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RB INYOKERN DATA CENTER

Application for Small Power Plant Exemption (SPPE)

Inyokern, Kern County, California

Docket Number - 26-SPPE-01

Supporting Document Appendix B

Subsection(s):

- B.1 - Cultural Resources Report
- B.2 - Historical Architectural Report

RB INYOKERN DATA CENTER

Application for Small Power Plant Exemption (SPPE)

Inyokern, Kern County, California

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Supporting Document Appendix B

Subsection(s):

- B.1 - Cultural Resources Report

PHASE I SURVEY OF THE INYOKERN DATA CENTER PROJECT, KERN COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

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MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

An intensive Phase I cultural resources survey was conducted for the Inyokern Data Center Project (Project), in Kern County, California. The proposed Project is within the census-designated place (CDP) of Inyokern (City), Kern County, California. This places the Project on the open flats of the Indian Wells Valley, a western extension of the Mojave Desert. Specifically, the Project is on the Inyokern United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute quadrangle, within Sections 19, 20, 29, and 30, in Township 26 South, Range 39 East (T26S/R39E), Mount Diablo Base and Meridian (MDBM). The Project covers 19 Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APN): 084-010-17, 084-010-18, 084-010-21, 084-010-22, 084-010-33, 084-010-35, 084-010-42, 084-010-43, 084-010-44, 084-010-45, 084-010-46, 084-010-47, 084-010-48, 084-010-58, 084-010-59, 084-021-18, 084-040-03, 352-085-07, 352-501-11. The proposed Project site consists of mostly undeveloped land bisected by dirt roads and bounded by well-traveled paved roads. Elevation within the Project Area, which is flat, ranges from 2,415 feet (ft.) to 2,435 ft. above mean sea level (amsl). The Project study area totals 95 acres (ac.); our study area encompasses not only the Project's components, but also a 200-ft. buffer.

This study was conducted by ASM Affiliates, with Michael Lenzi, MA, RPA, serving as principal investigator. ASM Associate Archaeologist Robert Azpitarte, MA, served as field director, with assistance from ASM Assistant Archaeologist Margarita Medina Lemus, BA. Ashlee Younie, MA, RPA, was a contributing author of this report. Background studies and fieldwork for the survey were completed from December 2025–January 2026. The study was undertaken to assist with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance. The California Energy Commission (CEC) will serve as the lead agency for the Project.

As designed, Intuva Inc. and Valley Wide Engineering & Construction have proposed the Inyokern Data Center. The Project will consist of a 99 MW modular, hyperscale campus located in Kern County, California. This Conceptual Basis of Design (BoD) defines the guiding engineering philosophies, performance criteria, and design parameters for the project, supporting both the California Energy Commission (CEC) Small Power Plant Exemption (SPPE) and subsequent design development phases. Constructed in three phases (35 MW → 70 MW → 99 MW), the project utilizes dual-sided electrical and mechanical systems for concurrent maintainability, high energy efficiency, and readiness for future technological evolution. The design adheres to a 70/30 load split and maintains operational redundancy across all critical infrastructure systems.

To determine whether the Project Area has been previously surveyed for cultural resources, and/or whether any such resources were known to exist within or near to it, ASM submitted a records search request to the Southern San Joaquin Valley Information Center (SSJVIC) in January 2026. The Project Area has been previously surveyed and seven (7) previously recorded resources are known to exist within it. A search of the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) *Sacred Lands Files* was requested on December 22, 2025, and on January 23, 2026; on March 16, 2026, a response was received. The NAHC results were negative for Tribal Cultural Resources and sacred sites.

The Phase I survey fieldwork was conducted on January 8, 2026, with 15-meter (m)-wide survey transect intervals within the Project Area. Ground surface visibility within the Project Area was

good to excellent (greater than 75 percent) except for the portions that were hardscaped over. Soils throughout the Project Area consist mainly of tan sand with dispersed quaternary deposits. Vegetation present was consistent with western Mojave Desert flora, and composed of creosote bush, blackbrush, rabbitbrush, ephedra, and cholla, as well as seasonal grasses and wildflowers.

As a result of the survey, six (6) of the seven (7) previously recorded resources were successfully located and updated, with the remaining resource found to be entirely outside of the Project Area. The investigated resources consist of site P-15-002050/CA-KER-002050H, a segment of the Southern Pacific Rail Road (SPRR); P-15-019864/CA-KER-010862H, a historic refuse scatter and fence line; P-15-019867/CA-KER-010865H, a historic refuse scatter; P-15-019869/CA-KER-010867H, a historic refuse scatter with earthen features; P-15-019870/CA-KER-010868H, a historic refuse scatter; and P-15-020317, a segment of California State Route 178.

All previously identified resources are historic in age, lack integrity, and are recommended not eligible for inclusion on the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR). No additional archaeological sites or historic properties were discovered within the Project Area. Based on these findings, the proposed Project does not have the potential to result in adverse impacts or effects to significant historical resources or properties, and no additional cultural resource studies are recommended. In the unlikely event that cultural resources are identified during Project implementation, work should be halted within a 100-ft. radius of the find, and a qualified archaeologist should be contacted to evaluate the newly discovered resource. Further mitigation, including subsurface testing, may be required to evaluate the discovery's eligibility for inclusion on the CRHR.

1. INTRODUCTION AND REGULATORY CONTEXT

ASM Affiliates was retained by Quad Knopf, Inc. to conduct an intensive Phase I cultural resources survey for the proposed Inyokern Data Center Project (Project), within the census-designated place (CDP) of Inyokern, in Kern County, California. The lead agency for the Project is the California Energy Commission (CEC). The purpose of this investigation was to assist with compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The investigation was conducted, specifically, to ensure that significant impacts to historic properties or historical resources do not occur as a result of Project construction.

This current investigation included:

- A background records search and literature review to determine if any known archaeological sites were present in the project zone and/or whether the study area had been previously and systematically studied by archaeologists;
- A search of the NAHC *Sacred Lands File* to determine if any traditional cultural places or cultural landscapes have been identified within the area;
- An on-foot, intensive survey of the study area to identify and record previously undiscovered cultural resources and to examine known sites; and
- A preliminary assessment of any such resources found within the subject property.

This study was conducted by ASM Affiliates, of Bakersfield, California, from December 2025–March 2025. Michael Lenzi, MA, RPA, served as principal investigator, and ASM Associate Archaeologist Robert Azpitarte, MA, conducted the fieldwork, with assistance from ASM Assistant Archaeologist Margarita Medina Lemus, BA. Ashlee Younie, MA, RPA, was a contributing author of this report.

This manuscript constitutes a report on the Phase I survey. Subsequent chapters provide background to the investigation, including historic context studies; the findings of the archival records search; a summary of the field surveying techniques employed; and the results of the fieldwork. We conclude with a summary and recommendations for the study area.

1.1 STUDY AREA LOCATION

The study area, consisting of open flat land, is within the census-designated place (CDP) of Inyokern, Kern County, California (Figure 1). This places the Project on the open flats of the Indian Wells Valley, a western extension of the Mojave Desert, and at an elevation range of approximately 2,415 feet (ft.) to 2,435 ft. above mean sea level (amsl). Specifically, the Project is within Sections 19, 20, 29, and 30, in Township 26 South, Range 39 East (T26S/R39E), Mount Diablo Base and Meridian (MDBM) as illustrated on the Inyokern USGS 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle. The Project will involve approximately 95 acres (ac.) of undeveloped private land, including a 200-ft. buffer. The Project covers 19 Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APN): 084-010-17, 084-010-18, 084-010-21, 084-010-22, 084-010-33, 084-010-35, 084-010-42, 084-010-43, 084-010-44, 084-010-45, 084-010-46, 084-010-47, 084-010-48, 084-010-58, 084-010-59, 084-021-18, 084-040-03, 352-085-07, 352-501-11.

