

## 5.5 Cultural Resources

This section addresses the potential impacts of the Proposed Project and alternatives on cultural resources. Cultural resources include prehistoric and historic sites, structures, districts, places, and landscapes, or any other physical evidence associated with human activity considered important to a culture, a subculture, or a community for scientific, traditional, religious or any other reason. Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), paleontological resources, although not associated with past human activity, are grouped within cultural resources. For the purposes of this analysis, cultural resources may be categorized into the following groups: archaeological resources, historic resources (including architectural/engineering resources), contemporary Native American resources, human remains, and paleontological resources.

Archaeological resources are places where human activity has measurably altered the earth or left deposits of physical remains. Archaeological resources may be either prehistoric-era (before European contact) or historic-era (after European contact). The majority of such places in California are associated with either Native American or Euro-American occupation of the area. The most frequently encountered prehistoric or historic Native American archaeological sites are village settlements with residential areas and sometimes cemeteries; temporary camps where food and raw materials were collected; smaller, briefly occupied sites where tools were manufactured or repaired; and special-use areas like caves, rock shelters, and rock art sites. Historic-era archaeological sites may include foundations or features such as privies, corrals, and trash dumps.

Historic resources include standing structures, infrastructure, and landscapes of historic or aesthetic significance that are generally 50 years of age or older. In California, historic resources considered for protection tend to focus on architectural sites dating from the Spanish Period (1529-1822) through World War II (WWII) and Post War era facilities. Some resources, however, may have achieved significance within the past 50 years if they meet the criteria for exceptional significance. Historic resources are often associated with archaeological deposits of the same age.

Contemporary Native American resources, also called ethnographic resources, can include archaeological resources, rock art, and the prominent topographical areas, features, habitats, plants, animals, and minerals that contemporary Native Americans value and consider essential for the preservation of their traditional values. These locations are sometimes hard to define and traditional culture often prohibits Native Americans from sharing these locations with the public.

Paleontology is a branch of geology that studies the life forms of the past, especially prehistoric life forms, through the study of plant and animal fossils. Paleontological resources represent a limited, non-renewable, and impact-sensitive scientific and educational resource. As defined in this section, paleontological resources are the fossilized remains or traces of multi-cellular invertebrate and vertebrate animals and multi-cellular plants, including their imprints from a previous geologic period. Fossil remains such as bones, teeth, shells, and leaves are found in the geologic deposits (rock formations) where they were originally buried. Paleontological resources include not only the actual fossil remains, but also the collecting localities, and the geologic formations containing those localities.

## 5.5.1 Setting

### Geographic Setting

As discussed in detail in Section 5.7, *Geology and Soils*, the study area is located within the western Transverse Ranges geomorphic province. The Transverse Ranges are characterized by west-east trending mountain ranges and ridges separated by intervening valleys.

The Proposed Project alignment traverses from north to south across the Little Simi Valley, over the Las Posas Hills, across the Santa Rosa Valley, and through the Calleguas Hills. The northern portion of the Proposed Project area is fairly level and is characterized by developed and disturbed landforms, while the southern portion is less developed and more rugged. Elevations range from 420 to 1,150 feet above mean sea level. The Arroyo Simi, which flows southwest through the Little Simi Valley, and Conejo Creek, which flows through the Santa Rosa Valley and through the Calleguas Hills, are the most significant drainages in the vicinity of the Proposed Project.

While the northern portion of the Proposed Project area is developed or covered by non-native plants, prehistorically it would have supported several native plant communities, including native grassland on the valley floor, coastal sage scrub on the lower and drier hill slopes, and chaparral at higher elevations and on north-facing slopes. Animals once present within the area included bear, mountain lions, bobcats, badgers, coyotes, mule deer, and gray foxes (Schmidt, 2007).

### Cultural Setting

#### *Prehistoric Setting*

It is not definitively known when human habitation in California first began, though radiocarbon dates from the Arlington Springs Woman site on Santa Rosa Island prove a human presence in the region by about 13,000 years before present (B.P.) (Glassow et al., 2007). This first period of human occupation, often referred to as the Paleoindian Period, is characterized by small groups of nomadic hunter-gatherers. The Paleoindian assemblage included a limited collection of rough and simplistic tool types, each used for multiple tasks or purposes; key artifacts within the later Paleoindian Period assemblage are fluted projectile points. Evidence from the Surf site near the mouth of the Santa Ynez River indicates that earliest inhabitants of the Santa Barbara Channel area collected shellfish and produced flake tools using local chert (Glassow et al., 2007).

After about 9,000 years B.P., a shift in subsistence and settlement strategies occurred, illustrating the abandonment of Paleoindian traditions for a more diverse exploitation of a broader natural environment, including a more successful utilization of coastal chaparral zones. The population of the Santa Barbara Channel area began to expand at this time and occupation seems to have concentrated along the coast, although this pattern could in fact be related to a lack of well-preserved inland sites (Glassow et al., 2007).

Milling equipment is first observed in the archaeological record by about 7,500 years B.P., a period identified as the Millingstone Horizon (Glassow et al., 2007). Archaeologically the

Millingstone Horizon is identified by a more diversified stone tool assemblage and included fine-worked projectile points, a large number of milling slabs, as well as ornamental and ceremonial objects. By 6,000 years B.P., mortars and pestles began to appear in household assemblages. This may signify an increased dependence on new food sources such as acorns and starchy tubers. Increases in shell beads, ritual objects, changing mortuary practices, and evidence of increasing trade across the channel between the islands and the mainland, all point to a corresponding increase in social complexity between 7,000 and 4,000 years B.P. Little is known about the social organization of Millingstone groups, but available evidence indicates that they likely consisted of small extended family groups with minimal social differentiation or political leadership (Glassow et al., 2007).

Between 4,000 and 2,000 years B.P., new technologies such as the use of asphaltum (tar), net weights, and fishhooks came into use, suggesting an intensification in fishing and coastal trade and a focus on a maritime economy (Glassow et al., 2007). In addition, the mortar and pestle came into wide use, indicating a greater variety of plant foods were utilized. Increasing population densities and numbers of permanent settlements along the coast after 500 B.C. led to competition for resources and increased socioeconomic differentiation. Coastal sites of this period contain substantial midden deposits and cemeteries that were in use for long periods of time, reflecting this population trend (Glassow et al., 2007).

Two important technological advances were achieved around 500 Anno Domini (A.D.): the introduction of the *tomol* (wooden plank canoe) and the bow and arrow. The *tomol*, which may have been developed as early as 500 A.D., allowed for passage into deeper waters, facilitating trade and the procurement of large fish and sea mammals (King, 1990; Glassow et al., 2007). The bow and arrow, also adopted around 500 A.D. as it was in other regions of California, was used both to hunt large game as well as in inter-group warfare. By the time the Spanish arrived in the 16th century, the Chumash people (the ethnographically documented culture of the Santa Barbara Channel) had developed a complex culture with a ranked society, complex trade networks, and a monetary economy based on shell beads. At that time, the Chumash had the most complex political and economic system in all of western North America (Glassow et al., 2007).

