

# Appendix G

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**James Roscoe  
Consultants Report**

**A Cultural Resources Study of Proposed Gravel Extraction  
Areas on  
the Mad River, Humboldt County, California**

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## **Introduction**

During the months of January, February, and March, this Cultural Resources Investigation was conducted at the request of the Humboldt County Planning Department of ten sites proposed for gravel extraction along the lower Mad River. The Humboldt County Planning Department is preparing a Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) which takes into account the potential adverse impacts of future gravel operations along the Mad River to significant cultural resources, among other variables. The County is the lead agency for the permitting of surface mining and reclamation and intends to prepare and publish this PEIR in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act. The County is evaluating these ten sites along the lower reach of the Mad River from Hammond Bridge to the former Sweasey Dam site (see Map 1).

The purposes of this investigation were to (1) locate and record project area cultural resources; (2) to evaluate the significance of study area cultural resources; (3) to assess potential impacts to cultural resources resulting from instream gravel operations; (4) to recommend appropriate mitigation measures, if necessary.

The following people were instrumental in providing information which helped in the completion of this report:

Allan Bramlette, Professor, Humboldt State University

Rick Fitzgerald, Research Associate

Albert James, Chairman, Table Bluff Rancheria

## **Project Area Description**

The ten sites composing the project area are all located within the existing banks of the lower reaches of the Mad River, Humboldt County, California. These sites are shown on accompanying sections of the Arcata North, Korbel, and Blue Lake, 7.5', USGS topographic quadrangles (see Maps 2 and 3). The sites consisted of ten different gravel bars proposed for

future gravel extraction operations. The environment of the project area consisted of a riparian corridor associated with the Mad River. Adjoining land consisted of river terraces currently being used for agricultural purposes, gravel production, or for low density residential and light industrial purposes. The topography of the proposed sites was predominantly level to gently rolling.

### **Investigation Methods**

The background research for this project included an examination of the archaeological site records, maps, and project files of the Northwest Regional Information Center of the California Archaeological Inventory, located at Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California. This record search, which updated the author's base maps and site records for the project area, was completed on December 4, 1992. The Regional Information Centers have been established by the California Office of Historic Preservation as the local repository for all archaeological reports which are prepared under cultural resource management regulations. The background literature search at the appropriate Regional Information Center is required by state guidelines and current professional standards. Following completion of this archaeological study, a copy of this report also must be deposited with that organization. The literature search is undertaken to determine if there are any previously recorded archaeological resources or historic structures within the project area and whether the area has been included within any previous archaeological research or reconnaissance projects.

In addition to the above record search at Sonoma State University, additional research was completed using historic maps, historic photographs, local newspapers, historic books and monographs, and oral history testimony.

After completion of the above research, Albert James, Chairman of the Table Bluff Rancheria, was consulted regarding any specific Native American concerns for the project area. Mr. James visited the project area and the two prehistoric archaeological sites recorded during this investigation and shared his knowledge and concerns about Wiyot sites in the area.

Following the pre-field research, a mixed strategy archaeological field reconnaissance of the project areas was conducted. The field reconnaissance was completed during the months of January, February and March by James Roscoe, Kimberley Roscoe, and Rick Fitzgerald. During this field survey the proposed direct impact areas were walked in a series of transects. More intensive coverage was given to areas characterized by two or more of the following variables associated with predicted high archaeological sensitivity: undisturbed or natural soil surfaces, level terrain above the Mad River floodplain, presence of creeks and margins of valleys. Most of the proposed project areas were within the floodplain and consisted of gravels and silts deposited during winter freshets. Areas where the original ground surface was visible were closely inspected for signs of archaeological materials. The exposed banks of the Mad river were also examined for evidence of buried strata of archaeological materials.

Extant cultural resources were recorded on standard archaeological site record forms devised for California by the Department of Parks and Recreation. No artifacts were collected, and no subsurface testing was performed during this study.