1.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

As designed, Intuva Inc. and Valley Wide Engineering & Construction have proposed the Inyokern Data Center. The Project will consist of a 99 MW modular, hyperscale campus located in Kern County, California. This Conceptual Basis of Design (BoD) defines the guiding engineering philosophies, performance criteria, and design parameters for the project, supporting both the California Energy Commission (CEC) Small Power Plant Exemption (SPPE) and subsequent design development phases. Constructed in three phases (35 MW → 70 MW → 99 MW), the project utilizes dual-sided electrical and mechanical systems for concurrent maintainability, high energy efficiency, and readiness for future technological evolution. The design adheres to a 70/30 load split and maintains operational redundancy across all critical infrastructure systems.

The main facility, a 99 MW Tier III+ facility supplied via a 115 kV interconnection to Southern California Edison (SCE), will encompass a 55.54-ac site which lies south of West Inyokern Road (Highway 178) and west of North Brown Road, composed of parcels APN 084-010-45 (portion), 084-010-44, and 084-010-43.

The site scales through three construction phases:

1. Phase 1 (0–24 months): 30–35 MW total, IT 21–25 MW, Non-IT 9–10 MW; three suites, first transformer and generator yard.
2. Phase 2 (24–48 months): 65–70 MW total, IT 45–49 MW, Non-IT 20–21 MW; additional suites, second transformer, and expanded cooling.
3. Phase 3 (48–72 months): 99 MW total, IT 70 MW, Non-IT 29 MW; final suite, complete 2N substation, and second generator yard.

The proposed Inyokern Data Center Project will encompass a total of approximately 95 ac., which includes all access roads, staging areas, the main facility, and ancillary infrastructure construction.

1.3 REGULATORY CONTEXT

1.3.1 California Environmental Quality Act

CEQA is applicable to discretionary actions by state or local lead agencies. Under CEQA, lead agencies must analyze impacts to cultural resources. Significant impacts under CEQA occur when “historically significant” or “unique” cultural resources are adversely affected, which occurs when such resources could be altered or destroyed through project implementation. Historically significant cultural resources are defined by eligibility for or by listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR). In practice, the federal NRHP criteria for significance applied under Section 106 are generally (although not entirely) consistent with CRHR criteria (see PRC § 5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4852 and § 15064.5(a)(3)).

Significant cultural resources are those archaeological resources and historical properties that:

- (1) Are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California’s history and cultural heritage;
- (2) Are associated with the lives of persons important in our past;

- (3) Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represent the work of an important creative individual, or possess high artistic values; or
- (4) Have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Unique resources under CEQA, in slight contrast, are those that represent:

An archaeological artifact, object, or site about which it can be clearly demonstrated that, without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that it meets any of the following criteria:

- (1) Contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and that there is a demonstrable public interest in that information.
- (2) Has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type.
- (3) Is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person (PRC § 21083.2(g)).

Preservation in place is the preferred approach under CEQA to mitigating impacts to significant or unique cultural resources.

1. Introduction and Regulatory Context

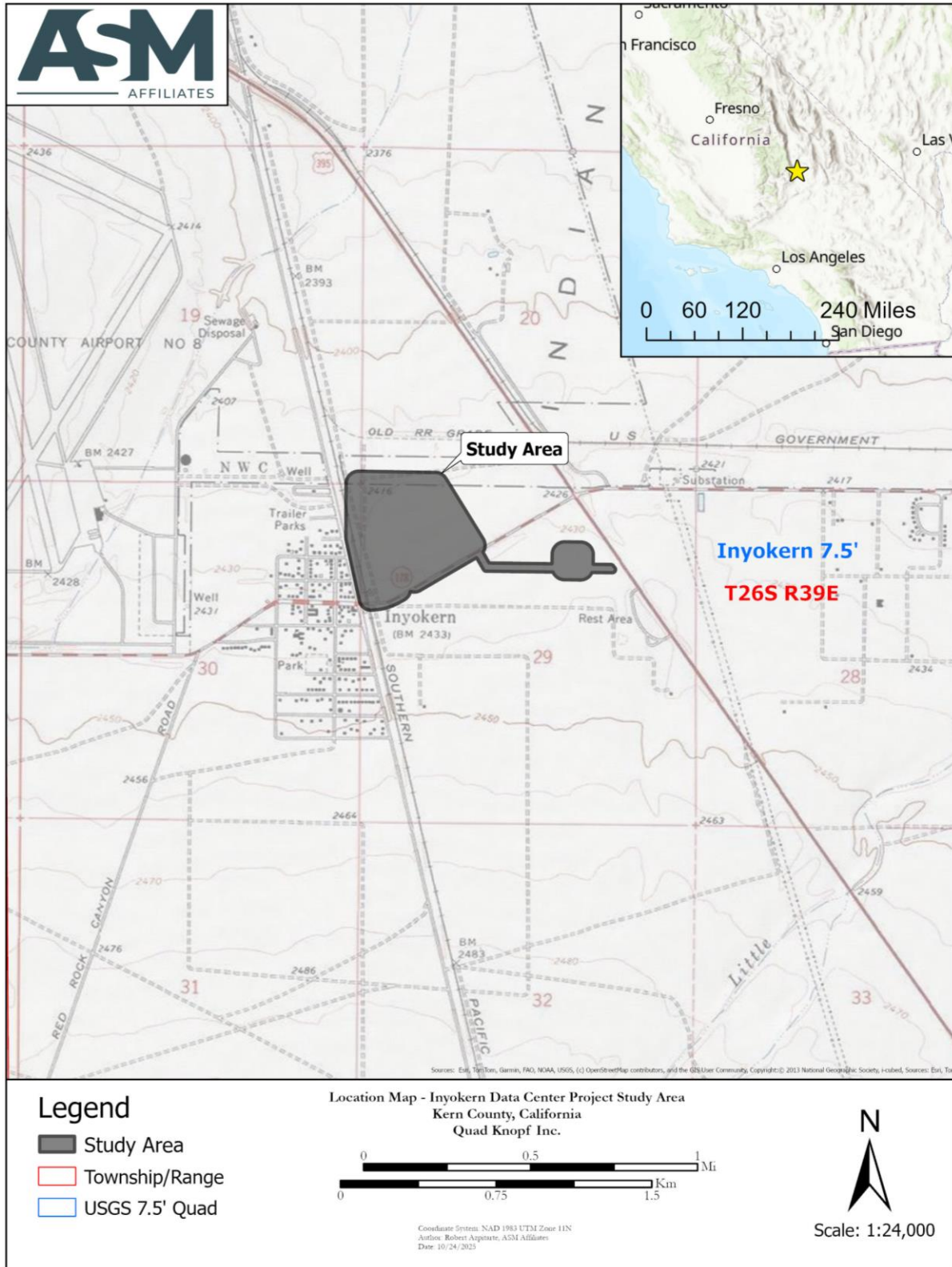


Figure 1. Location of the Inyokern Data Center Project study area, Kern County, California.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

2.1 ENVIRONMENTAL BACKGROUND

The survey area for the Project is in the western Mojave Desert region in Indian Wells Valley in Kern County, California. The Indian Wells Valley, which is a relatively flat, is oriented north-south in the western Mojave Desert. Indian Wells Valley covers an area of approximately 600 sq. mi. It is bounded by the El Paso Mountains on the south, the southern Sierra Nevada Mountain Ranges to the west, the Spangler Hills on the southeast, the Argus Mountain Range on the east, and the Coso Mountain Range to the north. The primary physiographic feature of the Indian Wells Valley is the China Lake playa.

The Project study area is characterized by continental climate conditions; with hot, dry summers and cold, dry winters. The area is home to many dry lake beds (playas), saline ponds, and north-south-trending mountain ranges that cast a rain shadow on the Indian Wells Valley. Between the mountains, the terrain is dominated by sand and gravel basins, which are characterized by a lack of water. The numerous faults along the valley margins tend to contain many of the locally occurring springs in the region. Vegetation in the Project Area is typical of the western Mojave Desert and consists of creosote, Joshua trees, buckwheat, cholla cactus, rabbitbrush, blackbrush, and seasonal grasses (cf. Schoenherr 1992).