### ***Ethnographic Setting***

The primary ethnographic group present in the Proposed Project area at the time of Spanish contact was the Chumash. Kroeber (1925) identified the Chumash as “predominantly a coast people” that “were more nearly maritime in their habits than any other Californian group.” Chumash territory included the Topanga and Malibu areas in the south, north to the approximate location of Morro Bay and east across the coastal range toward the San Joaquin Valley. Several of the northern Channel Islands were also included within Chumash territory. The Proposed Project area lies within the southern end of Ventureño Chumash, near the border with the Fernandeano Gabrielino to the south. Five Chumash villages were known to have existed in the area, named *Shumpashi*, *Shimiyi* (Simi), *Lalimanuc*, *Kayiwish*, and *S’apwi* (King, 1975). Chumash society consisted of tribal groups lead by a single chief who was responsible for the management and distribution of tribal resources. The nearest village to the Proposed Project area was S’apwi, which may have been located north of present-day Newbury Park (King and Parsons, 2000).

Chumash settlement sites included established village sites with large, circular residential huts of willow or pole construction and covered with tule mats or thatch. Also present within a Chumash village was a large ceremonial lodge or sweathouse. Along with more permanently settled villages, temporary short-term camps were established by the Chumash for use during resource foraging excursions.

The Chumash represented a complex society with a strict social order, with a well-established and prosperous system of trade, and standardized money exchange in the form of shell beads. With settlements along the Channel Islands, the Chumash were master maritime navigators, having developed the *tomol*, wooden plank canoes, to ferry people and trade goods between the islands and the mainland. Other key cultural items representative of the Chumash are finely crafted basketry of all forms, sizes, and decorations. Chumash peoples made use of their diverse environment, capitalizing upon a wide range of natural and animal resources for food and as raw material for the crafting of function tools and non-functional, ornamental items (Kroeber, 1925). Burial practices of the Chumash involve mourning ceremonies and permanent cemeteries near to villages. Personal items of the deceased as well as other offerings or objects were typically placed into the grave, prior to the completion of burial.

### ***Historic Period***

Although Spanish explorers made brief visits to the region in 1542 and 1602, sustained contact with Europeans did not commence until the onset of the Spanish Period. In 1769, Gaspar de Portolá led an expedition from San Diego, passing through the Los Angeles Basin, San Fernando Valley, and Santa Clarita Valley on its way to the San Francisco Bay (McCawley, 1996). This was followed in 1776 by the expedition of Father Francisco Garcés and the expedition of Juan Bautista de Anza in 1775 and 1776 (Johnson and Earle, 1990). A member of this expedition, Santiago Pico, received a grant of 113,000 acres, El Rancho Simi, in 1795. Other Spanish land grants within the area include Rancho Conejo, Rancho Las Posas, and Rancho Callueguas (Schmidt et al., 2008). These four land grants meet at a point near the Proposed Project alignment.

In the late 18th century, the Spanish began establishing missions in California and forcibly relocating and converting native peoples. Mission San Buenaventura (established 1782) and Mission San Fernando (established 1797) were the nearest missions to the Proposed Project area (Schmidt et al., 2008). The Ventureño Chumash were primarily sent to Mission San Buenaventura. Disease and hard labor took a toll on the native population in California; by 1900, the Native Californian population had declined by as much as 90 percent (Cook, 1978). In addition, native economies were disrupted, trade routes were interrupted, and native ways of life were significantly altered.

By the early 1800s Spanish control over the area known as Alta California was weakening, eventually leading to the establishment of the independent Republic of Mexico in 1821. Mexico continued to promote settlement of California with the issuance of land grants. In 1833, Mexico began the process of secularizing the missions, reclaiming the majority of mission lands, and redistributing them as land grants. In 1846, the Mexican-American War broke out. Mexican forces were eventually defeated and Mexico ceded California to the United States as part of the

Treaty of Guadalupe Hildalgo in 1848. California officially became one of the United States in 1850 (Starr, 2007).

When the discovery of gold in northern California was announced in 1848, a huge influx of people from other parts of North America flooded into California. The first transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, connecting San Francisco with the eastern United States. Newcomers poured into northern California (Starr, 2007). Southern California experienced a trickle-down effect, as many of these newcomers made their way south. The Southern Pacific Railroad extended this line from San Francisco to Los Angeles in 1876. The second transcontinental line, the Santa Fe, was completed in 1886 and caused a fare war, driving fares to an unprecedented low and encouraging large numbers of people to immigrate to Southern California. During the first three decades of the 20th century, more than 2 million people moved to Southern California, transforming it from a largely agricultural region into a major metropolitan area (Starr, 2007).

The Moorpark and Conejo Valley areas remained largely rural and agricultural through the 1950s. The City of Moorpark was first settled in 1887 but was not incorporated until 1983 (City of Moorpark, 2014). The city now has a population of 34,000. The City of Thousand Oaks, which includes the community of Newbury Park, was incorporated in 1964 and now has more than 127,000 residents (City of Thousand Oaks, 2014).

## **Studies and Investigations**

Three cultural resources studies have been conducted in connection with the Proposed Project, including a Phase I cultural resources study of tower locations (Schmidt, 2007), an Extended Phase I investigation (Schmidt et al., 2008), and a Phase I study of guard structure and stringing site locations (Ramirez and Hunt, 2015).

### **Records Search**

Records searches were conducted through the South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) in 2007 (Schmidt, 2007). The records searches included an examination of previous cultural resources survey coverage, reports, and known cultural resources within a 0.25-mile radius of the Proposed Project alignment. Documentation reviewed included survey and evaluation reports, archaeological site records, historic maps, the California Points of Historical Interest, the California Historical Landmarks, the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), and the California State Historic Resources Inventory listings.

The SCCIC records searches show 28 previously conducted studies within the 0.25-mile search radius, of which 17 overlap a portion of the Proposed Project alignment. No cultural resources have been previously recorded within the 0.25-mile records search radius.

### ***Native American Contact***

The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) conducted a search in late 2007 of the Sacred Lands File (SLF) in order to identify cultural resources or areas of concern to Native Americans within the Proposed Project vicinity. The NAHC's search of the SLF "failed to indicate the presence of Native American cultural resources in the immediate project area." The NAHC also provided a list of 11 Native American individuals or organizations that may have knowledge of cultural resources in the Proposed Project area (Schmidt, 2007).

