

Appendix E

Phase I Archaeological Survey of the Mahoney Ranch Study
Areas, City of Santa Maria, Santa Barbara County, California
(W&S Consultants 2005)

**PHASE I ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE MAHONEY RANCH STUDY
AREA, CITY OF SANTA MARIA, SANTA BARBARA COUNTY,
CALIFORNIA**

Prepared For:

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MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

An intensive Phase I archaeological survey was conducted for the Mahoney Ranch study area, City of Santa Maria, Santa Barbara County, California. This investigation involved an archival records search, a review of existing published and unpublished references on local prehistory and history, and an on-foot, intensive survey of the subject property. Archival records indicated that the study area had never been surveyed and that no cultural resources were known on or adjacent to it. Survey failed to result in the discovery of cultural resources of any kind. Development of the study area therefore does not have the potential to result in adverse impacts to cultural resources.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

At the request of Mr. Ken Melvin, P.E., Standard Pacific Homes, Westlake Village, California, an intensive Phase I archaeological survey and cultural resources assessment was conducted for the Mahoney Ranch study area, City of Santa Maria, Santa Barbara County, California. The Phase I archaeological survey was intended to provide a background review of pertinent research and an archival records search to determine if any known archaeological sites were present in the study area, and/or whether the area had been previously and systematically studied by archaeologists; an intensive, on-foot survey of the study area to identify unrecorded cultural resources; and a preliminary assessment of such resources, should any be found present. This manuscript constitutes a report on this Phase I archaeological study. Subsequent sections provide background to the investigation, including the results of the archival record search; a summary of the field surveying techniques employed; the results of the fieldwork; and management recommendations derived therefrom.

2.0 BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

2.1 Project Location and Description

The Mahoney Ranch study area is a 272 acres parcel that is located on the western edge of the City of Santa Maria, in Santa Barbara County, California (Figure 1). The study area is irregularly shaped, with Mahoney Road forming the northwest boundary of this study area and Black Road running along its western extreme. The Santa Maria Public Airport is located to the east, and a small residential housing development abuts the property to the south.

Mahoney Ranch is currently in agricultural use (row crops). The property is a relatively flat, sandy expanse, which appears to represent an ancient water sculpted terrace. Elevation within the study area ranges from less than 160 feet above mean sea level to about 180 feet. The lower elevations on the property fall within two arroyos that run from SE to NW. Although these features are relatively large, they appear to primarily represent historical arroyo downcutting from run-off, as they are short in length and have no

real hydrological sources or watersheds.

2.2 Ethnographic Background

The Santa Maria region, and Santa Barbara County in general, lie within the territory of the Chumash ethnolinguistic group (Kroeber 1925); specifically, the Purisimeño Chumash. These were Hokan speaking people, who occupied the area from Topanga Canyon northwest to approximately San Carpojo Creek. Because of their location in an area of early Spanish missionization, Chumash culture and lifeways were heavily disrupted prior to any modern efforts at ethnographic research, hence our knowledge of them is limited. However, based on fragmentary records and various means of inferential and analogical studies, a certain amount can be reconstructed about their way of life.

The Chumash followed a hunting-gathering-fishing subsistence pattern, which incorporated a heavy reliance on maritime resources, including pelagic and littoral fishes, and shellfish. Indeed, the bountiful sea resources that they exploited may have been a key factor in their evolutionary success (Landberg 1965): at the time of the arrival of the Spanish the Chumash had reached levels of population density, and complexities in social organization, unequaled worldwide by other non-farming groups (Moratto 1984:118). These included permanent coastal villages along the Channel Islands area containing as many as 1000 inhabitants (Brown 1967), as well as a hierarchical sociopolitical organization consisting of at least two major chiefdoms (Whitley and Beaudry 1991). Further, based on recent reconstructions using mission registers, the Chumash appear to have a matrilineal, and perhaps matrilineal, clan-based society (Johnson 1988).

The Santa Maria area was within the northern portion of Chumash territory which, unfortunately, received less attention from anthropologists than the Santa Barbara and Ventura regions. Still, some aboriginal Purisimeño Chumash place-names were recorded, primarily by Alfred Kroeber and John P. Harrington (see Applegate 1975; King 1975; Greenwood 1976). The most complete list is provided by Applegate (1975), who includes the following as named locations in the general vicinity:

‘ahwapsh -‘in the nettles’, village on Solomon Creek, S of Santa Maria (also ‘anaquwuk or thmapsi);

'alaqupsken - 'one that gives out', village, perhaps on Tepusquet Creek, SE of Santa Maria;
kasma'li - 'it is the last', a village near Casmalia;
lehlele - 'swan', a village at Guadalupe Lake;
nipumu - 'village', a village at Nipomo;
wasna - (translation unknown), a village at Huasna, north of Santa Maria.