2.2 GEOARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Geologically, the survey area is located on Holocene and Pleistocene alluvium with nonconforming plutonic rock (Dibblee and Minch 2008). United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) soil surveys identify the Project Area soils as composed of Wasco, Rosamond, and Cajon soil series. The Wasco series consists of very deep, well drained soils on recent alluvial fans and flood plains. The Rosamond series consists of deep, well drained soils that formed in material weathered mainly from granitic alluvium. The Cajon series consists of very deep, somewhat excessively drained soils that formed in sandy alluvium from predominantly granitic rocks.

A Caltrans geoarchaeological study (Meyer et al. 2010) that included the Project Area was consulted to identify the potential for buried archaeological sites. This study involved first determining the location and ages of late Pleistocene (>25,000 years old) landforms in the Mojave Desert. These were identified by combining a synthesis of 2,400 published paleontological, soils and archaeological chronometric dates with geoarchaeological field testing. The ages of surface landforms were then mapped to provide an assessment for the potential for buried archaeological deposits. These ages were derived primarily from the Soil Survey Geographic Database (SSURGO) and the State Soils Geographic (STATSGO) database. A series of maps were created from this information that ranked locations in seven ordinal classes for sensitivity for buried soils, from Very Low to Very High.

2.2.1 Potential for Buried Cultural Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources

According to Meyer et al. (2010), the Project Area exists on a geological landform that is Moderately High for archaeological deposits with Moderate potential for buried sites. However, although the proposed Project is located almost entirely within undeveloped land, the disturbed context and land-use history suggest that the potential for intact buried archaeological deposits being encountered during construction is low.

Overall, given the local geomorphic setting, mapped soils, and observed disturbance, the potential for buried cultural resources and tribal cultural resources was assessed as low. This assessment informed field methods by confirming the need for a surface-only survey with no targeted subsurface testing.

2.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

The following summary provides a brief overview of the prehistory of the Inyokern region, generally a part of the Mojave Desert in eastern California, and which can be divided into seven time periods, as follows.

2.3.1 Pre-Clovis (earlier than 12,000 YBP)

The initial occupation of North America is still a topic of research and debate, with the date of initial human entry onto the continent not yet known and little understood about the lifeways of the earliest occupants. This Late Pleistocene occupation is generally referred to as the Pre-Clovis (cultural) Period, dated at earlier than 13,500 years before present (Y.B.P.). During this period, many of the valley floors of the Mojave Desert and the Great Basin were filled with a large lake system, including Pleistocene Lake China on the Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS). Although a number of claims have been made for Pre-Clovis sites in the Mojave Desert generally, including in the Coso region specifically (see Davis 1978), these are as yet unverified. Possible Pre-Clovis petroglyph dates for the Coso Range, on China Lake NAWS, have been proposed by Whitley and Dorn (e.g., 1993, 2010; Whitley 2013). Rondeau 2023 indicates Folsom points have never been identified in California to date.

2.3.2 Paleoindian (11,200–9000 YBP)

The reduction of the Pleistocene lakes to shallow sloughs and swamps during the Terminal Pleistocene corresponds to the start of the Paleoindian Period, dating from about 12,000 to 9,000 Y.B.P. The hallmarks of this cultural period are fluted, collaterally flaked and basally thinned and ground Clovis spear points, Western Stemmed Tradition projectile points, and large, well-flaked but unfluted, lanceolate points. Substantial evidence of Paleoindian use of eastern California has been found in a number of areas, including NAWS China Lake (e.g., Davis 1978; Giambastiani and Bullard 2010). Paleoindian sites in the Great Basin and Mojave Desert are commonly (though not exclusively) found immediately above the lake bottoms, signaling the fact that adaptation to the drying lake system was an important aspect of early prehistoric lifeways. Currently there is no

firm evidence indicating that eastern California Paleoindian peoples significantly relied on big-game hunting (or scavenging).

A conservative interpretation of the chronometric results on Coso petroglyphs indicates that 18 percent date during the Paleoindian Period (Whitley and Dorn 2010; Whitley 2013), suggesting that the regional rock art tradition began during this interval.

2.3.3 Early Archaic (9000–6000 YBP)

The Early Archaic period (sometimes called the Western Pluvial Lakes Tradition, Lake Mojave, San Dieguito or Death Valley I) represents the early Holocene in paleoenvironmental terms. Its hallmark is generally considered to be the widely dispersed but ambiguously dated Western Stemmed Tradition spear points. These include the local variants known as Lake Mohave and Silver Lake points. Davis (1978; Davis et. al 1969) identified and discussed the importance of a number of Early Archaic sites in the Coso region. These are located in both the China Lake Basin and the Panamint Valley in former lacustrine environments and are indicative of lakeshore use if not occupation. Work at Early Holocene central Mojave Desert sites, primarily at Fort Irwin, in contrast has revealed considerable variability in lithic assemblages and materials, while also documenting relative continuity between early and middle Holocene faunal assemblages (Basgall 1993).

2.3.4 Middle Archaic (6000–4000 YBP)

Regardless of date of initial occupation of the region, substantial habitation did not occur until later, with the start of the Middle Archaic (or Pinto) Period, lasting from about 6000 to 4000 Y.B.P. The Middle Archaic corresponds to the Altithermal paleoenvironmental period, an extended time of dry climatic conditions.

Handstones and millingsstones are much more abundant in Middle Archaic assemblages than in previous time periods and are represented by bulky, well-worn, shaped variants that were routinely transported and maintained. In eastern California and the Mojave Desert, Middle Archaic population densities overall remained low. Subsistence focused partly on game procurement, but the importance of plant resources increased substantially. Faunal assemblages from many Pinto sites indicate that large artiodactyls were taken whenever possible, but hunting emphasized small game such as rabbits, hares, rodents, and reptiles (Basgall 1994). The fact that milling implements are comparable in frequency to later assemblages implies that Middle Archaic populations had already become broad-spectrum foragers.

2.3.5 Late Archaic (4000–1500 YBP)

The Late Archaic Period (also called Elko, Gypsum or Newberry) lasted from about 4000 to 1500 Y.B.P. This correlates with improved and wetter environmental conditions across western North America. The start of the Late Archaic in the Coso region is posited to represent the initial establishment of the primary settlement and subsistence systems that are currently archaeologically visible (Whitley 1994, 1998). The Late Archaic also witnessed the beginning of the intensive exploitation of the Coso Sugarloaf obsidian quarry, an event that apparently correlates with the

beginning of the inland-to-coastal obsidian trade in south-central California. The primary temporal diagnostics for the Late Archaic are Elko and Gypsum series projectile points.

Hildebrandt and McGuire (2002; McGuire and Hildebrandt 2005) suggest that this period included intensive big-game hunting and that the Coso petroglyphs represent a hunting cult associated with this subsistence emphasis, reflecting an example of costly signaling theory.

2.3.6 Haiwee (1,500–800 Y.B.P.)

The Haiwee (also called the Rose Spring or Saratoga Springs) Period is differentiated from the earlier Late Archaic/Elko Period by the introduction of the bow and arrow and a change from spear points to arrow points at circa A.D. 500 (cf. Yohe 1992). According to Hildebrandt and McGuire (2002; McGuire and Hildebrandt 2005; Gilreath and Hildebrandt 2008), and Garfinkel (2006, 2007; Garfinkel et al. 2010), this technological change increased the efficiency of big-game hunting leading to overhunting, a reduction in bighorn herd size, and a resulting intensification in the hunting cult rituals that produced Coso rock art. These archaeologists suggest that, due to the extirpation of the herds from overkill, the creation of pecked petroglyphs ended circa A.D. 1200–1300. Whitley (1994, 1998), in contrast, hypothesizes that petroglyph-making rituals also intensified during this period, but that this intensification was associated with rain shamanism resulting from droughts due to the Medieval Climatic Anomaly, a period of global climatic instability.

2.3.7 Numic (800–140 Y.B.P.)

The Numic (or, in some areas, Late Prehistoric, Shoshone or Marana) Period runs from about 800 Y.B.P. to the Historic Period and corresponds to the Little Ice Age. It is distinguished from the previous Haiwee interval by the introduction of brown-ware ceramics and a change in projectile points: from Rose Spring to Desert Side-notched and Cottonwood Triangular types. The Numic Period is considered to represent the appearance of the historical/ethnographic aboriginal pattern of lifeways.

