and ample foraging for deer, antelope and tule elk. The Sierra Miwok (Northern, Central, and Southern) foraged to higher or lower elevations to obtain foods not found in the vicinity of their permanent settlements. The gathering of wild plant foods included several highly prized varieties of acorns (interior live oak, blue oak, and black oak), nuts (buckeye, hazelnut, grey pine and sugar pine), seeds, roots and greens. The Southern Sierra Miwok primarily hunted the mule deer, but also hunted black bear, grizzly bear, and valley quail, as well as fished for trout. The principal tools for both hunting and war were the bow and arrow (Levy 1978:402-5).

The Southern Sierra Miwok manufactured both coiled and twined basketry. The basketry was stylistically similar to the Yokut and Numic-speaking peoples. Young children wore no clothing and women wore two-piece deerskin or grass skirts consisting of front and rear aprons. Hair was worn long, except when cut as a sign of mourning. Tattooing was practiced by both sexes and usually consisted of straight lines extending from the chin. Body painting was done primarily for ceremonial occasions (Levy 1978:405-8).

The Southern Sierra Miwok created four distinct types of dwellings; a conical house of tule matting was used at lower elevations in the territory. Tule mats were tied to a framework of poles. A semi-subterranean earth-covered dwelling was also used at times as a winter house. Houses had a centrally located hearth where some of the cooking was done. The Southern Sierra Miwok also built two types of assembly houses; a large semi subterranean type and a circular brush structure (Levy 1978:408-9).

The Spanish first made contact with the Southern Sierra Miwok during expeditions to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley in the later half of the eighteenth century. With the drastic reductions in populations in coastal areas where the missions were established, the missionaries shifted their attention inland and began the missionization of the interior peoples – the Bay Miwok, the Plains Miwok, and the Northern Valley Yokuts. Bay Miwok converts appear in the Mission San Francisco records as early as 1794, and Plains Miwok converts appear in the Mission San Jose records in 1811. Most of the Bay and Plains Miwok converts were taken to the Mission San Jose, though there are accounts of Christian Indians fleeing the missions and returning to their villages in the delta. Conflicts arose between the Spanish soldiers and the various tribelets through the 1820s and 1830s, when the previously independent tribelets of the valley united to develop a military force that “posed a substantial threat to the Mexican settlements in the coastal areas” (Levy 1978:400; Cook 1960, 1962).

With the arrival of Europeans and Americans in California in the 1840s, new diseases were introduced to the Miwok, including the Southern Sierra Miwok by fur trappers, gold miners and settlers. Relationships between the Southern Sierra Miwok and the miners were hostile. During the first year or two of the gold rush, the Miwok were heavily involved with gold mining. There are records of Southern Sierra Miwok supplying labor for large mining operations, along with evidence to indicate the deaths of at least 200 Miwok by miners during the period 1847-1860 (Levy 1978:401).

When the United States annexed California, a policy of confiscating Indian lands began. Treaties signed by members of the Southern Sierra Miwok tribelets were never ratified by the United States Senate (Levy 1978). Some of the Southern Sierra Miwok were removed to the Fresno area, though most of the Miwok remained in rancherias scattered throughout the Sierra Nevada foothills. Miwoks living on the rancherias during the latter half of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth subsisted partly by hunting/gathering and partly through seasonal wage labor on farms and ranches in the foothill areas (Levy 1978:401).

In the early part of the twentieth century, a number of small parcels of land (ranging from two to over 300 acres) were acquired by the federal government (through executive order or by purchase) as reservations for some rancherias of the Plains Miwok, the Northern Sierra Miwok and the Central Sierra Miwok. By 1951, the California legislature, via the Senate Interim Committee on California Indian Affairs had recorded a population of 109 Miwok individual (on reservations). Individuals descended from the Miwok still lived in the Sierra Nevada foothills in the 1970s (Levy 1978:401). At present there are several individuals who identify themselves as members of the "Southern Sierra Miwok Nation" residing in the nearby city of Mariposa and were listed as "Native American Contacts" by the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) (Appendix A).

2.1.3.2 Northern Valley Yokuts

"Yokuts" is a term applied to a large and diverse number of people inhabiting the San Joaquin Valley and Sierra Nevada foothills of central California. The Northern Valley Yokuts inhabited a 40- to 60-mile-wide area straddling the San Joaquin River, south of the Mokelumne River, east of the Diablo Range, and north of the sharp bend that the San Joaquin River takes to the northeast. The Southern Valley Yokuts inhabited the San Joaquin Valley south of the bend in the river. Although they were divided geographically and ecologically, they had similar linguistic styles. For the Northern Valley Yokuts, the San Joaquin River and its main tributaries served as a lifeline to the valley (Wallace 1978:462).

The Northern Valley tribes closely resembled the Yokuts groups to the south, although there were some cultural differences. The northerners had greater access to salmon and acorns, two important dietary resources, than the Southern Yokuts, and some of their religious practices reflected the influences of groups to their north, such as the Miwok. While inhumation was the usual practice in the southern valley, the Northern Valley Yokuts either cremated their dead or buried them in a flexed position (Wallace 1978:464, 468).

The Northern Valley Yokuts built their riverside villages on mounds along the water's edge to avoid the spring floods, which were a result of heavy Sierra snow melts. Living beside rivers and streams provided plentiful river perch, Sacramento pike, salmon, and sturgeon. Hunting provided waterfowl such as geese and ducks as well as land animals such as antelope, elk, and brown bear, although by all indications, fish constituted a majority of the diet. The surrounding woodland, grasslands, and marshes provided acorns, tule root, and seeds.

A chief headed the tribal villages, which averaged around 300 people. Family houses were round or oval, sunken, with a conically shaped pole frame, and covered with tule mats. Each village also had a lodge for dances and other community functions, as well as a sweathouse (Wallace 1978:462-464).

The Northern Valley Yokuts used bone harpoon tips used for fishing, stone sinkers for nets, chert projectile points for hunting, mortars and pestles, scrapers, knives, and bone awl tools to procure and manufacture food. Marine shells, procured from coastal tribes, were used for necklaces and other adornments, and marine shell beads sometimes accompanied the deceased. They used tule reed rafts to navigate the waterways for fishing and fowling. The Yokuts also manufactured a range of intricate baskets for a variety of purposes, including storing, cooking, eating, winnowing, hopper mortars, and the transport of food materials. Very little is known of the Northern Valley Yokuts' clothing, but drawings of their tattoos show that they served not only as a decoration but also as a form of identity (Wallace 1978:464).

Historical accounts from an unnamed Spanish expedition in 1810 and 1811 recall that the Spaniards named one of the Yokuts' village Pescadero ("fisherman") after seeing the Indians catching fish. During the time of Mexican land grants, Rancho Pescadero north of Tracy was named for the Yokuts village. According to early accounts, the Yokuts traded with neighboring tribes and were fairly peaceful. Initially, the Diablo Range served as a natural barrier against heavy recruitment by the coastal Spanish missions. However, by the early 19th century, Spanish, and later, Mexican missionaries began to explore the inner valleys in search of neophytes. The Yokuts became irritated with the intrusion, and soon began fighting back and stealing horses from rancheros and missions in retaliation for intrusion (ibid). The Northern Valley Yokuts were almost entirely decimated by missionization, usurpation of land by rancheros, "49ers", farmers, and epidemics (malaria being the most devastating, in 1833). At present, there are several individuals that identify themselves at Northern Valley Yokut and were listed as "Native American Contacts" by the NAHC (Appendix A).

2.1.4 History

2.1.4.1 Spanish Period (1806-1822) and Mexican Periods (1822-1848)

The first Spanish expedition to enter the San Joaquin Valley did so in 1806 under the leadership of Gabriel Moraga. Traveling north and northwest through the region, Moraga's party toiled for 40 miles through a treeless plain. Coming suddenly upon a clear stream, they named the area El Río de Nuestra Señora de la Merced, a name that was applied not only to the Merced River, but later to the county and to the present city. Moraga explored the lower course of the Merced River in the fall of 1808 (Hoover et al. 1990:198). Moraga's explorations into the area were considered a failure, since a site suitable for building a mission was not discovered.

After Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1822, two additional expedition forces entered the area; however, the purposes of their campaigns were no longer exploratory. Soldiers were sent into the Central Valley to recover stolen animals and punish hostile Indians in order to reduce the coastal attacks upon towns, missions, and ranchos.

Americans also began to enter the region during the Mexican period. In both 1827 and 1828, Jedediah Smith entered the San Joaquin Valley via the Tejon Pass and trapped beavers along the San Joaquin, Kings, and other rivers and streams that flowed from the Sierra. Smith was followed by fellow trappers such as Peter Ogden, Ewing Young, Kit Carson, and Joseph Walker, as well as John Fremont, who crossed the San Joaquin River on his way south through the Central Valley in 1844.

The first settlement in Merced County was not until land grants began to be issued by the Mexican government in 1843. Ranchers engaged in the cattle and tallow trade began to infiltrate the San Joaquin Valley and construct homes. The project is located within the lands of Rancho Los Mariposas. In 1847, John C. Frémont purchased the land from Juan B. Alvarado, who had received it from Governor Michaeltoarena in 1844 (Hoover et al. 1990:202). Although Frémont never saw the land, he did apply to the government for a military force to take possession of the land, on the account of hostile Indians in the area. Frémont eventually settled in hills of what is now Mariposa County.

2.1.4.2 American Period Development (1848-present)

On January 24, 1848, John Marshall discovered gold in the Sierra foothills; ten days later, on February 2, 1848, the Mexican and Americans signed the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo and California became part of the United States. Over the next two years, gold-seekers poured into California from across the nation and around the world. By the early 1850s, trading posts, mining camps, and small settlements had been established along the sloughs and rivers as well as at ferry crossings through the southern Sierra foothills and San Joaquin Valley.

The first bona fide American settlers in Merced County were John M. Montgomery and his partner, Colonel Samuel Scott, both from Kentucky. Montgomery eventually became the richest man in Merced County during his time and was known as the “Land and Cattle King of Merced” (Hoover et al. 1990:202).

As a result of California’s increasing population, in February of 1850 the territorial legislature passed an act that would divide the state into 27 counties. Mariposa County, which was the largest, contained 30,000-square miles and enveloped one-fifth of the State. This county alone consisted of land that would eventually become part of ten other counties including Merced. On April 19, 1855, Merced County was carved from the northwest section of Mariposa County and the seat of government was established along Mariposa Creek at the Turner and Osborn Ranch. In 1857 the County seat was relocated to Snelling’s Ranch, approximately nine miles north of present-day Lake Yosemite.

Early in the spring of 1851, Montgomery, Scott, and Dr. David Wallace Lewis established a house of entertainment, which was the beginning of the town of Snelling. At first it was only a brush shelter, but Dr. Lewis soon built what was later known as Snelling’s Hotel. In the fall of 1851 the Snelling family arrived and purchased the property.

The town of Snelling, although not a mining town, was an overflow from the mining regions. The town was located along the road to the Mariposa mines and became a stopover for those traveling to and from the area.

By the early 1870s, the population and importance of the small settlements of Merced County began to fade as construction on the Central Pacific railroad progressed down the San Joaquin Valley. Communities with connections to the railroad became commercial centers in the San Joaquin Valley. As a result, in December 1872, Merced County voters chose to relocate the seat of government from Snelling to the town of Merced (Hoover et al. 1990:202).

Not only did the Central Pacific Railroad establish towns and provide transportation throughout the Valley, it also promoted land use for ranching and farming. During the first two decades of the American period, following the excitement of the Gold Rush and the influx and thousands of

Argonauts, the price of cattle increased from four dollars to as much as forty dollars a head. As a result, ranching and the raising of livestock became central to the San Joaquin Valley economy. By the early 1870s, however, the livestock industry began to wane. The railroad provided a more efficient and reliable method of shipping freight and farm products, and transporting passengers; and the development of more productive agricultural machinery, such as combines and threshers, allowed farmers to produce larger harvests. As a result, open-range cattle ranches began to decline and the cultivation of wheat and other agricultural crops increased.

Early agriculture in Merced County focused on “dry-farming” methods; however, during the 1860s many local ranches and farmers began to develop small-scale irrigation projects. During the 1870s, “dry-farmed” wheat continued to be the dominant agricultural crop in Merced County. By the early 1880s, Charles H. Huffman, a prominent businessman and landowner instrumental in the formation of the town of Merced, controlled the irrigation system through the Merced Canal and Irrigation Company. This company expanded existing irrigation systems and formed agricultural settlements known as “colonies.” These “colonies” served as ready-made irrigated farmsteads, and enticed new settlement and increased real estate values throughout the area. Water developers typically bought up the lands to be served, in advance of their water development, in order to profit from the land boom that would follow.

In 1888, the Merced Canal and Irrigation Company was reorganized and refinanced to form the Crocker-Huffman Land and Water Company. With the financial backing of wealthy landowner Charles Crocker, this new entity organized the First National Bank, which financed numerous development projects in the county including a large creamery, the dam and canal that created Lake Yosemite, and the Fairfield and Le Grand canals leading out of the lake. By the 1890s, the Crocker-Huffman Company had organized sixteen colonies comprising approximately 30,000 acres, with roughly 6,000 acres cultivated. A wide variety of crops were grown in the colonies, including fruits, nuts, and alfalfa, an important feed crop for dairy cattle in Merced and surrounding areas.

In 1919, Merced County voters approved the creation of the Merced Irrigation District, a publicly owned entity that purchased the Crocker-Huffman system in 1922. Voters soon passed a bond issue funding improvements and expansion of the existing irrigation system, an effort that has continued into the present day.

By the beginning of the 20th century, irrigated agriculture had far surpassed “dry-farming” as the most profitable method of agriculture and allowed smaller farms to produce a variety of high-yielding cash crops. In the early 1990s, the dairy industry became a substantial contributor to the county’s economy.

2.1.4.3 The Snelling Mining District

Once the easily worked and profitable placers of the Sierra Nevada were exhausted, gold production declined. California’s maximum annual production of gold had been achieved by 1852, when \$81,294,000 worth of gold was recovered (Haynor 1939:1). With the exhaustion of rich placers, however, production decreased to \$24,316,000 in 1883. The restriction of hydraulic mining in 1884 further dropped the production of gold in California. Realizing that the continued success of placer mining required more efficient use of water, miners begin to apply new methods to the mining of gold (Griffin et al. 1994:13). These works were large undertakings that required more money and labor, and thus the formation of mining companies

or partnerships began. Prior to 1898, most efforts to work the low-lying flat gravels of flood plains and rivers had been unsuccessful (Romanowitz and Young 1934:486). However, in the early 1900s, successful dredging along the Feather River, near Oroville and on the American River near Folsom, began. Dredging allowed for the profitable recovery of gold bearing materials at little cost output. Documentation of gold dredging in these aforementioned areas has been extensive.

Dredging lands are found adjacent to mountain ranges and have been formed through the action of streams or glacial ice depositing gravel bearing reconcentrated gold values (Averill 1946:53). Placer deposits are accumulations of debris formed by the breaking down of rocks at higher altitudes, which have been gathered as a result of the action of running water in the beds of rivers and streams, on the adjoining plains. Minerals of a specific gravity, such as gold, will concentrate themselves (Haynor 1939:1). Placers deposits can be placed in two groups: modern/shallow deposits that lie near existing streams and are not covered, and ancient, deep level placers that lie beneath deposits of debris or rock. Dredging involves the later type of deposit, those which lie buried deep below the surface and can only be accessed through the assistance of heavy machinery.

Early dredging employed a bucket line dredge, which combined machinery for digging, sorting, washing, and tailings disposal in one huge floating hull (Lindström 1988). Bucket line dredges can reach up to 20 feet below the ground surface. Originally powered by steam, the dredges were later run with electricity. The tailings left by bucket line dredges are distinctive and unmistakable. The tailings usually consist of high rounded rows of cobbles created by the arc of the stacker as oversized materials is left behind the dredge on a steel spud that works as a pivot. The rows angle away from the dredge and each one represents a single pass or cycle of the bucket line. All of the company dredges in operation in Merced County were bucket line type, except for one small dragline dredge operated by R.H. Bottoms (Cabezut-Ortiz 1987:64).

Gold dredging operations experienced a resurgence in California during the Depression, which had caused the prices of supplies and labor to spiral downwards while gold remained stable at \$20.67 an ounce (Cabezut-Ortiz 1987:64). In 1935 the dredges of Merced County produced over one million dollars worth of gold at thirty-five dollars an ounce. By 1938, this figure had risen to two million dollars.

The project is located within the Snelling Mining District. The district was principally a dredging field; however, some placer mining and hydraulic mining of the terrace deposits along the Merced River were practiced during the gold rush without much success. Gold dredging operations first began in the general vicinity in 1907 and continued until 1919. Dredging in the project area did not begin until 1932 and lasted until 1942, when the United States War Production Board issued Work Limitation Order L-208 (Crews 1971:7). Dredging resumed in 1946 and lasted until 1952. The value of the total output of the Snelling Mining District is unknown, but the dredges are estimated to have produced about 17 million dollars in gold (Clark 1970:120).

Snelling Gold Dredging Company, owned by C.H. Thurman, Evan Estep, and others, is the first known company to have worked within the project area (Davis and Carlson 1952). The Snelling Gold Dredging Company started prospecting in the area in 1931 and began working their first dredge in April of 1932. The company preferred to lease land on a ten percent royalty lease. The land was typically leased from the farmers along the Merced River, many of whom were

going broke in the farming industry during this time (Crews 1971:5). In 1935 the company began operating a second dredge. The second dredge ran continuously until 1949, except for three and a half years during World War II.

The land holdings of the Snelling Gold Dredging Company consisted of marshy uncultivated land in the alluvial plain of the Merced River. The deposits consisted of uncemented gravel and sand with no clay. Gravel was typically 10- to 20-feet deep and bedrock consisted of lava ash (Bradley 1935:46-47). The ground was sparsely overlain by a cover of oak trees, cottonwood trees, and brush, which were removed by bulldozers before dredging. The bulldozer was also used to fill in water holes after dredging to eliminate mosquito hazards. Gold, with some platinum and silver, was recovered, with a ratio of one ounce of platinum to 100-ounces of gold. Daily production of the dredge averaged about 6,000 cubic yards, working 24 hours a day with three shifts of a crew of three to four men. The company operated 363 days a year; the Fourth of July and Christmas were set aside as holidays.

Both dredges in operation by the Snelling Gold Dredging Company were a standard type, with seven-cubic foot close-connected buckets, a 42-foot by 96-foot steel hull, and an ordinary riffle system (Bradley 1935:46-47). The Yuba Manufacturing Company was one of the main manufacturers of dredges during this time and both of the dredges in operation by the Snelling Gold Dredging Company were Yuba-type. The maximum digging depth of the dredges was approximately 25- to 28-feet below water level. A 75-foot horizontal swing of the bucket-ladders sometimes showed a difference in elevation of as much as eight feet (Crews 1971:9). Electric power for the dredges was obtained from the San Joaquin Light and Power Company.

The Snelling Gold Dredging Company was in court more often than any of the other dredging companies in Merced County, which may be a result of its duration of operation (Crew 1971:9). On September 30, 1933, Kate Jorgenson filed a case in Merced County Superior Court charging that the Snelling dredge, in crossing from the north to the south side of the Merced River, had caused mud, debris, and milky water to enter her canal, resulting in destruction of her crops and rendering her land unfit for use for at least three years. She also charged that the dredger left piles of stone in the river, which caused the river to change course and lessen the value of her canal and water rights. The case was dismissed after five years for lack of prosecution (Crews 1971:10).

In 1936 the company was in court as both a plaintiff and as a defendant. L.W. Halstead filed an appeal for a restraining order, claiming that the Snelling Gold Dredging Company was interfering with his ditch and water rights. The company came to an agreement with Halstead and the order was vacated. On August 4, the company filed suit against Hallie Best Martin and others, asking that a piece of land be sold, as the owners could not agree to the use of the land (Crews 1971:10). The company held options on 26/42nds of the land and owned the rest outright. The land was sold by court order and the money split between the owners.