Correspondence was conducted with all individuals and groups indicated by the NAHC as having affiliation with the Proposed Project site. Correspondence consisted of letters sent by Southern California Edison (SCE) on December 11, 2007, describing the Moorpark-Newbury 66 kV Subtransmission Line project and a map showing the Proposed Project area. Recipients were invited to reply with any information they could share about Native American resources that might be affected by the Proposed Project. To date, one response has been received from the Owl Clan, expressing concern for Chumash cultural sites within and near the Proposed Project area.

A second NAHC inquiry was made by SCE in November 2012. The NAHC provided a list of 22 Native American individuals or organizations that may have knowledge of cultural resources in the Proposed Project area, of which ten had been previously contacted in 2007. SCE sent letters to all 22 individuals or organizations on the NAHC's list. One response has been received to date. Ms. Isabella Ayala, the Ventura County Regional Representative from the Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation, requested that she be contacted if the Proposed Project would impact Native American cultural resources.

### ***Pedestrian Survey***

A cultural resources pedestrian survey was conducted in the Proposed Project area in 2007 (Schmidt, 2007). Areas surveyed included proposed lay down areas; the originally proposed access roads that required improvement; and a 100-foot diameter area around each pole location. In addition, a 100-foot-wide corridor was surveyed in the Santa Rosa Valley between pole location 20 and pole location 26. Moorpark Substation and Newbury Substation were not surveyed, as these sites are highly disturbed.

The 2007 pedestrian survey identified three previously unidentified prehistoric archaeological resources, two of which could have been impacted by past project activities (P-56-100196, a prehistoric lithic scatter, and P-56-001797, prehistoric lithic scatter and midden described in detail in the *Cultural Resources within the Proposed Project Area* discussion below). Extended Phase I subsurface archaeological investigations were conducted at each of the two sites located within the Proposed Project area. These investigations included excavation of surface scrapes, shovel test pits, one 1x1 meter controlled excavation unit at P-56-001797, and mapping of each of the resource areas (Schmidt et al., 2008). A Native American monitor was present during the archaeological investigations. The results of the extended Phase 1 subsurface archaeological investigations are presented in the *Cultural Resources within the Proposed Project Area* discussion below.

A cultural resources survey of 14 proposed guard structure locations and the stringing site adjacent to pole location 35 was conducted in 2014 (Ramirez and Hunt, 2015). The sites were surveyed using transects spaced no more than two meters apart. No cultural resources were documented.

### ***Cultural Resources within the Proposed Project Area***

Resource P56-100196 (MN-1) was recorded as a sparse flake scatter with a few fragments of marine shell (Schmidt, 2007). The Extended Phase I investigation found that the site was disturbed and did not contain a subsurface component (Schmidt et al., 2008). As such, the site was recommended not eligible for inclusion in the CRHR or local registers and is not considered a historical resource or unique archaeological resource under CEQA.

P56-001797 (MN-2, CA-VEN-1797) was originally recorded as a sparse flake scatter with a variety of material types and fire-altered rock in midden soil (Schmidt, 2007). The Extended Phase I investigation revealed that P-56-001797 contained a subsurface component between 0 and 80 centimeters below the surface (Schmidt et al., 2008). Artifacts recorded during the Extended Phase I investigation included a biface tool, cores, fragments of faunal bone, and carbonized plant remains. Excavation also revealed a prehistoric feature consisting of a dense concentration of fire-affected rocks, charcoal, and ashy soil. The feature covered an area approximately 12 meters in diameter and was 50 to 60 centimeters thick. Radiocarbon analysis of two charcoal samples recovered from the feature resulted in dates of approximately 950 and 1,250 years B.P. Based on this, resource P-56-001797 was recommended eligible for the CRHR under Criterion 4 (potential to yield information important to prehistory or history) and is considered a historical resources under CEQA.

### **Paleontological Setting**

This section summarizes the environmental setting from a paleontological perspective, both regionally and specific to the Proposed Project area, including presence of potentially fossiliferous geologic units and nearby known paleontological resources.

As described in Section 5.7, *Geology and Soils*, the geologic units present along the Proposed Project alignment include Quaternary alluvium, the Saugus Formation, the Las Posas Sand, the Sespe Formation, and the Conejo volcanics. Holocene (less than 11,000 B.P.) and Late Pleistocene (11,000 to 1.8 million years B.P.) alluvium is present in the Little Simi Valley and Holocene alluvium is present in the Santa Rosa Valley. These poorly consolidated silt, sand, and gravel deposits were emplaced along modern drainages and alluvial fans and floodplains. Because this unit spans both the Holocene and Pleistocene epochs, the paleontological sensitivity varies with depth. Paleontologic resources are generally those older than 5,000 years B.P., so more recent Holocene age alluvium by definition does not contain paleontological resources. Fossils from Pleistocene alluvial sediments are well represented throughout the Transverse Ranges. According to University of California Museum of Paleontology (UCMP) records, Quaternary fossils from Ventura County include birds, horses, bison, seal, and mammoth. Alluvial deposits are present along portions of Proposed Project Segments 1 and 2.

The Saugus Formation (rocks 2.6 million years to 10,000 years old) is composed of loosely consolidated nonmarine sandstone, conglomerate, and siltstone. UCMP does not indicate record of vertebrate fossils in the Saugus Formation. The Saugus Formation is exposed in the Las Posas Hills along Segment 2.

The Las Posas Sand (rocks aged 5.3 to 2.6 million years) consists of weakly indurated fine to medium grained sand exposed in the hills flanking Little Simi Valley. The UCMP has one record of a horse tooth fossil found in the Las Posas Sand in Ventura County. A short section of Segment 2 traverses the Las Posas Sand in the Las Posas Hills.

The Sespe Formation consists of nonmarine sandstone, pebbly sandstone, and claystone deposited by streams in the Oligocene (23 to 33 million years B.P.). In Ventura County, the UCMP contains records of many mammals, including anteaters, ungulates (like deer), clawed herbivores, large-toothed cats, as well as reptiles and birds. A short section of Segment 2 crosses the Sespe Formation in the Las Posas Hills, just south of a proposed stringing site.

The Conejo Volcanics are generally andesitic and basaltic igneous rocks of mid-Miocene age (most were deposited between 13 and 16 million years ago; Yerkes and Campbell, 1979). Igneous rocks have very low likelihood of containing paleontological resources. UCMP collections do not indicate any record of vertebrate fossils from the Conejo Volcanics in California. The Conejo Volcanics are exposed along Segments 2, 3, and 4.

The UCMP maintains a collection of fossil and modern organisms from all over the world, and has a catalog available to the public. A locality search (a search for fossil records in a specific location and formation) was conducted using the UCMP online catalog. The results are included in **Table 5.5-1, Fossil Records Search Results for the Proposed Project Area**, below (UCMP, 2014).