The relationship between the Numic and the earlier Haiwee period inhabitants is controversial, and no consensus has been achieved on this topic among archaeologists (see papers in Madsen and Rhode 1994). Based on one linguistic reconstruction, the eastward spread of the Numic languages (Shoshone and Northern and Southern Paiute) across the Great Basin is hypothesized to have occurred roughly 1,000 or more years ago. Some archaeologists have interpreted the theorized language change in terms of population movements and ethnic group replacements, and they have linked this perspective to observable prehistoric subsistence changes (e.g., Bettinger and Baumhoff 1982; Garfinkel 2007). The resulting Numic spread hypothesis suggests that Numic-speaking peoples migrated out of eastern California at about A.D. 1200 – 1300, outcompeting and replacing an earlier Pre-Numic population in the remainder of the Great Basin. Archaeologists who support the hunting-cult interpretation of the Coso petroglyphs (Hildebrandt and McGuire 2002; McGuire and Hildebrandt 2005; Gilreath and Hildebrandt 2008; Garfinkel 2006, 2007; Garfinkel et al. 2010) view their argument as a component of the Numic spread theory. These researchers suggest that Scratched style petroglyphs (i.e., fine-lined incisions) were made by Numic peoples to cancel the power or deface the earlier pecked engravings

Other archaeologists, partly based on different historical linguistic reconstructions, reject the Numic spread hypothesis and argue that Numic-speaking peoples have been in place, throughout the Great Basin, for a much longer period of time (e.g., Aikens and Witherspoon 1986; Loendorf 1999; Whitley et al. 1999a, 1999b). They argue that the petroglyph tradition has been continuous, into the historic period.

2.4 ETHNOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

The ethnographic period in the region is generally taken to begin about A.D. 1850. At that time the Ridgecrest region fell near to the boundary between two Uto-Aztecan language branches (Numic and Tubatulabic), three of the Numic languages (Shoshone and Northern and Southern Paiute), and for the Shoshone, between two distinct bands (Whitley et al. 2006).

Steward (1938) records that the Panamint Valley, located east of the Coso Range, was predominantly occupied by Panamint (or Koso) Shoshone (the California Central Numic language) from about Ballarat northward, with some admixture of Kawaiisu (the California Southern Numic language); the Kawaiisu were the predominant (but not exclusive) residents from Ballarat southward (some Panamint Shoshone also being present). Death Valley was occupied by representatives of three Numic languages. The approximately northern one-third was the domain of the Panamint Shoshone. In central Death Valley, around Furnace Creek, a mixture of Panamint Shoshone, Kawaiisu, and Southern Paiute (the Nevada Southern Numic language) purportedly lived. Southern Death Valley was apparently the domain of the Southern Paiute. The Kawaiisu residing in central Death Valley and Panamint Valley were known to the Shoshone as the *Panümünt* (Steward 1938) or, in its Southern Paiute form, *Panamaitsiwi* (Laird 1976), from which the toponymic “Panamint” is derived. This term has been applied to local geographical features, as well as to the language of the locally resident Shoshone, who were actually not “Panamints” at all. All or most of the Coso Range was occupied by the Koso Shoshone, who had villages at Coso Hot Springs, Coso Cold Springs (south of Darwin), Little Lake and Olancho, thereby including the south shore of Owens Lake (Steward 1938). The Northern Paiute occupied Owens Valley from the lake northward. The El Paso Mountains, which form the southern border of the Indian Wells Valley, were in Kawaiisu territory. The Ridgecrest area falls near the boundary between the Coso Shoshone and Kawaiisu.

Complicated though this pattern may seem, Fowler et al. (1995) have recently pointed out that, due to the low population density and band marriage exogamy, familial ties were quite widespread. The result was that while specific language and band territories might be fairly well defined, any given individual’s ties to and associations with the regional landscape were broad and typically exceeded the bounds of the band territory. This circumstance points to the fact that territorial boundaries in this sense had little direct bearing on many aspects of indigenous life.

Despite these language and band territorial differences, there were a series of cultural similarities between the various tribes. The ethnographic lifeways of the area’s inhabitants can then be sketched in general Numic terms. Relevant ethnographies, from which a synthesis for this region may be drawn, have been published by Steward (e.g., 1933, 1938, 1941, 1943), Kelly (1939), Laird (1976, 1984) and Zigmond (1986), among others. Based on these and other sources, ethnographic patterns in the region can be summarized as follows.

As regards subsistence, the Numic seasonal round involved alternating periods of aggregation into winter villages, and then dispersal into nuclear families. Winter village aggregation was predicated on stockpiling the fall pinyon harvest, combined with rabbit hunting. Winter aggregation typically occurred at major springs on the valley floors, where a band would congregate and live in pit houses. In the Coso Range, there were four of these. Steward (1938) also has noted that Panamint Valley was so arid that it effectively had no winter aggregation villages; the historical rancheria and reservation at Indian Ranch, in the northern part of the valley, was only established historically, once a well had been dug.

Following winter aggregation, usually around April, nuclear families dispersed in the early spring, initially in search of ripening seeds and greens on open alluvial fans. Seed collecting continued into the summer, with families moving to progressively higher elevations, likely including into the upland areas of the Coso Range, in search of ripening plants. By late summer (July through August), families were concentrated in the higher elevations of local mountain ranges. By early fall, pinyon exploitation had begun again at the higher elevations. With the return to the winter villages following the pinyon harvest, the seasonal round was completed. Steward (1938) noted that the Coso and Panamint ranges were exploited for seeds, roots, tubers and pinyon nuts. These were primarily areas used by dispersed, single-family groups during the summer and fall. Contemporary Timbisha Shoshone peoples, residing in Death Valley, continue to remember the quality of the pinyon nuts from the Coso Peak area (Fowler et al. 1995).

The social organization of the Numic has been a point of controversy. Although it is clear that regional bands and headmen existed during the Historical Period, Julian Steward (1938, 1955) argued that this was a recent development resulting from contact, emanating from the Euro-American need to have a single Native American spokesman and leader with whom they could interact. Omer Stewart (1939, 1966), in contrast, contended that Numic bands were the true aboriginal organizational system, and that they therefore had deep time depth.

Bands were named, regional land-holding groups that fell under the nominal leadership of a headman-shaman. This individual was responsible for organizing and scheduling group subsistence activities, such as rabbit drives, and ceremonies such as the Round Dance. In his role as shaman/healer, he conducted curing rituals. Although these are often viewed as primarily medical in nature, they also served as a form of social conflict resolution in that they alleviated social disharmony and stress instead of providing pharmacological cures for perceived ailments (Laird 1976, 1984).

Regional Shoshone bands within the general area included the Coso, with a band territory known as *Kuhwiji*, and whose headman at least until 1874 was Malarango (Chalfant 1933). (Malarango is presumably the origin for the local toponym “Maturango” Peak.) Another band may have been present in northern Death Valley, with Dock as a headman in the historical period. The Kawitch (or *Kauyaichits*) Shoshone from Ash Meadows in western Nevada comprised a third band whose territory may also have extended into Death Valley. According to military records, “Cowitch” was the headman of the Kawitch in 1871 (Cragen 1975). No data on political organization were collected for the Kawaiisu, although they were the resident group in the El Paso Mountains, which

borders Indian Wells Valley on the southwest. Southern Death Valley apparently fell within the domain of the Las Vegas Southern Paiute band (Kelly 1939).

Beyond the band as an autonomous land-holding unit, Numic social organization was patrilineal and patrilocal, although temporary matrilineal residence, serving as a form of bride-service, was practiced for about one year following marriage.