On September 22, 1938 another canal case was filed against the Snelling Gold Dredging Company by Leonard S. Spears. He claimed that the Snelling dredge was cutting across his canal, causing the banks to collapse, and that they were interfering with his ditch rights, water, and water rights. As a result, the company was ordered to construct a new ditch on the land that had a clear title, construct a road running along the ditch, pay 200 dollars, and were not allowed to interfere with the water and ditch rights of the plaintiff in the future. In return, they were allowed to dredge the old ditch (Crews 1971:10).

The last case filed by the Snelling Gold Dredging Company was on February 24, 1949 against Rosalind Bost Stiver and others. The case was over the ownership of a piece of land. The defendant had entered the land and claimed it as her own. The original deed contained a condition subsequent, that if the Yosemite Valley Railroad Company abandoned the use of the land, the defendants could re-enter and claim the land. As a result, Stiers was owner of an undivided 3/4ths interest in the land.

In September of 1945, the Merced County Board of Supervisors passed N-263, an anti-dredging ordinance for the county. This ordinance required that dredging companies level out the rocks left over from mining activities and replace three feet of topsoil in all areas that had been worked. The Snelling Gold Dredging Company could not afford to operate under this ordinance and they ceased work until the ordinance was modified the following year.

One of the employees of the Snelling Gold Dredging Company, Dennis Vischer, was a native of Snelling and began working as a 60-cents-an-hour oiler in 1941. During the next nine years he also worked as a winchman and eventually became a dredgemaster, earning 400 dollars a month (Rasmussen 1993:14). Vischer (n.d.) noted in a memoir that Dredge Number 1 of the Snelling Gold Dredging Company was assembled from the hull of the Isabel Dredging Company's dredge at the location of the present-day Cuneo Fishing Access, approximately 2.6 miles east of Snelling toward the old town of Merced Falls. Dredge Number 1 operated on both sides of the Merced River, eventually crossing the road from Snelling to Merced Falls just above Henderson Park. Dredge Number 1 was dismantled on the east side of the La Grange Road, just north of the Snelling-Merced Falls road, to be junked out. Dredge Number 1 is the dredge that was in operation along 60-acres of the current project. Vischer (n.d.) noted that the Dredge Number 2 started operating on the south side of the Merced River just below the Merced Falls-Hornitos Bridge. The dredge crossed the river just below the lumber town of Merced Falls and dredged on both sides of the Snelling-Merced Falls Road. Dredge Number 2 reached the area of the old Yuba camp, where it was shut down and dismantled. According to Vischer (n.d.), the hull was later sold and shipped to South America.

Although Vischer passed away recently, he is the last person known to be in possession of comprehensive records of the Snelling Gold Dredging Company, including a company ledger given to him by Elsie Estep, wife of Evan Estep, owner of Snelling Gold Dredging Company.

2.2 CALIFORNIAN HISTORICAL RESOURCES INFORMATION SYSTEM RECORDS SEARCH

Bibliographic references, previous survey reports, and archaeological site records were compiled through a records search of the Californian Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) in order to identify prior archaeological studies and known cultural resources within or adjacent to the project APE. This records search (File #60921) was conducted at the Central California Information Center (CCIC) at California State University, Stanislaus on 9 February 2006 (Appendix B). The project APE and a 1/2-mile search radius comprised the study area. The CHRIS search included a review of all recorded sites, studies, historical listings, and historical maps within and adjacent to the project area. The following references were also reviewed: the California Points of Historical Interest (PHI), the Californian historical Landmarks, the NRHP, the CRHR, and the California State Historic Resources Inventory (HRI).

2.2.1 Previous Studies within Study Area

The CHRIS records search showed that one previous cultural resources study has been conducted within a ½-mile of the search area (Appendix B). This study, #3332, was conducted by Mainery of PAR Environmental Services, Inc. in 1992 for the NRHP Significance Evaluation of the Main Canal in Merced County. No studies have been conducted within the project area, and the project APE has not been previously subjected to a survey for cultural resources.

2.2.2 Previously Recorded Cultural Resources within the Study Area

Although there were no previously recorded cultural resources identified within the project APE, there are two cultural resources identified within a ½-mile of the search area. The first resource is identified as the Crocker-Huffman Main Canal and was recorded as P-24-000488 (Mainery 1992b). The second resource was identified as the Yosemite Valley Railroad and was recorded as P-24-000076 (Napton 1994). In addition, a GLO Plat map dated 1853-1854 shows a short road or trail segment within the study area (Appendix B).

2.3 NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION RECORDS SEARCH

Concurrent with the CHRIS records search, the NAHC was contacted on 7 February 2006 to identify any areas of concern within the proposed project area that may be listed in the NAHC's Sacred Lands File. A response was received on 9 March 2006 indicating that there are no Native American cultural resources listed in the NAHC's Sacred Land File within the vicinity of the project. The NAHC provided a list of six Native American individuals and organizations that might have information pertinent to this project, or have concerns regarding the proposed project actions. Copies of this correspondence are included in Appendix A.

Letters and maps were sent to the contacts listed by the NAHC on 10 March 2006. The letters were sent to inform the individuals and organizations about the project, to inquire if they know of any unrecorded Native American cultural resources or other areas of concern within or adjacent to the APE, and to solicit comments, questions, or concerns with regard to the project. A Project Location Map was included with each letter.

Letters were sent to the following contacts:

- Katherine Erolinda Perez
- Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation (Jay Johnson, Spiritual Leader)
- Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation (Anthony Brochini, Chairperson)
- Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation (Les James, Spiritual Leader)

On 17 March 2006 Anthony (Tony) Brochini, Chairperson of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation contacted URS Historical Archaeologist, Michelle St. Clair. He left a message saying that the project area includes known prehistoric village sites (Appendix C). On 21 March 2006, Michelle St. Clair returned Mr. Brochini's phone call, but did not get an answer and left a message. On 23 March 2006 Mr. Brochini returned Ms. St. Clair's phone message. He voiced concerns that the project area contains Native American village sites. Ms. St. Clair explained that a cultural resources survey of the project area did not result in the identification of any prehistoric cultural resources. Additionally, the entire area had been previously dredged to bedrock, and therefore, it

is unlikely that any subsurface deposits exist in the area. However, Mr. Brochini was still concerned that there was a potential to find resources and recommended that a Native American monitor be present during any ground disturbing activities in the project area. As of the date of this report, no other responses have been received.

2.4 ARCHIVAL RESEARCH

URS Historical Archaeologist, Michelle St. Clair, conducted historical context and resource specific research on 8, 9, and 14 February 2006. This archival research was conducted to develop an historical context for the purpose of evaluating the significance of the dredger tailings piles located within the project APE. Research was conducted at the follow institutions:

- The California Geological Survey Library, Sacramento
- The California State Archives, Sacramento
- The California State Library, Sacramento
- The Merced County Records Office, Merced
- The Merced County Assessors Office, Merced
- The Merced County Historical Society and Museum, Merced

The historical context research included a review of mining claims and mining companies present in the project area, reports of the state mineralogist, The Engineering and Mining Journal, corporate filing papers, relevant newspaper articles, parcel ownership records, grantee/grantor records, and historical records. Relevant archaeological and historical reports also were reviewed.

The results of this archival research are presented above in Section 2.1.4.3 The Snelling Mining District.

3.1 SURVEY METHODS

All accessible portions of the project APE were subjected to a pedestrian survey for cultural resources on 17 March 2006 by URS archaeologists Michelle St. Clair, RPA and Christopher Lee. Both the north and south sides of the Merced River, including river banks where accessible, were subject to survey. The south side of the project APE was accessed by driving along the Crocker-Huffman Main Canal and walking north to the project area. Christopher Lee had previously worked in this part of the project APE as a monitor during the Merced River Ranch Revegetation Experiment in 2004. The north side of the project APE was accessed by parking at the Cuneo Fishing Access, owned by the Merced Irrigation District and located approximately 1.5-miles downstream of the Crocker-Huffman Diversion Dam, (labeled the Snelling Diversion Dam on the USGS topographic maps; see Figure 2), and walking south to the project.

Regularly-spaced survey transects were not employed due to the presence of numerous dredger tailing piles covering the project area, ranging in height from 3 to 10 feet high. Because of heavy rains throughout the winter of 2006, un-dredged areas, particularly low-lying, flat areas were inundated with water precluding examination of the ground surface (Picture 1 in Appendix D). Every effort was made to examine exposed ground surfaces where observed.

3.2 SURVEY RESULTS

Approximately 95 percent of the survey area was covered in dredger tailings precluding the inspection of the ground surfaces beneath (Picture 2 and Picture 3 in Appendix D). It is highly unlikely that any intact deposits remain beneath the dredger tailings piles, as the dredging in this area extended to bedrock (up to 20-feet below ground surface), thus obliterating any subsurface deposits that may have previously existed. The river banks located on the north and south sides of the Merced River are unlikely to contain subsurface prehistoric deposits, as they were within an area in which the river channel meandered freely prior to the 1870s. A substantial part of the river volume was redirected beginning with the construction of a diversion dam and canals in the 1870s; this culminated with the construction of the Crocker-Huffman Diversion Dam in 1910 (Tom Stevens, personal communication). Thus, the existing river banks, aside from past flooding events, may represent the river's channel subsequent to the 1870s. Flooding of the banks by the river, as observed during the current survey, may have also washed any historical era activities possibly associated with the dredging of the area downstream.

All portions of the project had been disturbed. Disturbances observed included: dirt road construction through the dredger tailings located on the north side of the Merced River for the Cuneo Fishing Access, heavy flooding in flat areas particularly the low-lying river banks and floodplain located immediately adjacent to the Merced River (Picture 1 in Appendix D), and leveling and removal of some of the tailings piles located on the south side of the Merced River for a revegetation experiment conducted in three areas of the Merced River Ranch as part of the Merced River Corridor Restoration Plan Phase IV: Dredger Tailings Reach project.

Several metal cables, ranging in length from 3-feet to 20-feet, were observed near the dredger tailings located on both the north and south sides of the Merced River (Picture 4 in Appendix D). Averill (1946:60) states that, "Dredges in California use and wear out literally hundreds of miles of wire rope. Bow lines and ladder suspension lines in particular are bought with length of service in mind. These ropes take severe punishment..." A metal drum and an indeterminate

piece of sheet metal (Picture 5 in Appendix D), as well as a metal rod approximately 4-feet long and 2 and 1/2-inches in diameter (Picture 6 in Appendix D) were observed in two separate locations on the south side of the project. All of these materials are likely to have been associated with dredging operations. None are considered to be unusual. No other cultural materials were noted within or immediately adjacent to the project area.

The dredger tailings located within the 60-acre project area were recorded on a Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) site record form, described, photographed, and plotted on the appropriate USGS 7.5 minute quadrangle. The DPR formed is attached to this report as Appendix E.

This study is consistent with compliance procedures set forth in NEPA and CEQA, Sections 15064.5 and 15126.4. Both federal and state level mandates are discussed in this report. Before considering impact significance of the project under NEPA and CEQA, the significance of the resource itself must first be determined. The following is a detailed discussion of what is considered significant at both the federal and state levels.

4.1 FEDERAL MANDATES

The federal government formally recognized the importance of some cultural resources with the passage of the 1906 Antiquities Act, 16 United States Code (USC) 431 et seq. In 1966, Congress passed the NHPA, which required all federal agencies to assess the effects of any agency-sponsored undertaking on cultural resources.

Under NEPA (42 USC) Section 4321-4327, federal agencies are required to consider potential environmental impacts and appropriate mitigation measures for projects with federal involvement. If the project has federal involvement (e.g., 404 permit), the lead federal agency will be responsible for project compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA and its implementing regulations, set forth by the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) at 36 CFR 800.

Four evaluation criteria to determine a resource's eligibility to the NRHP, in accordance with the regulations outlined in 36 CFR 800, are identified at 36 CFR 60.4. These evaluation criteria, listed below, are used to help determine what properties should be considered for protection from destruction or impairment resulting from project-related activities (36 CFR 60.2).

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

- (a) Resources that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- (b) Resources that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- (c) Resources that 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) Resources that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history (36 CFR 60.4).

The American Indian Religious Freedom Act, 42 USC 1996, has been established to protect religious practices, ethnic heritage sites, and land uses of Native Americans. The Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) (1990), 25 USC 3001 et seq., defines cultural items, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony, and establishes ownership hierarchy for remains found on federal lands. It also provides for specific case review, allows excavation of human remains, stipulates return of remains according to ownership, sets penalties, calls for cultural resource inventories, and has provisions for the return of specific cultural items. NAGPRA is initiated when the project and the finds are situated on federal lands.

4.2 STATE MANDATES

In considering impact significance under CEQA, the significance of the resource itself must first be determined. At the state level, consideration of significance as an “important archaeological resource” is measured by cultural resources provisions considered under CEQA Sections 15064.5 and 15126.4, and the draft criteria regarding resource eligibility to the CRHR.

Generally under CEQA, an historical resource (these include built-environment historic and prehistoric archaeological resources) is considered significant if it meets the criteria for listing on the CRHR. These criteria are set forth in CEQA Section 15064.5 and defined as any resources that:

- (a) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California’s history and cultural heritage;
- (b) Is associated with lives of persons important in our past;
- (c) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or
- (d) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Section 15064.5 of CEQA also assigns special importance to human remains and specifies procedures to be used when Native American remains are discovered. These procedures are detailed under California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5097.98.

Impacts to “unique archaeological resources” and “unique paleontological resources” are also considered under CEQA, as described under PRC 21083.2. A unique archaeological resource implies 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 one of the following criteria:

- ~~(1) The archaeological artifact, object, or site contains information needed to answer important scientific questions, and there is a demonstrable public interest in that information; or~~
- (2) The archaeological artifact, object, or site had a special and particular quality, such as being oldest of its type or the best available example of its type; or
- (3) The archaeological artifact, object, or site is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.

A non-unique archaeological resource indicates an archaeological artifact, object, or site that does not meet the above criteria. Impacts to non-unique archaeological resources and resources which do not qualify for listing on the CRHR receive no further consideration under CEQA.

Under CEQA Section 15064.5, a project potentially would have significant impacts if it would cause substantial adverse change in the significance of one of the following:

- (a) An historical resource (i.e., a cultural resource eligible for the CRHR);
- (b) A archaeological resource (defined as a unique archaeological resource which does not meet CRHR criteria);

(c) A unique paleontological resource or unique geological feature (i.e., where the project would directly or indirectly destroy a site);

(d) Human remains (i.e., where the project would disturb or destroy burials).

A non-unique archaeological or paleontological resource is given no further consideration, other than the simple recording of its existence by the lead agency.

4.3 LOCAL MANDATES

The Merced County General Plan also applies to the project. The purpose of the Open Space/Conservation Chapter of the Merced County General Plan is to ensure that historical resources are properly managed.

- Goal 2: Soil, water, energy, historical, and air resources are properly managed.
- Objective 2.E.: Significant archaeological and cultural resources are recognized and managed.
- Policies:
 - 21. Projects which affect archaeological sites and artifacts should be carefully managed to avoid damage;
 - 22. The original architectural character of significant historic structures should be maintained whenever possible;
 - 23. To discourage looting and vandalism, significant historical and archaeological resources should be subject to limited or controlled public access.

4.4 EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE FOR NEWLY RECORDED RESOURCES

4.4.1 Evaluation Methodology

Utilizing historical documents and records, an historical overview of the project area was completed to place the dredger tailings into an historical context. The significance of the dredger tailings was evaluated based on its importance within that context. A general history of Merced County was included to provide a framework for the development of gold dredging in the area.

4.4.2 Evaluation Results

4.4.2.1 Significance

The dredger tailings piles located within the project area do not appear eligible for listing on the NRHP under Criteria A, B, C, or D, as well as CEQA under Criteria A, B, C, or D.

Dredger tailings have been extensively documented along the Feather River, Oroville and the Sacramento River, Folsom. The tailings identified in the project area are similar to these other dredger tailings that have been previously researched. In fact, the dredger tailings from the current project are not associated with larger, more varied mining complexes or districts, such as those considered NRHP eligible at the Natomas diggings in Folsom. The Natomas diggings

exhibit various methods of mining that span the entire period of gold mining in California (1848 through the 1950s) including ground sluicing, prospecting pits, and hydraulic mining, as well as dragline and bucket line dredging. The cultural landscape of the Natomas area is of significantly greater value as it is characterized by the various methods of placer mining practiced in California. By contrast, the current project is limited to a disrupted cultural landscape that is solely comprised of tailings from bucket line dredging during the period 1932 to 1952. Other examples of dredging co-located with other types of mining are better represented and documented along the Sacramento and Feather Rivers.

Dredger tailings from the current project area are not unique to either the county or the state. The principal dredging gold fields in California were located along the Feather River in Oroville, the American River near Folsom, and later the Yuba River near Marysville. Overall gold recovery from operations produced approximately one-fourth of the total gold recovered from lode mining. According to a chart of California's gold production from 1898 to 1933 produced by Romanowitz and Young (1934:487), the peak dredge gold production was in 1917. Gold production declined from 1917, at first slowly and then more rapidly, due to increasing stress of adverse economic conditions following the war. There were in fact predictions that gold dredging in California was in its final stages between 1928 to 1930; however, the crash of 1929 marked the renewal of interest in it, as in gold mining in general (Romanowitz and Young 1934:488). The upward turn was accelerated by the devaluation of the dollar and the increase in the price of gold. Gold dredging continued in California until the early 1950s, however with increased efficiency in the construction and operation of dredges, fewer dredges were in operation. In 1909, 63 dredges were in operation in California and by 1934, 24 dredges were in operation with six under construction (Romanowitz and Young 1934). During the time of operation of the Snelling Gold Mining Company dredges (1932-1952), there were at least five other dredging companies in Merced County, four of those companies being concentrated near the Merced River. As a result of the activities of these companies, tailings are located throughout the county with a particularly high concentration of tailings at and near the Merced River. The historical information summarized above and the ubiquitous presence of tailings throughout the region demonstrate the commonplace nature of tailings; and that the tailings in the Snelling Mining District are neither associated with a principal dredging field of California, nor are they associated with the peak period for gold recovery from dredging.

After an intensive pedestrian survey as well as detailed historical research of the project area it was concluded that there is little or no significant data potential beyond that recovered from the historical description associated with the dredger tailings; and, that the tailings do not contribute any new information to the study of dredging in California. The vast amount of documentary materials dealing with the subject of dredging, particularly government mining reports, provide detailed information on the history and practice of bucket line dredging in California.

Additionally, historical records and documents indicate exactly which dredging company, Snelling Gold Dredging Company, was in operation in the specific project area. Historical documents provide information on the type of dredging that took place in the project area, dredging capacity, size of the buckets, and how many crew members were employed to operate it. Additional information provided by a former employee (Vischer n.d.) of the Snelling Gold Dredging Company provided information on the path that the company dredges worked in and thus, gave a better idea of exactly which dredge was in operation in the project area. Given the destructive nature of dredging, it is not expected that any intact deposits will be discovered under the existing tailings.

The flat areas between the tailings, most of which appear to have been created or highly disturbed as a result of hydraulic activity, do not appear to have supported, nor do they retain evidence of, other forms of mining (e.g., ground sluicing, hydraulic mining, etc.). Therefore, the information derived from historical records provides the best documentation of the dredging operations that took place in the project. Based on the survey of the area and destructive nature of bucket line dredging, it is not expected that any additional deposits associated with dredging activities will be discovered subsurface.

The dredger tailings piles located within the project are not associated with an important personage. Fred Estep was mentioned in a book on the History of Merced County as the owner of Snelling Gold Dredging Company (Radcliffe 1940:230), however, he was neither a native of the Snelling area (he was born in Virginia City, Nevada) nor was the Snelling Gold Dredging Company his first dredging venture (he had been engaged in the dredging business since 1902, in both California and Colorado). No other mention of Fred Estep in historical documents pertaining to the history of Merced County, the development of Merced County, or important persons in Merced County were identified.

A cultural landscape is defined by the National Park Service (NPS) as a,

geographical area that historically has been used by people, or shaped or modified by human activity, occupancy, or intervention, and that possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of areas of land use, vegetation, buildings and structures, roads and waterways, and natural features (McClelland et al. 1990:1-2).