**TABLE 5.5-1  
 FOSSIL RECORDS SEARCH RESULTS FOR THE PROPOSED PROJECT AREA**

<b>Geologic Unit</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Typical Fossil Types</b>	<b>Paleontological Resource Potential*</b>	<b>Proposed Project Segment</b>
Quaternary alluvium	Quaternary	Vertebrates, Invertebrates	Varies with depth (low to high)	Segments 1 and 2
Saugus Formation	Pleistocene, Pliocene	Invertebrates	Low	Segment 2
Las Posas Sand	Pleistocene, Pliocene	Invertebrates, Vertebrates	Low	Segment 2
Sespe Formation	Oligocene	Vertebrates, Invertebrates	High	Segment 2
Conejo Volcanics	Miocene	None	Low	Segments 2, 3, and 4

\* Based on the sensitivity criteria established by the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (SVP, 1995).

SOURCE: UCMP, 2014



## Regulatory Setting

Federal, state, and local governments have developed laws and regulations designed to protect significant cultural resources that may be affected by actions that they undertake or regulate. The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and CEQA are the primary federal and state laws governing preservation of historic and archaeological resources of national, regional, state, and local significance.

### *Federal*

#### **National Historic Preservation Act of 1966**

Enacted in 1966, the NHPA declared a national policy of historic preservation and instituted a multifaceted program, administered by the Secretary of the Interior, to encourage the achievement of preservation goals at the federal, state, and local levels. Section 106 of the NHPA states that federal agencies with direct or indirect jurisdiction over federally funded, assisted, or licensed undertakings must take into account the effect of the undertaking on any historic property that is included in, or eligible for inclusion in, the NRHP, and that the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation must be afforded an opportunity to comment. The steps of the Section 106 process are accomplished through consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office, federally-recognized Indian tribes, local governments, and other interested parties. The goal of consultation is to identify potentially affected historic properties, assess effects to such properties, and seek ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate any adverse effects on such properties.

#### **National Register of Historic Places**

The NRHP was established by the NHPA of 1966, as “an authoritative guide to be used by federal, state, and local governments, private groups and citizens to identify the Nation’s historic resources and to indicate what properties should be considered for protection from destruction or impairment” (Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 36 §60.2). The NRHP recognizes both historical-period and prehistoric archaeological properties that are significant at the national, state, and local levels.

To be eligible for listing in the NRHP, a resource must be significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture. Districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects of potential significance must meet one or more of the following four established criteria (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1995):

- A. Are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- B. Are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- C. 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. Have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Unless the property possesses exceptional significance, it must be at least 50 years old to be eligible for NRHP listing (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1995).

In addition to meeting the criteria of significance, a property must have integrity. Integrity is defined as “the ability of a property to convey its significance” (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1995). The NRHP recognizes the following seven qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. To retain historic integrity a property must possess several, and usually most, of these seven aspects. Thus, the retention of the specific aspects of integrity is paramount for a property to convey its significance.

### **Paleontological Resources**

A variety of federal statutes specifically address paleontological resources. They are generally applicable to a project if that project includes federally-owned or federally-managed lands, or involves a federal agency license, permit, approval, or funding. Federal legislative protection for paleontological resources stems from the Antiquities Act of 1906 (PL 59-209; 16 United States Code 431 et. seq.; 34 Stat. 225), which calls for protection of historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest on federal lands.

## **State**

### **California Register of Historical Resources**

Under the California Public Resources Code, Section 5024.19(a), the CRHR was created in 1992 and implemented in 1998 as “an authoritative guide in California to be used by state and local agencies, private groups, and citizens to identify the state’s historical resources and to indicate what properties are to be protected, to the extent prudent and feasible, from substantial adverse change.” Certain properties, including those listed in or formally determined eligible for listing in the NRHP and California Historical Landmarks that number over 1,000, are automatically included in the CRHR. Other properties recognized under the California Points of Historical Interest program, identified as significant in historical resources surveys or designated by local landmarks programs, may be nominated for inclusion in the CRHR. A resource, either an individual property or a contributor to a historic district, may be listed in the CRHR if the State Historical Resources Commission determines that it meets one or more of the following criteria, which are modeled on NRHP criteria:

- **Criterion 1.** It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California’s history and cultural heritage.
- **Criterion 2.** It is associated with the lives of persons important in our past.
- **Criterion 3.** It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction; represents the work of an important creative individual; or possesses high artistic values.
- **Criterion 4.** It has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.

Furthermore, under Public Resources Code (PRC) 5024.1, Title 14 California Code of Regulations (CCR), Section 4852(c), a cultural resource must retain integrity to be considered eligible for the CRHR. Specifically, it must retain sufficient character or appearance to be recognizable as a historical resource and convey reasons of significance. Integrity is evaluated with regard to retention of such factors as location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

### **California Environmental Quality Act**

CEQA is the principal statute governing environmental review of projects occurring in the state and is codified at PRC Section 21000 et seq. CEQA requires lead agencies to determine if a project would have a significant effect on the environment, including significant effects on historical or archaeological resources.

Under CEQA (§21084.1), a project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment. The CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 CCR §15064.5) recognize that a historical resource includes: (1) a resource listed in, or determined to be eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission, for listing in the CRHR; (2) a resource included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in PRC Section 5020.1(k) or identified as significant in a historical resource survey meeting the requirements of PRC Section 5024.1(g); and (3) any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California by the lead agency, provided the lead agency's determination is supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record. The fact that a resource does not meet the three criteria outlined above does not preclude the lead agency from determining that the resource may be a historical resource as defined in PRC Sections 5020.1(j) or 5024.1.

If a lead agency determines that an archaeological site is a historical resource, the provisions of Section 21084.1 of CEQA and Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines apply. If a project may cause a substantial adverse change (defined as physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of a historical resource would be materially impaired) in the significance of a historical resource, the lead agency must identify potentially feasible measures to mitigate these effects (CEQA Guidelines §§15064.5(b)(1) and 15064.5(b)(4)).

If an archaeological site does not meet the historical resource criteria contained in the CEQA Guidelines, then the site may be treated in accordance with the provisions of Section 21083, as a unique archaeological resource. As defined in Section 21083.2 of CEQA a "unique" archaeological resource is an archaeological artifact, object, or site, for which it can be clearly demonstrated that without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that it meets any of the following criteria:

- Contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and there is a demonstrable public interest in that information;

- Has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type; or
- Is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.

If an archaeological site meets the criteria for a unique archaeological resource as defined in Section 21083.2, then the site is to be treated in accordance with the provisions of Section 21083.2, which state that if the lead agency determines that a project would have a significant effect on unique archaeological resources, the lead agency may require reasonable efforts be made to permit any or all of these resources to be preserved in place (§21083.1(a)). If preservation in place is not feasible, mitigation measures shall be required.

