
9. CULTURAL RESOURCES

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Brooktrails Township lies within a mixed zone of coast redwood and hardwood tree species. Large-scale logging in the early 20th century greatly reduced the former virgin redwood stands, although second-growth redwood and firs are currently ample in the well-saturated drainages and north-facing slopes of the area. Large redwood stumps are in evidence throughout the forest, as reminders of the historic logging that was once active in the area.

The ethnographic inhabitants of the Willits vicinity were the Northern Pomo Indians, a group of interrelated tribelets stretching across Mendocino County from Fort Bragg in the west to Clear Lake in the east. The first contact between Pomo and non-Indian groups may have occurred during the visits of Sir Francis Drake to the coastal Mendocino area in 1579.

9.2 GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES

CULTURAL RESOURCES GOAL CR-9.1: Preserve historical and archaeological resources within the township.

Cultural resources includes both historic features and archaeologic sites.

A record search of the entire Specific Plan area was conducted at the California Archaeological inventory at Sonoma State University in August of 1993. One Native American site, CA-MEN-383, had been recorded in the area. This is believed to be a village site that is part of the Mitom group of Pomo Indians.

The project area associated with the proposed Willits Creek Reservoir project was surveyed on November 5 and 6, 1990. No archaeological deposits were found and the only evidence of cultural resources noted was that of circa-1900 logging in the area as indicated by numerous hand-cut redwood stumps. This would not preclude the presence of archaeological deposits occurring elsewhere within the Specific Plan area.

CULTURAL RESOURCES POLICY CR-9.1A

Establish procedures to be followed in the event that historical resources may be required to be removed or altered to make way for new development.

CULTURAL RESOURCES POLICY CR-9.1B

Establish procedures to be followed in the event that historical or archaeological artifacts or other archaeological resources are unearthed.

Historic Features: For purposes of this Specific Plan, an historic feature or resource is defined as a structure or place that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places; included in the State Historic Resources Inventory; is designated as a State Historical Landmark; or is locally designated as a local landmark or considered eligible for listing as an Historic Resource.

If during the course of development over the years, development-related impacts to important historic structures are identified, significant impacts could be mitigated by the following alternatives.

1. Avoidance of historic properties through modification of development plans that would allow for the preservation of the resources at their locations. This management program could also include restoration of structures to a specific period or theme, or preservation with adaptive re-use.
2. Relocation of historic structures to places where they can be preserved. Community parks and open space provide opportunities in this regard.
3. If other mitigation alternatives cannot be implemented and historic properties may be damaged or destroyed, it is recommended that an "Historic American Building Survey" be accomplished for such structures. Such a procedure involves the precise recording of structures through measurements, drawings and photographs. The documentation of the resources is on standardized forms and is accurate in detail to such an extent that after demolition, the historic structures could be reconstructed from the survey data. Copies of the documents should be filed with all appropriate state and local repositories. Such a program could include salvage and selective re-use of building features once the survey is completed.

Archaeologic Sites: Those portions of the Specific Plan area for which no development proposal has been submitted that have not been subjected to archaeological field investigations could contain cultural deposits. During the development of a site, if an archaeological deposit is suspected or found, a qualified archaeologist should be summoned to inspect and determine the nature and importance of the site.

If field reconnaissance results in the recording of prehistoric archaeological sites that cannot be avoided and preserved, and the importance of the cultural deposits cannot be determined from surface evidence, then subsurface testing programs should take place. Testing procedures should be designed to specifically determine the boundaries of the sites, the depositional integrity and cultural importance of the resources, as per CEQA Appendix K criteria. These investigations should be conducted by qualified professionals knowledgeable in regional prehistory. The testing programs should be conducted within the context of appropriate research considerations and should result in a detailed technical report that defines the exact project impacts to important resources and present comprehensive mitigation programs for addressing those impacts as explained further below.

Development-related impacts to important prehistoric archaeological sites could be mitigated by the following alternatives:

1. Avoidance of archaeological sites through modification of development plans that would allow for the preservation of the resources. Incorporation of site locations into protected open space or parklands would serve this purpose.
2. Covering or "capping" sites with a protective layer of fill. This could be a very good way of mitigating potential impacts in situations where public access may be increased as a result of development. Archaeological monitoring during the filling process should be recommended.
3. In circumstances where archaeological deposits cannot be preserved through avoidance or capping, data recovery through excavation would be the recommended plan. This measure would consist of excavating those portions of the site that would be adversely impacted. The work should be accomplished within the context of a detailed research design and in accordance with current professional standards. The program should result in the extraction of sufficient volumes of archaeological data so that important regional research considerations can be addressed.

Any archaeological resources located within the Specific Plan area can potentially render research information important to reconstructing and understand the Willits area prehistory. In considering subsurface testing and excavations of prehistoric archaeological sites, consultation with the local Native American community is essential; all aspects of the programs, including the treatment of cultural materials and particularly the removal, study and reinternment of Native American burials should be addressed. All applicable State and local legal requirements concerning these issues should be strictly enforced.

Implementation

The potential for cultural resources should be considered at the time of development review. All relevant resource records should be checked for the presence of and the potential for prehistoric and historic sites as applicable to each new development project.

- Year: Ongoing.
- Implementing Agency/Entity: Brooktrails Township Architectural Review Commission and District Architect.