The NPS further identifies landscape as a set of characteristics that are the “tangible evidence of the activities and habits of the people who occupied, developed, used, and shaped the land to serve human needs” (McClelland et al. 1990:3). Others have noted that, whether or not a given landscape meets this legal definition of significance, an appreciation of how it has evolved over time—interacting with and responding to changing environmental, social, and economic conditions—can lead to fuller understanding of the past (Tordoff 2004). While it might be argued that the project area constitutes a “cultural landscape” of dredging, it is understood from historical research that this landscape is neither “unique” or particularly “significant” to the development of Merced County or California. Bucket line dredging took place throughout Merced County as well as throughout California. The cultural landscape or setting of the Merced River Ranch project area is duplicated throughout the county and the state. Arguably, better examples of this landscape are documented at places like the Natomas diggings in Folsom. One might expect an historical landscape associated with dredging to contain associated features, such as mining camps, canals, roads, mining towns, an electric generation station, and sorting buildings to be included, rather than a single area of tailings. A dredger field that represents the feeling of a “cohesive landscape” would be expected to contain additional associated features. Within the approximately 60-acres of the project, only the dredger tailings and a few remnants of cable evidence the activities conducted there, and thus the subject project area does not contain the variability that would warrant its recognition as a significant “cultural landscape.”

The dredger tailings piles also do not constitute a “unique archaeological resource” as defined under PRC 21083.2 of the CEQA. As discussed above, most of the information on the area can be gleaned from historical documents. The archaeological site is not special or unique, in fact, there are numerous dredger tailings recorded throughout California. Lastly, the archaeological

site is not associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person in California history.

In summary, we find that the dredger tailings located within the Merced River Ranch are not eligible for listing under the NRHP or the CEQA. We find that proposed project undertakings will have no significant impact on the dredger tailings located there as the resource has been significantly documented through historical records, mapping, photographs, and recordation.

SECTION FIVE Significance Impacts and Mitigation Measure Recommendations

5.1 SIGNIFICANCE IMPACTS

As previously mentioned, impacts to identified cultural resources need to be considered only if the resource is considered a “significant” resource under the NRHP or is an “important” or “unique archaeological resource,” under the provisions of CEQA Sections 15064.5 and 15126.4. Because the dredger tailings piles from the project were not found to be significant, project impacts are not anticipated.

5.2 RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES

At this point in the project planning process, general mitigation measures can only be recommended in order to reduce potentially significant impacts to a less than significant level. If this project is implemented, these (and possibly other) mitigation measures should be implemented by the lead agency (which would likely be the California Department of Fish and Game) to reduce potential impacts to unknown archaeological resources.

5.2.1 General Mitigation Measures

The potential exists for ground disturbing construction activities to affect unknown archaeological resources. Grading, trenching, shoveling, and other activities have the potential to damage these nonrenewable resources. However, these potentially significant impacts can be mitigated to a less than significant level through the implementation of several general mitigation measures.

(Recommended) CRI: Prior to the beginning of earth moving construction activities (including initial vegetation removal), all construction personnel (including management) should be informed of the cultural resource values involved and of the regulatory protections afforded those resources. The construction personnel should also be informed of procedures relating to the discovery of unanticipated resources (as outlined below). They should be cautioned not to collect artifacts, and asked to inform a construction supervisor and a qualified archaeologist, pursuant to the event that cultural remains are discovered during the course of construction. A qualified archaeologist should administer supplemental briefings to all new construction personnel prior to the commencement of earth moving construction activities. The Client should be responsible for notifying the qualified archaeologist when new construction personnel are scheduled to work on the project.

In the event archaeological resources are unearthed during excavation activities associated with the project, work shall be stopped immediately, and the discovery shall be evaluated by a qualified archaeologist. If possible, the resource(s) will be avoided through design modification or protective measures, such as exclusion zones and protective fencing established around the resource. If the resource cannot be avoided, a qualified archaeologist will determine the significance of the resource and will consult with the lead federal agency (USFWS) and the lead state agency (CDFG), who will consult with the SHPO with regard to resource significance. If it is determined that the resource is significant, and the resource cannot be avoided, measures to mitigate impacts will be devised via consultation between the agencies and will be carried out by the Client.

SECTION FIVE Significance Impacts and Mitigation Measure Recommendations

Because the project does not take place on federal lands, the NAGRPA does not apply to the discovery of human remains. If human remains are discovered during the project, the specific protocol, guidelines, and channels of communication outlined by the NAHC, and in accordance with Section 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code, Section 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code (Chapter 1492, Statutes of 1982, Senate Bill 297), and SB 447 (Chapter 44, Statutes of 1987) will be followed. Section 7050.5 (c) will guide the potential Native American involvement, in the event of discovery of human remains, at the direction of the Merced County Coroner. If the coroner determines that the remains are not subject to his or her authority and if the coroner recognizes the remains to be those of a Native American, or has reason to believe that they are those of a Native American, he or she will contact the NAHC by telephone within 24 hours.

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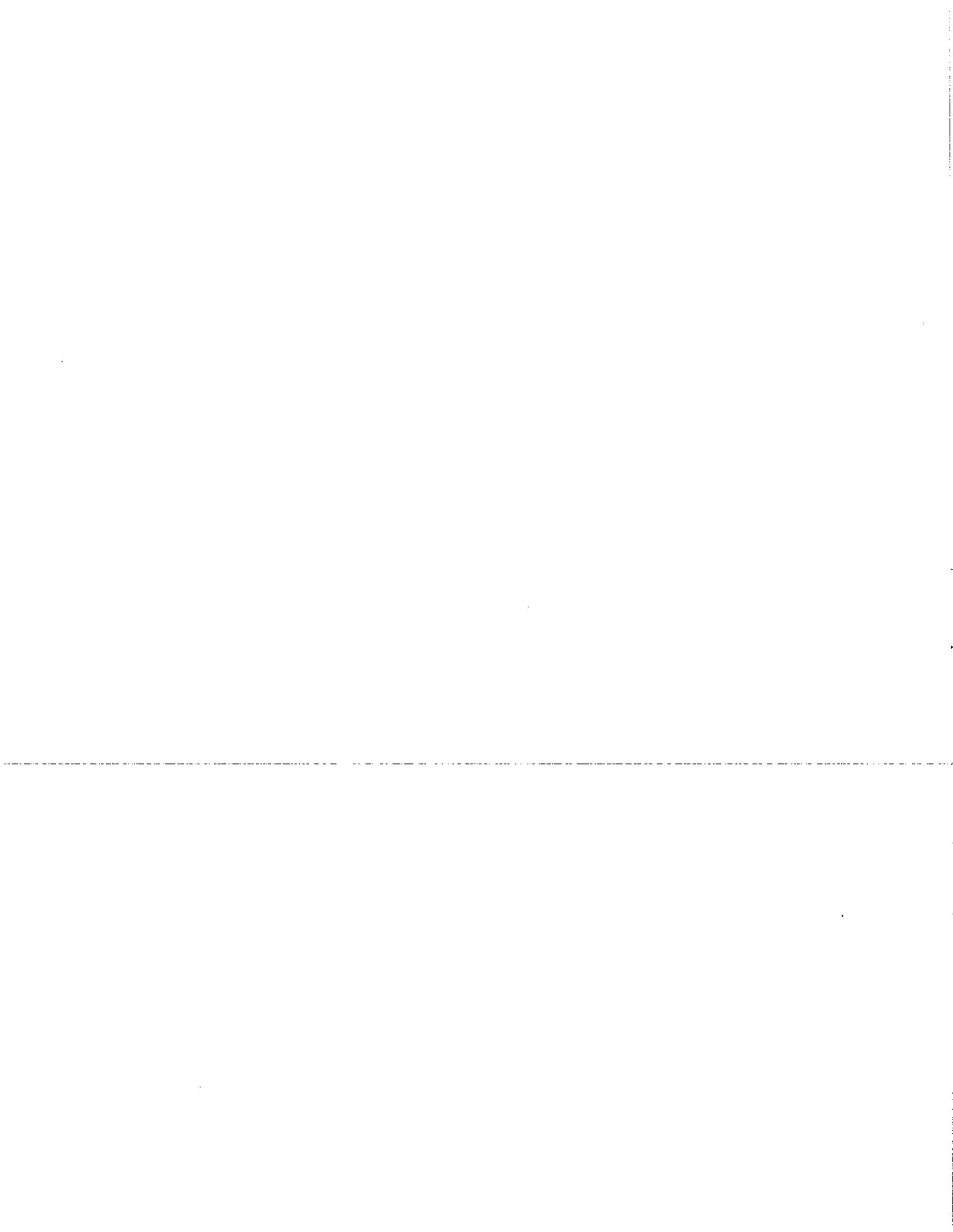
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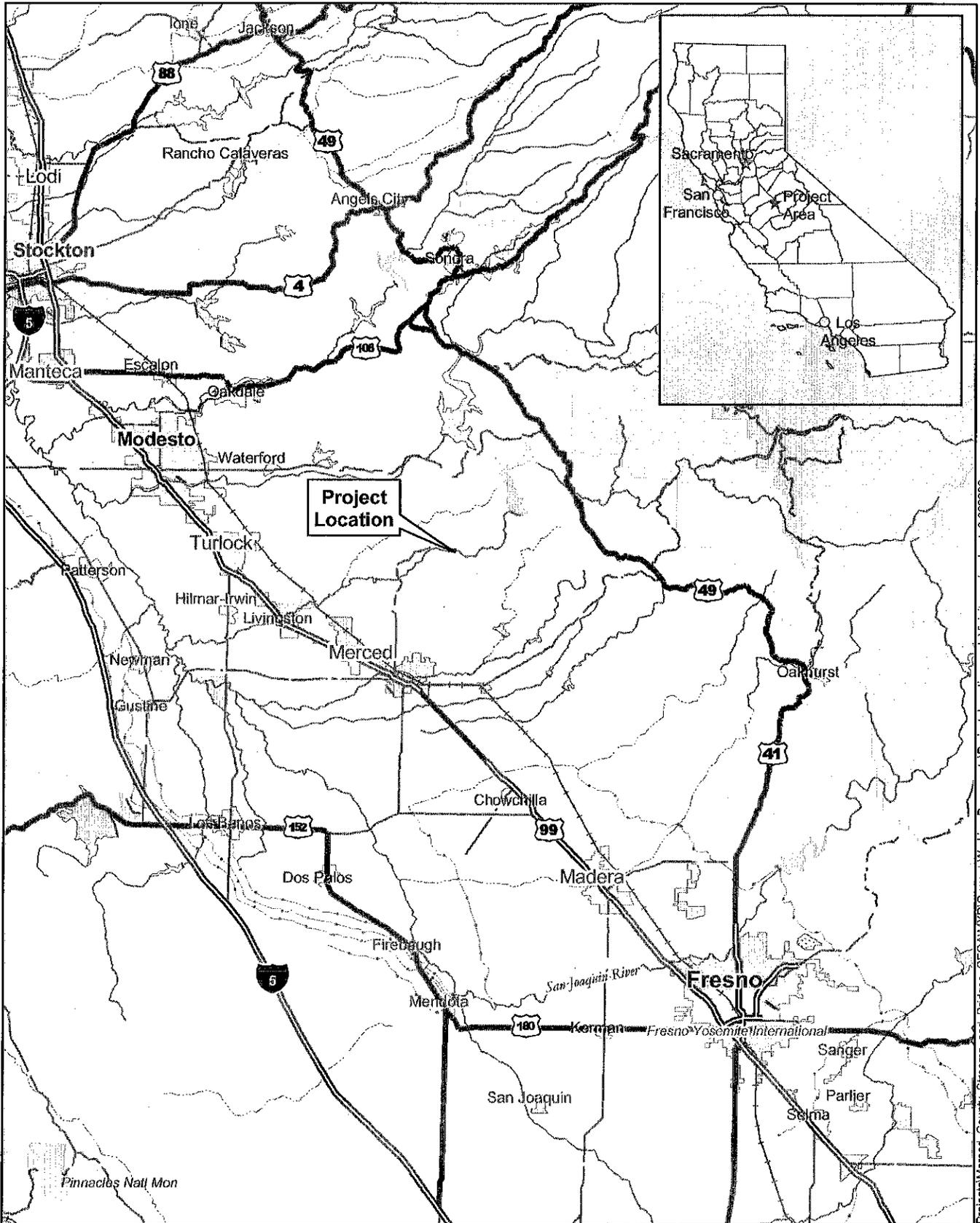
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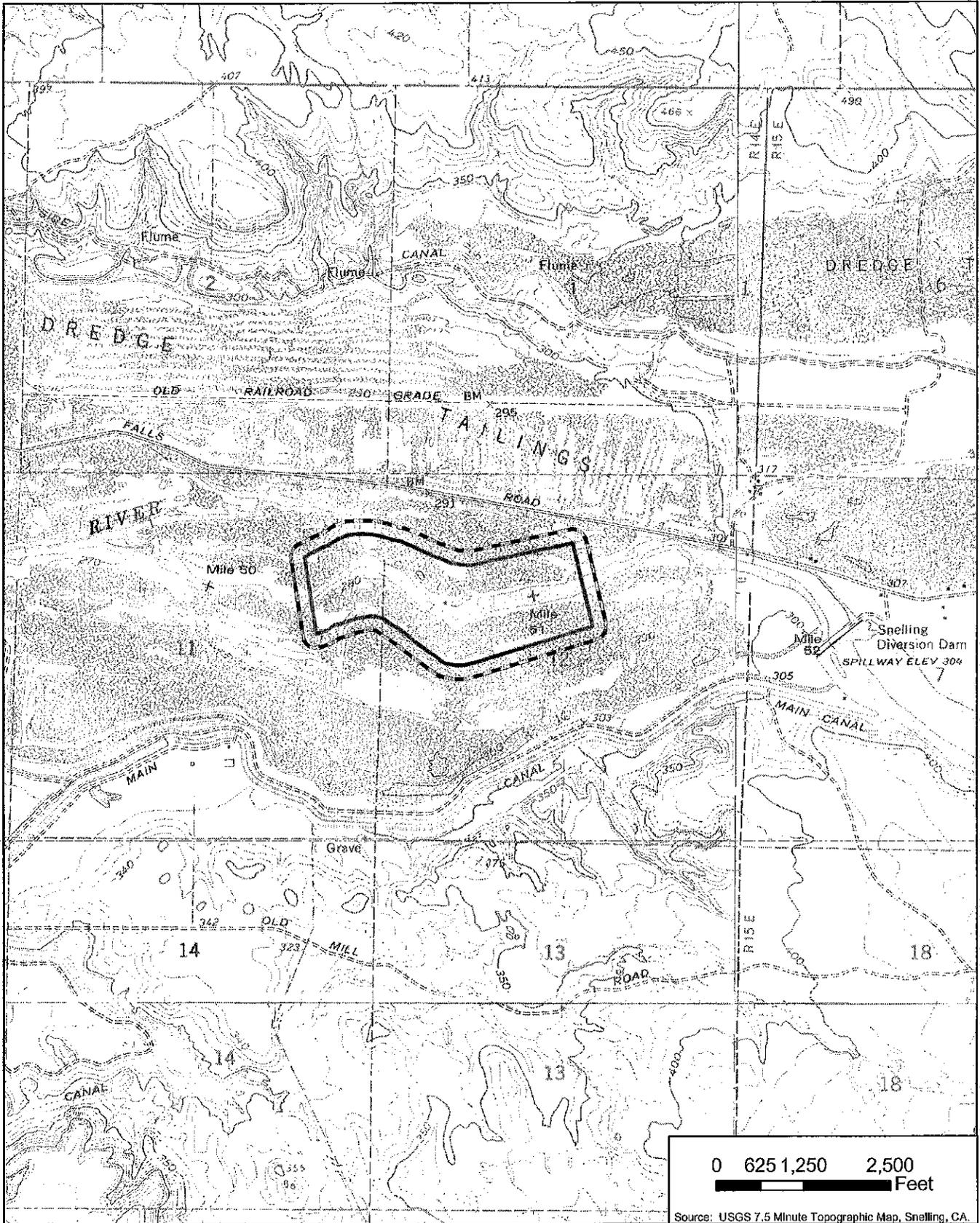
Figures





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Legend

- Project Area
- Survey Area

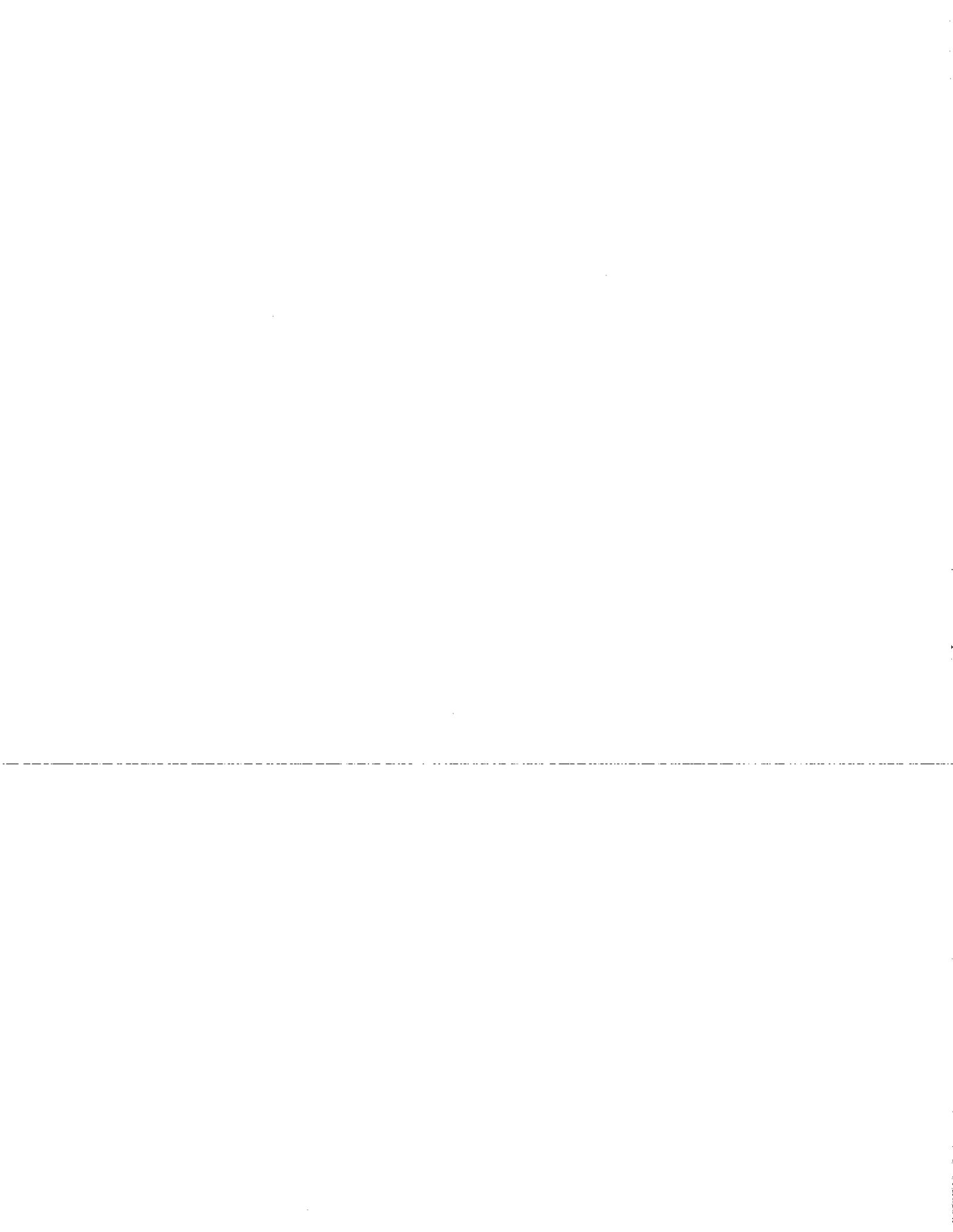


Merced River Ranch
26814344

Area Surveyed
for
Cultural Resources

Figure
2

Appendix A
Native American Correspondence





URS Corporation
1333 Broadway, Suite 800
Oakland, CA 94612
Phone: 510/893-3600

Facsimile Transmittal

Transmitted By:

Name: Michelle C. St. Clair
Company: URS Corp/Oakland, CA
Number of Pages (including cover): 2

Date: 2/7/2006

Please Deliver To:

Name: Ms. Carol Gaubatz
Company: Native American Heritage Commission
Fax #: 916/657-5390 Office Phone #:
Subject: Data Request for Merced County – Merced River Ranch Project

Comments:

Dear Ms. Gaubatz:

URS is providing environmental consulting services to Stillwater Services, Inc. for the restoration of a part of the Merced River located between the town of Snelling and Merced River Falls, Merced County, California. The project is located on the Snelling USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle. The geographic information is as follows:

Snelling 7.5' Quad, Township 5 South, Range 14 East, Sections 11 and 12.

