

To: Tim Gnibus, HDR
From: Amber Parron, HDR
Date: 10/24/2023
Subject: **Ramon Substation Improvements Project – Cultural Resource Technical Study**

1. Introduction

HDR, under contract with the Imperial Irrigation District (IID), conducted a cultural resource technical study in support of the proposed Ramon Substation Improvements Project (project) in Riverside County, California. The project is located in unincorporated Riverside County, east of Thousand Palms and north of Interstate 10. The substation currently occupies approximately 6.2 acres on the north side of East Ramon Road, east of the intersection with Vista de Oro (**Figure 1** and **Figure 2**). The project involves the expansion of the substation toward the north to include an additional footprint of 4 acres in a currently empty portion of the substation site. The proposed improvements would increase the capacity of the substation to accommodate electricity generated by planned utility-scale solar projects, which would tie into the substation, and then energy converted would be added to the electrical grid. The project area reviewed for this study encompasses the footprint of the proposed expansion and a buffer on either side of the substation to include potential access and staging areas that may be used for the project, for an overall extent of approximately 22 acres (**Figure 3**). The project area is located in Section 16 of Township 4S, Range 6E, San Bernardino Baseline Meridian.

HDR carried out archival research, including a record search at the Eastern Information Center (EIC) of the California Historical Resources Information System and a review of available historical aerial photographs and maps to identify potential cultural resources that may be present within the project area. HDR also requested a review of the Sacred Lands File, held by the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). HDR staff archaeologists conducted an intensive pedestrian survey of the Project Area on June 16, 2023.

2. Archival Research

On June 12, 2023, HDR submitted to the NAHC a request for a search of the Sacred Lands File in correspondence with the project area. The NAHC responded on July 10, 2023, stating that the results of the Sacred Lands File search were negative and providing a contact list for twelve Native American tribes who may also have knowledge of cultural resources in the vicinity of the project area (**Appendix A**).

On October 18, 2023, HDR cultural resource specialist Daniel Leonard carried out a record search at the EIC, housed at the University of California, Riverside, to identify all previous cultural resource investigations and all previously recorded cultural resources within 0.25 miles of the project area. The EIC search identified two previous investigations within the record search area, one of which was carried out in 2000 and covered the entire expansion area (**Table 1**). One previously recorded resource — P-33-009665, a historic “jackrabbit homestead” — was identified approximately 500 feet south of the expansion area. However, this homestead is no longer extant as it was demolished during construction of the existing Ramon Substation. The results of the EIC record search are provided in **Appendix B**.

Table 1. Previous Cultural Resource Studies Within 0.25 Miles of the Project Area

Code	Year	Author	Title
*RI-08102	2000	Richard Perry / U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District	Cultural Resources Survey of Approximately 720 Acres in the Western Coachella Valley, Riverside County, California for the Whitewater River Basin California, Flood Control Feasibility Study
RI-10461	2015	William T. Eckhardt, Matthew M. DeCarlo, Doug Mengers, Sherri Andrews, Don Laylander, and Tony Quach / ASM Affiliates	Archaeological Investigations and Monitoring for the Construction of the Devers-Palo Verde No. 2 Transmission Line Project, Riverside County, California

Note: An asterisk (*) indicates the study that intersects the project area.

HDR also conducted a review of and Bureau of Land Management General Land Office (GLO) records, historical aerial photographs (dating from 1959 to the present), and topographic maps (dating from 1904 to the present) to identify potential cultural resources within the project area. The GLO survey plat from 1856 shows Section 16, where the project area is located, as empty land. On the same GLO plat, an “Indian trail” is shown running northwest to southeast along the base of the Indio Hills, approximately 1.4 miles north-northeast of the project area. No land patents appear to have been filed for the project area. No features or structures within the project area are visible on historical topographic maps, including the 1904 Indio, California, 30-minute; the 1941 Edom, California, 15-minute; and the 1958 Myoma, California, 7.5-minute quadrangles. Aerial photographs show the project area as undeveloped open desert land prior to 2002. The homestead (P-33-009665) is visible between two tamarisk trees, as noted on the site record, on imagery dating between 1959 and 1996. Grading adjacent to the project area, within the footprint of the existing Ramon Substation, is visible on the 1984 aerial. Construction, landscaping, and incremental expansion of substation infrastructure in the area surrounding the project area are evident in more recent imagery. Between the 1996 and 2002 aerial images, construction of the substation resulted in the demolition of P-33-009665. During the same time period, two electrical transmission poles were installed within the project area, north of the substation. Additional generalized disturbance in the project area would have resulted from grading and other construction activities associated with the substation.