There is no evidence to suggest that any of these place-names apply to the study area, and it does not appear to have been specifically identified as an area of historical aboriginal use.

2.3 Archaeological Background

Our existing chronological scheme for regional prehistory has its origins in the research of D.B. Rogers (1929), working on the Channel Islands and the Santa Barbara coastline. At a later date, Rogers' scheme was modified in terminology and improved with additional and more detailed data and radiocarbon dates by W.J. Wallace (1955). More recently, King (1981) has suggested certain refinements to Wallace's proposed framework. However, the basic framework of this chronology has remained intact since first modified by Wallace.

Wallace's chronology for coastal California includes four time periods, the earliest of which (Early Man/Big Game Hunting period) was considered speculative, and thought to correlate with the end of the Pleistocene. Although it is likely that occupation of the southern California coastal region occurred during this early time period, to date the only evidence of such has been limited to a few discoveries of fluted projectile points, found in isolated locales. However, the characteristic geomorphological instability of the California coastline, combined with the major change in erosional/degradational regimes that occurred at the end of the Pleistocene, does not favor the preservation of remains from this period.

With the transition towards a modern environment, starting approximately 9 to 10 thousand years ago, however, an adaptation referred to as the Early Millingstone period or horizon began and is evident in the archaeological record. Most sites of this stage date between 8500 and 3500 years in age,

and are dominated by assemblages containing large numbers of groundstone artifacts, along with crude choppers and other core/cobble tools (see Greenwood 1972). These are thought to represent an adaptation to gathered foods, especially a reliance on hard-shelled seeds.

More recently, it has been suggested that scraper planes, in particular, may have served in the processing of agave (Kowta 1969; Salls 1985); that the association of groundstone and core/cobble tools represents a generalized plant processing toolkit, rather than one emphasizing hard-seeds, per se (Whitley 1979), and one that was used in appropriate environmental settings throughout the prehistoric past; that is, that the so-called 'early millingstone toolkit' is environmentally rather than chronologically specific and reflects localized exploitation patterns, rather than a wide-ranging adaptational strategy (Leonard 1971). However, on the coastal strip, per se, there continues to be evidence that such sites date to the earlier end of the time-frame, and they are generally located on terraces and mesas, above the coastal verge.

Recent studies by Erlandson (1988; see also Erlandson and Colton 1991), finally, provide evidence of a significant, even if small, population of coastal hunters-gatherers in the region before 7000 years ago, or at the beginning of the Early Millingstone period. Erlandson has shown that these were neither Big Game hunters, nor specialized, hard-seed gatherers, but instead generalized foragers that relied on a variety of different kinds of terrestrial, coastal and marine resources, and that they were adapted to estuarine embayments that have long-since disappeared from the local environment. Further, his evidence indicates that their primary protein sources were shellfish and other marine resources. Extending a pattern first identified by Meighan (1959) on the Channel Islands, in other words, this suggests that the adaptation to the seashore is a very ancient and long-lived tradition in local prehistory.

Following the Early Millingstone, a transitional stage, referred to as the Intermediate period, occurred. It is believed to have gotten underway about 3500 years ago, and to have lasted until about A.D. 1200. It is marked on the coast by a growing exploitation of marine resources, the appearance of the hopper mortar and stone bowl/mortar, and a diversification and an increase in the number of chipped stone tools. Projectile points, in particular, are more common at sites than previously, while artifacts such

as fish hooks and bone gorges also appear. Further, there is substantial evidence that it was at the early end of this Intermediate period that inland sites, such as those found in the Conejo Corridor on the north side of the Santa Monica Mountains, and those on the Cuyama River Valley (see Horne 1981), were first established and occupied, suggesting the exploitation of more varied environments and perhaps an increase in population (Whitley and Beaudry 1991), as well as a movement of coastal sites down towards the beaches. In general, however, the Intermediate period can be argued to have set the stage for the accelerated changes that took place immediately following it.

With the transition to the Late Prehistoric period at A.D. 1200, which followed the introduction of the bow and arrow at about A.D. 600, and represented by a major reduction in the size of projectile points, we can correlate local prehistory with Chumash society as described (even if in abbreviated form) by early chroniclers and missionaries. However, this is not to suggest that society was in any way static, for the transition to the Late Prehistoric period was marked by the evolution and eventual dominance of a sophisticated maritime economy. Further, the rise in Chumash social complexity has been shown to have been associated with the development of craft specialization, involving the use of standardized micro-drills to mass produce shell beads on Santa Cruz Island (Arnold 1987), and to have occurred during the Late Prehistoric period.