I am requesting the following information:

- Groups or individuals the NAHC believes should be notified regarding this project.
- Identification by the NAHC of any sacred lands within the subject lands that are listed within the Sacred Lands File.

I have attached a map depicting the project location. Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

URS Corporation/Oakland, CA

Michelle C. St. Clair, MA, RPA
Archaeologist

Enclosure: Merced River Ranch Project Area Map

*** TX REPORT ***

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URS

URS Corporation
1333 Broadway, Suite 800
Oakland, CA 94612
Phone: 510/893-3600

Facsimile Transmittal

Transmitted By:

Name: Michelle C. St. Clair
Company: URS Corp/Oakland, CA
Number of Pages (including cover): 2

Date: 2/7/2006

Please Deliver To:

Name: Ms. Carol Gaubatz
Company: Native American Heritage Commission
Fax #: 916/657-5390 Office Phone #:
Subject: Data Request for Merced County – Mercer River Ranch Project

Comments:

Dear Ms. Gaubatz:

URS is providing environmental consulting services to Stillwater Services, Inc. for the restoration of a part of the Merced River located between the town of Snelling and Merced River Falls, Merced County, California. The project is located on the Snelling USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle. The geographic information is as follows:

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- Identification by the NAHC of any sacred lands within the subject lands that are listed within the Sacred Lands File.

I have attached a map depicting the project location. Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

URS Corporation/Oakland, CA

Michelle C. St. Clair

 *** TX REPORT ***

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URS

URS Corporation
 1333 Broadway, Suite 800
 Oakland, CA 94612
 Phone: 510/893-3600

Facsimile Transmittal

Transmitted By:

Name: Michelle C. St. Clair
 Company: URS Corp/Oakland, CA
 Number of Pages (including cover): 2

Date: 2/7/2006

Please Deliver To:

Name: Ms. Carol Gaubatz
 Company: Native American Heritage Commission
 Fax #: 916/657-5390 Office Phone #:
 Subject: Data Request for Merced County - Mercer River Ranch Project

Comments:

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Snelling 7.5' Quad, Township 5 South, Range 14 East, Sections 11 and 12.

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- Identification by the NAHC of any sacred lands within the subject lands that are listed within the Sacred Lands File.

I have attached a map depicting the project location. Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

URS Corporation/Oakland, CA

Michelle C. St. Clair

To: Native American Heritage Commission

Firm: _____

Facsimile: 916-657-5390

From: URS Corp.

Date: 3/8/2006

Page 1 of : 3

Subject: Data Request for Mined County - Merced River
Ranch Project

Message: Just checking on the status of
this request. We sent a request on 2/7/2006
and then again on 2/28/2006.
Requesting again and will also send via
postal. If you have any questions
or concerns please contact me @
510-874-2107.

Thank you for your help,

Michelle St. Clair, RPA
Archaeologist

cc:

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE

The information in this facsimile transmission is intended solely for the stated recipient of this transmission. If you have received this fax in error, please notify the sender immediately by telephone. If you are not the intended recipient, please be advised that dissemination, distribution, or copying of the information contained in this fax is strictly prohibited.

*** TX REPORT ***

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URS

Facsimile

To: Native American Heritage Commission

Firm:

Facsimile: 916-657-5390

From: URS Corp.

Date: 3/8/2006

Page 1 of: 3

Subject: Data Request for Merced County - Merced River Ranch Project

Message: Just checking on the status of this request. We sent a request on 2/7/2006 and then again on 2/28/2006. Requesting again and will also send via postal. If you have any questions or concerns please contact me @ 510-874-2107.

Thank you for your help,

Michelle St. Clair, RPA
Archaeologist

STATE OF CALIFORNIAArnold Schwarzenegger, Governor**NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION**

915 CAPITOL MALL, ROOM 364
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
(916) 653-4032
Fax (916) 657-5390
Web Site www.nahc.ca.gov



March 9, 2006

Michelle C. St. Clair
Archaeologist
URS

Sent by Fax: 510-874-3268
Number of Pages: 2

Re: Proposed Merced River Ranch project, Merced County.

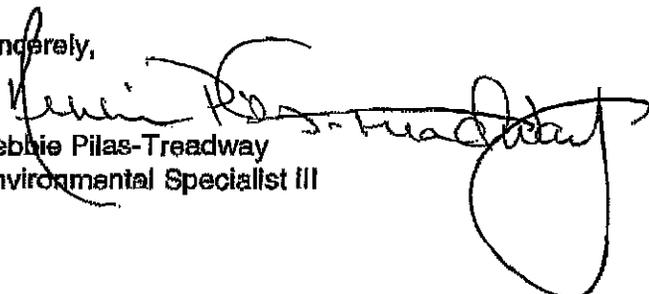
Dear Ms. St. Clair:

A record search of the sacred land file has failed to indicate the presence of Native American cultural resources in the immediate project area. The absence of specific site information in the sacred lands file does not indicate the absence of cultural resources in any project area. Other sources of cultural resources should also be contacted for information regarding known and recorded sites.

Enclosed is a list of Native Americans individuals/organizations who may have knowledge of cultural resources in the project area. The Commission makes no recommendation or preference of a single individual, or group over another. This list should provide a starting place in locating areas of potential adverse impact within the proposed project area. I suggest you contact all of those indicated, if they cannot supply information, they might recommend others with specific knowledge. By contacting all those listed, your organization will be better able to respond to claims of failure to consult with the appropriate tribe or group. If a response has not been received within two weeks of notification, the Commission requests that you follow-up with a telephone call to ensure that the project information has been received.

If you receive notification of change of addresses and phone numbers from any of these individuals or groups, please notify me. With your assistance we are able to assure that our lists contain current information. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at (916) 653-4038.

Sincerely,


Debbie Pilas-Treadway
Environmental Specialist III

Native American Contacts
Merced County
March 9, 2006

Katherline Erolinda Perez
 1234 Luna Lane
 Stockton , CA 95206
 canutes@comcast.net
 (209) 462-2680

Ohlone/Costanoan
 Northern Valley Yokuts
 Bay Miwok

Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation
 Anthony Brochini, Chairperson
 P.O. Box 1200
 Mariposa , CA 95338
 209-379-1120
 209-628-0085 cell

Miwok
 Pauite
 Northern Valley Yokut

Amah Mutsun Tribal Band
 Valentin Lopez, Chairperson
 3015 Eastern Ave, #40
 Sacramento , CA 95821
 (916) 481-5785

Ohlone/Costanoan

Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation
 Les James, Spiritual Leader
 PO Box 1200
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 209-966-3690

Miwok
 Pauite
 Northern Valley Yokut

Amah Mutsun Tribal Band
 Edward Ketchum
 35867 Yosemite Ave
 Davis , CA 95616
 aerieways@aol.com

Ohlone/Costanoan
 Northern Valley Yokuts

Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation
 Jay Johnson, Spiritual Leader
 5235 Allred Road
 Mariposa , CA 95338-9357
 209-966-6038

Miwok
 Pauite
 Northern Valley Yokut

This list is current only as of the date of this document.

Distribution of this list does not relieve any person of statutory responsibility as defined in Section 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code, Section 5097.94 of the Public Resources Code and Section 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code.

This list is only applicable for contacting local Native Americans with regard to cultural resources assessment for the proposed Merced River Ranch project, Merced County.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Arnold, Schwarzenegger, Governor

NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION

915 CAPITOL MALL, ROOM 364
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
(916) 653-4082
Fax (916) 657-5390
Web Site www.nahc.ca.gov



March 15, 2006

Michelle St. Clair
URS Corporation
1333 Broadway, Suite 800
Oakland, CA 94612

Sent by Fax: 510-874-3268
Number of Pages: 2

RE: **Proposed Merced River Ranch project, Merced County**

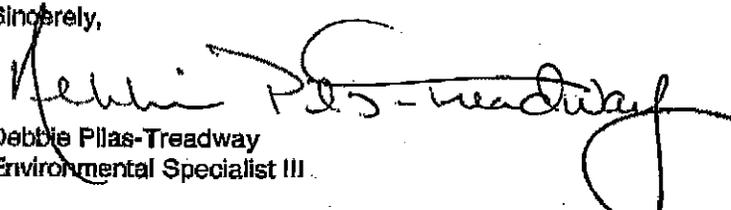
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If you receive notification of change of addresses and phone numbers from any of these individuals or groups, please notify me. With your assistance we are able to assure that our lists contain current information. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at (916) 653-4038.

Sincerely,


Debbie Pilas-Treadway
Environmental Specialist III

Native American Contacts
Merced County
March 14, 2006

Katherine Erolinda Perez
 1234 Luna Lane
 Stockton , CA 95206
 canutes@comcast.net
 (209) 462-2680

Ohlone/Costanoan
 Northern Valley Yokuts
 Bay Miwok

Southern Sierra Miwok Nation
 Jay Johnson, Spiritual Leader
 5235 Allred Road
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 209-966-6038

Miwok
 Pauite
 Northern Valley Yokut

Southern Sierra Miwok Nation
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 P.O. Box 1200
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 209-379-1120
 209-628-0085 cell

Miwok
 Pauite
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Southern Sierra Miwok Nation
 Les James, Spiritual Leader
 PO Box 1200
 Mariposa , CA 95338
 209-966-3690

Miwok
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This list is current only as of the date of this document.

Distribution of this list does not relieve any person of statutory responsibility as defined in Section 7090.5 of the Health and Safety Code, Section 5097.94 of the Public Resources Code and Section 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code.

This list is only applicable for contacting local Native Americans with regard to cultural resources assessment for the proposed Merced River Ranch project, Merced County.



March 10, 2006

Ms. Katherine Erolinda Perez
1234 Luna Lane
Stockton, CA 95206

Re: Merced River Ranch Project, Merced County

Dear Ms. Perez:

URS Corporation (URS) is providing environmental consulting services to Stillwater Services, Inc for the proposed restoration of a part of the Merced River. The project encompasses approximately 60 acres located between the town of Snelling and Merced River Falls. The project location, with a ½-mile search radius, is depicted on the enclosed project location map.

URS conducted a records search of the Central Coastal Information Center of the California Historic Resources Information System for any known archaeological sites or cultural resources located within the project area and a ½-mile buffer zone around it. The search yielded negative results within the project area. Likewise, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) was consulted and asked to search their Sacred Lands File for the project area. This search was also negative. The NAHC supplied a list of groups and individuals who may have additional knowledge of cultural resources within the specific project area. Your name was on the list provided by the NAHC. If you, or anyone you know, have any information or concerns about the specific project area please contact Ms. Michelle St. Clair, URS Archaeologist, in Oakland, California at 510-874-3107. If we do not hear back from you within two weeks of receipt of this letter we will assume you have no comments. It is noted that the current project does not qualify under Senate Bill 18 (SB 18) as there are no general or specific local land changes taking place with this project undertaking.

Sincerely,

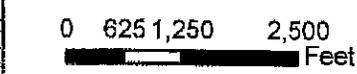
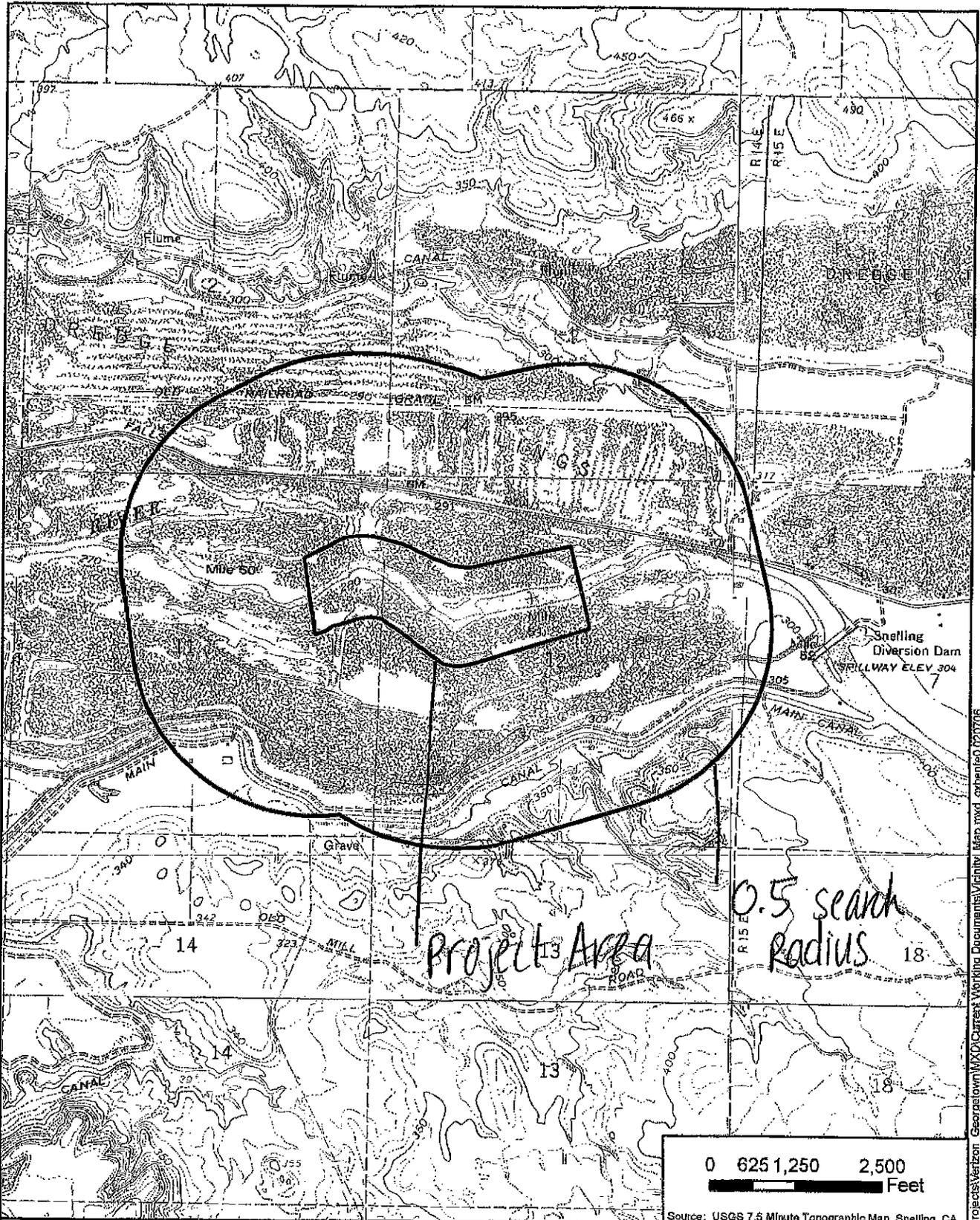
URS CORPORATION

Michelle C. St. Clair

Michelle C. St. Clair, RPA
Archaeologist

Enclosure: Project Area Map

URS Corporation
1333 Broadway, Suite 800
Oakland, CA 94612-1924
Tel: 510.893.3600
Fax: 510.874.3268



Source: USGS 7.5 Minute Topographic Map, Snelling, CA.

Legend

-  Project Area
-  Half Mile Buffer



URS	Merced River Ranch	Project Area Map	Figure 1
	26814344		

URS Corporation L:\Projects\Vertical - Georgetown\MXD\Currex Working Documents\Vicinity Map.mxd exbent0 020706



March 10, 2006

Valentin Lopez, Chairperson
Amah Mutsun Tribal Band
3015 Eastern Avenue, #40
Sacramento, CA 95821

Re: Merced River Ranch Project, Merced County

Dear Valentin Lopez:

URS Corporation (URS) is providing environmental consulting services to Stillwater Services, Inc for the proposed restoration of a part of the Merced River. The project encompasses approximately 60 acres located between the town of Snelling and Merced River Falls. The project location, with a ½-mile search radius, is depicted on the enclosed project location map.

URS conducted a records search of the Central Coastal Information Center of the California Historic Resources Information System for any known archaeological sites or cultural resources located within the project area and a ½-mile buffer zone around it. The search yielded negative results within the project area. Likewise, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) was consulted and asked to search their Sacred Lands File for the project area. This search was also negative. The NAHC supplied a list of groups and individuals who may have additional knowledge of cultural resources within the specific project area. Your name was on the list provided by the NAHC. If you, or anyone you know, have any information or concerns about the specific project area please contact Ms. Michelle St. Clair, URS Archaeologist, in Oakland, California at 510-874-3107. If we do not hear back from you within two weeks of receipt of this letter we will assume you have no comments. It is noted that the current project does not qualify under Senate Bill 18 (SB 18) as there are no general or specific local land changes taking place with this project undertaking.

Sincerely,

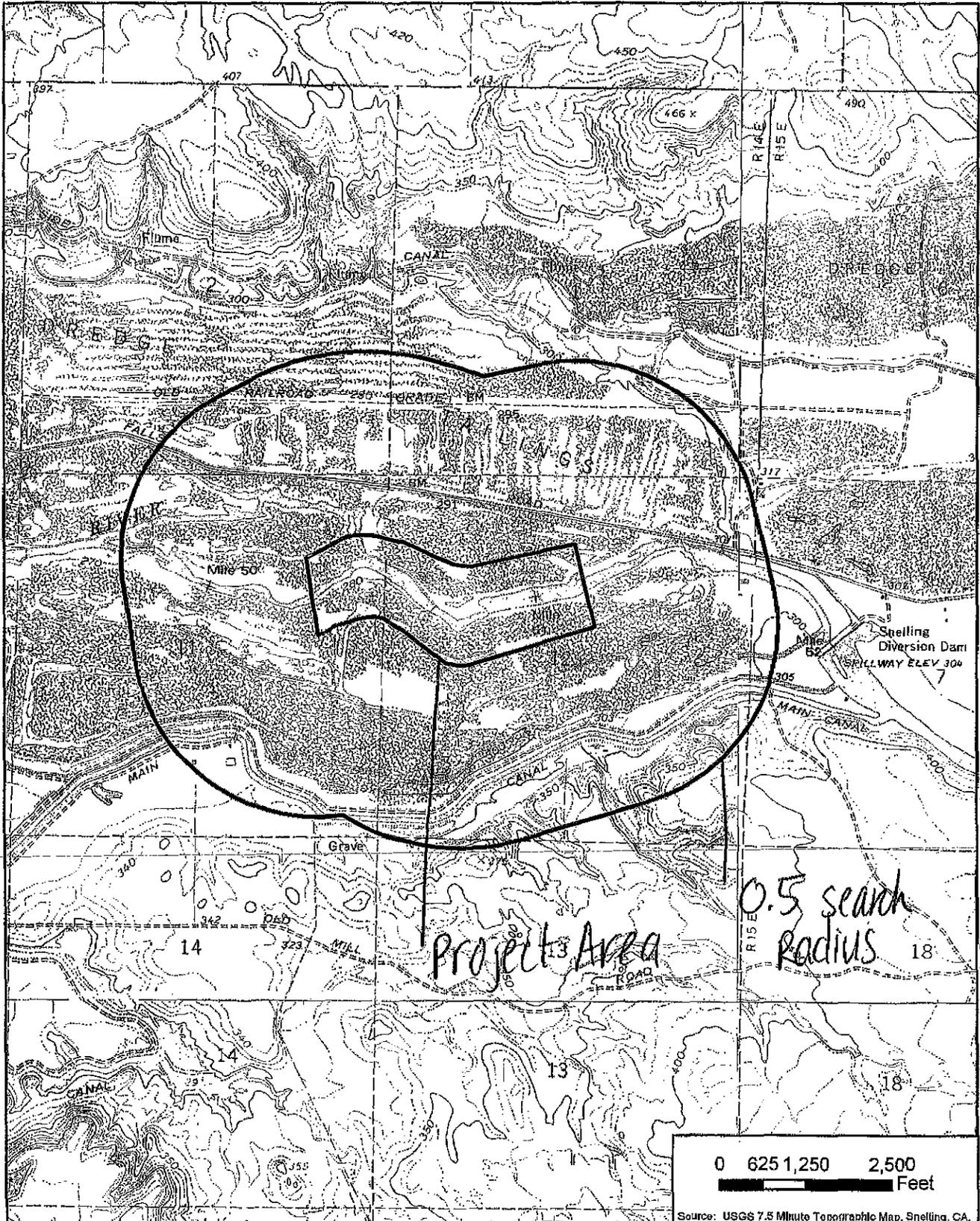
URS CORPORATION

Michelle C. St. Clair

Michelle C. St. Clair, RPA
Archaeologist

Enclosure: Project Area Map

URS Corporation
1333 Broadway, Suite 800
Oakland, CA 94612-1924
Tel: 510.893.3600
Fax: 510.874.3268

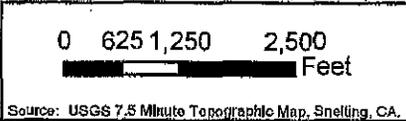


Legend

-  Project Area
-  Half Mile Buffer



URS	Merced River Ranch
	26814344



Source: USGS 7.5 Minute Topographic Map, Snelling, CA.