3. Survey Results

The project area is located in the northern Coachella Valley, an elongated rift valley that forms the northwestern extent of the Salton Trough. The project area is approximately two miles

southwest of the Indio Hills, a low range formed by uplift between the two main faults of the San Andreas fault system. The surface geology of the Coachella Valley consists of Quaternary alluvium. The majority of soils in the project area are classified by the U.S. Department of Agricultural National Cooperative Soil Survey as Myoma fine sand. Carsitas gravelly sand is found in approximately 15 percent of the project area north and east of the existing substation, and a small area (less than 5 percent of the total acreage) of Coachella fine sand exists in the far eastern part of the project area. These soils formed from recent alluvium and consist exclusively of C horizons.

On June 16, 2023, HDR cultural resource specialists James Whitaker and Amber Parron conducted a full-coverage, intensive pedestrian survey of the project area. The purpose of the survey was to document any cultural resources that may be present, note past disturbance, and assess the potential of the project area to contain buried cultural resources. All accessible portions of the project area were covered with survey transects using 10- to 15-meter spacing. Ground visibility at the time of the survey was 100 percent (**Photograph 1** through **Photograph 5**).

Vegetation in the project area consisted of species typical of the Colorado Desert Creosote Bush Scrub plant community, including creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), cheesebush (*Ambrosia salsoia*), grasses, and palo verde (*Parkinsonia* sp.) planted for landscaping along East Ramon Road near the substation.

The results of the survey were negative for cultural resources. No artifacts, ecofacts, features, historic structures, midden soils, or other evidence of cultural resources were identified within the project area. Although no cultural resources were observed, modern debris was noted within the project area, especially north and east of the existing Ramon Substation (**Photograph 6**). Disturbance from vehicle activity, grading of the existing substation, installation of transmission poles, and other construction activities was observed throughout the project area.

