

ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTING

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PRELIMINARY ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECONNAISSANCE FOR THE BACK COUNTRY ROADS AND TRAILS PROJECT, PALO CORONA REGIONAL PARK, MONTEREY COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

by

Mary Doane and Gary S. Breschini, Ph.D. RPA

Submitted to

**Mr. Tim Jensen
Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District**

October 19, 2009

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SUMMARY: PROJECT 4033C

RESULTS: SEE TEXT

LINEAR: <20 MILES

SITES: SEE TEXT

UTMG: NW 5.9832/40.3917, N 6.0050/40.3993, NE 6.0160/40.4960, SE 6.0190/40.3555,
S 6.0122/40.3522, SW 5.9955/40.3600

MAPS: USGS 7.5 MINUTE MONTEREY, SOBERANES POINT, MT. CARMEL QUADRANGLES

Required for Monterey County Planning Department:		Yes	No	N/A	See text
Evidence of:	Sacred/Religious site	___	___	<u>X</u>	_____
	Native American Remains	___	<u>X</u>	___	_____
	Anything of Archaeological Significance	<u>X</u>	___	___	<u>X</u>
	Findings of Historical Significance	<u>X</u>	___	___	<u>X</u>

INTRODUCTION

In February 2009 Archaeological Consulting was authorized by Tim Jensen, Resources Manager for the Monterey Peninsula Regional Parks Department, to prepare a Preliminary Archaeological Reconnaissance report for the Back Country Roads and Trails Project at Palo Corona Regional Park south of Carmel, Monterey County, California.

As part of our methodology in the preparation of this report, we have conducted: 1) a background records search at the Northwest Regional Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System, located at Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park; and 2) a field reconnaissance of the Palo Corona Back Ranch project area. The following report contains the results of these investigations as well as our conclusions and recommendations.

PROJECT LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

Palo Corona Regional Park is located south of the Carmel River and east of State Highway 1 in Carmel, Monterey County, California (see Map 1). The roads and trails project area includes the existing ranch roads in the southern part of the Palo Corona Regional Park, sometimes called the Back Ranch, some of which through disuse have become mere trails or tracks. The Universal Transverse Mercator Grid (UTMG) coordinates for the approximate ends of the Back Ranch roads and trails project area are as follows: northwest 5.9832/40.3917, north central at the main ranch road 6.0050/40.3993, northeast 6.0160/40.4960, southeast 6.0190/40.3555, south central at the main ranch road 6.0122/40.3522, and southwest 5.9955/40.3600 on the USGS 7.5 minute Monterey, Soberanes Point and Mt. Carmel Quadrangles (1947 and 1956; photorevised 1983).

The current project involves assessment of the roads/trails network to determine if public access along the roads and trails will create a CEQA level impact to cultural resources.

At the time of our field reconnaissance the recently maintained and graded main and lateral ranch roads afforded good surface visibility in most places. The more gently sloping, not recently graded portions of several roads were vegetated with short dry grasses, which did little to restrict surface visibility.

However, portions of some roads were not readily accessible or provided limited soil visibility due to slides, fallen trees and overgrown vegetation. Portions of lower Chamise Ridge road were washed out and largely overgrown with brush. The extreme end of the northern spur road off Cabin Ridge road was overgrown and inaccessible. The alignment of the historic ranch road from the Corona Homestead to Seneca Ridge was severely overgrown with brush and a barrier had been placed across that road at the lower end of an old fir tree plantation. The southern spur road below Rocky Ridge had washed out. Nevertheless, overall soil surface visibility in the project area surveyed was adequate for the purposes of this reconnaissance.

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in the preparation of this report included two primary steps, as follows:

Background Research

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 Historical Resources Information System, located at Sonoma State University. In addition, our own extensive files and maps were examined for supplemental information, such as rumors of historic or

prehistoric resources in the general project area. These literature searches are undertaken to determine if any archaeological resources have been recorded in the project area, and whether the area has been included in previous archaeological research or reconnaissance studies.