Project Area Map Figure 1

URS Corporation L:\Projects\Merced_Ranch\Map\Map.mxd exhanle0 D20706



March 10, 2006

Mr. Edward Ketchum
Amah Mutsun Tribal Band
35867 Yosemite Avenue
Davis, CA 95616

Re: Merced River Ranch Project, Merced County

Dear Mr. Ketchum:

URS Corporation (URS) is providing environmental consulting services to Stillwater Services, Inc for the proposed restoration of a part of the Merced River. The project encompasses approximately 60 acres located between the town of Snelling and Merced River Falls. The project location, with a ½-mile search radius, is depicted on the enclosed project location map.

URS conducted a records search of the Central Coastal Information Center of the California Historic Resources Information System for any known archaeological sites or cultural resources located within the project area and a ½-mile buffer zone around it. The search yielded negative results within the project area. Likewise, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) was consulted and asked to search their Sacred Lands File for the project area. This search was also negative. The NAHC supplied a list of groups and individuals who may have additional knowledge of cultural resources within the specific project area. Your name was on the list provided by the NAHC. If you, or anyone you know, have any information or concerns about the specific project area please contact Ms. Michelle St. Clair, URS Archaeologist, in Oakland, California at 510-874-3107. If we do not hear back from you within two weeks of receipt of this letter we will assume you have no comments. It is noted that the current project does not qualify under Senate Bill 18 (SB 18) as there are no general or specific local land changes taking place with this project undertaking.

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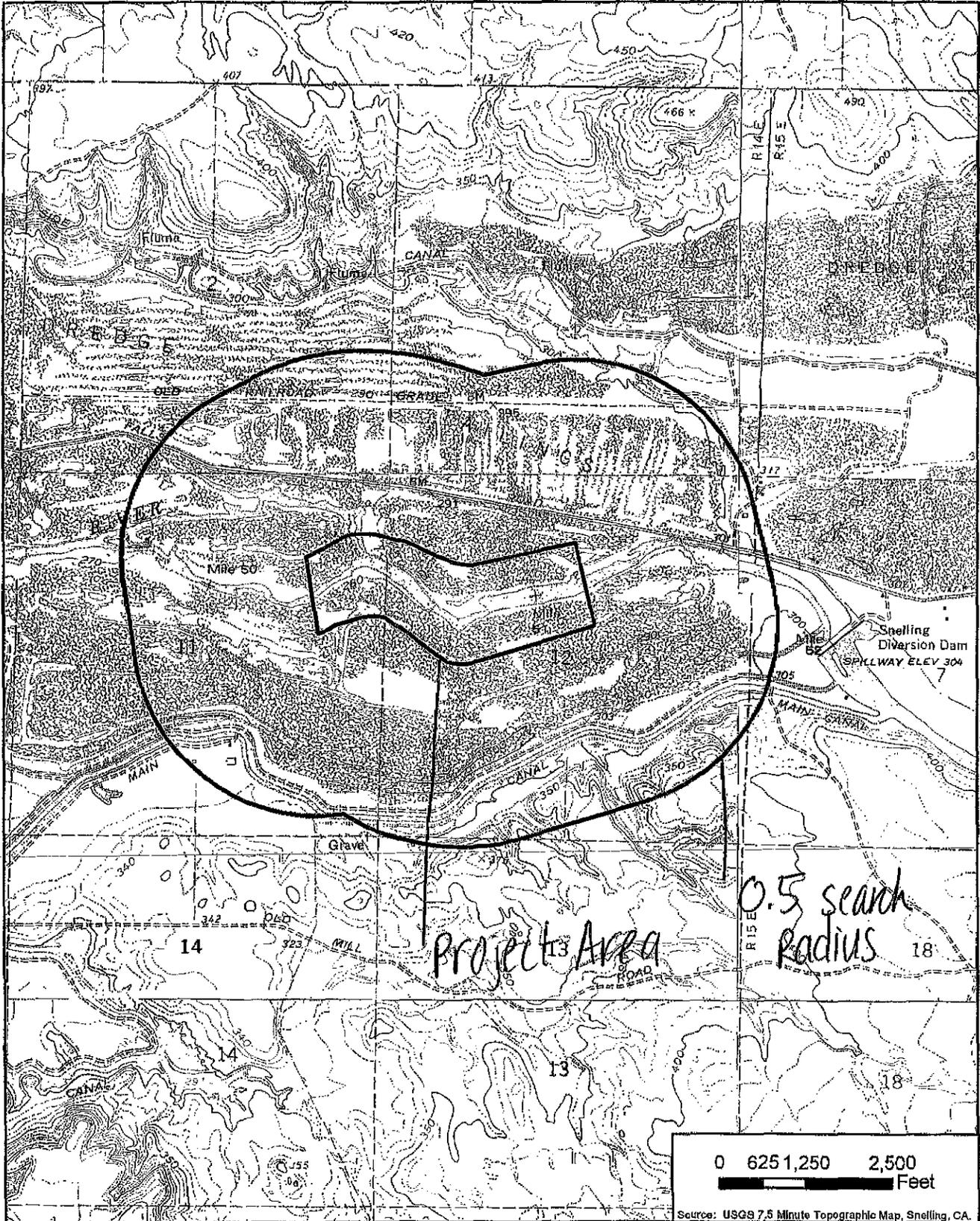
URS CORPORATION

Michelle C. St. Clair

Michelle C. St. Clair, RPA
Archaeologist

Enclosure: Project Area Map

URS Corporation
1333 Broadway, Suite 800
Oakland, CA 94612-1924
Tel: 510.893.3600
Fax: 510.874.3268



URS Corporation L:\Projects\Horizon_Geotown\MXD\Current Working Documents\Views\Map.mxd exbated020706

Legend

- Project Area
- Half Mile Buffer



URS

Merced River Ranch

Project Area Map

Figure

26814344

1



March 10, 2006

Mr. Jay Johnson, Spiritual Leader
Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation
5235 Allred Road
Mariposa, CA 95338-9357

Re: Merced River Ranch Project, Merced County

Dear Mr. Johnson:

URS Corporation (URS) is providing environmental consulting services to Stillwater Services, Inc for the proposed restoration of a part of the Merced River. The project encompasses approximately 60 acres located between the town of Snelling and Merced River Falls. The project location, with a 1/2-mile search radius, is depicted on the enclosed project location map.

URS conducted a records search of the Central Coastal Information Center of the California Historic Resources Information System for any known archaeological sites or cultural resources located within the project area and a 1/2-mile buffer zone around it. The search yielded negative results within the project area. Likewise, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) was consulted and asked to search their Sacred Lands File for the project area. This search was also negative. The NAHC supplied a list of groups and individuals who may have additional knowledge of cultural resources within the specific project area. Your name was on the list provided by the NAHC. If you, or anyone you know, have any information or concerns about the specific project area please contact Ms. Michelle St. Clair, URS Archaeologist, in Oakland, California at 510-874-3107. If we do not hear back from you within two weeks of receipt of this letter we will assume you have no comments. It is noted that the current project does not qualify under Senate Bill 18 (SB 18) as there are no general or specific local land changes taking place with this project undertaking.

Sincerely,

URS CORPORATION

Michelle C. St. Clair

Michelle C. St. Clair, RPA
Archaeologist

Enclosure: Project Area Map

URS Corporation
1333 Broadway, Suite 800
Oakland, CA 94612-1924
Tel: 510.893.3600
Fax: 510.874.3268



March 10, 2006

Mr. Anthony Brochini, Chairperson
Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation
PO Box 1200
Mariposa, CA 95338

Re: Merced River Ranch Project, Merced County

Dear Mr. Brochini:

URS Corporation (URS) is providing environmental consulting services to Stillwater Services, Inc for the proposed restoration of a part of the Merced River. The project encompasses approximately 60 acres located between the town of Snelling and Merced River Falls. The project location, with a ½-mile search radius, is depicted on the enclosed project location map.

URS conducted a records search of the Central Coastal Information Center of the California Historic Resources Information System for any known archaeological sites or cultural resources located within the project area and a ½-mile buffer zone around it. The search yielded negative results within the project area. Likewise, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) was consulted and asked to search their Sacred Lands File for the project area. This search was also negative. The NAHC supplied a list of groups and individuals who may have additional knowledge of cultural resources within the specific project area. Your name was on the list provided by the NAHC. If you, or anyone you know, have any information or concerns about the specific project area please contact Ms. Michelle St. Clair, URS Archaeologist, in Oakland, California at 510-874-3107. If we do not hear back from you within two weeks of receipt of this letter we will assume you have no comments. It is noted that the current project does not qualify under Senate Bill 18 (SB 18) as there are no general or specific local land changes taking place with this project undertaking.

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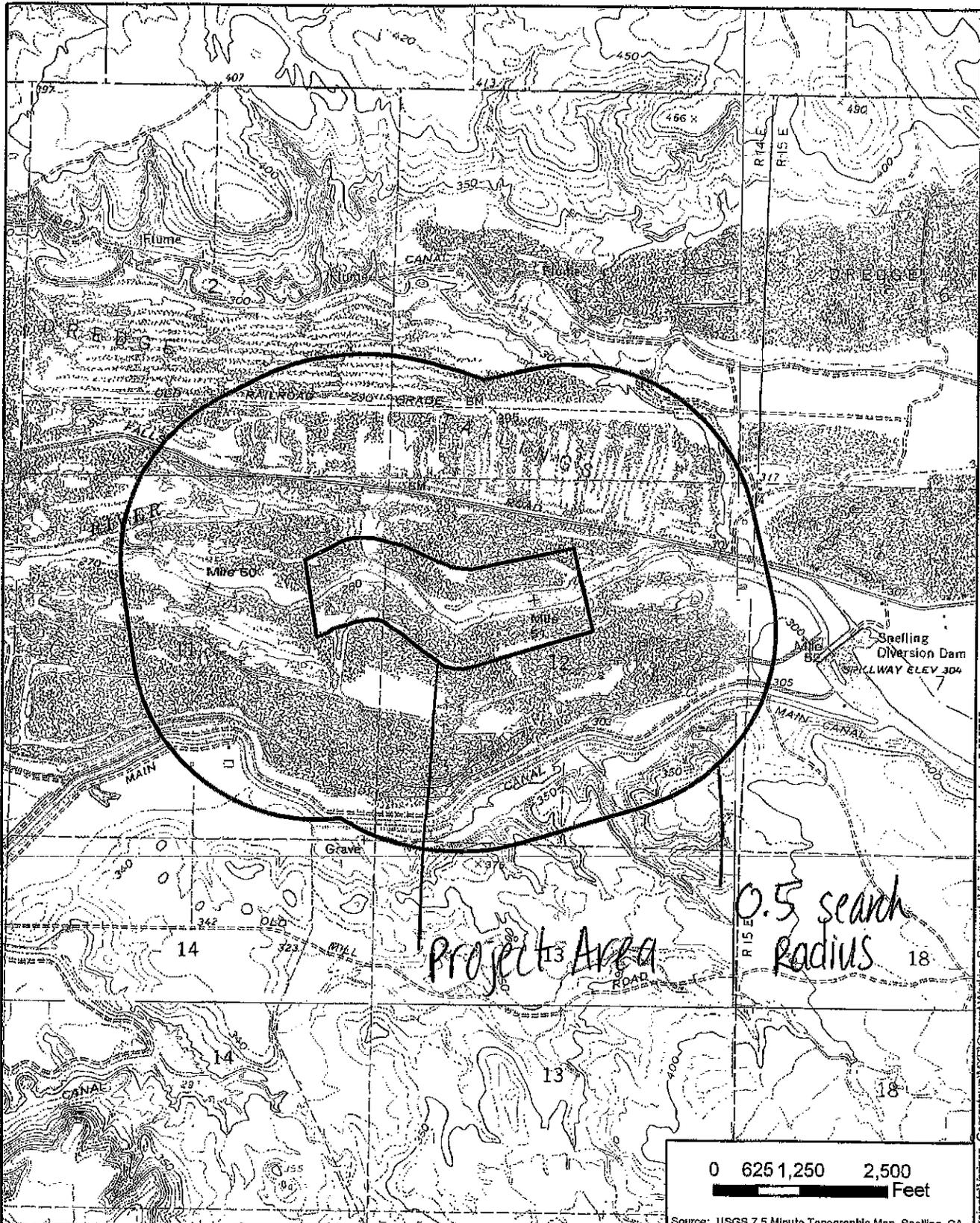
URS CORPORATION

Michelle C. St. Clair

Michelle C. St. Clair, RPA
Archaeologist

Enclosure: Project Area Map

URS Corporation
1333 Broadway, Suite 800
Oakland, CA 94612-1924
Tel: 510.893.3600
Fax: 510.874.3268



0 625 1,250 2,500 Feet

Source: USGS 7.5 Minute Topographic Map, Shelling, CA.

Legend

-  Project Area
-  Half Mile Buffer



URS

Merced River Ranch

26814344

Project Area Map

Figure
1



March 10, 2006

Mr. Les James, Spiritual Leader
Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation
PO Box 1200
Mariposa, CA 95338

Re: Merced River Ranch Project, Merced County

Dear Ms. Perez:

URS Corporation (URS) is providing environmental consulting services to Stillwater Services, Inc for the proposed restoration of a part of the Merced River. The project encompasses approximately 60 acres located between the town of Snelling and Merced River Falls. The project location, with a ½-mile search radius, is depicted on the enclosed project location map.

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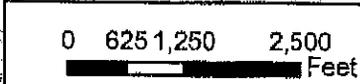
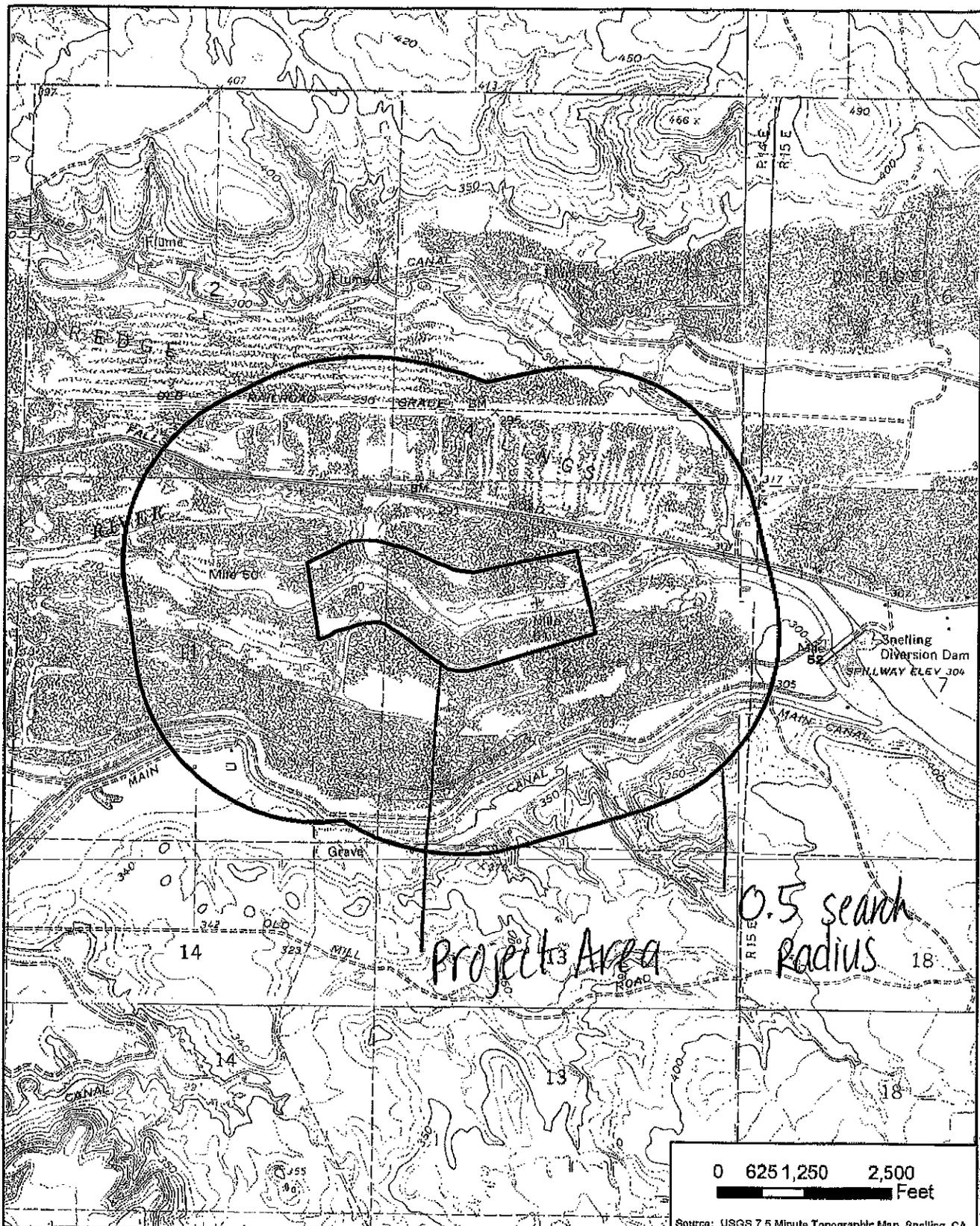
Sincerely,

URS CORPORATION

Michelle C. St. Clair, RPA
Archaeologist

Enclosure: Project Area Map

URS Corporation
1333 Broadway, Suite 800
Oakland, CA 94612-1924
Tel: 510.893.3600
Fax: 510.874.3268



Source: USGS 7.5 Minute Topographic Map, Snelling, CA.