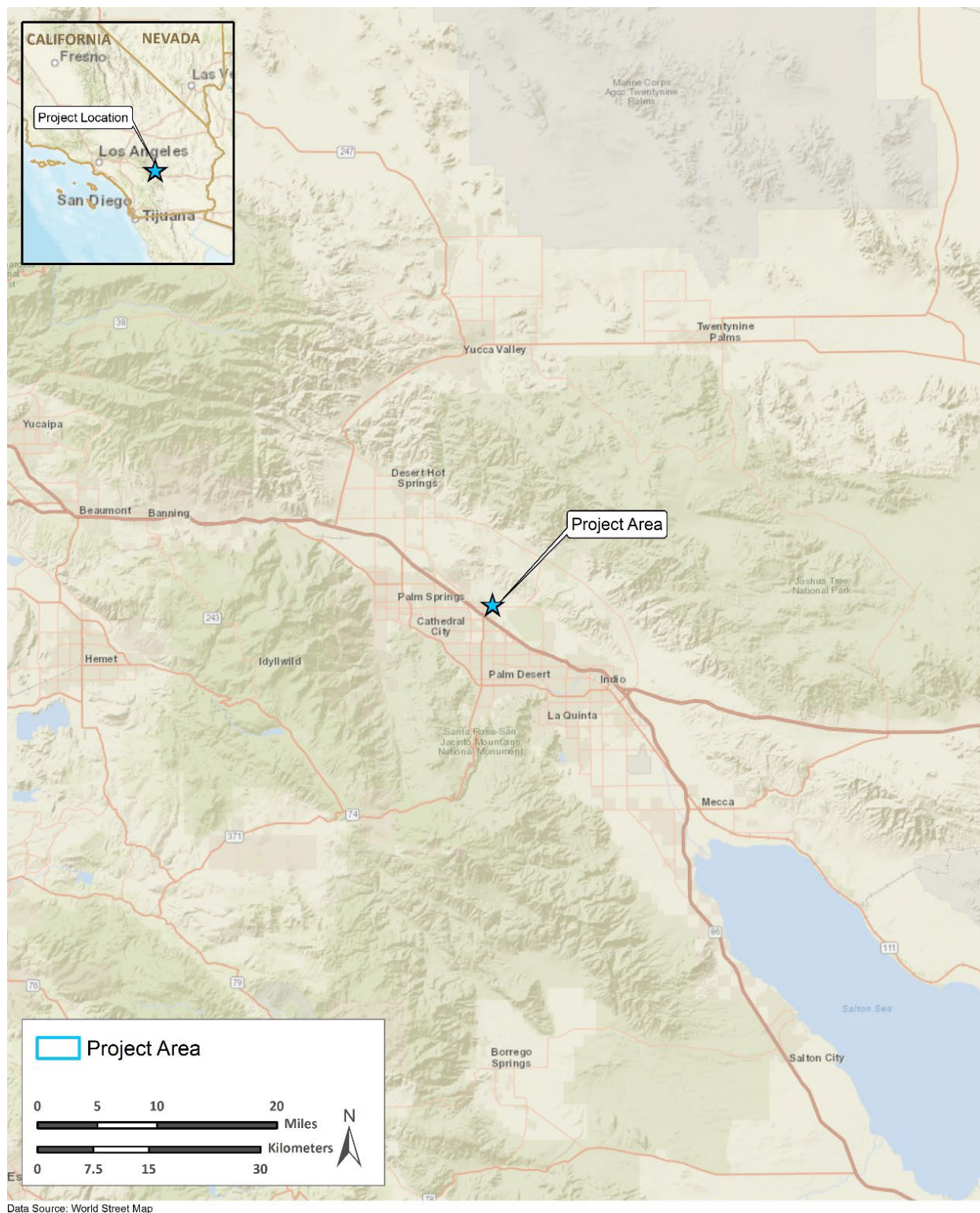
4. Recommendations

Archival research and an intensive pedestrian survey identified no cultural resources within the project area. The negative results of the archival research and survey support a determination that the project would not result in a significant impact to cultural resources.

Because these soils in the project area are young and their geomorphic surfaces are unstable, the possibility exists for archaeological sites to be buried under them. In the northern Coachella Valley region, locations with high archaeological potential tend to occur near large drainages or springs, neither of which are present in the project area. Overall, therefore, the potential to encounter buried archaeological resources in the project area during construction is assessed as moderate.

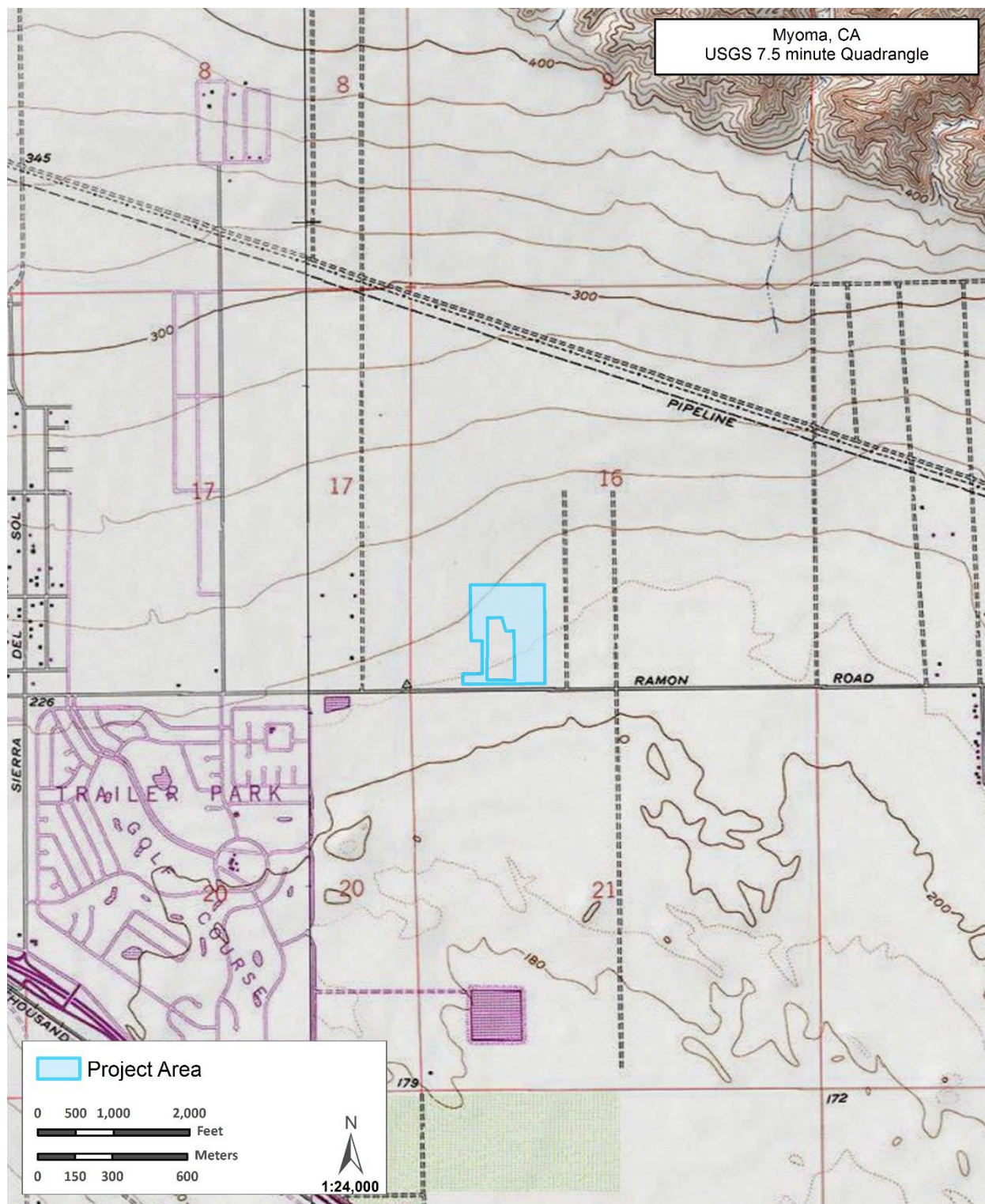
HDR recommends the contractor specifications require the stoppage of all ground-disturbing activities within a 50-foot radius in the event of an unanticipated discovery of prehistoric or historic-period artifacts or features during construction until a professional archaeologist, in consultation with IID, can make an assessment of the resource's significance.

