

## 4.10 CULTURAL RESOURCES

The purpose of this Section is to describe the archaeological/paleontological/historical resources which exist in the Metropolitan Bakersfield area, identify the potential impacts to such resources resulting from the proposed Project, reference General Plan goals and policies, and, where necessary, recommend mitigation measures to preserve and/or to protect the resources.

### ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

#### HISTORICAL RESOURCES

The San Joaquin Valley was occupied by Native American groups for thousands of years. During ethnographic times, the San Joaquin Valley was inhabited by over 40 Yokuts tribes characterized with a distinct name, dialect and territory. Historically the Yokuts have been separated into three geographical divisions, Northern, Southern Valley, and Foothill. The Southern Valley Yokuts occupied the region around the Project area.

The southern portion of San Joaquin Valley was inhabited as early as 6000 B.C. Much of the Valley's human prehistory was dominated by the Southern Valley Yokut Indians, whose homeland comprised Tulare, Buena Vista, and Kern Lakes, their connecting sloughs, and the lower portions of the Kings, Kaweah, Tule, and Kern Rivers. Adjacent to these waters was an extensive swamp which shrank and expanded seasonally. Besides providing a substantial supply of plant and animal foods, the contiguous rivers, sloughs, and lakes served as a waterway for travel.

It has been estimated that the Yokuts' political units averaged 350 persons each, giving a total aboriginal population of 5,250 for the 15 southern San Joaquin valley tribes. A much higher figure (15,700) has been calculated, based on estimates for various villages made by Spanish exploring expeditions in the early nineteenth century.

The Southern Valley Yokuts followed a mixed economy that emphasized fishing, hunting waterfowl, and collecting shellfish, roots, and seeds. The rich food resources of their land permitted the tribes to occupy permanent residences for most of the year.

European contact with the Southern Valley Yokuts was first recorded in 1772 when a band of Spanish soldiers ventured through Tejon Pass in the San Joaquin Valley. No further contact is indicated until Francisco Garces arrived in 1776. In the early 1800s, the Catholic Church made an attempt to establish missions but failed. The southern valley became a haven for the native runaways of missions outside the area, and the infiltration of different customs led to the breakdown of local cultural practices.

When California was annexed by the United States, the San Joaquin Valley was overrun with settlers, and Indian lands passed into the Euroamerican hands. The few remaining Southern Valley people went to the Tejon reservation established at the base of the Tehachapi Mountains or to the Fresno reservation near Madera.

These reservations failed to prosper, and the Indians who remained on them were moved to the Tule River reservation in 1859.

### **Known Archaeological Sites**

Several archaeological sites are known to occur in the Plan area. An inventory of these sites indicates that most consist of habitation areas, burial sites, lithic scatters, or bedrock mortars. There is one major ethnic village in the Project area, known as "Waycoya".

The vast majority of these artifacts are remnants of the Yokuts Indians, who have lived in the area for several thousand years. However, some of the remnants near the river and northeast foothills are from Hokan-speaking Indians.<sup>1</sup>

### **Areas of Archaeological Sensitivity**

A review of previously recorded archaeological sites provides information on site types for an area and suggests potential location and types for undiscovered cultural resources. The majority of the archaeological sites located within the Project area lay outside of urban development area. The sites consist of human burial grounds, chipping areas where stone tools were manufactured, and habitation areas of various durations. Additionally, a couple of pictographs have been identified near Kern Canyon.

The City of Bakersfield Planning Department has a confidential map on file indicating the areas of varying archaeological sensitivity. Three sensitivity values were used: high, moderate, and low. High sensitivity areas are areas with known cultural remains that contain a high or very high probability of containing additional site remains.

Moderate areas are generally along watercourses or in the valley, near or along old shorelines. Moderate sensitivity included areas where some resources are known, and because of their environmental setting, have a good chance of containing archaeological remains.

Low sensitivity areas may contain archaeological sites. However, these areas are determined to be resource-poor for early habitation or use, or these areas are highly developed and any sites that may have been present have in all probability been destroyed.

### **Historical Development of Bakersfield**

During the mid-1800's, present day Bakersfield was known as Kern Island because of the several forks of the Kern River which surrounded it. It was very swampy with forests of Poplar, Buttonwillow, Sycamore, and other indigenous flora.