Legend

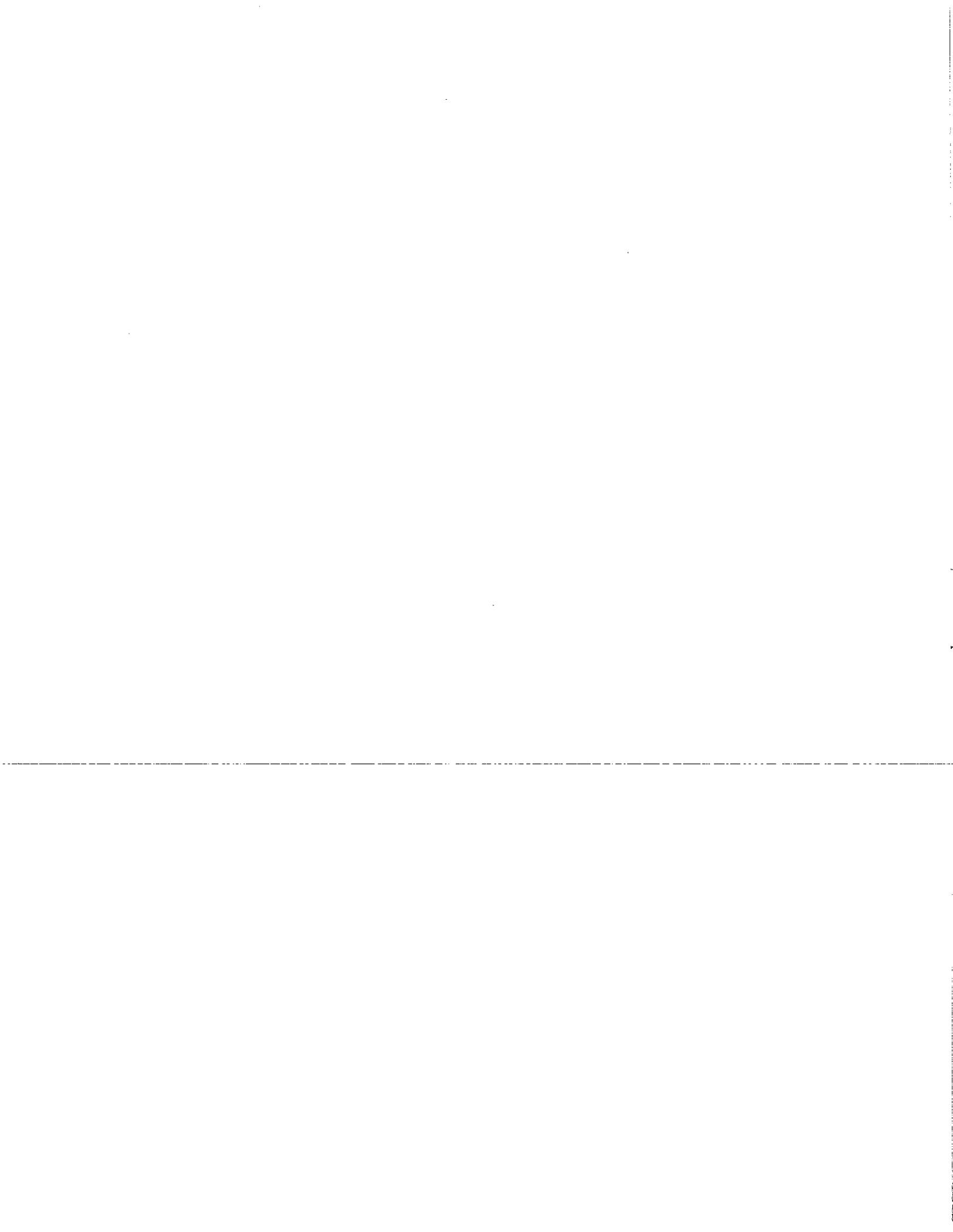
-  Project Area
-  Half Mile Buffer



URS	Merced River Ranch	Project Area Map	Figure 1
	28814344		

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Appendix B
Records Search





February 7, 2006

Ms. Elizabeth A. Greathouse, Coordinator
Central California Information Center
Department of Anthropology
California State University, Stanislaus
801 W. Monte Vista Avenue
Turlock, CA 95382

Subject: Expedited Record Search Request for the Merced River Ranch Project

Dear Ms. Elizabeth A. Greathouse:

This is to request a **expedited rate** record search for the Merced River Ranch Project. This project is a state sponsored project that will involve restoration of a part of the Merced River. The project is located in Merced County along an area of the Merced River between the town of Snelling to the west and Merced River Falls to the east. The project area is depicted on the enclosed Snelling USGS 7.5' Minute Series Quadrangle map, Township 5 South, Range 14 East, Sections 11 and 12. We are requesting the following information for this project area and the 1/2-mile radius around it:

- Plotted locations and a list of all recorded cultural resources within the search area.
- The current status of each resource: National Register and California Inventory of Historic Resources eligibility status.
- Copies of entire site records both in the project area and within the 1/2-mile search radius.
- Bibliographic references for all survey reports and cultural resource studies conducted within and within a 1/2-mile of the search area.
- Copies of GLO plats and any other historic materials.



Please call us to confirm an estimated completion time for this report, as well as if you estimate this **expedited rate** search will **exceed \$500.00** for this project. If you have any questions regarding this search please feel free to call Michelle St. Clair at (510) 874-3107. Please send one invoice to the address above.

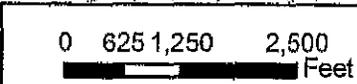
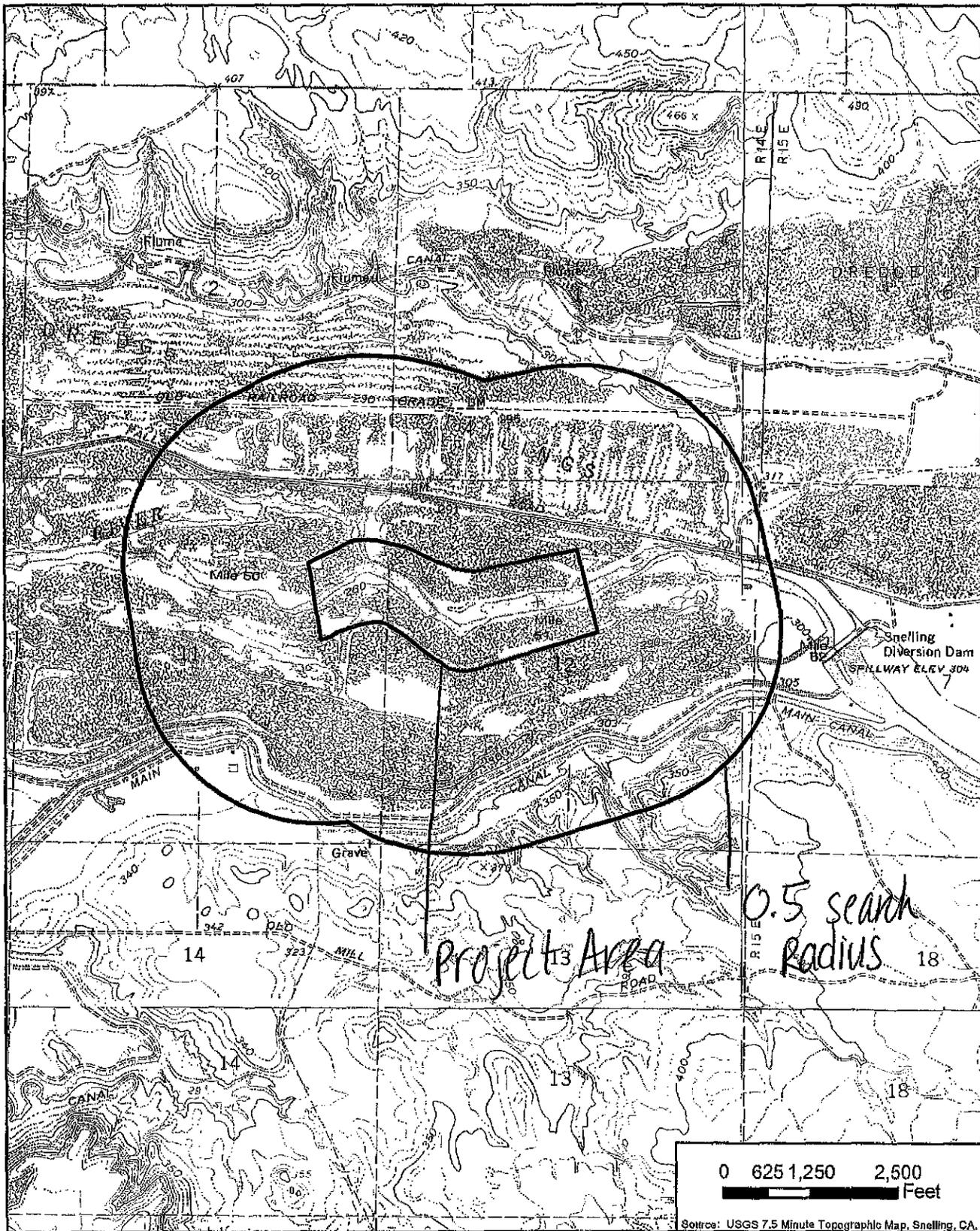
Sincerely,

URS CORPORATION

Michelle C. St. Clair

Michelle C. St. Clair, RPA
Archaeologist

Enclosure: Merced River Ranch Project Area Map



Source: USGS 7.5 Minute Topographic Map, Snelling, CA.

Legend

	Project Area
	Half Mile Buffer



URS

Merced River Ranch
26814344

Project Area Map

Figure
1

URS Corporation L:\Projects\Verizon_Geotown\Map\Current Working Documents\Vicinity_Map.mxd exported 02/07/06

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA INFORMATION CENTER

California Historical Resources Information System

Department of Anthropology - California State University, Stanislaus

801 W. Monte Vista Avenue, Turlock, California 95382

(209) 667-3307 - FAX (209) 667-3324

Alpine, Calaveras, Mariposa, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus & Tuolumne Counties

Date: February 09, 2006

Michelle C. St. Clair, Archaeologist
URS Corporation
Oakland Office
1333 Broadway, Suite 800
Oakland, CA 94612-1924

CCIC File #: 6092I
Project: Merced River Ranch Area

Dear Ms. St. Clair,

We have conducted a RUSH records search as per your request for the above-referenced project area located on the Snelling and Merced Falls USGS 7.5-minute quadrangle maps in Merced County.

Search of our files includes review of our maps for the specific project area and a one-half-mile radius of the project area (as specified by the client), and review of the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, the *California Inventory of Historic Resources* (1976), the *California Historical Landmarks* (1996), and the *California Points of Historical Interest* listing (May 1992 and updates), the Historic Property Data File (Office of Historic Preservation current computer list dated 1/13/2006), the CALTRANS State and Local Bridge Survey (1989 and updates), the *Survey of Surveys* (1989), GLO Plats, and other pertinent historic data available at the CCIC for each specific county.

The following details the results of the records search:

Prehistoric or historic resources within the project area:

No prehistoric resources have been reported to the CCIC.

Regarding the dredge field and tailings within the project area and search radius:

- Associated with the Snelling gold mining district, discussed in the attached pages from *Gold Districts of California* (Clark 1970:120-121).
- A large portion of the dredge field has been recorded to the west (just west of Henderson Park) as P-24-001782. Another large portion has been recorded to the east, also outside of the search area (part of it is plotted on your map) as P-24-000435 (CA-MER-000348H). Records available if needed. Neither is listed in the Archaeological Determinations of Eligibility (OHP computer printout dated 12/13/2005) or in the Historic Property Data File (1/13/2006).
- The 1954 edition of the Merced Falls 15' USGS map references "Dredge Tailings".

Other historic map data; copies attached:

The GLO Plat map for T5S/R14E (sheet #44-327, dated 1853-1854) shows a short road or trail segment within the project, and a ditch in or immediately adjacent.

The following GLO Plat maps were also checked and portions attached for T5S/R15E; no cultural references or features were noted for the project or search radius: sheet #44-329 (1853-1869); #44-328 (1853-1854).

No other historic archaeological resources or historic properties reported to the CCIC.

Prehistoric or historic resources within a one-half-mile radius of the project area:

No prehistoric resources have been reported to the CCIC.

The Crocker-Huffman Main Canal has been recorded as P-24-000488. Copy of record attached. It is not listed in the Historic Property Data File, but it is listed on the attached page 103 of Archaeological Determinations of Eligibility—NRHP status code "2S2" (Determined eligible for the NRHP/Listed in the CA Register). Not listed in *California Inventory of Historic Resources* (DPR 1976).

The Yosemite Valley Railroad grade passed through the search area. Records attached for P-24-000076 (CA-MER-000343H)—one "overview" record and one record for a portion in the Yosemite Lakes quad. We do not know if the grade still exists in the search area, or whether mining operations have obliterated it. No formal eligibility status found on file for portions within Merced County, in the HPDF or the ADOE. However, there is a listing for a portion in Mariposa County in the vicinity of Yosemite Village (6Y—ineligible for the NRHP but not evaluated for CA Register or local listing). Page 13 of the Mariposa County HPDF attached (this listing goes with the BLM memo attached to the Napton record).

Historic map data; copies attached:

The 1954 Merced Falls 15' USGS map references the "Crocker Hoffman Canal", shows a building in the NE ¼ of section 12, 3 buildings in the S ½ of section 11, and shows roads (including Merced Falls Road).

The GLO Plat for T5S/R14E (sheet #44-327, dated 1853-1854) references two ditches, Rommels House, Hempsteds House, and a Road.

Resources known to have value to local cultural groups:

None have been formally reported to the CCIC.

Previous investigations within the project:

None have been reported to the CCIC.

Previous investigations within a one-half-mile radius of the project Area:

One has been reported; copy of title page attached for: ME-3332 Maniery (1992)

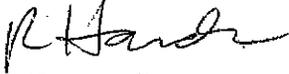
Recommendations/Comments: Please be advised that a historical resource is defined as a building, structure, object, prehistoric or historic archaeological site, or district possessing physical evidence of human activities over 45 years old. There may be unidentified features 45 years or older within your project that are considered as historical resources requiring further study and evaluation by a qualified professional of the appropriate discipline.

In accordance with State law, if any historical resources are found during construction, work is to stop and the lead agency and a qualified professional are to be consulted to determine the importance and appropriate treatment of the find.

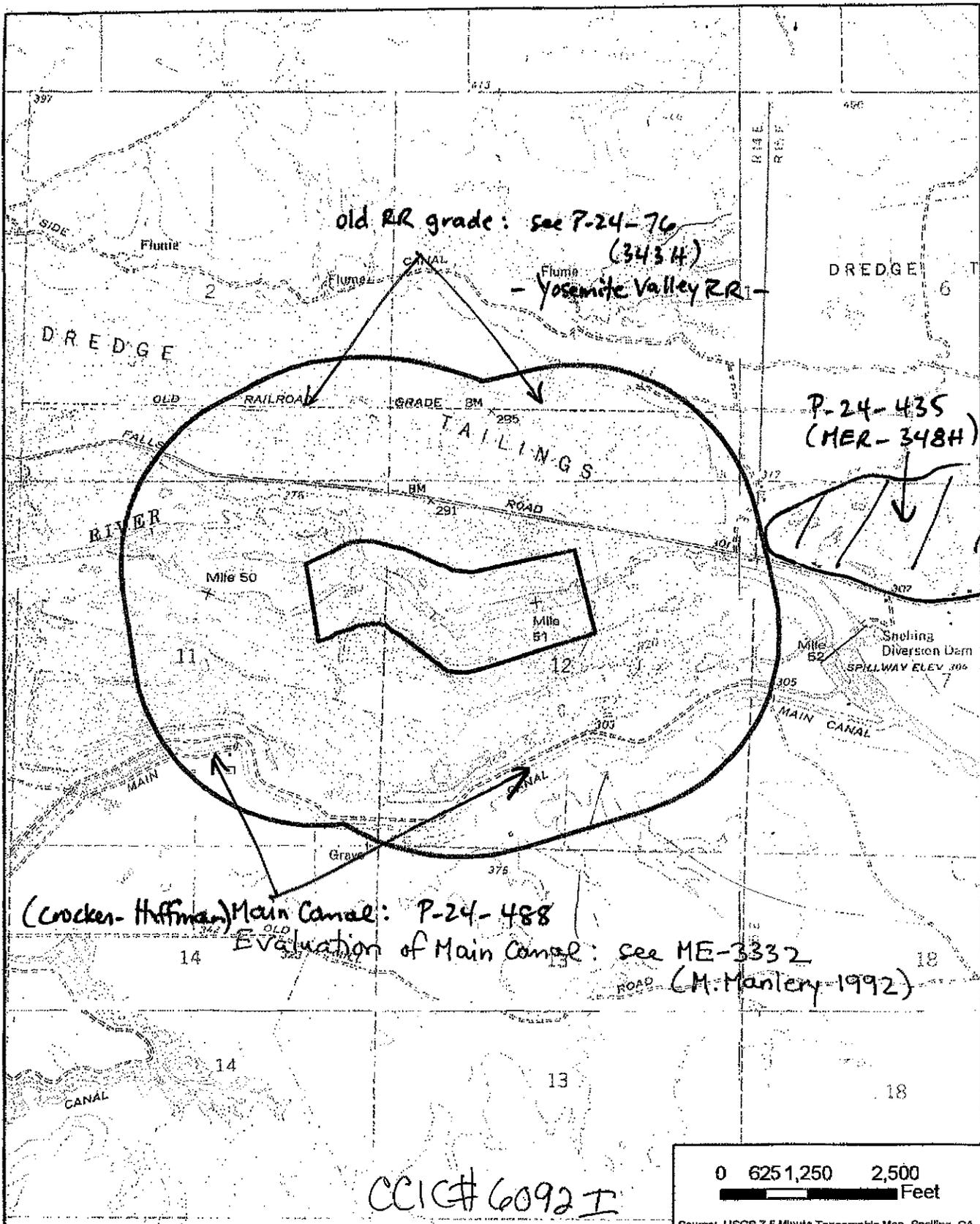
We understand that you will be conducting an archaeological survey of the proposed project that is the subject of this records search. We look forward to receiving one copy of your report of findings which should include two copies each complete site record for all historical resources discovered as a result of the survey.

We thank you for contacting this office regarding historical resource preservation. Please let us know when we can be of further service. Please sign and return the attached Agreement of Confidentiality form. Billing is attached, payable within 60 days of receipt of the invoice.

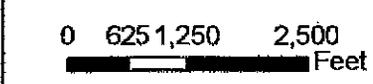
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Hards".

Robin Hards, staff
Central California Information Center
California Historical Resources Information System



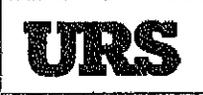
CCIC# 6092 I



Source: USGS 7.5 Minute Topographic Map, Snodling, CA

Legend

-  Project Area
-  Half Mile Buffer



Merced River Ranch
26814344

Project Area Map

Figure
1

URSCorporation L:\Projects\Verzeta_Geogis\down\MXD\Current Working Documents\Verzeta_Map.mxd c:\bentec\020705

Page 13 01-13-06

memo attached to
Wapton record for
Mer. Co.