If human remains are inadvertently discovered during construction, all ground-disturbing activities in the vicinity of the discovery must cease immediately and a 50-foot-wide buffer will be established around the location of the discovery to secure it from further disturbance. California State law (Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5; Public Resources Code Sections 5097.94, 5097.98, and 5097.99) will be followed. These regulations specify that work will stop immediately in any areas where human remains or suspected human remains are encountered. The Riverside County Coroner's office must be contacted immediately. The coroner has two working days to examine the remains after being notified by IID. If the remains are determined to be Native American, the coroner has 24 hours to notify the NAHC, who will designate a most likely descendant. The NAHC will immediately notify the most likely descendant, who will have 48 hours to make recommendations to the landowner or representative for the respectful treatment or disposition of the remains and grave goods. If the most likely descendant does not make recommendations within 48 hours, the area of the property must be secured from further disturbance. If no recommendation is given, IID or its authorized representative will re-inter the human remains and items associated with Native American burials with appropriate dignity on the property in a location not subject to further subsurface disturbance. At all times, human remains should be treated with proper dignity and respect.



Data Source: World Street Map

Figure 1. Project vicinity



Data Source: USA Topo Maps

Figure 2. Project Area on the USGS 7.5-minute Myoma topographic quadrangle



Data Source: World Imagery; World Street Map

Figure 3. Project Area on aerial background



Photograph 1. Project Area west of the Ramon Substation, facing south.



Photograph 2. Project Area west of the Ramon Substation, facing north.



Photograph 3. Project Area east of the Ramon Substation, facing north.



Photograph 4. Project Area east of the Ramon Substation, facing west.



Photograph 5. Project Area north of the Ramon Substation, facing south.



Photograph 6. Modern debris in the Project Area north of the Ramon Substation, facing southwest.

Appendix A. Native American Heritage Commission Correspondence

NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION

July 10, 2023

Amber Parron
HDR Inc

Via Email to: Amber.Parron@hdrinc.com

Re: Ramon Substation Expansion Project, Riverside County

Dear Ms. Parron:

A record search of the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) Sacred Lands File (SLF) was completed for the information you have submitted for the above referenced project. The results were negative. However, the absence of specific site information in the SLF does not indicate the absence of cultural resources in any project area. Other sources of cultural resources should also be contacted for information regarding known and recorded sites.

Attached is a list of Native American tribes who may also have knowledge of cultural resources in the project area. This list should provide a starting place in locating areas of potential adverse impact within the proposed project area. I suggest you contact all of those indicated; if they cannot supply information, they might recommend others with specific knowledge. By contacting all those listed, your organization will be better able to respond to claims of failure to consult with the appropriate tribe. If a response has not been received within two weeks of notification, the Commission requests that you follow-up with a telephone call or email to ensure that the project information has been received.