The CEQA Guidelines note that if an archaeological resource is neither a unique archaeological nor a historical resource, the effects of a project on those resources shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment (CEQA Guidelines §15064.5(c)(4)).

### **Paleontological Resources**

Paleontological resources are explicitly afforded protection by CEQA, specifically in Section V(c) of Appendix G, the “Environmental Checklist Form,” which addresses the potential for adverse impacts to “unique paleontological resource[s] or site[s].” Public Resources Code Chapter 1.7 (§§5097 through 5097.7), *Archaeological, Paleontological, and Historical Sites*, defines any unauthorized disturbance or removal of a fossil site or remains on public land as a misdemeanor and specifies that state agencies may undertake surveys, excavations, or other operations as necessary on state lands to preserve or record paleontological resources (PRC §5097.5). California Penal Code Section 622.5 sets the penalties for the damage or removal of paleontological resources.

### **Professional Paleontologist Standards**

The Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (SVP) has established guidelines for the identification, assessment, and mitigation of adverse impacts on nonrenewable paleontological resources (SVP, 1995). Practicing paleontologists in the nation adhere to the SVP’s assessment, mitigation, and monitoring requirements as outlined in these guidelines, which were approved through a consensus of professional paleontologists. The SVP defines the value of paleontological resources and in particular, states the following:

- Vertebrate fossils and fossiliferous deposits are considered significant nonrenewable paleontological resources, and are afforded protection by federal, state, and local environmental laws and guidelines.
- A paleontological resource is considered to be older than recorded history or 5,000 years before present and should not be confused with archaeological resource sites.
- Invertebrate fossils are not significant paleontological resources, unless they are present with an assemblage of vertebrate fossils or they provide undiscovered information on the origin and character of the plant species, past climatic conditions or the age of the rock unit itself.

- Certain plant or invertebrate fossils may be designated as significant by a project paleontologist, special interest group, lead agency or local government.

With these principles, the SVP (1995) has outlined criteria for screening the paleontological potential<sup>1</sup> of rock units and established assessment and mitigation procedures tailored to such potential. **Table 5.5-2, *Paleontological Potential Criteria***, lists the criteria for high-potential, undetermined, and low-potential rock units.

**TABLE 5.5-2  
PALEONTOLOGICAL POTENTIAL CRITERIA**

Paleontological Potential	Description
High	Geologic units from which vertebrate or significant invertebrate or plant fossils have been recovered in the past, or rock formations that would be lithologically and temporally suitable for the preservation of fossils. Only invertebrate fossils that provide new information on existing flora or fauna or on the age of a rock unit would be considered significant.
Undetermined	Geologic units for which little to no information is available.
Low	Geologic units that are not known to have produced a substantial body of significant paleontological material, as demonstrated by paleontological literature and prior field surveys, and which are poorly represented in institutional collections.

SOURCE: SVP, 1995.

### **Local**

California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) General Order No. 131-D explains that local land use regulations would not apply to the Proposed Project. However, for informational purposes, the goals and policies of local general plans and other planning documents pertaining to cultural resources that would otherwise be relevant to the Proposed Project and alternatives are described below.

### **Ventura County**

Specific goals and policies within the current General Plan for the County of Ventura that apply to cultural resources include (County of Ventura, 2013):

*Goal 1.8.1 (1):* Identify, inventory, preserve and protect the paleontological and cultural resources of Ventura County (including archaeological, historical and Native American resources) for their scientific, educational and cultural value.

*Goal 1.8.1 (2):* Enhance cooperation with cities, special districts, other appropriate organizations, and private landowners in acknowledging and preserving the County's paleontological and cultural resources.

<sup>1</sup> Paleontological potential refers to the likelihood that a rock unit will yield a unique or significant paleontological resource.

*Policy 1.8.2 (1):* Discretionary developments shall be assessed for potential paleontological and cultural resource impacts, except when exempt from such requirements by CEQA. Such assessments shall be incorporated into a countywide paleontological and cultural resource data base.

*Policy 1.8.2 (2):* Discretionary development shall be designed or re-designed to avoid potential impacts to significant paleontological or cultural resources whenever possible. Unavoidable impacts, whenever possible, shall be reduced to a less than significant level and/or shall be mitigated by extracting maximum recoverable data. Determinations of impacts, significance and mitigation shall be made by qualified archaeological (in consultation with recognized local Native American groups), historical or paleontological consultants, depending on the type of resource in question.

*Policy 1.8.2 (3):* Mitigation of significant impacts on cultural or paleontological resources shall follow the Guidelines of the State Office of Historic Preservation, the State Native American Heritage Commission, and shall be performed in consultation with professionals in their respective areas of expertise.

*Policy 1.8.2 (4):* Confidentiality regarding locations of archaeological sites throughout the County shall be maintained in order to preserve and protect these resources from vandalism and the unauthorized removal of artifacts.

*Policy 1.8.2 (5):* During environmental review of discretionary development the reviewing agency shall be responsible for identifying sites having potential archaeological, architectural or historical significance and this information shall be provided to the County Cultural Heritage Board for evaluation.

### **City of Moorpark**

The City of Moorpark's Municipal Code (Chapter 15.36) provides for the identification, protection, enhancement, and use of historic landmarks within the city. It establishes a historical preservation commission, establishes procedures for the designation of local historic landmarks, and requires approval for alteration of such landmarks.

### **City of Thousand Oaks**

The City of Thousand Oaks Cultural Heritage Ordinance (Ordinance No. 265-NS) creates a cultural heritage board and defines standards for listing as a historical, cultural, and natural landmark.

The City of Thousand Oaks General Plan contains the following goal, policies, and implementation measures concerning cultural resources:

*Goal:* The City shall preserve and protect archaeological resources for future generations and the Conejo Valley's cultural heritage.

*Policy CO-32:* All information or maps on file with the City pertaining to the location of previously recorded archaeological sites within the Thousand Oaks Planning Area shall remain confidential unless specifically authorized to be released to the public by the local Native American Indian Council.

*Policy CO-33:* Management of cultural resources such as archaeological sites, historic structures or places shall emphasize resource protection and preservation.

*Policy CO-34:* The preferred method for preserving any previously recorded archeological site shall be by deed restriction as permanent "open space", in order to prevent any future development or use that might otherwise adversely impact these resources.

*Policy CO-35:* Decisions pertaining to the disposition of archaeological, historical and cultural resources shall be made in concert with recognized public agencies, groups or individuals having jurisdiction, expertise or interest in these matters, including but not limited to the State Office of Historic Preservation, Thousand Oaks Cultural Heritage Board and local Native American Indian Council, including other designated representatives and affected property owners.