PROPERTY-NUMBER	PRIMARY-#	STREET ADDRESS	NAMES	CITY NAME	OWN	YR-C	OHP-PROG.	PRG-REFERENCE-NUMBER	STAT-DAT	NRS	CRIT
141617	P-1923	8464 Arch Rock →	CASCADES STORAGE BLDG #821/	YOSEMI (VIC) YOSEMITE VI	P	1917	HIST.RES.	DOE-22-99-0002-0007	06/02/99	2D2	
141615	P-1921	8496 Arch Rock →	CASCADES GARAGE BLDG #819/	YOSEMIT (VIC) YOSEMITE VI	P	1917	HIST.RES.	DOE-22-99-0002-0005	06/02/99	2D2	
069067	22-Z00405	see letter in back →	YOSEMITE VALLEY RAILROAD	(VIC) YOSEMITE VI	U	0	PROJ.REVW.	BLM900709C	08/08/90	6Y	
141611	P-1917	8490 Arch Rock →	CASCADES RESIDENCE #815/	YOSEMITE (VIC) YOSEMITE VI	P	1917	HIST.RES.	DOE-22-99-0002-0001	06/02/99	2D2	
058623	22-Z00364		MC GURK CABIN	(VIC) YOSEMITE VI	U	0	HIST.SURV.	5389-0014-0000	06/04/79	1S	
058610	22-Z00351	GLACIER POINT RD	GLACIER POINT TRAILSIDE MUSEUM	(VIC) YOSEMITE VI	F	1924	HIST.SURV.	5389-0002-0000	04/04/78	1S	
058611	22-002027	OLD COULTERVILLE RD	OLD COULTERVILLE ROAD AND TRAIL	(VIC) YOSEMITE VI	U	0	HIST.SURV.	5389-0003-0000	01/01/79	2S1	
058613	22-002508	SR 140	YOSEMITE HYDROELECTRIC POWER PLANT	(VIC) YOSEMITE VI	U		PROJ.REVW.		10/28/77	2S1	
							HIST.RES.	DOE-22-99-0002-9999	06/02/99	2S2	
							PROJ.REVW.	NPS981104A	06/02/99	2S2	
							HIST.SURV.	5389-0005-0000	01/01/83	2S2	
							PROJ.REVW.		10/28/77	2S1	
058612	22-Z00353	SR 140	MERCED GROVE RANGER STATION	(VIC) YOSEMITE VI	F	0	HIST.SURV.	5389-0004-0000	06/15/78	1S	
058615	22-Z00356	SR 41	ACTING SUPERINTENDANT'S HQTS./ARMY	(VIC) YOSEMITE VI	F	1904	HIST.SURV.	5389-0006-0000	06/09/78	1S	
075373	22-002516	YOSEMITE VALLEY	FOSTER CURRY CABIN, TRESIDDER RESI	(VIC) YOSEMITE VI	FP	1916	HIST.SURV.	5389-0020-0003	11/01/79	1D	C
075240	22-Z00459	YOSEMITE VALLEY	POHONO BRIDGE	(VIC) YOSEMITE VI	F	1928	HIST.SURV.	5389-0021-0004	11/25/77	1D	C
075379	22-00	YOSEMITE VALLEY	SWIMMING TANK/POOL	(VIC) YOSEMITE VI	FP	1913	HIST.SURV.	5389-0020-0006	11/01/79	1D	C
075244	22-Z00461	YOSEMITE VALLEY	TENAYA CREEK BRIDGE	(VIC) YOSEMITE VI	F	1928	HIST.SURV.	5389-0021-0006	11/25/77	1D	C
075242	22-Z00460	YOSEMITE VALLEY	SUGAR PINE	(VIC) YOSEMITE VI	F	1928	HIST.SURV.	5389-0021-0005	11/25/77	1D	C
075238	22-002033	YOSEMITE VALLEY	CLARK BRIDGE	(VIC) YOSEMITE VI	F	1928	HIST.SURV.	5389-0021-0003	11/25/77	1D	C
075375	22-002513	YOSEMITE VALLEY	MOTHER CURRY'S CABIN	(VIC) YOSEMITE VI	FP	1916	HIST.SURV.	5389-0020-0004	11/01/79	1D	C
075377	22-002512	YOSEMITE VALLEY	48 BUNGALOWS WITH BATH	(VIC) YOSEMITE VI	FP	1918	HIST.SURV.	5389-0020-0005	11/01/79	1D	C
058632	22-Z00371	YOSEMITE VALLEY	YOSEMITE VALLEY BRIDGES	(VIC) YOSEMITE VI	F	1922	HIST.SURV.	5389-0021-9999	11/25/77	1S	
075369	22-002514	YOSEMITE VALLEY	REGISTRATION OFFICE	(VIC) YOSEMITE VI	FP	1904	HIST.SURV.	5389-0020-0001	11/01/79	1D	C
058631	22-Z00370	YOSEMITE VALLEY	CAMP CURRY HISTORIC DISTRICT, CURR	(VIC) YOSEMITE VI	FP	1899	HIST.SURV.	5389-0020-9999	11/01/79	1S	C
075371	22-002515	YOSEMITE VALLEY	ENTRANCE SIGN	(VIC) YOSEMITE VI	FP	1914	HIST.SURV.	5389-0020-0002	11/01/79	1D	ABC
075248	22-002038	YOSEMITE VALLEY	STONEMAN BRIDGE	(VIC) YOSEMITE VI	F	1933	HIST.SURV.	5389-0021-0008	11/25/77	1D	C
075246	22-Z00462	YOSEMITE VALLEY	HAPPY ISLES BRIDGE	(VIC) YOSEMITE VI	F	1929	HIST.SURV.	5389-0021-0007	11/25/77	1D	C

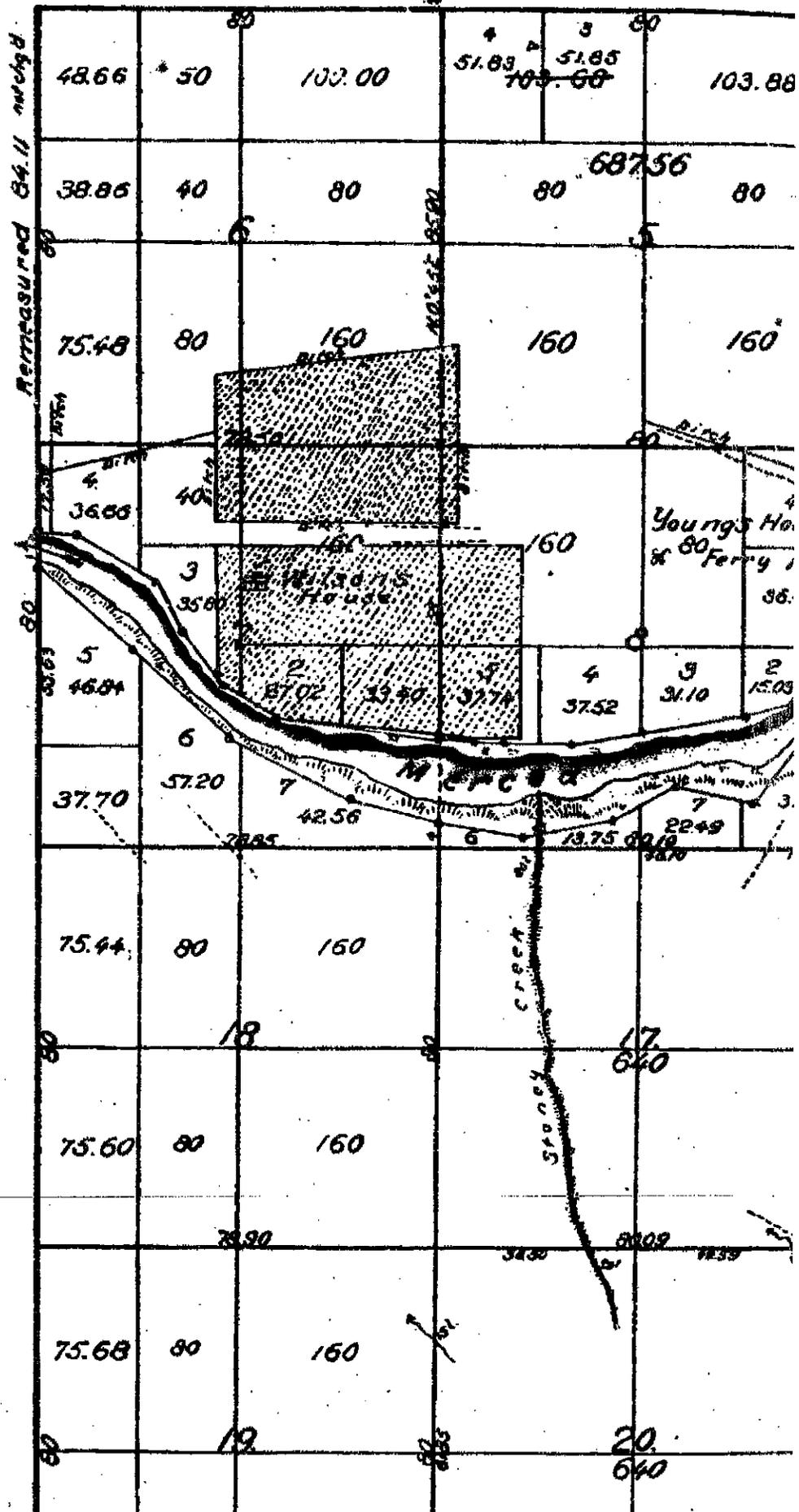
541 records listed.

GLD Plot T.S's/RISE' MOM

44-328

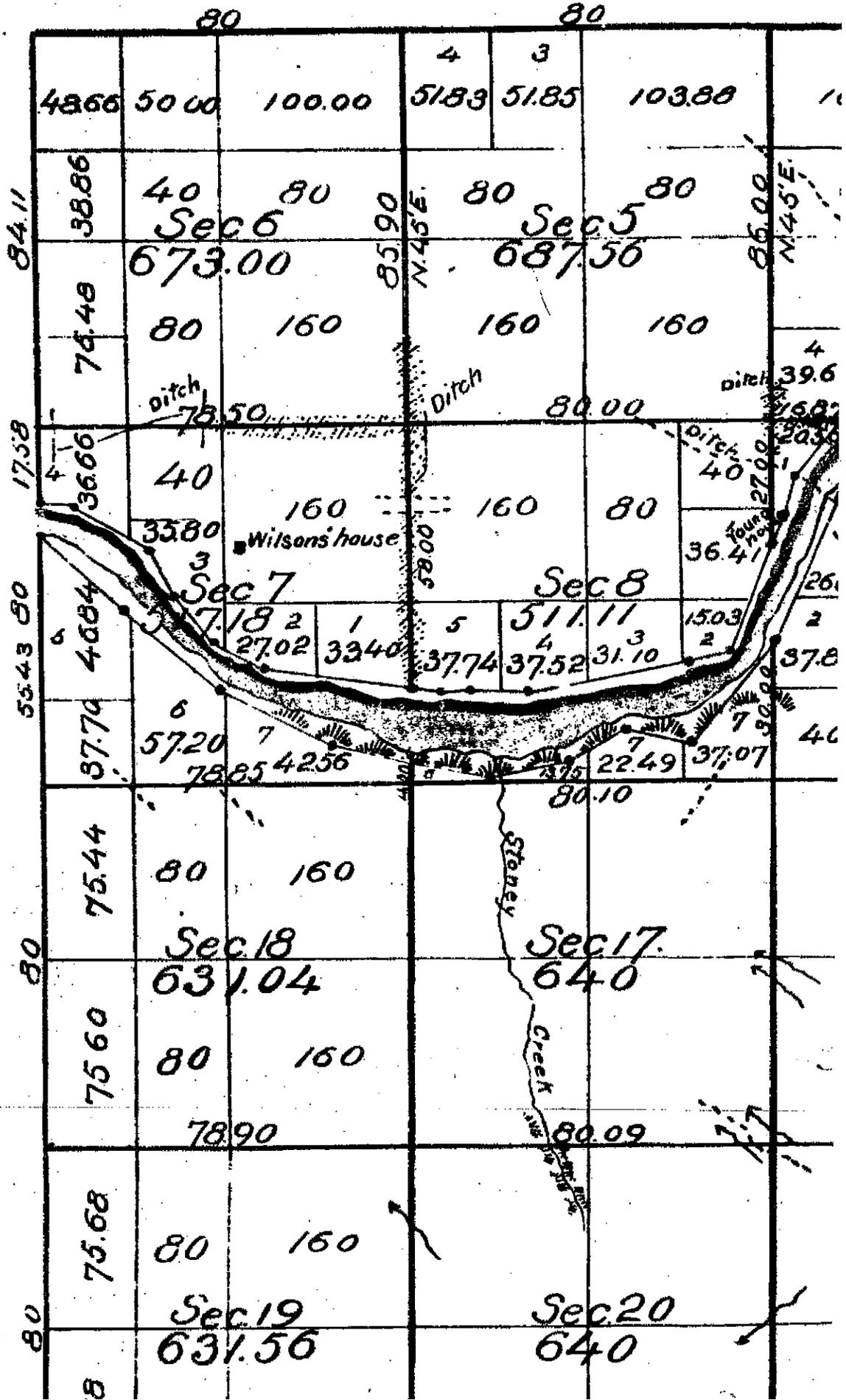
(1853-1854)

See Sup. Gen. Letter
May 21st 1869



GLO Plot
 TSS/RISE MDM
 # 44-329
 (1853-1869)

Township N^o 3 South, Rang



MER-000006/H	24-000107	2S2	07/22/99	AD0E-24-99-001-000	JWPR	CA-MER-6
		2S2	07/22/99	FHWA990628A	JWPR	
MER-000046/H	24-000147	6Y	09/13/89	AD0E-24-89-001-00	TVPR	GNH 46
		6Y	09/13/89	FHWA890824C	TVPR	J 4
MER-000107	24-000207	1D	05/07/73	73000412	KPNP	CRESENT HOUSE #6
MER-000126	24-000611	1D	05/07/73	73000412	KPNP	
MER-000130	24-000220	1D	05/07/73	73000412	KPNP	MER 5-130
MER-000134	24-000224	1D	05/07/73	73000412	KPNP	MER 5-134
MER-000135	24-000225	1D	05/07/73	73000412	KPNP	MER 5-135
MER-000280	24-000370	6Y	04/14/87	BLM851029A		
MER-000323	24-000413	2S2	05/26/92	FHWA920408B	NDPR	
MER-000325H	24-000415	6Y	06/15/00	AD0E-24-00-0002-00	NTPR	CRU-92-MER-1H, P-24-595
		6Y	06/15/00	FHWA000107A	NTPR	
MER-000344H	24-000079	6Y	11/27/95	AD0E-24-95-001-00	CCPR	
		6Y	11/27/95	USAF940407A	CCPR	
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MER-000347	24-000106	6Y	09/19/96	FWS960909A	SGPR	
MER-000350H	24-000593	6Y	06/15/00	AD0E-24-00-0013-00	NTPR	P-24-593
		6Y	06/15/00	FHWA000107A	NTPR	
MER-000352H	24-000595	6Y	02/29/00	AD0E-24-00-0003-00	NTPR	P-24-595
		6Y	02/29/00	FHWA000107A	NTPR	
MER-000353H	24-000596	6Y	06/15/00	AD0E-24-00-0004-00	NTPR	ALFARATA DAIRY FARM, P-24-596
		6Y	06/15/00	FHWA000107A	NTPR	
MER-000354H	24-000597	6Y	06/15/00	AD0E-24-00-0005-00	NTPR	P-24-597
		6Y	06/15/00	FHWA000107A	NTPR	
MER-000355H	24-000598	6Y	06/15/00	AD0E-24-00-0006-00	NTPR	DE ROOS COMPLEX AND SITE OF TED'S MARKET, P-24-598
		6Y	06/15/00	FHWA000107A	NTPR	
MER-000357H	24-000600	6Y	06/15/00	AD0E-24-00-0007-00	NTPR	THE RIDGE FARMSTEAD, P-24-600
		6Y	06/15/00	FHWA000107A	NTPR	
MER-000358H	24-000601	6Y	06/15/00	AD0E-24-00-0008-00	NTPR	P-24-601
		6Y	06/15/00	FHWA000107A	NTPR	
MER-000359H	24-000602	6Y	06/15/00	AD0E-24-00-0009-00	NTPR	CHAVEZ SITE, P-24-602
		6Y	06/15/00	FHWA000107A	NTPR	
MER-000360	24-000603	6Y	06/15/00	AD0E-24-00-0010-00	NTPR	P-24-603
		6Y	06/15/00	FHWA000107A	NTPR	
MER-000361H	24-000604	6Y	06/15/00	AD0E-24-00-0011-00	NTPR	TONY TING'S MARKET AND HOUSES, P-24-604
		6Y	06/15/00	FHWA000107A	NTPR	
MER-000362H	24-000605	6Y	06/15/00	AD0E-24-00-0012-00	NTPR	P-24-605
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		6Y	07/31/03	FHWA020109A	MMPR	
MER-001638		6Y	09/16/04	FHWA040722B	CCPR	CA-MER-000369
MER-001639		6Y	09/16/04	FHWA040722B	CCPR	CA-MER-000370
MER-001642H		6Y	09/16/04	FHWA040722B	CCPR	CA-MER-000371H
MER-00350HH	24-593	6Y	06/15/00	AD0E-24-00-0001-00	NTPR	P-24-593
		6Y	06/15/00	FHWA000107A	NTPR	
MER-Z00001	24-000612	2S1	02/22/83			BEAR CREEK DISTRICT = <i>Maniposa Co.</i>
MER-Z00002	24-000489	1S	05/07/73	73000412	KPNP	SAN LUIS GONZAGA ARCHEOLOGICAL DISTRICT
MER-Z00003	24-000488	2S2	08/03/92		NDPR	MERCED MAIN CANAL (<i>Crocker-Huffman</i>)
MER-Z00005		6Y	04/05/01	AD0E-24-01-001-000	JWPR	24-001641
		6Y	04/05/01	FHWA010312A	JWPR	
MER-Z00007/H		2S2	02/22/83	COE821229A	KPNP	BEAR CREEK ARCHEOLOGICAL DISTRICT, 24-000612 ← <i>same</i>
MER-Z00008		6Y	10/10/03	AD0E-24-03-002-000	JDPR	ASM-1
		6Y	10/10/03	WAPA030506A	JDPR	
MER-Z00009		6Y	10/10/03	AD0E-24-03-003-000	JDPR	ASM-2
		6Y	10/10/03	WAPA030506A	JDPR	

CEC 3332

ME

N 1363491

Merced Co.

* Snelling 7.5

Merced Falls 7.5

Yosemite Lake 7.5

Winton 7.5

Merced 7.5?

NATIONAL REGISTER OF
HISTORIC PLACES
SIGNIFICANCE EVALUATION,
MAIN CANAL,
MERCED COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

P-24-000488

↳ see ADOE

FINAL REPORT

For

Department of the Army
Corps of Engineers, Sacramento
650 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, California 95814

By

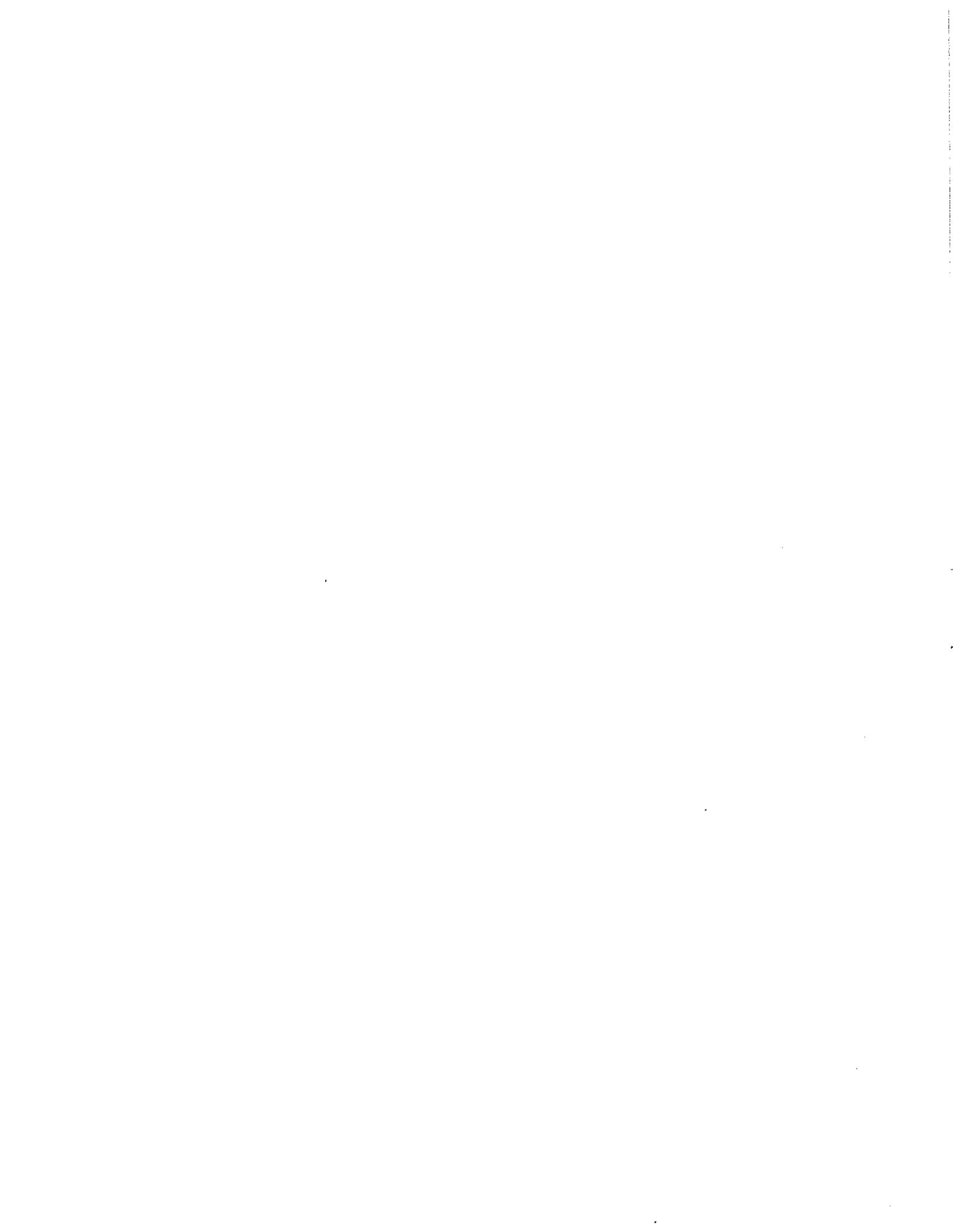
PAR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, INC.