2.5 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The first documented American exploration of the Mojave Desert began with Jedediah Smith, who went across the western end from Cajon Pass along the southern edge of Antelope Valley into the San Joaquin Valley in 1826-27. Documented exploration of the Indian Wells Valley area occurred in 1834 with the passage of Captain Joseph R. Walker and his party who were looking for an all-season route across the Sierra Nevada (Walker 1971:4). Walker, along with noted explorer Kit Carson, led part of John C. Frémont's third expedition across Walker Pass and into the Kern River Valley (Dillon 1984). The Rogers and Manly party, which was also known as the Jayhawkers or Death Valley '49ers, crossed the region in their 1849 expedition across the Mojave Desert. Lieutenant Edward Beale, leading a caravan of camels, also came across the southern side of the Mojave in his 1857 trip to Fort Tejon (Bancroft 1963; Settle 1963:61; Boyd et al. 1982). Non-native explorers often followed existing Native American trails and footpaths or used Native American guides, knowing that they were likely to lead to settlements, often steering toward water and food sources along the way.

The discovery of gold in northern California in 1848 resulted in a dramatic increase of population, mainly consisting of fortune seekers and gold miners, who began to scour other parts of the state. After 1851, when gold was discovered in the Sierra Nevada Mountains in eastern Kern County, the population of the area grew rapidly (JRP Historical Consulting 2009). As more Euro-American settlers came to the valley and the population rose, tensions between the settlers and the native populations flared, eventually leading to the Owens Valley Indian War of 1862-1863. The war began with skirmishes between groups of settlers and the Owens Valley Paiute and their Shoshone and Kawaiisu allies. Eventually, the United States intervened and established Camp Independence, later becoming Fort Independence. In 1863, after numerous battles and an attempt at peace, large numbers of Owens Valley Paiute were removed from the valley to Fort Tejon (Whitley et al. 2006).

Inyokern was established as a sparse agricultural community in the late nineteenth century. Once the Southern Pacific Railroad (SPRR) established Siding #16, also known as Magnolia, a small town began to form in 1908 (Inyokern Community Center 2025). Coupled with the construction of the Los Angeles Aqueduct, a small community began to develop in the twentieth century. Additional expansion to Indian Wells Valley area began with the onset of World War. Kern County "Airport No. 8" in Inyokern was chosen as the location to stage a rocket program. The airport itself was constructed in 1935 to connect Inyokern to other regions (Indian Wells Valley Airport District 2015). Operations moved from Inyokern to the Ridgecrest area with the establishment of the Naval Ordnance Test Station (NOTS) in 1943. The Indian Wells Valley remains a sparsely populated area where individuals live for a variety of reasons that largely depend upon the national economy and socioeconomic trends.

The origins of the adjacent City of Ridgecrest, located east of Inyokern, extend back to 1912, when it was the small farming village of Crumville, named after a local dairy farmer. The town grew slowly with the first post office not opening until 1941, and with the population still fewer than 200 residents. The Naval Ordnance Test Station (NOTS, precursor to NAWS), opened in 1943, during World War II, and the town has been closely allied with the Department of the Navy specifically, and the defense industry generally, since that time. Ridgecrest was incorporated in 1963, and it currently has approximately 27,000 residents.

3. ARCHIVAL RECORDS SEARCH

An archival records search was conducted at the California State University, Bakersfield, Southern San Joaquin Valley Information Center by SSJVIC staff members in January 2026, to determine: (i) if precontact or historical archaeological sites had previously been recorded within the study area; (ii) if the study area had been systematically surveyed by archaeologists prior to the initiation of this field study; and/or (iii) whether the region of the field project was known to contain archaeological sites and to thereby be archaeologically sensitive. Additionally, a search of the NAHC *Sacred Lands File* was requested to ascertain whether traditional cultural places or cultural landscapes had been identified within or adjacent to the Project Area. The results of this archival records search are summarized below (see Confidential Appendix A). Local registers and applicable city/county-listed historic resources and repositories were reviewed. No additional listed cultural resources were identified beyond those documented through CHRIS and field survey. Based on the records searches, the Inyokern Data Center Project Area appeared to have relatively low archaeological sensitivity.

The literature search and APE encompass the project site and all linear facilities, including the 99 MW campus and the 115 kV interconnection, extending the required buffers along each alignment consistent with Appendix B(g)(2)(B) and (C). If any alignment changes outside the evaluated area, additional records search and field survey will be completed prior to construction.

According to the records search, 10 previous linear and block studies had covered large portions of the Project Area (Table 1). These previous studies resulted in the identification and recordation of seven cultural resources that are historic in nature (Table 2). An additional 26 previous surveys were completed within a 1-mile (mi.) radius of the Project Area (Table 3), resulting in an additional 42 cultural resources within a 1-mi. radius (Table 4). Due to the age of the previous field surveys within the Project Area, which exceed the limits for baseline data under CEQA, those areas were re-surveyed by ASM for the current proposed project.

Of the 49 cultural resources identified within the records search area as within the Project Area, seven intersect the defined APE/limits of disturbance and 42 are outside the Project Area (Table 2 and Table 3). ASM reviewed the resource forms and their locations, to determine if any represented duplicate, relocated, or segmented records, and did not identify any resources meeting these criteria.

Figure B-1 presents the USGS 7.5' quad map delineating all prior survey coverage and CHRIS identifying numbers within the literature search area (Confidential Appendix B). Figure B-2 provides a 1:24,000-scale map depicting the locations of all previously recorded and newly identified cultural resources within the APE (Confidential Appendix B).

Copies of prior cultural resources technical reports meeting the Appendix B(g)(2)(B) criteria, including those with coverage within 1-mile of the surveyed area, were made available to CEC staff via a hosted online link. A table identifying which reports meet the Appendix B(g)(2)(B) criteria is provided (Table B-1, Confidential Appendix B).

Table 1. Previous Reports in the Project Area

Report No.	Year	Author (s)/Affiliation	Title
KE-00289	1993	Berg, John / Far Western Anthropological Research Group, Inc.	A Cultural Resources Survey and Inventory for the Mojave Pipeline/Coso Lateral
KE-00309	1990	Burton, Jeffery F. / Trans-Sierran Archaeological Research	An Archaeological Survey of the Contel Bishop to Inyokern Fiberoptics Line, Inyo and Kern Counties, California
KE-02188	1992	Hall, M.C., Mikesell, Stephen, and Riggs, David / Far Western Anthropological Research Group, Inc. - JRP Historical Consulting Services	Cultural Resources Survey of a Portion of the Former Southern Pacific Mojave-Owens Branch Railroad, Inyo and Kern Counties, California
KE-02553	1998	Burke, Thomas / Archaeological Research Services, Inc.	Re-Examination of Previously Documented Cultural Resources on the Union Pacific Railroad Lone Pine Branch, MP 430.00 Searles to MP 519.34 Near Lone Pine, on Public Lands Administered by the BLM, Ridgecrest Office
KE-03497	2006	Wickstrom, Brian / California Department of Transportation	Historic Property Survey Report for the Inyokern Four Lane Project Kern County, California
KE-03574	2006	Switalski, Hubert J. / AMEC Earth and Environmental, Inc.	Archaeological Investigations for Southern CA Edison's Proposed Overhead Line Removal and the Installation of an Underground Conduit, Inyokern, Kern County, California
KE-03690	2008	Wickstrom, Brian / California Department of Transportation	Supplemental Historic Property Survey Report for the Inyokern Four Lane Project Kern County, California
KE-03777	2010	Palm-Leach, Laura, Brandy, Paul, King, Jay, Mikkelsen, Pat, Seil, Libby, Hartman, Lindsay, Bradeen, Jill, Larson, Bryan, Freeman, Joseph, Costello, Julia, Rosenthal, Jeffrey, and Jones, Deborah / Far Western Anthropological Research Group, Inc.	Cultural Resources Inventory of Caltrans District 6 Rural Conventional Highways in Fresno, Western Kern, Kings, Madera, and Tulare Counties Summary of Methods and Findings
KE-04674	2014	Sampson, Seth / EMD NAWS China Lake	Repair by Replacement-Water Main from Harvey Field to Wells 30 and 31 Point of Connection, Kern County, California
KE-05045	2016	Whitley, David S. and Carey, Peter A. / ASM Affiliates	Phase I Survey & Phase II Significance Evaluations, Inyokern Solar Project, Kern County, California