The Regional Information Centers have been established by the California Office of Historic Preservation as the local repository for all archaeological reports prepared under cultural resource management regulations. A background literature search at the appropriate Regional Information Center is required by state guidelines and current professional standards. Following completion of a project, a copy of the report must be deposited with that organization.

Field Reconnaissance

The field reconnaissance was conducted by Mary Doane, B.A., and Gary S. Breschini, Ph.D., on several days between April 15 and August 7, 2009. The pedestrian survey consisted of a “general surface reconnaissance” of all roads project areas and some adjacent lands which could reasonably be expected to contain visible cultural resources, and which could be viewed without major vegetation removal.

A portion of Echo Ridge, Van Winkleys, Dolores and Seneca Creek roads, as well as the Mal Paso tile tub trough spur were examined in April. The remainder of the roads were surveyed in June, July and August following the recording of several previously identified cultural resources in the Back Ranch (see Map 2 and the unattached Addendum, Site Records). In addition to the road alignments, gently sloping areas adjacent to the existing roads, bedrock outcrops within easy walking distance from the roads, two spurs not on our original roads map and a descending lateral ridge line between Dolores and Seneca Creek were surveyed (see Map 1, Figures 17 and 18).

RESULTS OF THE RECONNAISSANCE

Background Research

The background search of the files at the Northwest Regional Information Center found that there are five recorded cultural resources located within one kilometer of the boundaries of the southern part of the Palo Corona Regional Park. Prehistoric site CA-MNT-1461 is found on a lower part of Rocky Ridge west of the ranch. CA-MNT-1928 (P-27-2146) is a large prehistoric midden site east of Palo Corona Peak in the Mitteldorf Preserve. Sites CA-MNT-1504/H (P-27-120) and CA-MNT-1505 (P-27-121) are located on San Jose Creek in the Santa Lucia Preserve east of Palo Corona Regional Park. The historic Rancho San Carlos Road alignment, recorded as P-27-2130, runs along a portion of the eastern boundary of Palo Corona Regional Park. As part of the current project, we have recorded several sites within the southern portion of the Ranch (see Map 2 and unattached Addendum, Site Records).

No resources in the project area have been listed in the California Inventory of Historical Resources (March 1976), California Historical Landmarks, or the National Register of Historic Places.

The historic maps search found that the 1884 General Land Office Plat of Township 17S/Range 1E depicts a trail between Sections 5 and 4 in the vicinity of the historic Corona ranch road (see Figure 1). It may represent the beginnings of the road, which was to become the main access to the Corona and other homesteads in the valley. On the 1940 US Army Corps of Engineers Tactical Map, Point Sur Quadrangle, Grid Zone "G" (see Map 4), a dirt road is depicted running from Corona Road in Carmel Highlands eastward through the Corona Homestead to Rancho San Carlos Road. This historic alignment remains a main ranch road between its western entrance in Carmel Highlands and the Corona Homestead. The eastern portion up to Seneca Ridge has been abandoned for years (see Figures 2, 14 and 15).

The project area lies within the currently recognized ethnographic territory of the Costanoan (often called Ohlone) linguistic group. Discussions of this group and their territorial boundaries can be found in Breschini, Haversat, and Hampson (1983), Kroeber (1925), Levy (1978), Margolin (1978), and other sources. In brief, the group followed a general hunting and gathering subsistence pattern with partial dependence on the natural acorn crop. Habitation is considered to have been semi-sedentary and occupation sites can be expected most often at the confluence of streams, other areas of similar topography along streams, or in the vicinity of springs. These original sources of water may no longer be present or adequate. Resource gathering and processing areas and associated temporary campsites are frequently found on the coast and in other locations containing resources utilized by the group. Factors which may influence the locations of these sites include the presence of suitable exposures of rock for bedrock mortars or other milling activities, ecotones, the presence of specific resources (oak groves, marshes, quarries, game trails, trade routes, etc.), proximity to water, and the availability of shelter. Temporary camps or other activity areas can also be found along ridges or other travel corridors.

