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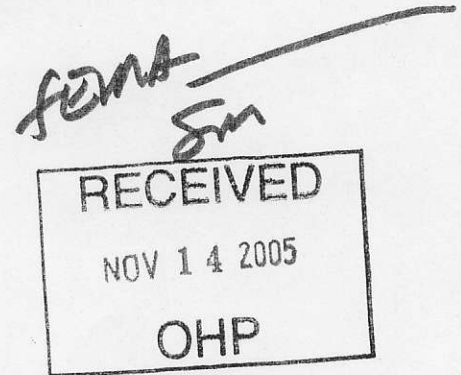
2005 DEC -2 PM 2:00

U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
1111 Broadway, Suite 1200  
Oakland, CA 94607-4052



FEMA

November 8, 2005



Mr. Milford Wayne Donaldson  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Office of Historic Preservation  
1416 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 1442-7  
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: Conejo Fire Mitigation, Conejo Recreation and Park District, FEMA-1498-DR-CA, HMGP #1498-98-36

Dear Mr. Donaldson:

The purpose of this letter is to transmit the enclosed technical report and summarize the results of an archaeological field review of lands potentially affected by a project proposed in Thousand Oaks, Ventura County, California. The Conejo Recreation and Parks District (CRPD) has applied for funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to augment and expand an annual program of vegetation management within CRPD property in the City of Thousand Oaks, Ventura County, California. CRPD applied for FEMA funding through the State of California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES). FEMA is proposing to fund the project through the HMGP program under a presidential disaster declaration (FEMA-1498-DR-CA) for the Southern California wildfires of October 2003. CRPD has applied for funding from FEMA to create approximately 22 miles of fuel breaks on lands operated by the Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency (COSCA). This report was prepared by URS Corporation (URS), as a consultant to FEMA, to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, and the Programmatic Agreement (PA) among FEMA, the California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), OES, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

In summary, a field review of the project area was supplemented by a cultural resources records review conducted at the South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) of the California Historical Resources Information System. In addition to the literature review, the California Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) was contacted for a review of its Sacred Lands File as well as a list of Native American groups and individuals it believes should be contacted. The Sacred Lands File search was negative. FEMA sent letters to those groups and individuals listed by the NAHC. To date, one response has been received. A summary of this correspondence is provided in the enclosed report.

The results of the literature review and field survey indicate that there are 79 prehistoric sites within a half-mile radius of the proposed project, based on the data provided by the SCCIC. Of these, 15 prehistoric sites are within or adjacent to the project area of potential effects (APE), as plotted by the SCCIC. The remaining sites are located outside of the APE and would not be adversely affected by the proposed project. An archaeological survey of the APE was undertaken between July 11 and 15, 2005, by URS archaeologists. The results of the survey were negative. Extensive prior development over the past 30 years has likely destroyed any archaeological sites that may have been in close proximity to the APE.

FEMA requests an expedited consultation pursuant to 36 CFR 800.3(g).

### **Project Description**

The proposed project involves creating fire fuel breaks on approximately 22 linear miles within COSCA lands that are adjacent to residences, other structures, and roadways within the City of Thousand Oaks. The proposed action consists of the selective removal of vegetation within 100 feet of structures and 10 feet of roadways, including access roads. The proposed action would not include treatment of private property, for which vegetation clearance is the responsibility of the property owner. The distance between a structure and the corresponding property boundary obviously varies from residence to residence, but on average in the project area this distance is approximately 60 feet. Equipment staging areas include public streets, parking lots, and other areas where the ground surface has already been disturbed. Hand crews would utilize weed eaters, chain saws, masticators, discers, and walk-behind tracked mowers to remove vegetation. Figures 2a through 2e in the attached report show the method of treatment that would occur for each portion of the proposed fuel breaks.

FEMA, in accordance with revised implementing regulations of the NHPA (May 18, 1999) found at 36 CFR 800.3(a), has determined that the proposed project is an undertaking.

### **APE Determination**

The APE for the proposed project is confined to the footprint of activity necessary to conduct the vegetation thinning. Figures 2a through 2e in the enclosed report depict the APE for the project. Access to each of the project areas can be achieved via existing paved or graded roadways. Construction staging is confined to paved or previously graded areas. Accordingly, the APE is narrowly focused on the fuel breaks themselves. Pursuant to the revised implementing regulations of the NHPA found at 36 CFR 800.4(a)(1), FEMA seeks your concurrence with its determination of the APE.

### **Literature Review**

Pursuant to the revised implementing regulations of the NHPA found at 36 CFR 800.4(a)(2), the project area was subject to a cultural resources literature review. The enclosed report provides a complete description of the literature review.

### **Natural Setting**

The enclosed report provides a complete description of the natural setting.

## **Prehistory, Ethnohistory, and History**

The enclosed report provides a complete description of the prehistory, ethnohistory, and history of the project area.

## **Cultural Resources Inventory Methods and Results**

Brian W. Hatoff of URS, qualified as an archaeologist under the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards, served as Principal Investigator for the cultural resources survey conducted in July 2005. The enclosed report provides a complete description of survey methods and results.

The field survey consisted of an intensive pedestrian survey using 10- to 15-meter transect intervals. Although some areas of the APE were densely covered with dried grasses, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, and chamise, the entire APE was subject to a complete pedestrian survey. In areas with dense ground cover, the archaeologists periodically cleared the vegetation from the ground in order to inspect the underlying soil surface. Additionally, the archaeologists inspected the excavation spoils at the openings of rodent burrows because they can bring buried items, including cultural artifacts and midden, to the surface from subsurface deposits. The results of the archaeological survey were negative for cultural resources within all areas surveyed. No built environment features were found within the APE.

## **Findings and Conclusions**

Pursuant to the revised implementing regulations of the NHPA found at 36 CFR 800.11(d), this letter and enclosed report provides a description of the undertaking, an APE determination, relevant maps, and a description of the steps FEMA has taken under Section 800.4(b) to identify historic properties. As described above, no properties eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) were identified through a literature review or pedestrian survey of the APE. Therefore, the proposed project is not expected to have any effect on historic properties.

There is always the possibility that previously recorded or previously unidentified archaeological resources could be discovered during project construction. In accordance with Stipulation X of the PA, FEMA will require CRPD to stop work in the event of an unexpected discovery and will comply with the steps outlined in Stipulation X.

In accordance with Stipulation VII of the PA, FEMA has conducted the Standard Project Review. FEMA made a determination of "no historic properties affected" and, in accordance with the PA, is submitting for review the enclosed report supporting that determination. In accordance with Stipulation VII, FEMA may authorize funding for the project unless you object to this determination within 21 days of your receipt of this documentation.



If you have questions, you can contact me at (510) 627-7284 or Mr. Hatoff at (510) 874-3195.

Sincerely,



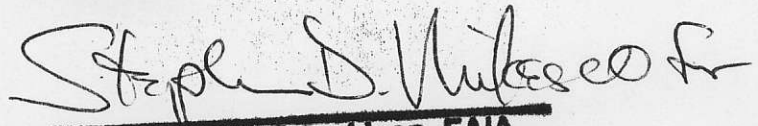
Alessandro Amaglio, AIA  
Environmental Officer

Enclosure

Cc:

Dennis Castrillo, OES  
Marcia Rentschler, OES  
Bill Palermo, CRPD  
Margaret Lopez, SCCIC

**CONCUR:**



**Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA  
State Historic Preservation Officer**

11/30/05