*Implementation Measure 1:* Continue to conduct archaeological field surveys as deemed to be necessary, while utilizing comprehensive resource management procedures to test, salvage, stabilize and store locally excavated artifacts.

*Implementation Measure 2:* Support the efforts of local citizens, appointed committees or other designated public agencies and private institutions that are working to conserve archaeological and historic resources. Full public discussion shall be encouraged prior to any action being taken.

## 5.5.2 Significance Criteria

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project would result in significant cultural resources effects on the environment if it would:

- a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5;
- b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a unique archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5;
- c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature; or
- d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.

CEQA provides that a project may cause a significant environmental effect where the project could result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource (PRC §21084.1). CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 defines a "substantial adverse change" in the significance of a historical resource to mean physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of a historical resource would be "materially impaired" (CEQA Guidelines §15064.5[b][1]).

CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b)(2), defines that the significance of a historic resources is "materially impaired" when a project:

- (A) Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion in, or eligibility for, inclusion in the CRHR; or

- (B) Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics that account for its inclusion in a local register of historical resources pursuant to Section 5020.1(k) of the PRC or its identification in an historical resources survey meeting the requirements of Section 5024.1(g) of the PRC, unless the public agency reviewing the effects of the project establishes by a preponderance of evidence that the resource is not historically or culturally significant; or
- (C) Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of a historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its eligibility for inclusion in the CRHR as determined by a lead agency for purposes of CEQA.

### 5.5.3 Applicant Proposed Measures

SCE proposes the following applicant proposed measures (APMs) to minimize impacts to cultural resources from the Proposed Project. The impact analysis assumes that the following APMs related to cultural resources would be implemented as discussed below.

**APM CUL-1: Cultural and Paleontological Resources.** A cultural resources survey of the project area was conducted prior to past construction activities. Additionally, a number of physical protection and impact avoidance measures were implemented prior to, and during, past construction activities. These activities would also be implemented prior to, and during, future construction activities:

- Physically isolate within an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) one cultural resource discovered during previous surveys. The ESA is an area in which construction activities are prohibited, and from which construction workers are excluded.
- Utilize an archaeological monitor on site during ground disturbing activity in the vicinity of identified archaeological resources.
- Conduct a preconstruction meeting to orient construction crews to sensitive areas prior to any ground disturbing activity within the vicinity of identified archaeological resources.
- Should cultural material that may yield sensitive information be uncovered during construction, then all work within a 15-meter radius of the discovery will be halted until the find is evaluated by a qualified archaeologist. In the case of unearthing human remains during excavation, no further disturbance occurs until the County Coroner makes the necessary findings as to origin and distribution, pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. (No cultural material or human remains were uncovered during past construction activities).
- If construction is halted because of an archaeological discovery, no work begins within that area until written notification from a qualified archaeologist is given to the Project Manager or construction foreman.

**APM CUL-2: Unanticipated Discoveries.** If previously unidentified cultural resources are discovered during construction, personnel would suspend work in the vicinity of the find. The resource would then be evaluated for listing in the CRHR by a qualified archaeologist, and, if the resource is determined to be eligible for listing in the CRHR, the resource would either be avoided or appropriate archaeological protective measures would be implemented.



If human remains are uncovered during project construction, SCE and/or its contractors shall immediately halt all work in the immediate area, contact the applicable County Coroner to evaluate the remains, and follow the procedures and protocols set forth in Section 15064.5 (e)(1) of the CEQA Guidelines. Per Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, upon the discovery of human remains, there shall be no further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent remains. If the applicable County Coroner determines that the remains are Native American, it is anticipated that the Coroner would contact the Native American Heritage Commission in accordance with Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5(c) and Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 (as amended by AB 2641). In addition, SCE shall ensure that the immediate vicinity where the Native American human remains are located is not damaged or disturbed by further development activity until SCE has discussed and conferred, as prescribed in Public Resource Code Section 5097.98, with the most likely descendant regarding their recommendations.

**APM CUL-3: Paleontological Resources Protection.** To protect paleontological resources, SCE would implement procedures including, but not limited to: preconstruction coordination; recommended monitoring methods; emergency discovery procedures; sampling and data recovery methods, if needed; museum storage coordination for any specimens and data recovered; and reporting requirements.

**APM WET-1: Worker Environmental Awareness Training.** Prior to the start of past construction activities, a Worker Environmental Awareness Plan (WEAP) was developed. A presentation was prepared by SCE and used to train site personnel prior to the commencement of work. A record of all trained personnel was kept. This process would be repeated prior to and during the future construction activities.

The WEAP training included a list of phone numbers of SCE environmental specialist personnel associated with the Project (archaeologist, biologist, environmental compliance coordinator, and regional spill response coordinator), and covered the following topics:

- Archaeological Resources Training
  - An Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) has been physically delineated and marked to protect an archaeological resource
  - All work and equipment staging, storing, and placement shall remain outside the ESA
  - The Project has implemented procedures to follow if unanticipated archaeological resources are discovered, including:
    - If archaeological resources are discovered during construction activities, all work in the vicinity of the find shall halt
    - The archaeological monitor shall be informed
    - The archaeological monitor shall notify the project foreman and SCE archaeologist immediately
    - Archaeological monitors have the authority to temporarily halt work in the area of archaeological discoveries until the resource has been evaluated by a qualified archaeologist

- Work in the area of the discovery shall not resume until written notification is received from the SCE archaeologist
- The SCE archaeologist will provide an estimate of how long an excavation of the resource would take
- The Project has established procedures to follow if human remains are encountered. If human remains are encountered during earth-disturbing activities, State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states that there “shall be no further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent remains until the coroner of the county in which the human remains are discovered [has made the appropriate assessment and] the recommendations concerning the treatment and disposition of the human remains has been made to the person responsible for the excavation, or to his or her authorized representative, in the manner provided in Section 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code.”
- Biological Resources Training. Workers were informed of general and Project-specific biological impact reduction measures, including:
  - Keep vehicles on existing roads and pads
  - Avoid impacts to drainages
  - Minimize clearing of vegetation
  - Avoid trapping animals by covering trenches/holes at the end of each day
  - Workers informed of requirements and actions under Migratory Bird Treaty Act
  - Workers informed of protected plant and wildlife species that may be found in the Project Area, where they have been identified during past surveys, and protection measures that may be implemented
- SWPPP Training
  - Background on the regulatory climate
  - Education on individual and corporate responsibilities under the Clean Water Act
  - Presentation of activities covered under the Construction General Permit, and requirements of the Construction General Permit
  - Develop and implement a SWPPP
  - Eliminate or control non-stormwater
  - Visual inspections
  - Identification of SWPPP requirements
  - Daily inspection checklist
  - Maps
  - BMPs

