

## 4.6 CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

### 4.6.1 INTRODUCTION

This section addresses the potential for the proposed project to impact cultural and paleontological resources located along proposed pipeline routes and within the proposed reclaimed irrigation site locations. **Section 4.6.2** presents an overview of the regional cultural setting, as well as research methods and results of the study. The relevant federal, state, and local regulations are outlined in **Section 4.6.3** and project-related impacts and recommended mitigation measures are presented in **Section 4.6.4**.

As explained in **Section 1.0**, the discussion and analyses in this SEIR tier from the information and conclusions included within the 2006 City of Hollister Domestic Wastewater System Improvement (DWSI) and San Benito County Water District Recycled Water Project (RWP) EIR (2006 EIR). The 2006 EIR described, in general, what potential environmental effects may be expected from the development of reclaimed water sites and the extension of water distribution pipelines, and how these impacts are to be addressed and/or mitigated. The 2006 EIR anticipated no significant and unavoidable impacts to known cultural or paleontological resources resulting from implementation of the DWSI and RWP. Potential impacts to inadvertently discovered resources could be mitigated to less than significant levels through implementation of mitigation measures. This section expands on the cultural and paleontological resource impacts discussion of the 2006 EIR as it relates specifically to the development of reclaimed water irrigation sites and previously unassessed pipeline routes.

### 4.6.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Environmental setting and cultural background information is incorporated by reference from Chapter 4.5.2 of the 2006 EIR (refer to **Section 1.3** of this SEIR).

#### ***Archival and Literature Search***

Record searches were conducted for the project area on July 14, 2004, August 23, 2005, and April 17, 2007, at the Northwest Information Center (NWIC) of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) at Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California, by NWIC staff. Each of these searches targeted all areas that contained pipeline routes and reclaimed water irrigation locations including a 0.5-mile radius from these areas. Cultural resources site records, maps, and survey reports pertaining to the project area were collected and examined. In addition, various local, state, and federal cultural resource inventories were also reviewed including the Historic Properties Directory (HPD) for San Benito County. Historical maps were reviewed for historic land use patterns in order to determine archaeological and historic resource sensitivity within the project area.

The record search revealed that several cultural resource studies have been performed within and adjacent to the proposed project areas. Eleven surveys have been conducted within portions of the current project area, and an additional eleven are reported within a 0.25-mile radius. The record search indicated that one prehistoric resource has been recorded within or adjacent to Site 2A (CA-SBN-25) and are within the immediate vicinity of Site 1 (CA-SBN-243). Several cultural resources are reported within the surrounding 0.5-mile radius of the proposed project.

The prehistoric Hudner Ranch Site (CA-SBN-25) is plotted on the site location map provided by the NWIC as covering approximately 20 acres, including the southeastern corner of Site 2A. The plotted location is somewhat misleading; however, as the site record does not include a site map, describes the boundaries of the resource as “indeterminate,” and notes a single lithic flake as the only identified cultural constituent. A second note on the site form mentions a 1973 conversation with an occupant of the Hudner Ranch, which revealed that mortars had been removed from the site within the previous 10 years. The type, size, shape, and material of the mortars is not discussed, nor is their secondary location mentioned. Moreover, the identification of a single lithic artifact at the site does not merit such a large, albeit “indeterminate,” site boundary. Comparison of the narrative site location and the topographic quadrangle of the Hudner Ranch area suggest that the site was likely located entirely outside the area identified for reclaimed water irrigation.

Site CA-SBN-243, a sparse prehistoric lithic scatter, is shown on the NWIC record search map as being adjacent to Site 1. The narrative location description on the primary record form gives the site location as private land on the north side of Highway 156, thus outside of the proposed project area.

The Hollister Airport Hangar #6 is listed on the Historic Property Data File (HPDF) provided by the NWIC, and is just outside of the proposed project area. Furthermore, the HPDF indicates that the resource does not meet the significance criteria for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (National Register).

### ***Native American Consultation***

A letter requesting a check of the sacred lands file for the project area was sent to the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) on April 17, 2007. The NAHC responded that a check of the NAHC sacred lands file was negative for the project area. However, they did provide a list of Native American individuals and groups that have expressed interest in projects in San Benito County. Letters were sent on July 18, 2007 to the Native American individuals and groups identified by the NAHC requesting information relevant to the prehistoric, historic, and ethnographic land uses within the project area. The individuals identified by the NAHC and contacted via letter in 2007 are the same individuals consulted with in 2004. No responses to the contact letters have been received.

A copy of the NAHC correspondence and sample of the information request letter sent to the identified Native American individuals and groups is included as **Appendix L** to this report.