If you receive notification of change of addresses and phone numbers from tribes, please notify me. With your assistance, we can assure that our lists contain current information.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at my email address: Andrew.Green@nahc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Andrew Green
Cultural Resources Analyst

Attachment



ACTING CHAIRPERSON
Reginald Pagaling
Chumash

SECRETARY
Sara Dutschke
Miwok

COMMISSIONER
Isaac Bojorquez
Ohlone-Costanoan

COMMISSIONER
Buffy McQuillen
Yokayo Pomo, Yuki,
Nomlaki

COMMISSIONER
Wayne Nelson
Luiseño

COMMISSIONER
Stanley Rodriguez
Kumeyaay

COMMISSIONER
Vacant

COMMISSIONER
Vacant

COMMISSIONER
Vacant

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
Raymond C. Hitchcock
Miwok, Nisenan

NAHC HEADQUARTERS
1550 Harbor Boulevard
Suite 100
West Sacramento,
California 95691
(916) 373-3710
nahc@nahc.ca.gov
NAHC.ca.gov

Native American Heritage Commission
Native American Contact List
Riverside County
7/10/2023

Tribe Name	Fed (F) Non-Fed (N)	Contact Person	Contact Address	Phone #	Fax #	Email Address	Cultural Affiliation	Counties	Last Updated
Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians	F	Reid Milanovich, Chairperson	5401 Dinah Shore Drive Palm Springs, CA, 92264	(760) 699-6800	(760) 699-6919	laviles@aguacaliente.net	Cahuilla	Imperial,Riverside,San Bernardino,San Diego	
Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians	F	Patricia Garcia-Plotkin, Director	5401 Dinah Shore Drive Palm Springs, CA, 92264	(760) 699-6907	(760) 699-6924	ACBCI-THPO@aguacaliente.net	Cahuilla	Imperial,Riverside,San Bernardino,San Diego	
Augustine Band of Cahuilla Mission Indians	F	Amanda Vance, Chairperson	84-001 Avenue 54 Coachella, CA, 92236	(760) 398-4722	(760) 369-7161	hhaines@augustinetribe.com	Cahuilla	Imperial,Riverside,San Bernardino,San Diego	
Cabazon Band of Mission Indians	F	Doug Welmas, Chairperson	84-245 Indio Springs Parkway Indio, CA, 92203	(760) 342-2593	(760) 347-7880	jstapp@cabazonindians-nsn.gov	Cahuilla	Imperial,Riverside,San Bernardino,San Diego	
Cahuilla Band of Indians	F	BobbyRay Esaprza, Cultural Director	52701 CA Highway 371 Anza, CA, 92539	(951) 763-5549		besparza@cahuilla-nsn.gov	Cahuilla	Imperial,Riverside,San Bernardino,San Diego	6/28/2023
Cahuilla Band of Indians	F	Daniel Salgado, Chairperson	52701 CA Highway 371 Anza, CA, 92539	(951) 972-2568	(951) 763-2808	chairman@cahuilla-nsn.gov	Cahuilla	Imperial,Riverside,San Bernardino,San Diego	6/28/2023
Cahuilla Band of Indians	F	Anthony Madrigal, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer	52701 CA Highway 371 Anza, CA, 92539	(951) 763-5549		anthonymad2002@gmail.com	Cahuilla	Imperial,Riverside,San Bernardino,San Diego	6/28/2023
Los Coyotes Band of Cahuilla and Cupeño Indians	F	Ray Chapparosa, Chairperson	P.O. Box 189 Warner Springs, CA, 92086-0189	(760) 782-0711	(760) 782-0712		Cahuilla	Imperial,Riverside,San Bernardino,San Diego	
Morongo Band of Mission Indians	F	Ann Brierty, THPO	12700 Pumarra Road Banning, CA, 92220	(951) 755-5259	(951) 572-6004	abrierty@morongo-nsn.gov	Cahuilla Serrano	Imperial,Los Angeles,Riverside,San Bernardino,San Diego	
Morongo Band of Mission Indians	F	Robert Martin, Chairperson	12700 Pumarra Road Banning, CA, 92220	(951) 755-5110	(951) 755-5177	abrierty@morongo-nsn.gov	Cahuilla Serrano	Imperial,Los Angeles,Riverside,San Bernardino,San Diego	
Quechan Tribe of the Fort Yuma Reservation	F	Jordan Joaquin, President, Quechan Tribal Council	P.O.Box 1899 Yuma, AZ, 85366	(760) 919-3600		executivesecretary@quechantribe.com	Quechan	Imperial,Kern,Los Angeles,Riverside,San Bernardino,San Diego	5/16/2023
Quechan Tribe of the Fort Yuma Reservation	F	Jill McCormick, Historic Preservation Officer	P.O. Box 1899 Yuma, AZ, 85366	(928) 261-0254		historicpreservation@quechantribe.com	Quechan	Imperial,Kern,Los Angeles,Riverside,San Bernardino,San Diego	5/16/2023
Quechan Tribe of the Fort Yuma Reservation	F	Manfred Scott, Acting Chairman Kw'ts'an Cultural Committee	P.O. Box 1899 Yuma, AZ, 85366	(928) 210-8739		culturalcommittee@quechantribe.com	Quechan	Imperial,Kern,Los Angeles,Riverside,San Bernardino,San Diego	5/16/2023
Ramona Band of Cahuilla	F	John Gomez, Environmental Coordinator	P. O. Box 391670 Anza, CA, 92539	(951) 763-4105	(951) 763-4325	igomez@ramona-nsn.gov	Cahuilla	Imperial,Riverside,San Bernardino,San Diego	8/16/2016
Ramona Band of Cahuilla	F	Joseph Hamilton, Chairperson	P.O. Box 391670 Anza, CA, 92539	(951) 763-4105	(951) 763-4325	admin@ramona-nsn.gov	Cahuilla	Imperial,Riverside,San Bernardino,San Diego	
Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians	F	Lovina Redner, Tribal Chair	P.O. Box 391820 Anza, CA, 92539	(951) 659-2700	(951) 659-2228	Isaul@santarosa-nsn.gov	Cahuilla	Imperial,Los Angeles,Orange,Riverside,San Bernardino,San Diego	
Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians	F	Isaiah Vivanco, Chairperson	P. O. Box 487 San Jacinto, CA, 92581	(951) 654-5544	(951) 654-4198	ivivanco@soboba-nsn.gov	Cahuilla Luiseno	Imperial,Los Angeles,Orange,Riverside,San Bernardino,San Diego	
Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians	F	Joseph Ontiveros, Cultural Resource Department	P.O. BOX 487 San Jacinto, CA, 92581	(951) 663-5279	(951) 654-4198	jontiveros@soboba-nsn.gov	Cahuilla Luiseno	Imperial,Los Angeles,Orange,Riverside,San Bernardino,San Diego	
Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians	F	Cultural Committee,	P.O. Box 1160 Thermal, CA, 92274	(760) 397-0300	(760) 397-8146	Cultural-Committee@torresmartinez-nsn.gov	Cahuilla	Imperial,Riverside,San Bernardino,San Diego	
Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians	F	Darrell Mike, Chairperson	46-200 Harrison Place Coachella, CA, 92236	(760) 863-2444	(760) 863-2449	29chairman@29palmsbomi-nsn.gov	Chemehuevi	Imperial,Inyo,Riverside,San Bernardino	
Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians	F	Anthony Madrigal, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer	46-200 Harrison Place Coachella, CA, 92236	(760) 775-3259		amadrigal@29palmsbomi-nsn.gov	Chemehuevi	Imperial,Inyo,Riverside,San Bernardino	