2.4 Historical Background

Traditional Chumash society was altered irrevocably with the onset of the missionization and Spanish colonization of the coastal region. First contact with European culture occurred relatively early on: Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo stopped in the general Chumash area in A.D. 1542 while exploring the coast, and Sebastián Vizcaíno sailed-by in 1602 (Bancroft 1963), with Pedro de Unamuno (in 1587) and Sebastian Rodriguez Cermeño (in 1595) both visiting the central coast, *per se* (Robinson 1957). But the historical period effectively began with the passing of the Gaspar de Portolá expedition through the area in 1769 - 1770 (Bolton 1971; Boneu 1983). It was shortly thereafter, with the establishment of the Missions of San Luis Obispo de Tolosa in 1772, Santa Barbara in 1786, and La Purísima Concepción, in

1787, that marked the true end of the aboriginal period.

Initially, at least, Santa Maria was removed from early historical activities, which focused on the coast. Initial use of the region resulted from the establishment of a series of Mexican ranchos which emphasized sheep and cattle grazing. The study area falls within the area of the Punta de la Laguna Rancho which was granted to Luis Arrellanes and E.M. Ortega in 1844, and which covered almost 27,000 acres (Thompson and West 1883). The City of Santa Maria itself, originally referred to as "Central City," was not founded until 1867, on government land adjacent to the Laguna Rancho. The study area appears to have been isolated even from this early development, and it has remained in agricultural open-space into the 21st century.

3.0 ARCHIVAL RECORDS SEARCH

An archival record search was conducted at the University of California, Santa Barbara, Archaeological Information Center (AIC), by AIC staff members to determine: (i) if prehistoric or historical archaeological sites had previously been recorded within the Mahoney Ranch study area; (ii) if the study area had been systematically surveyed by archaeologists prior to the initiation of this field study; and/or (iii) whether the region of the field project was known to contain archaeological sites and to thereby be archaeologically sensitive. The complete results of this archival record search are included in this document as Appendix A.

Files and records at the UCSB AIC indicate that the Mahoney Ranch study area had never been systematically surveyed by archaeologists. Though no sites had been recorded in or adjacent to the study area, survey of the property was recommended.

4.0 FIELD SURVEY METHODS

An intensive and systematic field survey of the Mahoney Ranch study area was conducted by David S. Whitley, Ph.D., and Joseph M. Simon, of the W & S Consultants staff, on 22-24 January, 2005. The groundsurface was examined by walking transects across the study area spaced at 15 - 20 meter intervals to identify artifacts or other archaeological indicators that might be present on the groundsurface. Particular attention was paid to areas on the property where archaeological deposition could occur, such as at toe-slopes and in swales.

Groundsurface visibility during the fieldwork was generally excellent. The study area consists of agricultural land used for row crops and the majority of the property had been disked but not yet planted.

5.0 SURVEY RESULTS

The intensive Phase I archaeological survey of the Mahoney Ranch study area, Santa Maria, Santa Barbara County, California, failed to result in the discovery or recording of cultural resources of any kind.

6.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An archival records search, background studies, and an intensive, on-foot surface survey of the Mahoney Ranch study area, City of Santa Maria, Santa Barbara County, California, were conducted as part of a Phase I archaeological survey. No cultural resources had been previously recorded on the property, and none were discovered during the fieldwork. Based on this fact, the development and use of the Mahoney Ranch does not have the potential to result in adverse impacts to cultural resources. No additional archaeological work is therefore recommended for this property. In the unlikely event that archaeological resources are uncovered during grading or construction within the property, however, it is recommended that an archaeologist be contacted to evaluate the discovered finds.

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8.0 FIGURES

List of Figures:

Figure 1 - Location of the Mahoney Ranch study area, Santa Maria, Santa Barbara County, California.