P.O. Box 160756
Sacramento, California 95816-0756

February 28, 1992

(M. Maniemy)

Appendix C
Telephone Log



DATE: 3-17-06 TIME: 7:36 ^{AM} PM	TELEPHONE MEMORANDUM	PROJECT NO. 26814344 TASK NO. 00073
(TO) (FROM) Michelle St Clair, URS Corp COMPANY from: Tony Brochini, Chairperson Southern Sierra Mink Nation PHONE NO. 209-379-1120 (office) or 209-678-0855 (cell) RECORDED BY M. St. Clair PROJECT NAME Merced River Ranch	ROUTING _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	FILE

Tony Brochini left a message of Michelle St Clair's voicemail. He voiced concern that there are known Native American village sites within the project area and that his great grandfather was a native of Snelling. He also said that Snelling was the site of Treaty M, an 18-tribe treaty between the state of California and California Native Americans (1851-1852) - The U.S. Senate never ratified these treaties, and so land was never set aside for the Native Americans. Tony Brochini asked for a call back.

3-21-06 - Michelle St. Clair returned Mr. Tony Brochini's phone left a message.

DATE: 3-23-06 TIME: 2:24 ^{AM} PM	TELEPHONE MEMORANDUM	PROJECT NO. 26814344 TASK NO. 00073
(TO) (FROM) <u>Michelle St. Clair, URS Corp</u> COMPANY <u>from Tony Brochini, Chairperson</u> <u>Southern Sierra Minuk Nation</u> PHONE NO. <u>209-379-1120 (office)</u> RECORDED BY <u>M. St. Clair</u> PROJECT NAME <u>Merced River Ranch</u>	ROUTING _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ FILE	

Mr. Brochini returned Michelle St. Clair's phone call. Michelle St. Clair explained the project area boundaries to Mr. Brochini and that they were limited to 60-acres and did not enter the town of Snelling. Ms. St. Clair also explained that the area had been surveyed on Friday, March 17, 2006 by URS archaeologists who found no evidence of prehistoric habitation and/or resources in the area. Ms. St. Clair also explained there is little to no potential to find buried cultural resources as the entire project area has been dredged to bedrock. Mr. Brochini voiced concern that there are existing Native American village sites within the project. He recommended a Native American monitor be present in the project area during any ground disturbing activities.

Appendix D
Photographs



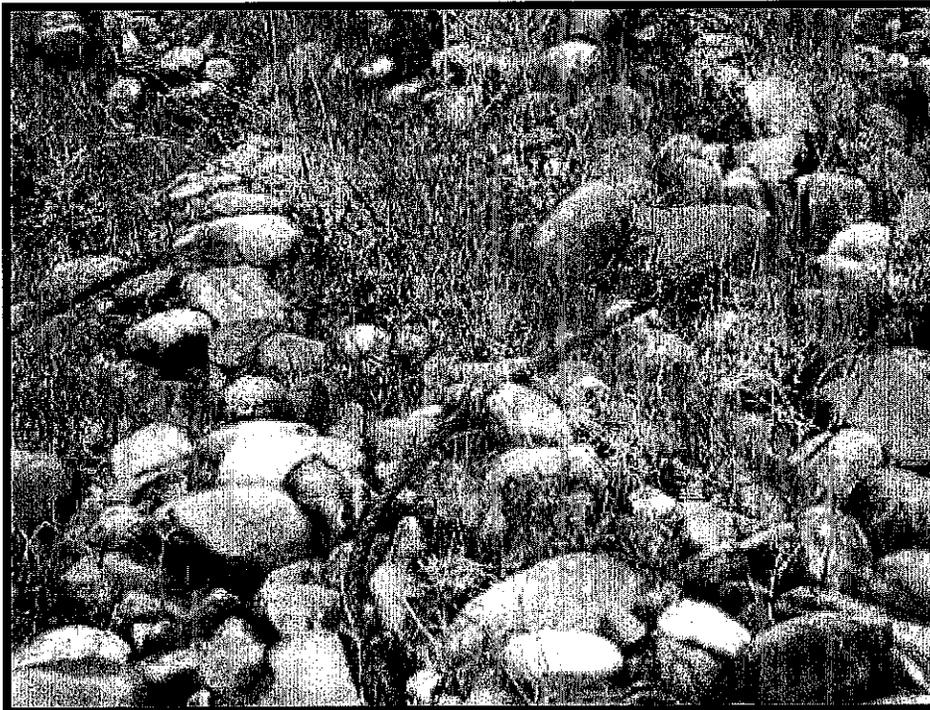
Picture 1: North side of project area looking south. Merced River flooding.



Picture 2: South side of project area looking west. Dredger tailings.



Picture 3: North side of project area looking east. Dredger tailings.



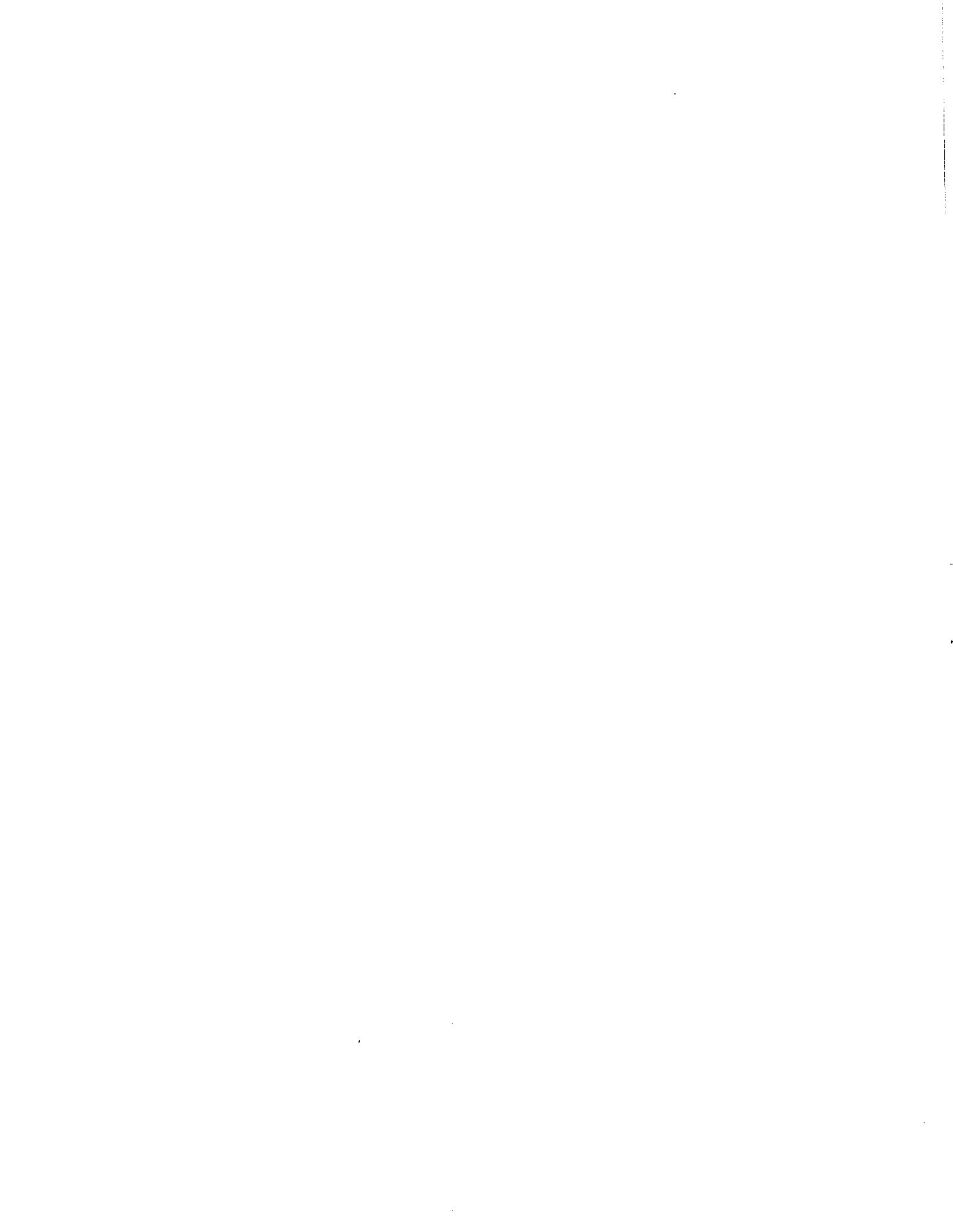
Picture 4: Detail of metal cable located on south side of the project area.



Picture 5: Detail of metal drum and sheet metal located on the south side of the project area.



Picture 6: Detail of metal rod located on the south side of the project area.



Appendix E
DPR Form

PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____
NRHP Status Code _____
Other _____
Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

Page 1 of 5 Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) _____

P1. Other Identifier: Merced River Ranch Dredge Tailings

*P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted

*a. County Merced and (P2c, P2e, and P2b or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad Snelling Date 1962 T 5S; R 14E; NE 1/4 of Sec 11; and NW 1/4 of Sec 12; M.D.M B.M.

c. Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone 10, 73300163 mE/ 4155466 mN (northwest corner); 730130 mE/ 4155140 mN (southwest corner); 731325 mE/ 415527 mN (northeast corner); 731383 mE/ 4155230 mN (southeast corner)

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate)

To access the south side of the tailings (south of Merced River), take Snelling Road south from the town of Snelling, turn east on Robinson Road, turn north onto the gravel road just before the Main Canal. Do not cross the canal. At the second bridge park and walk north toward the Merced River. To access the north side of the tailings (north of the Merced River), take Merced Falls Road east from the town of Snelling. At the Cuneo Fishing Access parking lot walk south toward the Merced River.

*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

The dredge tailings are located on approximately 60 acre, both north and south, of Merced River. The dredge tailings are south of Merced Falls Road, north of the Crocker-Huffman Mail Canal, east of the town of **See continuation sheet.**

*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) AH9

*P4. Resources Present: Building Structure Object Site District Element of District
 Other (Isolates, etc.)



P5b. Description of Photo: (view, date, accession #) North side of Merced River, view east, 17 March 2006

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and

Sources: Historic
 Prehistoric Both

*P7. Owner and Address:

California Department of Fish and Game, 1416 Ninth Street, Sacramento, California, 95814

*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, and address)

Michelle St. Clair, URS Corp. 1333 Broadway, Suite 800 Oakland, CA 94612

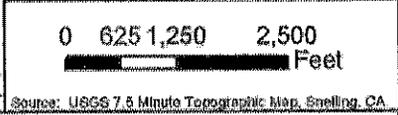
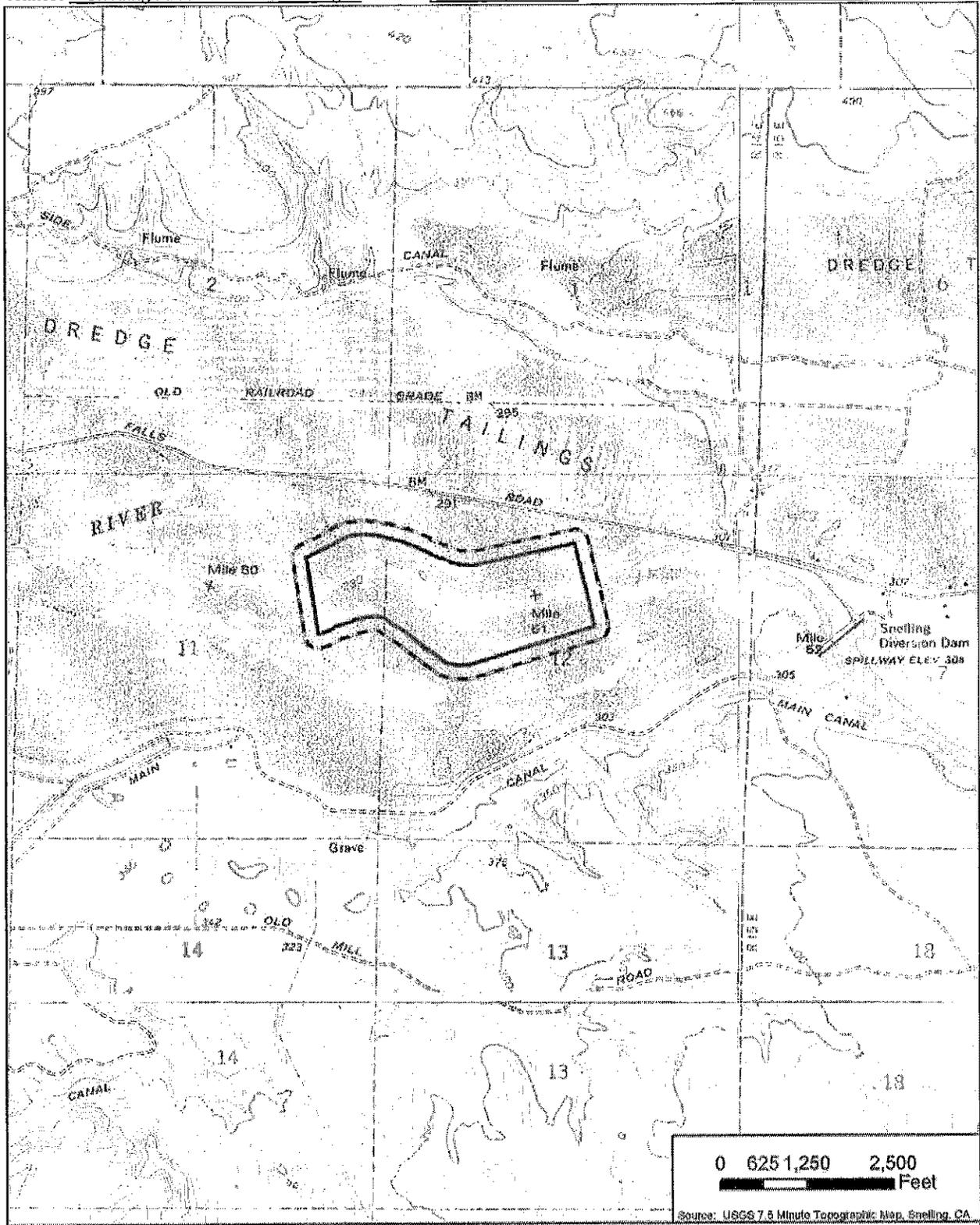
*P9. Date Recorded: 17 March 2006

*P10. Survey Type: (Describe) Field Reconnaissance

*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none."): URS Corp., April 2006, Cultural Resources Technical Report, Merced River Corridor Restoration Plan, Phase IV: Dredger Tailings Reach Project

*Attachments: NONE Location Map Sketch Map Continuation Sheet Building, Structure, and Object Record
 Archaeological Record District Record Linear Feature Record Milling Station Record Rock Art Record
 Artifact Record Photograph Record Other (List): _____

Page 2 of 5 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Merced River Ranch Dredge Tailings
 *Map Name: Snelling Area USGS Quadrangle *Scale: 1 : 24,000 *Date of Map: 1952



Legend

- Project Area
- Survey Area



URS	Merced River Ranch	Area Surveyed for Cultural Resources	Figure 2
	28814344		

Page 3 of 5 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Merced River Ranch Dredge Tailings
*Recorded by: Michelle St. Clair *Date Recorded: 17 March 2006 Continuation Update

Description (continued)

Snelling, and west of the diversion dam. The dredge tailings consists of rounded cobble piles, from 4- to 6-feet in height, running horizontal and diagonal to the Merced River. The tailings extend beyond the 60-acre area recorded.

Several lengths of metal cable (from 3- to 9-feet) in length were observed on both the north and south sides of the Merced River during the survey. A metal drum, and indeterminate piece of sheet metal, and a metal rod (approximately 4-feet long and 2 ½ inches in diameter) were all observed on the south side of the project area. All of these aforementioned materials are likely to have been associated with the dredging operations in the area.

The tailings are located within the Snelling Mining District and are the result of activities by the Snelling Gold Mining Company who operated a bucket-line dredge (Dredge #1) in the area from 1932 through 1952. The tailings observed in the this area are consistent with those created from the type of bucket-line dredge operated by the Snelling Gold Dredging Company.



Metal cable observed within dredge tailings (Detail)

Page 4 of 5 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Merced River Ranch Dredge Tailings
*Recorded by: Michelle St. Clair *Date Recorded: 17 March 2006 Continuation Update

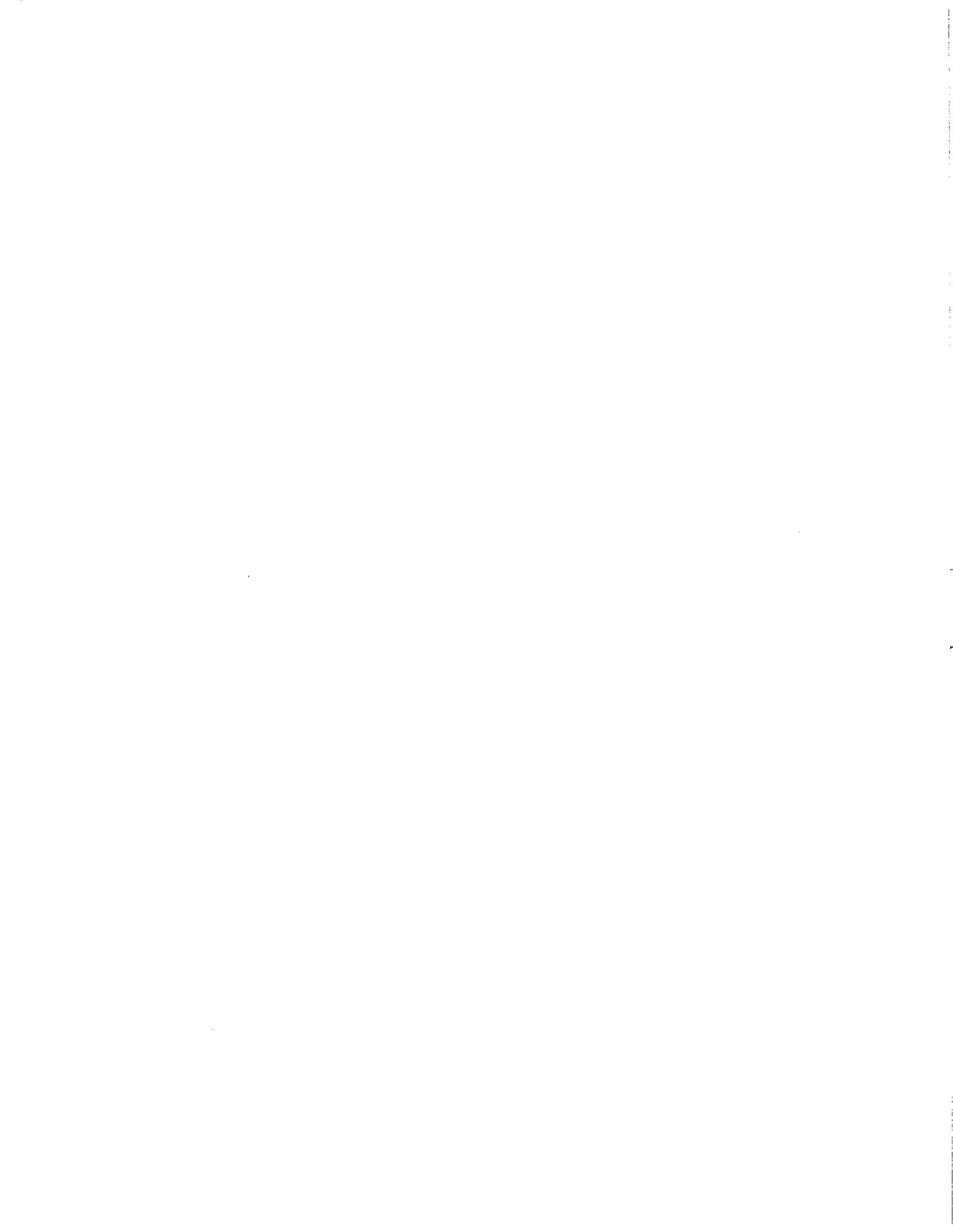


Metal drum and sheet metal located on the south side of the Merced River (Detail)

Page 5 of 5 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Merced River Ranch Dredge Tailings
*Recorded by: Michelle St. Clair *Date Recorded: 17 March 2006 Continuation Update



Metal Rod located on the south side of the Merced River (Detail)



Appendix C

Central California Information Center Results