In 1857, the state legislature offered a contract for the clearing of swamp and overflow lands on the southern San Joaquin Valley. Colonel Thomas Baker purchased the contract from the Montgomery brothers. He began his reclamation project by hiring Indians to put a headgate on the old south fork of the Kern River,

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<sup>1</sup> Metropolitan Bakersfield 2010 General Plan EIR, September 1989, Page 2-46.

creating a separate channel which was later known as the town ditch. He constructed a dam access the north end of Buena Vista Lake which caused the drainage of a considerable portion of the swampy lands in the southern San Joaquin Valley. Baker was able to raise capital for his projects by selling much of his land at 50 cents to a dollar an acre.

Baker built an adobe home on Kern Island after he moved there from Visalia. Occupying the home was the Baker family as well as the travelers wishing overnight lodging and grazing for their livestock in Baker's Field. Having recovered the swampland, he began surveying a townsite and inducing settlement into the area. The town he laid out would eventually become Bakersfield. Around 1868, Philo D. Jewett, an early local settler and owner of the Rio Bravo Ranch, named the community Bakersfield after Baker.

## **RAILROADS**

The final determining factor on the location of the townsite was that of the railroad surveys in the mid-1860s which served to confirm Baker's prediction that the Kern Island was an ideal location for a townsite. In 1867, the Southern Pacific Railroad began pushing for a two block right-of-way through the center of town for their proposed railroad. The city founders would only allow one block and a land dispute erupted. The Southern Pacific Railroad eventually decided to build the railroad through the town of Sumner, which later became Kern City, then east Bakersfield.

In 1898, the San Francisco and San Joaquin Valley Railroad (later known as the Santa Fe) came to Bakersfield. The Railroad's arrival assisted in stimulating new growth for the city.

## **OIL DISCOVERY**

Adding to the growth brought on by the San Francisco and San Joaquin Valley Railroad was the discovery of recoverable oil in the Kern River Fields in 1899. This stimulated growth in Bakersfield that was unparalleled. Thousands flocked into the area, causing a boom in the building trades.

## **URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

Bakersfield was incorporated in 1873 and disincorporated in 1876 due to a disagreement with the town marshal. To effect the marshal's departure, the city fathers found it necessary to disincorporate the city. It wasn't until 1898 that Bakersfield regained its corporate status.

Bakersfield owes its classic grid form to the efforts of Thomas Baker and a survey crew for the Kansas and Pacific Railroad. They laid out the townsite, completing the task in 1869. Laid out as an eastern city, the streets were all names in numerical order, north, south, east, and west, beginning at the center of town. In 1870, when the first official survey of the town was completed, Bakersfield centered at the intersection of Chester Avenue and Railroad (Truxtun) Avenue. Except for 80 acres in the northwest section of the townsite, Bakersfield stretched from present-day California Avenue on the south to 22<sup>nd</sup> Street on the north, and from F Street in the west to S Street on the east. As time progressed, the town grew first to the south with various subdivisions and additions.

As described above, the arrival of two railroads (the Southern Pacific in 1874 and the Santa Fe in 1898), and the discovery of recoverable oil in the Kern River Fields in 1899 were events which played major roles in shaping the city.

Other events of major importance in the City's history were two fires: one within the City in 1889, and the other in the business district of Kern City (East Bakersfield) in 1898. These fires destroyed much of the early commercial architecture of the City.

The most devastating disaster in Bakersfield's history was the 1952 earthquake and aftershock which caused millions of dollars in immediate damage and much more due to secondary demolition of damaged older buildings.

## **HISTORICAL LANDMARKS**

Over the years, local individuals and organizations have been responsible for the marking of Bakersfield's past. From the 1930s to the present, landmarks have played an important part in identifying the area's heritage. The marking of historic sites is an integral part of historic preservation. It provides a picture of the past that has generally been either overlooked or forgotten by the general public. As outlined in Table 4.10-1, *Historical Landmarks*, numerous historical landmarks exist in the Project area.

## **PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

The Project area is underlain by sediments and rocks of Quarternary age (1.8 million years to present). Deposits are from the Kern River, related streams, and possibly lakes that have existed in the region during the past 1.6 million years.

During the Quarternary age, several large and small lakes occupied the southern portion of the San Joaquin Valley. The present surface extent of these lakes is reflected in the remnants of Buena Vista Lake, Kern Lake, and Tulare Lake. In the past, these lakes fluctuated in size with climatic changes. Wet seasons resulted in expansion of the lakes; droughts resulted in the shrinking of the lakes. During the Pleistocene age (1.8 million years to 10,000 years ago), there was a diverse assemblage of large and small animals living along the shores of these lakes. As a result, lake deposits in this area have produced the remains of numerous species of extinct animals such as elephants, camels, sloths, horses, a variety of rodents, turtles and amphibians.