### **Ethnographic Background and Land Use**

The project area is located within the ethnographic territory of the Wiyot Indians. The Wiyot at the time of White contact were divided into three principal groups, speaking a mutually intelligible language which differed markedly from the Athabaskan languages to the east and south and the Yurok language to the north. Although Yurok and Wiyot are both considered by linguists to be Algic languages, they are not closely related. A speaker of Wiyot can not understand the speech of a Yurok. The three subdivisions of the Wiyot were (1) the Patawat, who lived in the villages on the lower Mad River, (2) the Wiki on Humboldt Bay, and (3) the Wiyot along the lower Eel River (Elsasser 1978). It is the name of the Eel River division which is now used exclusively in accounts pertaining to the entire group.

With a population numbering somewhere between a low estimate of 1,000 by Kroeber (1925) and a high estimate of 3,300 by Cook (1956), the Wiyot lived almost exclusively in villages along the protected shores of

Humboldt Bay and near the mouths of the Eel and Mad Rivers. Villages consisted of dwellings which were rectangular in plan, made from split redwood planks. Associated with most Wiyot villages was a sweathouse used by Wiyot men for sleeping, gambling, and ceremony. With these villages as their base, the Wiyot were able to hunt and gather a wide variety of plant and animal resources within their territory. Mollusks, sea lions, and stranded whales were among the ocean resources utilized by the Wiyot, while deer, elk, and acorns constituted more important land resources. Perhaps the most important protein source for the Wiyot were the yearly anadromous fish runs on the Eel and Mad rivers, during which the Wiyot were able to smoke and store enough salmon to last through the winters when other food resources were not as abundant.

Although the Wiyot had contacts with White explorers and fur trappers prior to the California Gold Rush, it was this monumental event that was to change the character of northwestern California forever and lead to the decimation and displacement of the Wiyot in the short course of 15 years. From 1850 to 1865, the territory of the Wiyot became the center for the largest concentration of Whites in California north of San Francisco, due to the use of Humboldt Bay as a shipping point to the mines, the establishment of a redwood timber industry, and the homesteading of the Eel River and Arcata bottoms for ranching and farming purposes. The whites who came into Humboldt County in the 1850's, and 1860's were not known for their tolerance toward cultures other than their own, and many came from areas to the east where Indians were feared and hated. Soon after the first White settlements were established on Humboldt Bay, the Wiyot population was decimated by Euro-American violence and introduced diseases. Those who did not die from these causes were displaced from their villages (often located on the best plots of land) and driven to distant reservations or marginal lands within the Humboldt Bay region.

Ethnographic and archaeological data collected by L.L. Loud (1918) for Wiyot territory provides the best published record of prehistoric land-use of the project area. As shown on Map 4, Loud (1918; Plate 1) identified a number of Wiyot habitation and resource procurement sites within or near the present study area. Loud had only a limited amount of time for his fieldwork in this area. He describes his methodology as follows:

*Most of the modern village sites on Mad River, from its mouth to Blue Lake, were located by the help of Aleck Sam...We drove up one side of the river in a wagon, the sites being pointed out as we passed them. This was done in one day's time, so only in a few cases did we get out of the wagon to take a look at the exact spot. (Loud 1918:276).*

Loud made the following comments regarding the Wiyot population density and settlement pattern in the project vicinity starting at the bend of Mad River between site 7B and site 8:

*This was a very thickly settled district, with many villages so close together that, at the present time, it is difficult to identify them with the names of sites secured from native informants. Site 9, containing a considerable bed of shell, was the only one of these sites actually visited and located by the writer. It is located on the ranch of W.E. Clark, about the center of the southeast quarter of section 17, township 6 north, range 1 east. It becomes necessary to thus definitely locate this place, because there has been such a great change in the course of the river here, which formerly made a bend of over a mile to the south of its present channel. However, this change seems to be due to a definite local cause rather than to any general migratory character of the river bed, such as we find in the delta of Eel river. Mad River has a fairly definite channel.*

*The cause of the formation of this great bend seems to be revealed in the description of site H. Here a tremendous jam of logs had been piled up by winter floods. It is possible that some generations ago, before the log jam was formed, the river had a straight channel as a present, but that owing to the obstruction the river had to find a new channel. The bend to the south ran shallow, so that fish could be easily taken during the semiannual run, hence the unusually large population in the vicinity. The Indians burnt the jam at site H one summer. After that the place was a noted feeding ground for elk. There was also a good place for taking eels and salmon near this village, yet it contained only three houses within the memory of Aleck Sam. After the whites came, they cut a ditch across the peninsula-like bend, and the force of the current ripped out a new channel, tearing out great trees and straightening the river once more.*