### ***Field Survey***

A field survey of the project area was first conducted on July 22, 2004, and included the existing DWTP site and several pipeline routes. On March 8 and 9, 2006, AES archaeologists conducted intensive pedestrian surveys of a portion of the Hollister Airport site, the San Juan Oaks Golf Course, and associated recycled water pipeline routes for the 2006 EIR. The most recent field study was conducted between April 30 and May 4, 2007, and included an on-foot survey in 10- to 25-meter-wide linear transects within an additional portion of the Hollister Municipal Airport, Brookhollow Ranch (Sub areas A and B), Riverside Park, Pacific Sod Farm, and associated pipeline routes. Survey locations for the proposed project are depicted in **Figure 4.6-1**. Surface visibility at each of the proposed reclaimed water irrigation sites was generally good as a result of recent agricultural tilling along the edges of roads and

Insert Figure 4.6-1

within agricultural fields. However, dense vegetation at Brookhollow Ranch Subarea A resulted in some areas of poor visibility (40%). The ground surface was examined for archaeological remains, while rodent burrow backdirt piles and road cuts were examined for indicators of buried archaeological deposits.

Site indicators for the presence of prehistoric sites in this area may include, but are not limited to ground depressions; darkened soil areas indicative of midden; fire scorched and/or cracked rock; modified obsidian, quartzite or other vitreous minerals; and grinding stones including manos and metates. Historic-era artifacts may include, but are not limited to: metal objects, including nails, containers or miscellaneous hardware; glass fragments; ceramic or stoneware objects or fragments; milled or split lumber; trenches; feature or structure remains such as buildings or building foundations; and trash dumps.

As a result of the field survey conducted in April and May 2007, three historic-period resources were identified and recorded. Department of Parks and Recreation site forms for each of the new resource are attached as **Appendix N**. Furthermore, field survey verified that sites CA-SBN-243 and Hollister Airport Hangar #6 are outside of the proposed project area. The survey failed to relocate the single lithic artifact (flake) that characterizes site CA-SBN-25. The location of the newly recorded resources, as well as the plotted location of CA-SBN-25, are depicted on a map included in **Appendix N**.

### ***Site 1 - Hollister Municipal Airport***

All natural ground surfaces within the Hollister Airport sprayfield location were inspected for archaeological resources, and surrounding areas were visually examined for aboveground resources. One historic resource was identified and designated the Hollister Sprayfield Site 1 (HSF-1). This resource consists of three buildings along the northwest edge of the Hollister Municipal Airport property. The present agricultural tenant stated that the two-room residence, a bunkhouse, and an open-air garage were used as housing for migrant farm workers on an adjacent ranch. A scatter of terra cotta pipe fragments is associated with the buildings. No other cultural resources were observed within the airport project area.

### ***Site 2 - Brookhollow Ranch***

Subareas A and B of Brookhollow Ranch were intensively surveyed for cultural resources. A single cultural resource, designated HSF-2, was identified within Subarea A. Site HSF-2 is located approximately 100 yards west of Hudner Road and adjacent to the east side of a small drainage channel. This historic site includes the remains of two cement foundations, a brick chimney, scattered bricks, half of a riveted metal hot water heater, assorted ferrous metal objects, concrete chunks, milled wood, barbed wire, and a mature fig tree.

### ***Site 3 - Riverside Park***

The Riverside Park area was surveyed for visible surface manifestations of cultural resources. Surface visibility within proposed Riverside Park was considered excellent due to recent agricultural tilling that left a great deal (100%) of the ground surface exposed. No archaeological remains were noted. Three modern residences, a detached garage, a metal corral, and barn were observed within the western portion of the site that may meet the age requirements for listing as historic properties. Examination of the USGS topographic quadrangle indicates that all but one of the structures, a vernacular-style

bungalow, are less than 50 years old. The lone structure that meets the minimum age criteria is designated HSF-3 and is described below.

HSF-3 consists of a single vernacular-style bungalow. The house is approximately 1050 square feet in size, has a moderately pitched roof, single-hung wooden sash windows, clapboard siding, and a modern asphalt shingle roof. A small porch is located at the entrance to the house on the south side of the structure, facing a relatively new garage. The house that comprises HSF-3 is not architecturally significant, nor is it associated with important events or individuals. Moreover, the structure does not possess the information important to the study of history. As such, HSF-3 does not meet the eligibility threshold for listing on the California Register of Historic Resources and is not considered a Historic Resource for the purpose of CEQA.

### ***Site 4 - Pacific Sod Farm***

Survey of the Pacific Sod Farm focused on areas that were not completely obscured by cultivated grasses. Surface visibility within the potential reclaimed water irrigation area was low due to the dense growth of turf grasses; however, edges of fields, rodent burrows, roads, and road cuts were inspected for exposure of subsurface cultural resources. No archaeological sites or historic resources were observed.

### ***Site 5 - San Juan Oaks Golf Club***

The golf course site was surveyed for cultural resources during the field examinations for the 2006 EIR. No subsurface or aboveground resources were identified at that time. The golf course site was not re-surveyed for the current SEIR.

### ***Pipeline Alignments***

One linear pipeline route was surveyed in May and April 2007. This included a linear survey of two transects within a 20-foot corridor. The off-road route begins near the intersection of the Union Pacific railroad and Hudner Lane crossing, which is located roughly 1.8 miles due west of the Hollister Municipal Airport. The proposed pipeline route continues west/southwest on paved roads, before turning south on a dirt road across open country. The route continues south to Buena Vista Road, where it runs for approximately 1.4 miles east along Buena Vista to the intersection with the Veterans Memorial Highway. Visibility along the proposed pipeline route was excellent in areas where it uses established road shoulders; surface visibility was somewhat diminished in areas south of Brookhollow Subarea A. No cultural resources were observed along the proposed pipeline route.

