

6 Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are remains and sites associated with human activities, including Native American archaeological sites (both prehistoric remains and sites occupied after European arrival), historic buildings and archaeological sites, and natural landscape elements with traditional cultural significance (including areas of economic and religious significance).¹ This chapter provides background on Native American settlements in Humboldt County and summarizes both historic and prehistoric cultural resources in the county. It also includes a summary of existing General Plan policies. Because no planning issues for cultural resources were identified in Phase I, no policy options are presented; however, as part of the Phase II community workshops, suggestions for modifications of existing policies may emerge.

6.1 NATIVE AMERICAN AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

Before European settlement, the Humboldt County area was one of the most culturally diverse regions of California, being home to nearly a dozen distinct peoples. In large part, Native American tribes occupied distinct areas conforming largely to the natural watershed basins (see Table 6-1). The majority of tribes were Athabascan speakers and hill people who built permanent homes along rivers; the Yurok and Wiyot spoke Algonquian languages and settled along both coasts and rivers; the Karok were Hokan-speaking and lived in mountainous territory.

Table 6-1: Native American Tribes and Areas of Settlement in Humboldt County

<i>Tribe</i>	<i>Linguistic Affiliation</i>	<i>Watershed and Principal Settlements</i>	<i>Population at First European Contact</i>
Yurok	Algonquian	Lower Redwood, lower Klamath	3,100
Karok	Hokan	Upper Klamath	2,700
Hoopa	Athabascan	Trinity (including Hoopa Valley)	1,000
Chilula	Athabascan	Middle Redwood	600
Whilkut	Athabascan	Upper Redwood, lower Mad	2,600
Wiyot	Algonquian	Humboldt Bay coast	3,200
Nongatl	Athabascan	Van Duzen, upper Mad	No data
Lassik	Athabascan	Eel	No data
Sinkyone	Athabascan	South Fork Eel	2,100
Mattole	Athabascan	Mattole	1,200

Sources: Sonia Tamez, 1978; Winzler and Kelly, 1977.

The following is a brief summary of settlement patterns, including residential structures, food provision, and mortuary practices.

¹ California Native American Heritage Commission, *Understanding Cultural Resources* [website], Apr 2002.

Northwest California

Peoples that settled north of the Eel complex watersheds are grouped together as Northwest California cultures. This group includes the Hokan- and Algonquian-speaking tribes, as well as the Hoopa, Chilula, and Whilkut.

Villages clustered around lagoons, sloughs, and river mouths along the coast. Inland settlements were usually along streams, sometimes on terraces above floodways; the Yurok sometimes built on steep slopes.² Seasonal migration was common; for example, the Chilula built permanent villages on flats along Redwood Creek, but moved up to higher ridges in summer and fall. Most groups tended to build along the side of a river or hill that received more sun and on hillsides where timber was less dense.³

Late Period Karok settlements were dependent on topography and river fish and would only settle in flat riverside areas; higher areas were more permanent as they were less likely to fall to floods. Hoopa sites were found near but not alongside the Trinity, and later at mid-level terraces, which were safe but not too remote. Stormy Saddle and Pine Ridge near Hupa Mountain were two rare ridge-top settlements, although not used permanently. Temporary camps generally require bench areas (if above waterways), useful plants, nearby water, and dense timber.

Although some tribes to the south practiced cremation, Northwest California tribes uniformly buried their dead, and cemeteries were established near the permanent (wintertime) villages. Bodies were buried in plank-lined graves.

Houses were usually built of redwood or cedar planks. Hoopa and Chilula houses were built with an excavated interior room surrounded by a ground-level “bench.” The Whilkut built their houses from bark slabs. The Hoopa, Yurok, and Chilula also built sweatshouses, which for the Hoopa also served as a communal sleeping-room for the village’s men.⁴

The Hoopa claimed food-rich lands (where acorns and manzanita were plentiful), but shared right-of-way with other groups; the Yurok established privately owned land. On the coast and in rivers, the emphasis for food was on fish and sea mammals.

Transitional Athabascans

The people of the Eel complex and Mattole watershed areas are called Transitional Athabascans, as their culture is a bridge of sorts between the Hoopa and Whilkut to the north

² Tamez, Sonia. *Archaeological Overview of Portions of the North Coast Ranges and Northwestern California*, 1978, p 29.