*...From pioneers living in Arcata, the following information was*

*obtained regarding the group of villages about the bend of the river. One stated that there were probably twenty houses, including one sweat-house, covered with earth, within two hundred to three hundred yards of each other, situated on both sides of the river. Another said that about all the Indians of this vicinity lived on an area of thirty acres. A third informant, who was often present at their dances, estimated that two to three hundred indians gathered at their summer festivities, erecting very large conical bark and brush houses. At such times the square plank houses were but few in comparison to the temporary conical houses .*

*...scattered along the river, between the bend and Blue Lake, there were half a dozen small villages or camps. That is, about every mile there was an Indian house or two. High hills flanked both sides of the river, and the forest was dense, so population here was not large. But near Blue Lake the conditions were more favorable. There was here a valley, formed by the junction of the North Fork with the main river, which contained several patches of prairie...besides the more extensive ones on the ridges. There were good fishing holes on the North Fork where the Indians regularly camped...Another fishing place was.... at the base of a waterfall blocking the advance of salmon (Loud 1918:261-264).*

In summary, it is probable that fish resources made the study area attractive for resource procurement and settlement. Prehistoric-era archaeological remains which might be preserved in the study area include concentrations of chipped and ground stone artifacts found in poorly developed midden and non-midden contexts. These sites would most likely be found on elevated terraces situated near the river, creeks, or springs. The gravel bars which constitute the majority of the direct impact areas would not have been archaeologically sensitive because any prehistoric sites or artifacts located there would have been completely destroyed or carried away by previous major floods (especially those in the decades of the nineteen-fifties, and sixties ).

## **Historic Overview**

Early exploration along the northern coast of California included ships under the British, Spanish, and Russian flags, with the first recorded

landing at Trinidad by the Spanish in 1775. Captain Jonathan Winship, master of the ship "O'Cain" and under contract with the Russian-American Company, entered the Bay in 1806 with Aleut hunters in search of sea otters. Finding the hunting poor, their stay was short and it was another 43 years before the Bay was "rediscovered" by a land party in December 1849. Under the leadership of Dr. Josiah Gregg, the party of eight, which included L.K. Wood who left record of the expedition, came westward from the mining district on the North Fork Trinity River in search of Trinidad Bay. After an arduous journey, the party reached the coast near Little River after a short excursion northward, turned back and proceeded down the coast, eventually reaching the shores of Humboldt Bay (Lewis, 1943). Wood's narrative describes the party's encounter with Mad River:

*Little River was soon recrossed after which nothing occurred to interrupt our progress until we reached another stream which was then a large river being swollen by the heavy rains. Its banks ran full and its waters near the mouth appeared deep and moved so slowly and gently that we concluded that it must be a navigable stream. Our next difficulty was to cross this river. Here the harmony that had existed for so short a time was again disturbed. The Doctor wished to ascertain the latitude of the mouth of the river, in order hereafter to know where it was. This was of course opposed by the rest of the company. Regardless of this opposition he proceeded to take his observation. We were equally obstinate in adhering to the determination of proceeding without delay. Thus decided, our animals were speedily crossed over and our blankets and ourselves placed in canoes--which we had procured from the Indians for this purpose--ready to cross. As the canoes were about pushing off the Doctor, as if convinced that we would carry our determination into effect and he be left behind, hastily caught up his instruments and ran for the canoe, to reach which, however, he was compelled to wade several steps in the water. His cup of wrath was now filled to the brim; but he remained silent until the opposite shore was gained, when he opened upon us a perfect battery of the most withering and violent abuse. Several times during the ebullition of the old man's passion he indulged in such insulting language and comparisons that some of the party, at best not too amiable in their disposition, came very near inflicting upon him summary punishment by consigning him, instruments and all, to his beautiful river. Fortunately for the old gentleman pacific councils prevailed and we were soon ready and off again. This stream in*