The most important paleontological resource in the Planning area is Shark Tooth Hill. The following data regarding this resource was obtained from an article written by Bourdon, DeJong, Heim, and Alter.<sup>2</sup>

### *Stratigraphy and Depositional Environment*

*The formation that includes "Sharktooth Hill" is locally referred to by geologists as the "Round Mountain Silt Formation". Located in Kern County, California, it was deposited by a river delta coming out of the mountains to*

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<sup>2</sup> Sharktooth Hill Miocene Sharks & Rays. Bourdon, DeJong, Heim and Alter © 1998-2001, <http://www.elasmo.com/frameMe.html?file=paleo/sth/shrkhill.htm>, March 21, 2002.

**TABLE 4.10-1  
HISTORICAL LANDMARKS**

Site No.	Name
<b>California State Historical Landmarks</b>	
137	Gordon's Ferry on the Kern River, near Bakersfield
277	Garces Circle, Bakersfield
278	Place where Francisco Garces crossed the Kern River, near Bakersfield
290	Discovery Well of Kern River Oilfield, near Bakersfield
382	Colonel Thomas Baker Memorial, Bakersfield
589	Mountain House, near Bakersfield
631	Garces Baptismal Site, near Bakersfield
660	Point on the Jedidiah Smith Trail, near Bakersfield
690	Site of the Last Home of Alexis Godey, Bakersfield
<b>City of Bakersfield Register of Historic Places</b>	
Amy Holdroyd House	Kern Co. Hall of Records
Bakersfield Californian	Kern County Land Company
Bakersfield Fire Department	Kress Building
"China Alley"	The McGill Building
Colonial Apartments	Nile Theater
Curran House	Old Bank of America
First Presbyterian Church	Padre Hotel
Fish Building	Porterfield Hotel, Smartt Apartments
Fox Theatre	Post Office, Federal Building
Frank Munzer House	Spencer House
The Guild House	Standard Oil Building
Habertelde Building	Tegeler Hotel
The Hayden Building	Vincent's, Padre Garage
Hopkins Building	Women's Club
Hugh Curran Home	Woolworth

*the east of Bakersfield. At this time (Middle Miocene) most of central California was covered by a small sea. As time progressed, the central California region dried up exposing the Miocene and Early Pliocene deposits. The Southern Bakersfield region continued to exist as a swampy area well into the Pleistocene. At the same time the Miocene deposits eroded into a hilly area with many gullies exposing the so-called "Upper Layer of the Round Mountain Silt Formation". This is the layer containing most of the bone beds which have yielded the most diverse and best studied Tertiary fossil marine vertebrate assemblage yet known from anywhere within the Pacific Realm.*

*This fossil assemblage, called the Sharktooth Hill Local Fauna is comprised of more than one hundred species of sharks, rays, bony fish, turtles, birds and mammals, including terrestrial species from the adjacent Miocene land mass (south of where Bakersfield currently is located). The "Round Mountain Silt Formation" covers approximately 110 square miles. The Sharktooth Hill Bonebed is a single, relatively thin, but widespread horizon – this fossil producing layer is only 6 to 18 inches thick (with some exceptions). It has been correlated with the Barstovian North American Land Mammal Age, and is approximately 13 and 15 million years old.*

Geological records of the region indicate that the Project area is underlain by recent alluvial deposits to all depths likely to be reached by excavations associated with development. These alluvial deposits appear to be too young geologically to contain significant fossil remains based on the age of Buena Vista Lake deposits, which represent the distal end of the Kern River deposits. Therefore, the Project area is considered to have a very "low potential."

## **STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA**

The purpose of this analysis is to identify any potential cultural resources within or adjacent to the Project area, and to assist the Lead Agency in determining whether such resources meet the official definitions of "Historical resources", as provided in the California Public Resource Code, in particular CEQA.

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Initial Study Checklist, a project would typically have a significant impact on cultural resources if the project would cause one or more of the following to occur.

- Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5;
- Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5;
- Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature; and/or
- Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries (refer to Section 10.0, *Effects Found Not To Be Significant*).