³ *Ibid.*, p 30.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p 34.

and other tribes to the south. Permanent occupation was oriented to major drainage areas; seasonal uses were focused on foothills and mountains.⁵

Distinctions between summer seasonal and permanent winter structures were pronounced. The Sinkyone built dance- and sweathouses, brush shelters, excavated circular permanent houses, and lean-tos. The Lassik built only conical lean-tos.

There is some disagreement on whether the Mattole and Sinkyone buried or cremated their dead; it is believed that the Mattole cremated people killed in war and buried all others.

Food was obtained by a variety of means, including hunting, fishing, and gathering greens, depending on seasonal availability. Kettenchow, near the Eel River, was an important site to the Lassik due to the abundance of camass grown there.⁶

Archaeologically significant sites have been identified by the presence of refuse from marine life, debris from stone toolmaking, mortar, and tools.⁷

CULTURALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

Culturally sensitive areas are sites and regions of special importance to Native Americans, primarily coastlines and riverbanks with outstanding religious or resource-producing importance. Over 32,000 acres of land in Humboldt County are designated as culturally sensitive, with notable concentrations along the Lower Klamath, the Lower Trinity, lower end and North Fork of the Mad, and the Van Duzen Rivers, and the eastern shore of Humboldt Bay. Culturally sensitive areas exist on both public and private lands. While some locations are publicly identified, others are held as confidential information by local Native American organizations.⁸

The North Coastal Information Center has records for approximately 2,040 cultural resource sites, including cemeteries, villages, and lithic scatters: surface-visible concentrations of stone chips, flakes, and tools. Three-quarters of these resources are located along rivers and major tributaries; the remainder are located in flat mountainous areas or prairies. High-density sites (villages, cemeteries, and ceremonial and gathering areas) are concentrated in the Hoopa and Yurok reservations and riverine areas. Ridgelines along rivers and creeks, where traveling between villages likely occurred, and lithic scatters around Trinidad, Humboldt Bay, the Eel delta, and Shelter Cove are considered medium-density resource sites.

⁵ Ibid., p 59.

⁶ Ibid., p 65.

⁷ Ibid., pp 68-69.

⁸ U.S. Coast Guard, Economically Significant Sites & Historical and Culturally Sensitive Areas, document 9975. A list of known archaeological sites has been requested on a confidential basis for use in preparing sketch plans.

6.2 HISTORIC SITES AND LANDMARKS

Historic resources include sites, structures, districts, or other physical evidence associated with past human activity greater than 50 years old. Humboldt County is home to a large number of historical sites, having been one of the first areas in California to be explored and settled by Europeans. Thirteen Humboldt County locations are California State Historical Landmarks (see Table 6-2) and 51 sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Three sites appear on both lists, as well as on the California Register of Historical Resources: the Trinidad Head Light Station, Fort Humboldt in Eureka, and the Jacoby Building in Arcata.

Table 6-2: State Historical Landmarks in Humboldt County

<i>Site</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Features</i>
Trinidad Head	Peak	Trinidad, west of Highway 101	Cross, erected 1755 (later site of light house)
Fort Humboldt	Fort	3431 Fort Ave., Eureka	Established 1853
Old Arrow Tree	Site	East of Korbel County Highway, Korbel	Site of Indian treaty
Centerville Beach Cross	Site	Centerville Rd, west of Ferndale	Cross, erected 1860
Camp Curtis	Military Post	L.K. Wood Blvd, Arcata	HQ of mountain battalions from 1862 to 1865
Town of Trinidad	City	Edwards St and Hector St, Trinidad	Oldest town on northern California coast
City of Eureka	City	3 rd St and E St, Eureka	Major port of entry
California's First Drilled Oil Wells	Site	Mattole Rd and Front St, Petrolia	First oil wells in California, many with heads still intact
Jacoby Building	Building	8 th St and H St, Arcata	Supply point for Klamath-Trinity mining camp trade
Old Indian Village of Tsurai	Site	Ocean St and Edward St, Trinidad	Location of prehistoric permanent Indian community
Arcata and Mad River Railroad Co.	Site	330 Railroad Ave, Blue Lake	Oldest RR line on north coast; linked Humboldt Bay with Trinity River mines
Humboldt Harbor Historical District	District	Harold Larsen Vista Point (Humboldt Hill Rd off Hwy 101), Eureka	Point of survey for first settlements in Humboldt Bay area
Ferndale	City	Ferndale City Hall Park (Main St and Herbert St), Ferndale	Pioneer agricultural and dairy community

Source: California Resources Agency, 2002.