This list is current only as of the date of this document. Distribution of this list does not relieve any person of statutory responsibility as defined in Section 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code, Section 5097.94 of the Public Resource Section 5097.98 of the Public Resource Code.

This list is only applicable for contacting local Native Americans with regard to cultural resources assessment for the proposed Ramon Substation Expansion Project, Riverside County.

Record: PROJ-2023-003430
Report Type: List of Tribes
Counties: Riverside
NAHC Group: All

Appendix B. Record Search Results

Reports

ReportNum	Authors	CitYear	CitTitle	CitPublisher	ReportType
RI-08102	Richard Perry	2000	Cultural Resources Survey of Approximately 720 Acres in the Western Coachella Valley, Riverside County, California for the Whitewater River Basin California, Flood Control Feasibility Study	US Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District	Archaeological, Field study
RI-10461	William T. Eckhardt, Matthew M. DeCarlo, Doug Mengers, Sherri Andrews, Don Laylander, and Tony Quach	2015	Archaeological Investigations and Monitoring for the Construction of the Devers-Palo Verde No. 2 Transmission Line Project, Riverside County, California	ASM Affiliates	Archaeological, Field study, Monitoring

Resources

PrimaryString	TrinomialString	OtherIDs	ResType	Age	InfoBase	Attribs	RecordingEvents
P-33-009665	CA-RIV-006465H	Other - Jackrabbit Homestead (JH)	Building	Historic	Survey	HP02	2000 (Ed Collins, IID)