Table 2. Previously Recorded Resources in the Project Area

Resource	Type	Age	Description
P-15-002050	Site	Historic	Segment of China Lake Railroad Spur grade
P-15-017779	Site	Historic	Refuse scatter
P-15-019864	Site	Historic	Refuse scatter
P-15-019867	Site	Historic	Refuse scatter
P-15-019869	Site	Historic	Refuse scatter
P-15-019870	Site	Historic	Refuse scatter
P-15-020317	Structure	Historic	Culvert

Table 3. Previous Reports within 1 mi. of the Project Area

Report No.	Year	Author (s)/Affiliation	Title
KE-00035	1994	Laylander, Don / California Department of Transportation	Negative Archaeological Survey Report. Highway Project Description: District 09, Kern County, Expenditure Authorization 262101
KE-00047	1995	Laylander, Don / Caltrans, District 9	Negative Archaeological Survey Report. Highway Project Description: District 09, Kern County, Route 395, Post Miles 23.1, Expenditure Authorization 952137
KE-00119	1994	Laylander, Don / Caltrans, District 9	Archaeological survey report for the Wash Rack Wastewater Containment Project, Kern, Inyo, and Mono Counties, California
KE-00532	1978	Jelinek, James C. and Young, Daniel L. / Unknown	Historic Properties Survey Report, Route 09-KER-178, PM R93.2/100.6, Inyokern Road, Inyokern to Ridgecrest
KE-00567	1986	Lawson, Jan B. and Individual Consultants Lawson, Clifton E. / Individual Consultants	Report of Archaeological Survey for James H. Pappe, June 1986
KE-00568	1987	Lawson, Jan B. and Individual Consultants Lawson, Clifton E. / Individual Consultants	Report of Archaeological Survey for Ethel M. Burge
KE-00572	1995	Laylander, Don / California Department of Transportation	Negative Archaeological Survey Report DOT-09-KER-395, PM 15.0/29.3, EA 250000
KE-00576	1985	Lerch, Michael K. / Michael K. Lerch & Associates	Archaeological Survey of the Proposed Kerr-McGee Water Line Easement, China Lake Naval Weapons Center, Kern County, California
KE-00733	1990	Norwood, Richard H. / RT Factfinders	Cultural Resource Survey for Tentative Parcel Map No. 9457, 20 Acres in Inyokern, Kern County, California
KE-00744	1991	Norwood, Richard H. / RT Factfinders	Cultural Resource Survey for a 10.19 Acre Property and a 22.7 Acre Property, Inyokern, CA
KE-01828	1978	Young, Daniel L. / Individual Consultant	Archaeological Survey Report for Highway Improvement Projects Between China Lake Boulevard and Highway 395 On 9-KER-178-R93.2/96.1, E.A. 073201, 9-KER-178-96.1/99.1, E.A. 073101, 9-KER-178-99.1/100.3, E.A. 060301
KE-02016	1989	Taylor, Thomas / Southern CA Edison, Environmental Affairs Division	Archaeological Survey Report Inyokern-Kramer 220 KV Transmission Line Conductoring Project Tower Sites, Pulling Areas, Sleeve Areas and Wire Setups Kern and San Bernardino Counties, California
KE-02112	1994	Laylander, Don / California Department of Transportation	Archaeological Survey Report for the Wash Rack Wastewater Containment Project, Kern, Inyo, and Mono Counties, CA
KE-02736	1999	Shepherd, Carolyn / China Lake NAWS, CA	Demolition of 18 Miles of Abandoned Railroad Track, Naval Air Weapons Station, China Lake, Kern County
KE-02862	2003	Wickstrom, Brian / California Department of Transportation	Archaeological Survey Report for the Inyokern Four-Lane Project, Kern County, CA (06-KER-395, PM 14.8/23.0)

3. Archival Records Search

Report No.	Year	Author (s)/Affiliation	Title
KE-02900	2004	Darcangelo, Michael, Hildebrandt, William R., and King, Jerome / Far Western Anthropological Research Group, Inc.	Archaeological Survey of the Southern and Western Portions of the Security Perimeter Fence Line, Naval Air Weapons Station, China Lake
KE-03352	2006	Hudlow, Scott M. / Hudlow Cultural Resource Associates	A Phase I Cultural Resource Survey for APNs 084-272-13, 14, and 15, Brown Road and Las Flores Avenue, Inyokern, Kern County, California
KE-03619	2007	Switalski, Hubert / AMEC Earth & Environmental, Inc.	Archaeological Survey Report for the Southern California Edison Company's Realignment of Overhead Utilities Along the Highway Six 12 kV Distribution Circuit (DWO 6286-6707, AI 7-6705), Inyokern, Kern County, California
KE-03661	2008	Lewis Pruettt, Catherine / Three Girls and a Shovel (Bakersfield)	A Cultural Resources Assessment of Approximately 80 Acres West of Inyokern, Kern County, California
KE-03771	2010	Wickstrom, Brian / California Department of Transportation, Central California Cultural Resources Branch	Archaeological Evaluation Project Report for the Inyokern Four-Lane Project Kern County, California
KE-03835	2009	Romani, John F. / Compass Rose Archaeological, Inc	Inyokern Streets Improvements Project, 3rd Street, Drummond Avenue, and Las Flores Avenue (approximately 2.25 miles), Kern County, California
KE-04043	2010	Romani, John F. / Compass Rose Archaeological, Inc.	Archaeological Survey Report Improvements to Brown Road between Ridgecrest Boulevard to Athel Avenue (Approximately 8.8 miles), Kern County, California
KE-04384	2010	Duran, Christopher A., Trevino, Michelle, and Johnson, Lynn / Epsilon Systems Solutions, Inc.	Volume I: Report and Appendices A and D: Downs Substation Cultural Resources Survey, San Bernardino and Kern Counties, California
KE-04431	2013	Ugan, Andrew and Rosenthal, Jeffrey / Far Western Anthropological Research Group	Archaeological Survey of 12,457 Acres of the Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake North and South Ranges, Inyo, Kern, and San Bernardino Counties, California.
KE-04542	2012	Sampson, Seth / Naval Air Weapons Station, China Lake	Cultural Resources Inventory Negative Report - Seabee Water Well Drilling Project 2012-017
KE-05256	2021	Wesson, Alex; Bever, Michael; Allen, Mark W.; Gusick, Amy E.; Martinez, Mandi; Winslow, Diane L.; Jordan, Amy; Reeve, Rowland; Ainia, Amira; Hesse, India S.; Lisboa, Rafella; and Dumm, Katie / SWCA Environmental Consultants	Class III Cultural Resources Inventory For the TLRR Evaluation Project Along The Ivanpah–Control 115-Kv Transmission Line, Inyo, Kern, And San Bernardino Counties, California

Table 4. Previously Recorded Resources within 1 mi. of the Project Area

Resource	Type	Age	Description
P-15-008758	Isolate	Pre-contact	CCS flake
P-15-008762	Isolate	Pre-contact	Metate
P-15-008763	Isolate	Pre-contact	Mano
P-15-008764	Isolate	Pre-contact	Core
P-15-012070	Site	Historic	Historic road segment