## **Paleontological Resources**

An existing geological study was reviewed (Geocon, 2004) for information on the subsurface geology of the project area in order to identify project components that might affect vertebrate paleontologic resources in fossiliferous rocks. The online database at the University of California Museum of Paleontology (UCMP) website was accessed June 18, 2007, to determine whether any significant fossil finds have been recorded in the project vicinity.

A 1973 report by Olaf P. Jenkins, consulting geologist and retired Chief, California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG), states that in this region [the Hollister area] "there are deposits representing Plio-

Pleistocene, mid-Pleistocene, and late Pleistocene time. However, diagnostic fossils are lacking, and no absolute ages have been determined.” Jenkins further notes that the oldest deposits, regarded as Plio-Pleistocene, are beds of the non-marine San Benito Gravels (CDMG, 2000). No sedimentary rock units with a high potential for containing significant paleontological resources are located within the proposed project area.

The online database of the UCMP revealed that although 667 fossils have been collected from San Benito County, the vast majority of these are microfossils. Some invertebrate fossils have been found, namely gastropods and bivalves. The 13 reported vertebrate fossils, including several species of large Pleistocene mammals, are mostly from locations in the central and southern portions of the county. No vertebrate fossils could be sourced to the project vicinity (UCMP, 2007).

### 4.6.3 REGULATORY SETTING

A description of the Regulatory Setting is incorporated by reference from Section 4.5.1 of the 2006 EIR. Section 4.5.1 of the 2006 EIR includes discussion of the following:

- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines
- Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21083.2
- San Benito County General Plan
- City of Hollister General Plan

### 4.6.4 IMPACT ANALYSIS

#### Cultural Resources Significance Criteria

CEQA *Guidelines* Section 15064.5 defines historic resource as a resource (1) listed on, or determined to be eligible by the State Historic Resources Commission for listing on, the CRHR; (2) listed in a local register of historic resources or as a significant resource in a historical resource survey; or (3) considered to be “historically significant” by a lead agency as supported by substantial evidence in the record.

An impact to cultural resources is considered significant if implementation of the proposed project would:

- Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource as defined in PRC 21083.2 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5;
- Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a unique archaeological resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5;
- Disturbance or destruction of a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature; or
- Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.

CEQA *Guidelines* 15064.5 defines “substantial adverse change” as physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings.

PRC Section 21083.2 defines “unique archaeological resource” as 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 or more of the following criteria: (1) that it contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and that there is demonstrable public interest in that information; (2) that it has a special and particular quality, such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type; or (3) that it is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.

### Assumptions

Mitigation measures identified in the 2006 EIR are assumed to be implemented as a component of the proposed project. The 2006 EIR identified one mitigation measure applicable to the development of reclaimed water irrigation areas, the connecting pipelines and placing of pipelines. This measure is described in detail in **Appendix C** and is briefly summarized below:

- **2006 EIR MM 4.5.1:** An inadvertent discovery of archaeological or paleontological resources during earthmoving activities associated with pipeline and sprayfield development could result in significant impacts to the resource. In the event that any prehistoric or historic archaeological resources or paleontological resources are discovered, all work within the vicinity of the find shall be halted until a professional archaeologist and/or paleontologist can assess the significance of the resource. If any find is determined to be significant, then representatives of the City shall meet with the cultural resources professional to determine the appropriate course of action. If human remains are discovered, the procedure outlined in California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 shall be followed.

### Impact Statements and Mitigation Measures

#### **IMPACT 4.6-1. Development of reclaimed water irrigation sites and pipelines may impact historic properties.**

**Sites 1-2** Development in the Hollister Airport (Site 1) and Brookhollow Ranch (Sites 2A and 2B) has the potential to impact newly recorded historic resources HSF-1 and HSF-2. The recorded historic resources will be subject to increased water exposure as a result of the proposed project; however, this is not considered an adverse impact. **Less than Significant Impact.**

**Sites 3-5** No historic properties have been recorded at Sites 3, 4 and 5. Therefore, no impact would occur. **No Impact.**

**Pipelines** No historic properties have been recorded at Sites 3, 4 and 5 or along the pipeline road alignments. Therefore, no impact would occur. **No Impact.**

#### **IMPACT 4.6-2. Development of sprayfields may impact previously unidentified cultural properties.**

**Sites 1-5** Unknown subsurface remains of cultural or paleontological resources may exist at each of the sites which could be affected by proposed sprayfield development, particularly ground disturbing activity associated with pipeline construction. This is considered a potentially significant impact. Implementation of 2006 EIR Mitigation Measure 4.5.1 ~~from the 2006 EIR,~~

#### 4.6 Cultural and Paleontological Resources

summarized above, would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level. **Less than Significant Impact.**