Based on these standards, the effects of the proposed project have been categorized as either a “less than significant impact” or a “potentially significant impact.” If a potentially significant impact cannot be reduced to a less than significant level through the application of goals, policies, standards or mitigation, it is categorized as a significant and unavoidable impact. The standards used to evaluate the significance of impacts are often qualitative rather than quantitative because appropriate quantitative standards are either not available for many types of impacts or are not applicable for some types of projects.

The City of Bakersfield has established procedures for preserving its designated historic and cultural resources by adoption of the Historic Preservation Ordinance (No. 2781) adopted on September 29, 1982. The Ordinance encompasses significance criteria requirements, the obligations required of historic property ownership, and a broad range of incentives available to owners of historic properties.

## IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

- **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE MAY RESULT IN THE DEGRADATION OR LOSS OF HISTORIC, ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES.**

**Level of Significance Before Policies/Mitigation:** Potentially Significant Impact.

**Impact Analysis:** The urban area is projected to expand upon buildout of the General Plan. The actual impact resulting from this expansion would depend on whether the proposed development occurs in areas of high, moderate or low archaeological sensitivities. Thus, potential impacts would be site-specific and an evaluation would be conducted on a project-by-project basis. It is anticipated, however, that a greater potential for impact would exist for development occurring in areas considered to have a high sensitivity (i.e., high probability) for resources. Conversely, development occurring in areas with low probability for archaeological resources would have a lesser potential for impacts.

A way of determining impacts to paleontological resources is to estimate the potential for discovery as a measure of likelihood that fossils would be discovered during excavations into a given rock unit. This potential is based on the past discovery of fossils from that rock unit. Paleontological potential does not measure the significance of individual fossils present within the Project area since it is impossible to accurately predict what individual fossils will be discovered. The possibility exists that older fossiliferous alluvium may be present six feet below the surface since the remains of Pleistocene (ice age) land animals have been collected from older alluvial deposits in Kern County. If excavations penetrate below six (6) feet, there is a “low to moderate potential” for the discovery of fossils. A “low to moderate potential” indicates that grading operations may expose fossils during development. These activities could destroy any fossils present. The destruction of such fossils could adversely impact the region’s paleontological resources.

It should be noted that for each incremental development, site importance must be determined. Further, each incremental development would be required to comply with all applicable State and Federal regulations concerning preservation, salvage, or handling of cultural resources. It should be noted that the existing General Plan does not contain policies pertaining to cultural resources. However, in consideration of the

State and Federal regulations, the policies specified in the Land Use Element, and the specified mitigation, potential impacts upon cultural resources would not be considered significant.

**Goals and Policies in the General Plan Update:** The Land Use Element contains the following goals and policies:

- LU-P-5 Provide for streetscape improvements, landscape, and signage which uniquely identify major and/or historic residential neighborhoods.
- LU-P-7 Provide for the retention of historic residential neighborhoods as identified in the Historical Resources Element if adopted by the City of Bakersfield.
- LU-P-27 Require that new commercial uses maintain visual compatibility with single-family residences in areas designated for historic preservation.
- LU-P-73 Promote the creation of both residential and commercial historic districts, and encourage the upgrading of historic structures.

**Mitigation Measures:**

- 4.10-1 As part of the environmental review procedure, an evaluation of the significance of paleontological, archaeological, and historical resources and the impact of proposed development on those resources shall be conducted and appropriate mitigation and monitoring included for development projects.
- 4.10-2 Development on land containing known archaeological resources (i.e., high sensitivity areas) shall utilize methodology set forth, as described necessary by a qualified archaeologist, to locate proposed structures, paving, landscaping, and fill dirt in such a way as to preserve these resources undamaged for future generations when it is the recommendation of a qualified archaeologist that said resources be preserved in situ.
- 4.10-3 The preservation of significant historical resources as identified on Table 4.10-1 shall be encouraged by developing and implementing incentives such as building and planning application permit fee waivers, Mills Act contracts, grants and loans, implementing the State Historic Building Code and other incentives as identified in the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance.
- 4.10-4 The preservation of significant historical resources shall be promoted and other public agencies or private organizations shall be encouraged to assist in the purchase and/or relocation of sites, buildings, and structures deemed to be of historical significance.

**Level of Significance After Policies/Mitigation:** Less Than Significant Impact.

**UNAVOIDABLE SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS**

Compliance with applicable State and Federal regulations and implementation of the specified mitigation measures would result in less than significant impacts to historic and cultural resources.