Field Research

Archaeological Resources: Several archaeological resources, located near or within the road alignments surveyed during this project, are described individually below (see Map 2).

Dolores Grinding Rocks: The Dolores grinding rocks site was recorded just west of Dolores road, which runs down northeast to the Corona Homestead (see Figure 3). This site consists of over 20 grinding holes in three sandstone outcrops. An isolated chert flake was found on the sharp bend in the Dolores road below the grinding rock site. Despite a wider ranging survey of the ridge and adjoining areas, no additional cultural materials were discovered in the vicinity of the Dolores grinding rocks.

Animas Grinding Rocks: The Animas grinding rocks site, a smaller mortar site with two sandstone outcrops, is located south of Animas Creek along the western boundary of Palo Corona Regional Park (see Figure 4). Historic farm equipment sits adjacent to the main ranch road immediately north of the grinding rocks (see Figure 5).

Van Winkleys Pig Pen: A prehistoric midden site was identified and recorded on the southern part of Van Winkleys road just below the former Van Winkleys pig pen clearing (see Figure 6). Van Winkleys road runs through the midden site, which is identified by dark soil and sparse, scattered fragments of *Mytilus* (mussel) shell.

Historic Resources: Several previously identified historic resources, including the Corona homestead site on the historic Corona ranch road, the Chavote homestead site at the upper end of the Chavote canyon road, the Escobar-Seneca homestead site on a bench west of the main ranch road, the Escobar-Cypress homestead site south of San Jose Creek road, and the Mal Paso tile tub trough west of the main road, were recorded during this project (see unattached Addendum, Site Records). In addition two newly identified historic sites were identified and recorded on the Seneca Creek road, a grizzly bear trap and a lumbering site. They are discussed individually below.

Corona Homestead: The Corona Homestead complex in the heart of the Palo Corona Regional Park includes a standing cabin structure as well as corrals and fencing, a water cistern, other structural remains from a ranch house and a blacksmith shop, fruit trees and roads (see Figures 7 and 8).

Chavote Homestead: Chavote homestead consists of the remains of a small structure overgrown with brush, two fruit trees and a large rose bush (see Figure 9). This is located just uphill from a spring.

Escobar Seneca Homestead: Non-native trees and a collapsed structure remain at the Escobar-Seneca homestead located on a bench west of the main ranch road just south of San Jose Creek (see Figure 10).

Escobar Cypress Homestead: The Escobar-Cypress homestead just south of San Jose Creek includes the remains of a collapsed structure under very large cypress trees (see Figure 11).

Seneca Bear Trap: Of the two additional historic resources identified along the Seneca Creek road, the remains of an historic grizzly trap immediately adjacent to the road was recorded as the Seneca Bear trap (see Figure 12, see also Figure 22 in Storer and Tevis 1984).

Seneca Lumber Cache: South of the bear trap on Seneca Creek, a lumber cache produced from a large felled redwood tree was recorded as Seneca Lumbering #1 (see Figure 13).

Palo Corona Ranch Road: The portion of the historic east/west Corona road alignment located within Palo Corona Ranch has been recorded as part of this project (see Figures 14 and 15). This graded road with minimal drainage improvement appears to follow the original road alignment. The portion of the road west of Corona homestead is well maintained in a useable condition. The portion of the road east of Corona homestead is not currently passable by vehicle due to vegetation overgrowth, downed trees, erosion and a barricade placed at the abandoned houses adjacent to the overgrown Christmas (fir) tree farm just below Seneca Ridge.

Mal Paso Tub Trough: The tile tub trough located at the headwaters of Mal Paso Creek on a spur road west of the main ranch road was recorded as an historic resource (see Figure 16). Previously, prehistoric artifacts have been found in the trough area. However, the whereabouts of those artifacts is not now known.

No evidence of prehistoric materials was found in the vicinity of the tile tub trough during this survey.

Additional Field Survey: Several ranch roads surveyed during this project with negative findings are addressed below.