Resource	Type	Age	Description
P-15-012435	Site	Historic	Refuse scatter
P-15-012436	Site	Historic	Foundation
P-15-012437	Site	Historic	Refuse scatter
P-15-012543	Structure	Historic	Historic wagon road
P-15-013796	Structure	Historic	SCE Inyokern Substation Complex
P-15-013823	Structure	Historic	Powerline and Utility pole
P-15-013824	Structure	Historic	Powerline and utility poles
P-15-015202	Site	Historic	Refuse scatter
P-15-015203	Site	Pre-contact	Lithic scatter
P-15-015696	Structure	Historic	Bridge
P-15-015969	Site	Historic	Refuse scatter
P-15-017435	Site	Historic	Refuse scatter and spur roads
P-15-017437	Site	Historic	Refuse scatter
P-15-017438	Site	Historic	Refuse scatter
P-15-017441	Site	Historic	Road and refuse scatter
P-15-017447	Site	Historic	Road and refuse scatter
P-15-017654	Site	Historic	Refuse scatter
P-15-017656	Site	Historic	Refuse scatter
P-15-019865	Site	Historic	Refuse scatter
P-15-019866	Site	Historic	Refuse scatter
P-15-019868	Site	Historic	Refuse scatter
P-15-019871	Site	Historic	Refuse scatter
P-15-019872	Site	Historic	Refuse scatter
P-15-021058	Isolate	Historic	Can scatter
P-15-021059	Isolate	Historic	Can scatter
P-15-021099	Site	Historic	Refuse scatter
P-15-021101	Site	Historic	Refuse scatter
P-15-021102	Site	Historic	Refuse scatter
P-15-021115	Site	Historic	Refuse scatter
P-15-021210	Structure	Historic	Tower line
P-15-021211	Structure	Historic	Access road
P-15-021247	Structure	Historic	Unpaved road
P-15-021248	Structure	Historic	Transmission line
P-15-021249	Structure	Historic	Weiman Avenue/road
P-15-021250	Structure	Historic	Access road
P-15-021251	Structure	Historic	Sydnor Ave/ unpaved road
P-15-021252	Structure	Historic	Felspar Ave/ unpaved road

Although the site boundary for P-15-017779/ CA-KER-09810H (a historic refuse scatter) was reported to be within the current Project Area by the SSJVIC, ground observations confirmed that this resource falls entirely outside of the Project Area footprint. The site was not investigated for this reason, and the existing site record was not updated. The site will be excluded from potential impacts and is not considered further in this report.

A search of the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) *Sacred Lands Files* was requested on December 22, 2025, and on January 23, 2026. On March 16, 2026, a response was received. The NAHC results were negative for Tribal Cultural Resources and sacred sites. Upon receipt of the NAHC contact list, outreach letters were transmitted. Responses (written and oral) will be compiled and summarized within Appendix B, as they are received. If requested through consultation or required by CEC, a Tribal Monitor will be retained during ground-disturbing activities in sensitive areas.

Table 5. Tribal Outreach Summary

Tribe	Attempts	Response
Kern Valley Indian Community	Mailer: 03/18/26 Follow-up: n/a	No Response
Tejon Indian Tribe	Mailer: 03/18/26 Follow-up: n/a	No Response
Tubatulabals of Kern Valley	Mailer: 03/18/26 Follow-up: n/a	No Response
Tule River Indian Tribe	Mailer: 03/18/26 Follow-up: n/a	No Response

4. METHODS AND RESULTS

The Inyokern Data Center Project study area is approximately 95 ac. in size. The Project Area is located at the approximate center of CDP Inyokern and bounded by private business and residences on the west, solar arrays on the north, Highway 178 on the south, and undeveloped land on the east. The Project Area is bisected by multiple dirt roads and has been previously disturbed. This area is entirely accessible and has been impacted by off-highway vehicle traffic and illegal trash dumping.

An intensive Phase I survey was undertaken on January 8, 2026, with Robert Azpitarte, MA, serving as field director with assistance from ASM Assistant Archaeologist Margarita Medina Lemus, BA. Prior to survey, historical topographic maps were consulted to identify any potential historic resources located within the study area. The study area was then examined with the field crew walking parallel transects spaced at 15-m intervals across the parcel to identify surface artifacts, archaeological indicators (e.g., shellfish or animal bone), and/or archaeological deposits (e.g., organically enriched midden soil). Special attention was paid to rodent burrow back dirt piles, in the hope of identifying subsurface soil conditions that might be indicative of archaeological features or remains. No cultural resources were collected during the survey.

Ground-surface visibility within the Project Area was good to excellent (greater than 75 percent) except for the portions that were hardscaped over, mostly along the southern boundary of the main facility, following Highway 178, and along the west boundary, where the existing SPRR grade exists. Soils throughout the Project Area consist mainly of tan sand with dispersed Quarternary deposits. Vegetation present was consistent with western Mojave Desert flora, and composed of creosote bush, blackbrush, rabbitbrush, ephedra, and cholla, as well as seasonal grasses and wildflowers.

4.1 SURVEY RESULTS

As a result of the survey six (6) previously recorded resources were successfully located and updated. One resource was found to be entirely outside of the Project Area and excluded from investigation. No new archaeological sites or historic properties were discovered within the Project Area. Updated DPR 523(A) forms for all resources documented/updated during this study are included in Confidential Appendix B, consistent with Appendix B(g)(2)(C)(iii). Trinomial and HRI identifiers have been confirmed with CHRIS records and are provided on each DPR form (or 'Not assigned' where applicable). Each form includes an explicit CRHR eligibility recommendation and integrity rationale.

4.1.1 Previously Recorded Resources

P-15-002050/CA-KER-002050H

This description serves as supplementation to a previously recorded segment of site P-15-002050/CA-KER-002050H (SPRR). The recorded segment measures 1,550 ft. in length and is

located just northeast of the intersection of State Highway 178 and Brown Road in Section 29, T26S/R39E.

This segment of P-15-002050 was previously recorded by J. Berg in 1992 (Hall 1993) and reported to consist of a building foundation (concrete slab) and track crossing (“Locus O;” Inyokern Station). The main rail grade is described elsewhere with only the earthen grade and no ballast, ties, or crossbeams remaining. Additional features associated with this segment include remnants of railcar “Siding 16” (F1–F3) which itself measures 950 ft. in length. According to the Historical Marker Database (HMDB 2026), Siding 16 was established in 1909 and was the beginning of the town of Inyokern. Originally composed of a raised unloading platform with a covered shed at one end, the siding served as the supply station for Short Canyon and Indian Wells Canyon. Later, that unloading siding would be made into a depot.

F1 consists of an intact concrete platform that measures 28 ft. by 15 ft. by 10 in. tall. In 2009, a commemorative plaque was installed immediately next to this feature, and concrete pier blocks were incorporated. F2 and F3, each approximately 20 ft. in length, consist of segments of partially graveled over siding with only wooden tie beams and bolts visible. These features were located immediately adjacent to the depot on the east until c. 1970 (NETR 2026). Previously recorded site P-15-019869/CA-KER-010867H, immediately east of this siding location, also contains a possibly associated concrete feature. Overall, this segment of the SPRR can be considered in poor condition.

The segment lacks integrity and has experienced decades of disturbances mainly from off-road recreation and right-of-way (ROW) maintenance. Modern debris was noted across its entire length. Although the construction and early use of this railroad was a key contributor to an important historical event (Criterion 1), this segment lacks integrity of materials, design, feeling, association, and workmanship; thus, it is unable to convey its significance.

P-15-019864/CA-KER-010862H

This site was originally recorded as a historic refuse scatter by ASM Affiliates in 2016 and is composed of an early-to-mid-twentieth century domestic refuse scatter with five main concentrations and a dilapidated fence line. While generally unchanged, only a small portion of the previously recorded northern site boundary extended into the current study area. Within this portion, only a concentration of cans (C1) was observed. Overall, the site is in poor condition.

Site P-15-019864/CA-KER-010862H was previously recommended not eligible for inclusion on the CRHR by ASM Affiliates in 2016 (Carey 2016a). The site lacks integrity of materials, design, feeling, association, and workmanship; thus, it is unable to convey its significance.

P-15-019867/CA-KER-010865H

This site was originally recorded as a historic refuse scatter by ASM Affiliates in 2016 and is composed of an early-to-mid-twentieth century domestic refuse scatter with one main concentration. The site remains as last described. While generally unchanged, only a small portion

of the previously recorded southern site boundary extended into the current study area, and only two bimetal cans were observed within it. Overall, the site is in poor condition.

Site P-15-019867/CA-KER-010865H was previously recommended not eligible for inclusion on the CRHR by ASM Affiliates in 2016 (Carey 2016b). The site lacks integrity of materials, design, feeling, association, and workmanship; thus, it is unable to convey its significance.

P-15-019869/CA-KER-010867H

This site was originally recorded as a historic refuse scatter by ASM Affiliates in 2016 and is composed of an early-to-mid-twentieth century domestic refuse scatter with three main concentrations and four features. During the current study, the site was found to be unchanged and is as last described. Overall, the site is in poor condition.