- Presentation on spill prevention and control, and spill notification procedures
- Identification of common stormwater violations
- Education on how to identify problems and devise solutions
- Instruction on the importance of maintaining the construction site. All trash must be removed from the job sites daily, and all construction debris shall be removed at the end of construction
- Instructions to notify the foreman and regional spill response coordinator in case of a hazardous materials spill or leak from equipment, or upon the discovery of soil or groundwater contamination
- Instruction that noncompliance with any laws, rules, regulations, or mitigation measures could result in being barred from participating in any remaining construction activities associated with the Project

## 5.5.4 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

### Analysis Approach

Impacts on cultural resources could result from ground-disturbing activities and/or damage, destruction, or alteration of historic structures. Ground-disturbing activities include excavation, grading, trenching, vegetation clearance, the operation of heavy equipment, and other surface and sub-surface disturbance that could damage or destroy surficial or buried archaeological resources including prehistoric and historic remains or human burials. This analysis considers where ground-disturbance would occur and, by examining where ground-disturbance overlaps with known cultural resources, areas of archaeological sensitivity, and geologic units of high paleontological resource potential, assesses the severity of potential impacts and provides mitigation to minimize those impacts, as needed.

#### **a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5.**

**Impact 5.5-1: Construction activities and operation could cause an adverse change in the significance of a historical resource [inclusive of archaeological resources] which is either listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, or a local register of historic resources. *Less than significant with mitigation (Class II)***

#### **Construction**

One historical resource, archaeological site P-56-001797, was identified near a Proposed Project component that would require ground disturbance. Proposed Project construction activities could impact the site, which would be a significant impact. In addition, since the Proposed Project would involve ground-disturbing activities that may extend into undisturbed soil, it is possible that such actions could unearth, expose, or disturb subsurface archaeological resources that were not immediately observable on the surface, some of which may qualify as historical resources.

Mitigation Measures 5.5-1a through 5.5-1d, in conjunction with APM CUL-1 and APM WET-1, would reduce potentially significant impacts to historical and archaeological resources to less than significant. APM CUL-1 and APM WET-1 would create an Environmentally Sensitive Area, require monitoring in the vicinity of known archaeological sites, and establish a pre-construction worker sensitivity program. Mitigation Measure 5.5-1a would require the retention of a qualified archaeologist. Mitigation Measure 5.5-1b would require that resource P-56-001797 be avoided during construction of the Proposed Project, and provides additional details regarding the establishment of an Environmentally Sensitive Area. Mitigation Measure 5.5-1c would require full-time archaeological monitoring of construction activity within 100 feet of resource P-56-001797. Mitigation Measure 5.5-1d provides specific requirements to be followed in the event of accidental discovery of cultural resources. With these mitigation measures, impacts to historical and archaeological resources would be less than significant.

### **Operation and Maintenance**

Site P-56-001797 is located immediately adjacent to an existing tubular steel pole. Routine operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project would include repairing conductors, washing or replacing insulators, repairing or replacing other hardware components, tree trimming, and brush and weed control. In addition, conductors could require re-stringing and access roads could require maintenance to repair damage that could occur due to an unforeseen event such as a storm. Any of these operation and maintenance activities could result in impacts to resource P-56-001797. However, Mitigation Measure 5.5-1b, which would require that a qualified archaeologist create a long-term management plan for resource P-56-001797, would reduce potentially significant impacts to historical resources from Proposed Project operation and maintenance to a less-than-significant level.

**Mitigation Measure 5.5-1a:** SCE and/or its contractors shall retain a qualified archaeologist, defined as an archaeologist meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for professional archaeology (U.S. Department of the Interior, 2014), to carry out all mitigation measures related to archaeological resources.

**Mitigation Measure 5.5-1b:** Prior to the commencement of construction activities and in coordination with the qualified archaeologist, the construction zone shall be narrowed or otherwise altered to avoid impacts to resource P-56-001797. In coordination with the qualified archaeologist, avoidance shall be ensured by the delineation of an Environmentally Sensitive Area around the site. Protective fencing or other markers shall be erected around the Environmentally Sensitive Area prior to any ground disturbing activities; however, the Environmentally Sensitive Area shall not be identified specifically as an archaeological site, in order to protect sensitive information and to discourage unauthorized disturbance or collection of artifacts.

If avoidance of site P-56-001797 is demonstrated to be infeasible, prior to the issuance of any grading or building permits, a detailed Cultural Resources Treatment Plan shall be prepared and implemented by a qualified archaeologist. The Cultural Resources Treatment Plan shall include a research design and a scope of work for data recovery of the portion(s) of the resource to be impacted by construction activities. Treatment may consist of (but would not be limited to): a sufficient avoidance buffer to protect the resource until data

recovery and/or removal is completed; sample excavation; surface artifact collection; site documentation; and historical research, with the aim to target the recovery of important scientific data contained in the portion of the significant resource to be impacted. The Cultural Resources Treatment Plan shall include provisions for analysis of data in a regional context, reporting of results within a timely manner, and curation of artifacts and data at an approved facility. The reports documenting the implementation of the Cultural Resources Treatment Plan shall be submitted to and approved by the CPUC prior to the commencement of construction activities, and shall also be submitted to the South Central Coastal Information Center.

Prior to the commencement of the operation and maintenance phase, the qualified archaeologist, in coordination with SCE, shall develop a long-term cultural resources management plan for archaeological site P-56-001797 in order to minimize future impacts during project operation and maintenance.

**Mitigation Measure 5.5-1c:** Prior to commencement of construction activities, an archaeological monitor shall be retained by SCE and/or its contractors to monitor all ground-disturbing activities, including grading, excavation, vegetation clearance and grubbing, within 50 feet of archaeological site P-56-001797. The monitor shall be, or shall work under the supervision of, a qualified archaeologist. In the event that cultural resources are unearthed during ground-disturbing activities, the archaeological monitor shall be empowered to halt or redirect ground-disturbing activities away from the vicinity of the find so that the find can be evaluated. Evaluation of resources shall follow the procedures set forth in Mitigation Measure 5.5-1d.

**Mitigation Measure 5.5-1d:** If archaeological resources are encountered during construction, SCE and/or its contractors shall cease all activity within 100 feet of the find until the find can be evaluated by a qualified archaeologist. Per California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15126.4(b)(3), project redesign and preservation in place shall be the preferred means to avoid impacts to significant historical resources. Consistent with California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15126.4(b)(3)(C), if it is demonstrated that resources cannot be avoided, the qualified archaeologist shall develop additional treatment measures in consultation with the CPUC, which may include data recovery or other appropriate measures. The qualified archaeologist shall consult with appropriate Native American representatives in determining appropriate treatment for unearthed cultural resources if the resources are prehistoric or Native American in nature. Archaeological materials recovered during any investigation shall be curated at an accredited curational facility. Work may proceed on other parts of the alignment while treatment is being carried out. The qualified archaeologist shall prepare a report documenting evaluation and/or additional treatment of the resource, which shall be submitted to the CPUC and South Central Coastal Information Center.