Rocky Ridge Road: Rocky Ridge road is located between the main ranch road on the ridge leading to Palo Corona Peak and the western boundary of the park property. Because Rocky Ridge has been theorized to be an important prehistoric route between the coast and the complex of sites in and around San Francisquito Flat, that road alignment as well as adjacent gentle slopes and rock outcrops were carefully surveyed. The spur leading to a spring south of the western end of the road was washed out about part way down. Although short cattle-cropped grasses afforded good surface visibility on Rocky Ridge, no cultural resources were identified during the reconnaissance.

Chamise Ridge, Panoche, Malpaso, Cabin Ridge, Seneca Ridge, Echo Ridge: No evidence of potentially significant cultural resources was found during the survey along the Chamise Ridge, Panoche, Malpaso, Cabin Ridge, Seneca Ridge or Echo Ridge ranch roads (see Figures 17 and 18). The western part of Chamise ridge road was in good condition, but, as it dropped steeply down the slope toward the creek to the south, portions of the road were eroded to a mere trail's width and overgrown with brush. The large hilltop meadow at the upper end of Panoche Road was surveyed in addition to the road. The Malpaso road survey included the spurs to spring boxes and watering troughs as well as open areas near the road. Echo Ridge, Seneca Ridge as well as adjacent meadows and side spurs, and Cabin Ridge as well as adjacent meadows and side spurs were surveyed. The road from Cabin Ridge through Escobar-Cypress homestead and back up toward Rancho San Carlos Road was included in the survey as well as the road along the south side of San Jose Creek.

Surface soil in the road alignments ranged from thin tan grainy silt or rock on the ridges and upper slopes to a dark gray silty clay loam in the more heavily vegetated lower slopes and creekside areas.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

All of the cultural resources previously and recently identified in the Palo Corona Back Ranch along the existing ranch road alignments have been recorded during this reconnaissance project (see unattached Addendum, Site Records). Almost all of the resources identified in the back ranch are located in areas where future impacts from facilities maintenance or improvement projects are unlikely. Potential methods for management of several resources are discussed below.

Van Winkleys Pig Pen: If vehicular use of Van Winkleys road continues, the midden site should be protected from future impacts by covering the midden site with a layer of clean fill soil. In order to reduce impacts from rutting and erosion, the road should not be used for vehicular travel during wet weather.

Dolores and Animas Grinding Rocks: Continued use and maintenance of the existing ranch road should not result in impacts to the two identified prehistoric grinding rock sites.

Homestead sites-general: Continued vehicular or pedestrian use of the existing ranch roads is not expected to result in impacts to the remnants of historic structures, which are largely hidden by brush and poison oak. Adverse impacts to the non-native ornamental and fruit trees should be avoided.

Corona Homestead: In the Corona Homestead complex, the ranch house is gone and the foundation ruins are covered by vegetation. Most of the historic features, except for the Corona Cabin and the corral area, are not likely to be subject to impacts from maintenance or possible future restoration for visitor use.

The cabin should be evaluated for historic significance prior to modification to accommodate visitor use of the park facility. The corral and fencing should be left in their historic configuration.

Because a potential for future impacts to the several prehistoric and historic resources of the back ranch portion of Palo Corona Regional Park may arise in the course of future maintenance or improvements projects, we make the following minimum recommendations for future management of those resources.

- Plans for improvements to or maintenance of roads and structures in close proximity to the recorded cultural resources should be reviewed by a qualified professional archaeologist in order to identify the potential for project impacts. At a minimum, a qualified archaeologist should monitor road and trail improvements or structural work within or in close proximity to identified cultural resources.
- If development of new road or trail alignments are considered, the impact areas should be subject to an archaeological field reconnaissance.

Because of the possibility of unidentified (e.g., buried) cultural resources being found during any road or building construction project, we recommend that the following standard language, or the equivalent, be included in any permits issued for the project area:

- If archaeological resources or human remains are unexpectedly discovered during any construction, work shall be halted within 50 meters (150 feet) of the find until it can be evaluated by a qualified professional archaeologist. If the find is determined to be significant, appropriate mitigation measures shall be formulated and implemented.

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