The sites recognized on the National Register of Historic Places include architecturally significant nineteenth-century homes, banks, hotels, libraries, public buildings, bridges, schools, churches, lighthouses, and the historic districts of Klamath, Ferndale, Eureka, Hoopa, and Orick.

6.3 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

FEDERAL REGULATION

Cultural resources are addressed on a federal level via United States Code (USC), the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Standards and Guidelines, and Executive Orders and Memoranda.

Foremost among them is the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA; USC Title 16, Chapter 470), which established the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the National Historic Landmark Program (NHLP), delineated the duties of State Historic Preservation Officers, established programs and regulations to assist Indian tribes, designated matching grants to states and grants to the National Trust for carrying out the provisions of the NHPA, and established a national Historic Preservation Fund.

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA; USC Title 25, Chapter 32; implemented through CFR Title 43, Part 10) “requires Federal agencies and museums (institutions that receive Federal funds) to provide information about Native American cultural items to parties with standing and, upon presentation of a valid request, dispose of or repatriate these objects to them.”⁹

The National Park Service operates National NAGPRA and the National Center for Cultural Resources; the Bureau of the Interior oversees NRHP, NHLP, and most other Federal cultural resources preservation programs.

STATE REGULATION

Several State laws, most notably Section 15064.5(f) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Section 5020-5029 and 21083.2 of the Public Resources Code, protect archaeological and historic resources. CEQA requires analysis of development projects’ impacts on unique archaeological resources or Native American culturally significant sites. In cases where potential damage to the resource may result, reasonable efforts may be required to preserve the resources.

The California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), under the Department of Parks and Recreation, is the governmental agency primarily responsible for the statewide administration of the historic preservation program in California. The chief administrative officer for the OHP is the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), who also acts as Executive Secretary of the State Historical Resources Commission (SHRC). This committee conducts the State Historic Resource Inventory and maintains the California Register of Historic Resources, which identifies historical landmarks and points of interest.

The mission of the OHP and SHRC is “to preserve and enhance California's irreplaceable historic heritage as a matter of public interest so that its vital legacy of cultural, educational,

⁹ U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, “NAGPRA” at www.usbr.gov/nagpra, viewed on 15 April 2002.

recreational, aesthetic, economic, social, and environmental benefits will be maintained and enriched for present and future generations.”¹⁰ This is carried out through identifying and registering historic properties; ensuring that state and federal regulations and complied with; and promoting a historic preservation ethic.

6.4 POLICY ISSUES

No policy issues related to cultural resources were identified in the Critical Choices Report. Since cultural resources are protected through both federal and state regulations, as well as County policies (listed below), no additional policy options are recommended for the General Plan update. The primary focus in the future should be on implementing and enforcing current regulations. If suggestions for modification of existing policies on cultural resources are made during the community workshops, they will be considered during Phase III when the draft General Plan is prepared.

EXISTING POLICIES

The County Framework Plan establishes the following policies for the protection of cultural resources, consistent with the federal and state regulatory framework.

GOAL

To provide for the protection and enhancement of cultural resources for the historic, scientific, educational, and social contributions they render to the present generation and to generations that follow.

POLICIES

1. Cultural resources (including but not limited to archaeological, paleontological and architectural sites, grave sites and cemeteries) shall be identified where feasible, assessed as to significance, and if found to be significant, protected from loss or destruction.
2. Concerned citizens, historical organizations and applicable agencies shall be consulted during project review for the identification and protection of cultural resources.
3. Projects located in areas found to have cultural resources shall be conditioned and designed to avoid loss or degradation of these resources.
4. Expert opinions and field reconnaissance at the applicant's expense may be required during environmental assessment to determine the presence, extent, and condition of cultural resources and the likely impact upon such resources.

¹⁰ California Office of Historic Preservation, “About OHP” at ohp.parks.ca.gov, viewed on 15 April 2002.

5. Archaeological and paleontological resources shall not be knowingly destroyed or lost through a discretionary action unless:
 - A. The site or resource has been found to be of insignificant value by relevant experts and representatives of the cultural resources community, or;
 - B. There is an overriding public benefit from the project, and compensating mitigation to offset the loss is made part of the project.
6. Mitigation measures shall be required where new development would adversely impact archaeological or paleontological resources.

Humboldt County General Plan Update
Natural Resources and Hazards

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