Site P-15-019869/CA-KER-010867H was previously recommended not eligible for inclusion on the CRHR by ASM Affiliates in 2016 (Carey 2016c). The site lacks integrity of materials, design, feeling, association, and workmanship; thus, it is unable to convey its significance.

P-15-019870/CA-KER-010868H

This site was originally recorded as a historic refuse scatter by ASM Affiliates in 2016 and is composed of a sparse, early-to-mid-twentieth century refuse scatter largely contained within two concentrations. During the current study, the site was found to be unchanged and is as last described. Overall, the site is in poor condition.

Site P-15-019870/CA-KER-010868H was previously recommended not eligible for inclusion on CRHR by ASM Affiliates in 2016 (Carey 2016d). The site lacks integrity of materials, design, feeling, association, and workmanship thus, it is unable to convey its significance.

P-15-020317

This description serves as supplementation to a previously recorded and evaluated segment of P-15-020317 (California State Route 178). The recorded segment measures 2,215 ft. in length and is located between Brown Road and Highway 14 in Sections 29 and 30, T26S/R39E. This segment of California State Route 178, also known as West Inyokern Road, consists entirely of a well-traveled paved road. No historic features associated with the road were identified during the current study.

This segment of P-15-020317 was previously evaluated by Urbana Preservation & Planning, LLC in 2020 (Becker 2020, 2021) and recommended as not eligible for inclusion on the CRHR. Although the construction and early use of California State Route 178 was a key contributor to an important historical event (Criterion 1), this segment lacks integrity of materials, design, feeling, association, and workmanship; thus, it is unable to convey its significance.

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5. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An intensive Phase I archaeological survey was conducted for the Inyokern Data Center Project, in Inyokern, Kern County, California. A records search of site files and maps was conducted at the SSJVIC and a search of the NAHC *Sacred Lands File* was completed. The results of the records search and ground observations determined that a total six (6) previous sites were documented in the Project Area. A request was made on December 22, 2025, and on January 23, 2026; on March 16, 2026 a response was received. The NAHC results were negative for Tribal Cultural Resources and sacred sites. Tribal outreach letters were sent on March 18, 2026, and no responses have been received as of this report's writing.

A total of six previously recorded historic-era cultural resources were identified and updated as a result of the intensive field survey, and no new resources were identified. These consist of site P-15-002050/CA-KER-002050H, a segment of the SPRR; P-15-019864/CA-KER-010862H, a historic refuse scatter and fence line; P-15-019867/CA-KER-010865H, a historic refuse scatter; P-15-019869/CA-KER-010867H, a historic refuse scatter with earthen features; P-15-019870/CA-KER-010868H, a historic refuse scatter; and P-15-020317, a segment of California State Route 178.

All these sites have been disturbed, mainly in the form of modern refuse dumping. Some sites have also been affected by modern road construction and off-highway vehicle trails, with trash pits dug on at least one site. The sites contain materials dating from early-to-mid-twentieth century mixed with more recent (including contemporary) debris and contain a mixture of domestic and fragmented construction remains. Further, the concentration of these sites on the edge of Inyokern reflects casual and illicit trash dumping, most likely by local residents. This pattern of dumping appears to have started by about 1920. Based on artifacts and refuse observed on the sites, it has continued into contemporary/modern times. The result is a series of mixed-age refuse dumps, none of which have an associative context.

All previously identified resources are historic in age, lack integrity, and are recommended not eligible for inclusion on the CRHR.

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

Based on these results, the development of this property does not have the potential to result in impacts to historical properties or resources, and no additional archaeological work is recommended.

A Cultural Resources Unanticipated Discovery Plan will be implemented during construction, including stop-work procedures, notification chain, qualified archaeologist evaluation, and treatment options (avoidance, testing, data recovery). If human remains are discovered, work will stop within 50 ft. and the County Coroner will be notified; if determined Native American, NAHC will be contacted and the NAHC-designated Most Likely Descendant (MLD) will be consulted.

All personnel will receive cultural resources awareness training prior to ground disturbance; attendance will be documented and refresher training provided as needed.

5.1.1 Cultural Resources Unanticipated Discovery Plan

Prior to ground disturbance, the project will implement an approved treatment plan prior to the issuance of grading permits. The approved treatment plan will utilize data recovery methods, as necessary, to reduce impacts on subsurface resources. All prehistoric and historic-era features identified during exploration will be evaluated by a qualified archaeologist based on the CRHR criteria consistent with the archaeological treatment plan.

After completion of the field work, all artifacts will be cataloged, and the appropriate forms will be completed and filed with the California State University, Bakersfield, SSJVIC by the qualified archaeologist in coordination with the Director or Director's designee of Kern County prior to issuance of occupancy permits (temporary or final).

The qualified archaeologist and or Native American monitor shall have authority to halt construction activities temporarily in the immediate vicinity of an unanticipated find. If, for any reasons, the qualified archaeologist or qualified Native American monitor are not present but construction crews encounter a cultural resource, then all work shall stop temporarily within 100 feet of the find until a qualified archaeologist in consultation with a qualified Native American monitor, have been contacted to determine the proper course of action.

If archaeological resources are encountered during excavation or grading of the site, all activity within a 100-foot radius of the find shall be stopped, the Kern County or the Director's designee shall be notified, and a qualified archaeologist shall examine the find. The archaeological and Native American monitors shall evaluate the find to determine if they meet the definition of a historical, unique archaeological, or tribal cultural resource and make appropriate recommendations regarding the disposition of such finds prior to issuance of building permits for any construction occurring within the above-referenced 100-foot radius.

If the finds do not meet the definition of a historical, unique archaeological, or tribal cultural resource, no further study or protection is necessary prior to project implementation. If the find does meet the definition of a historical, unique archaeological, or tribal cultural resource, then it shall be avoided by project activities. If avoidance is not feasible, adverse effects to such resources shall be mitigated in accordance with the recommendations of the archaeological and Native American monitors.

Recommendations may include collection, recordation, and analysis of any significant cultural materials. A report of findings documenting any data recovery shall be submitted to Kern County or the Director's designee, Native American Heritage Commission (tribal cultural resources), and the California State University, Bakersfield, SSJVIC prior to issuance of the certificate of occupancy. The Project Applicant shall ensure that construction personnel do not collect or move any cultural material and shall ensure that any fill soils that may be used for construction purposes does not contain any archaeological materials.

5.1.2 Inadvertent Discovery of Human Remains

If human remains are discovered during excavation or grading of the Project, all activity within a 100-foot radius of the find shall be stopped. The Kern County Coroner shall be notified immediately and will determine whether the remains are of Native American origin or an investigation into the cause of death is required. If the remains are determined to be Native American, the Coroner shall notify the NAHC within 24 hours of the identification. Once the NAHC identifies the MLD(s), the descendant(s) will make recommendations regarding proper burial (including the treatment of grave goods), which will be implemented in accordance with section 15064.5(e) of the California Code of Regulations, Title 14. The archaeologist shall recover scientifically valuable information, as appropriate and in accordance with the recommendations of the MLD. A report of findings documenting any data recovery shall be submitted to Kern County or the Director's designee, the California State University, Bakersfield, SSJVIC, and the MLD.

5.1.3 Worker Cultural Resources Awareness Training

Prior to the commencement of construction, the Project Applicant shall secure the services of qualified archaeological and Native American monitors, as needed. These monitors shall prepare a workforce environmental awareness program (WEAP) to instruct construction workers of the obligation to protect and preserve valuable archaeological and Native American resources for review and approval by Kern County or the Director's designee. This program shall be provided to all construction workers via a recorded presentation and shall include a discussion of applicable laws and penalties under the laws; samples or visual aids of resources that could be encountered in the project vicinity; instructions regarding the need to halt work in the vicinity of any potential archaeological and Native American resources encountered; and measures to notify their supervisor, the applicant, and the specialists.

The Project Applicant shall submit the qualifications of archaeological and Native American monitors, as well as an electronic copy of the WEAP to Kern County.

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APPENDICES

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