**Significance after mitigation:** Less than significant.

**b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a unique archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5.**

**Impact 5.5-2: Construction activities could adversely impact a unique archaeological resource. *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II)**

**Construction**

None of the known cultural resources located within the Proposed Project area have been identified as meeting the criteria for unique archaeological resources. However, since the Proposed Project would involve ground-disturbing activities that may extend into undisturbed soil, it is possible that such actions could unearth, expose, or disturb subsurface or otherwise unique archaeological resources that were not immediately observable on the surface, some of which may qualify as unique archaeological resources. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 5.5-1c, which would require archaeological monitoring of ground-disturbing activities, and Mitigation Measure 5.5-1d, which would provide for measures in the event of an inadvertent discovery of archaeological resources, would reduce the potentially significant impact to currently unknown unique archaeological resources to less than significant.

**Operations and Maintenance**

Operations and maintenance of the Proposed Project, if it involved subsurface disturbance, could impact unique archaeological resources. However, implementation of Mitigation Measures 5.5-1c and 5.5-1d would reduce this potentially significant impact to a less-than-significant level.

**Mitigation:** Implement Mitigation Measures 5.5-1c and 5.5-1d.

**Significance after mitigation:** Less than significant.

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**c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature.**

**Impact 5.5-3: Excavation could directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource. *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II)**

**Construction**

Based on the results of museum collections data and available literature on the geology and paleontology of the Proposed Project area, the two geologic units known to underlie the Proposed Project alignment that have been determined to be of high paleontological sensitivity are the Sespe Formation and Quaternary alluvium. Impacts on paleontological resources would be less than significant at sites underlain by geologic units of low paleontological potential, or where only minor excavation or grading would occur (such as access road rehabilitation and improvements to stringing sites).

The ground disturbing activities associated with construction of the portion of the Proposed Project that traverses the Sespe Formation in the Las Posas Hills would be limited to disturbance caused by vehicles involved in conductor stringing, which would not include excavation. Excavation of Quaternary alluvium would be required for construction of guard structures in the southern Santa Rosa Valley (along Santa Rosa Road) and Little Simi Valley (north of the Moorpark Substation and along Montair Drive, SR 118, and Hitch Boulevard), and for installation of the 500 foot duct bank within Moorpark Substation. It is assumed that each wood pole for the guard structures would require excavation of a hole approximately 10 feet deep and 2 feet in diameter. Approximately 185 cubic yards of material would be removed from a trench dug for the installation of the duct bank. Paleontological resources could be encountered or destroyed during excavation at these locations.

Implementation of APM CUL-3 would reduce the impact of the Proposed Project on paleontological resources by requiring monitoring during excavation, which would increase the likelihood that encountered paleontological resources could be salvaged and adequately recorded. Small scale excavations, even in geologic units of high paleontological potential, have a low probability of encountering fossils. However, in order to adequately reduce the potentially significant impact of the Proposed Project on paleontological resources during excavation in Quaternary alluvium to a less-than-significant level, Mitigation Measure 5.5-3 is required. The activities described in Mitigation Measure 5.5-3 add more specific detail to the description of activities included in APM CUL-3, and are required to be implemented at excavations occurring in Quaternary alluvium.

**Mitigation Measure 5.5-3:** SCE will hire a qualified paleontologist, as defined by Society of Vertebrate Paleontology guidelines, to monitor excavation activities located in Quaternary alluvium. If the monitor or construction crews discover fossils or fossil-like material during excavation and earth-moving operations, all earthwork and other types of ground disturbance within 50 feet of the find shall stop immediately until the qualified paleontologist can assess the nature and importance of the find. Based on the scientific value or uniqueness of the find, the qualified paleontologist may record the find and allow work to continue, or recommend salvage and recovery of the fossil. The paleontologist may also propose modifications to the stop-work radius based on the nature of the find, site geology, and activities occurring on the site.

If treatment and salvage is required, recommendations will be consistent with Society of Vertebrate Paleontology guidelines (SVP, 1995) and currently accepted scientific practice. If required, treatment for fossil remains may include preparation and recovery of fossil materials so that they can be housed in an appropriate museum or university collection, and may also include preparation of a report describing the finds. SCE and/or its contractor will be responsible for ensuring that treatment is implemented. If no report is required, SCE and/or its contractor will nonetheless ensure that information on the nature, location, and depth of all finds is readily available to the scientific community through university curation or other appropriate means.

**Significance after mitigation:** Less than significant.

**d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.**

**Impact 5.5-4: Construction could result in damage to previously unidentified human remains. *Less than significant* (Class III)**

The Proposed Project would not disturb known human remains. The land use designations for the Proposed Project components do not include cemetery uses, and no known human remains exist within the area. However, since the Proposed Project would involve ground-disturbing activities, it is possible that such actions could unearth, expose, or disturb previously unknown human remains. In the event that human remains are discovered during construction activities, the human remains could be inadvertently damaged, which could be a significant impact. However, with implementation of APM CUL-2 and APM WET-1, which require that work halt and the County Coroner be contacted in the event of the discovery of human remains, this impact would be less than significant.

**Mitigation:** None required.

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## 5.5.5 Alternatives

### No Project Alternative 1

Under No Project Alternative 1, the construction, operation, and maintenance-related impacts that would result under the Proposed Project, as discussed in Section 5.5.4, would not occur. No ground disturbing activity would occur along the Proposed Project alignment, and cultural and paleontological resources within the area would not be disturbed or potentially disturbed. No Project Alternative 1 would not directly or indirectly destroy any cultural or paleontological resources, or disturb any human remains. There would be no impact under No Project Alternative 1 (No Impact).

### No Project Alternative 2

Under No Project Alternative 2, the Proposed Project would not be constructed and all of the infrastructure already constructed for the Moorpark-Newbury 66 kV Subtransmission line would be removed, with the exception of the previously installed LWS poles and energized conductor. Although removal of previously installed infrastructure would generally involve disturbance of already-disturbed soil, some limited ground disturbance may be required. While this shallow disturbance would likely result in no impacts to paleontological resources (No Impact), it could disturb archaeological resources at or near the surface, including historical resource P-56-001797, or human remains. However, implementation of Mitigation Measures 5.5-1a through 5.5-1d, in conjunction with APM CUL-1, would mitigate this potentially significant impact to cultural resources to a less-than-significant level (Class II). Impacts to human remains would be less than significant with implementation of APM CUL-2 (Class III).

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