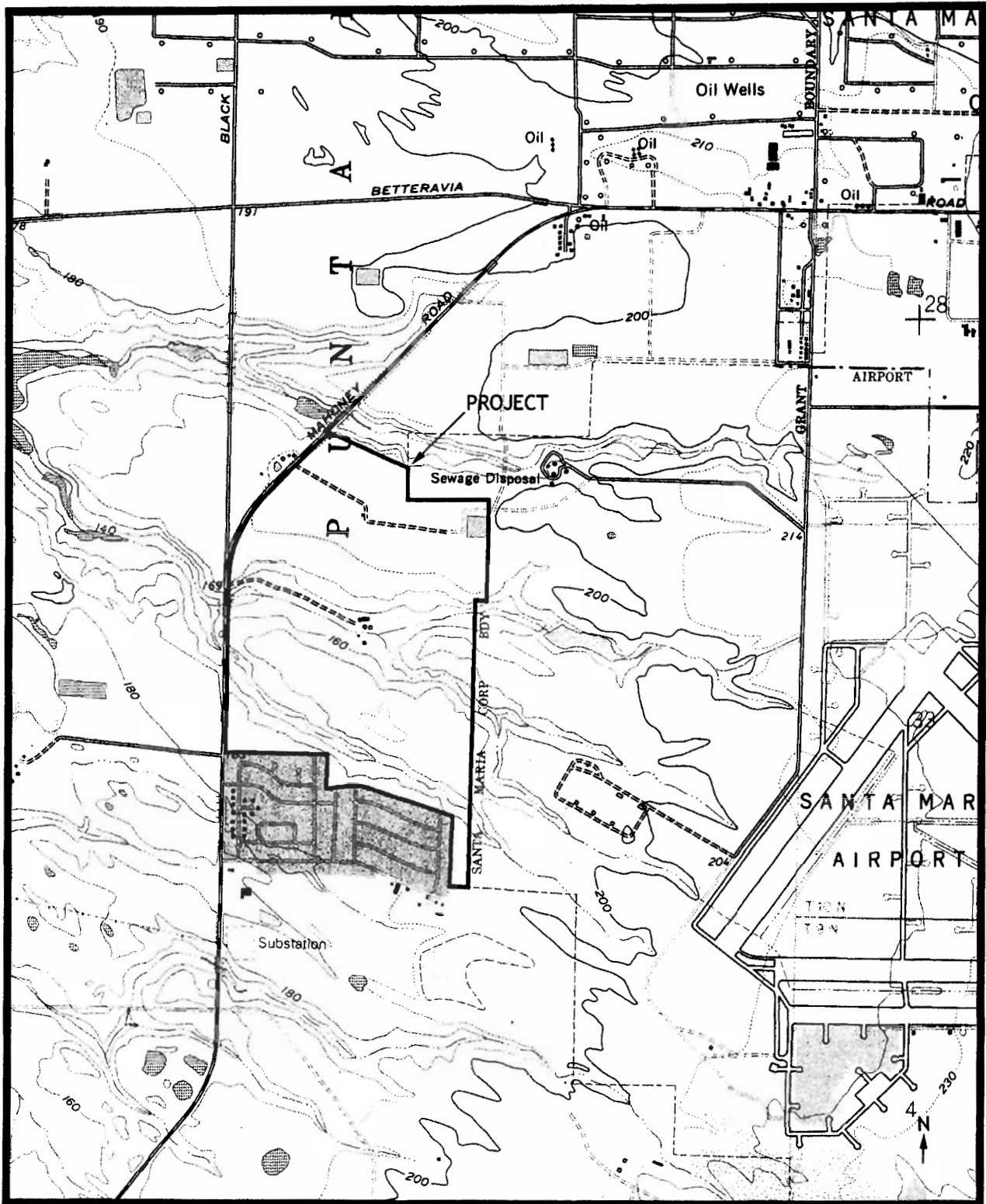


Figure 1: Project location on Santa Maria, CA. 1:24 000 USGS quadrangle.

9.0 APPENDIX A: ARCHIVAL RECORDS SEARCH



1/5/2005

David S. Whitley
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Dear Dr. Whitley

Enclosed are the results of the record search you requested for the Mahoney Ranch Project. Our records were searched for all known archaeological sites, historic resources, and previous cultural resource surveys within a 1/8 mile radius of the project area.

In this search, zero archaeological site(s) and zero previous cultural resource survey(s) were found. The survey locations were mapped in colored pencil onto portions of the Santa Maria quad(s). A bibliography of these surveys is included. A search of the inventories for the State Historic Property Data Files, National Register of Historic Places, National Register of Determined Eligible Properties, California Historical Landmarks, California Points of Historic Interest, California OHP Archaeological Determinations of Eligibility, and the Caltrans State and Local Bridge Surveys yielded zero property evaluation(s) within the search radius.

According to our records, the project area has not been surveyed. Therefore a cultural resource survey is recommended.

Please contact me if you have any questions about this search.

Sincerely,

Christopher Pollock

Christopher Pollock
Assistant Coordinator