



CHAPTER 10: HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

This Element of the General Plan addresses a broad range of issues which contribute to the character of Madera: the city's Historic, Cultural, and Fossil Resources. Together, these issues create the community history that is shared by everyone in Madera.

HISTORIC, CULTURAL, AND FOSSIL RESOURCES

The following summarizes the key points of Madera's history, starting with prehistory (up to about the 1700s). Madera's modern history and fossil record are also discussed.

PREHISTORY

The prehistory of the San Joaquin Valley is generally divided into three periods:

- The first period is characterized by big game hunting and is dated approximately 8,000 years ago.



Yokut family of Phillip Hunter, 1932.

- The second period is dated from approximately 5,000 B.P. (Before Present) to A.D. 1200, and is characterized by a shift in subsistence strategy from hunting to the collection of plant resources. This shift in economic pursuits is evidenced in typical artifact assemblages from this period that include seed-grinding implements.
- The third period dates from approximately A.D. 1200-1700, and represents habitation of the area by Yokuts.

Prior to the arrival of Euroamericans in the region, California was inhabited by groups of Native Americans speaking more than 100 different languages and occupying a variety of ecological settings. California can be divided into four subculture areas: Northwestern, Northeastern, Southern, and Central. Madera is in the Central subculture area, which includes the territory of Northern Valley Yokuts. Northern Valley Yokuts inhabited the Central Valley surrounding the San Joaquin River from Mendota in the south to the area between the Calaveras and Mokelumne rivers in the north. The City of Madera and the surrounding area are within the territory of the Ausumne group of Northern Valley Yokuts.

The basic social and economic group of Northern Valley Yokuts is the family or household unit, with the nuclear and/or extended family forming a corporate unit. These basic units were combined into distinct, named village or hamlet groups which functioned as headquarters of a localized patrilineage.¹ Lineage groups were important political and economic units that combined to form tribelets numbering between 300 and 500 persons. Each tribelet had a chief or headman who exercised political control over the villages that comprised it. The office of tribelet chief was hereditary, with the chieftainship being the property of a single patrilineage within the tribelet.

¹ A "patrilineage" is a line of descent as traced through men on the paternal side of a family.

Subsistence activities of Northern Valley Yokuts included hunting, fishing, and collection of plant resources, particularly acorns. They built a variety of structures including residential dwellings, ceremonial structures, and semi-subterranean sweat lodges. The typical dwelling was a thatched house covered by brush, grass, or tules. A variety of flaked and ground stone tools (e.g., knives, arrow and spear points, and rough cobble and shaped pestles) were common among Northern Valley Yokuts. Obsidian was a highly valued material for tool manufacture, and was generally imported. Northern Valley Yokuts also engaged in trading relationships with surrounding groups for commodities such as salt, marine shells, and basketry.

Euroamerican contact with Native American groups living in the Central Valley of California began during the last half of the eighteenth century. At this time, the attention of Spanish missionaries shifted away from the coast, and its dwindling Native American population, to the missionization of interior populations such as Northern Valley Yokuts. The efforts of the Spanish to missionize the Native American population began a history of destructive Euroamerican interactions with Native Americans that eventually lead to the loss of traditional Native American culture.

HISTORIC PERIOD

Initial expeditions into the San Joaquin Valley were exploratory in nature, but were soon followed by campaigns to either convert and/or relocate Native Americans to missions. Missions dominated the social, political, and economic lives of both Spanish and Native Americans across much of California during the Spanish Period (ca. 1769-1821). Many Native American groups, however, were reluctant to adapt to the mission “system” and convert to Catholicism. This factor, in combination with the onset of many European diseases, virtually ended the traditional lifeways of many Native American groups in California.



HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

The Mexican Period (ca. 1821-1848) in California was an outgrowth of the Mexican Revolution, and its accompanying social and political views affected the mission system. In 1833 the missions were secularized and their lands divided among the Californios as ranchos in the form of land grants. The ranchos facilitated the growth of a semi-aristocratic group that controlled large ranchos or land grants. Local Native American populations, who were essentially used as forced labor, worked on these large tracts of land. This was a period of growing antagonism of Native Americans toward Euroamericans and also decline in Native American populations due to both disease and abuse.

The American Period (ca. 1848-present) in California history began with the end of the Mexican-American War and the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848.

The Gold Rush was the catalyst for major settlement and development of the region. As miners migrated south from the Columbia-Sonora goldfields, many settled on the valley floor. Madera County encompasses a fairly large area from west to east, including the foothill region, the plains, and the high Sierra. Although each region offered its own resources and opportunities, the mountains were tapped for their enormous timber reserves. The population increased steadily as the Central Pacific Railroad established lines in the San Joaquin Valley in 1872.

Rising demand for timber prompted the construction of a vast flume that ran 63 miles from the Soquel Basin into the valley. Built in 1874, the flume made it possible to move millions of feet of lumber annually. The flume was originally planned to end at Borden, a community already established along the Central Pacific Railroad. However, high property prices and land level issues prompted mill investors to locate elsewhere. The new end-point for the flume was named Madera, Spanish for “wood” or “timber.”



Madera's 1900 courthouse is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It now houses a museum of local history.

As a result, Madera grew significantly, and in 1876 the California Lumber Company officially laid out the town. The Town of Madera became the county seat in 1893.

The table below lists the buildings in Madera that have been listed as historic resources or are eligible for listing. Details on each of these resources follows the table. While a number of homes and buildings from Madera’s early years survive, most have been extensively remodeled and have lost much of their historic value.

**TABLE HC-A: HISTORICAL RESOURCES
IN THE CITY OF MADERA GENERAL PLAN UPDATE AREA**

Site Number	Site Identification	Year Built	Location	NRHP Eligibility Status
P-20-002516	Madera County Courthouse	1900	210 W. Yosemite Avenue	Listed
P-20-002497	Luther Burbank School	1925	328 Madera Avenue	Eligible
P-20-002494	Dixie Motel	1934	1100 S. Gateway Drive	Eligible

The following narrative is based on information submitted by the North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians and is provided to reflect the perspective of native peoples on the history of the Madera area.

Long before non-native traders and explorers arrived in the early 1800s, many native tribes, including the North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians, were already well established in the area now known as Madera County. The tribes migrated between more permanent residence in the foothills to the valley floor where they hunted plentiful game, fished the many rivers, and gathered a variety of foodstuffs, depending on the season. The constant migration from foothills to valley and back again encouraged friendly interaction between tribes as they traded goods, shared ceremonies, and intermarried.

The Madera County Courthouse was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1971. The application was made for its listing in 1970 by the curator of the Madera County Historical Society. It was found eligible for the Register under two criteria: A-Significant Event(s) and C-Architecture/Engineering.

The Madera County Agricultural Offices, otherwise know as the Madera County UC Co-operative Extension, was in the past known as The Luther Burbank School. This building was found eligible for the National Register of

The arrival of non-native settlers and miners forever changed the lives of the indigenous people. Their migratory lifestyle was disrupted as traditional hunting grounds came under the ownership of the settlers, a concept entirely foreign to the tribes. Nonetheless, the natives adapted to the inevitable changes and maintained friendly relationships with settlers in the county.

In an effort to integrate the North Fork Mono into the non-native way of life, the federal government granted the tribe allotments of what was typically small and barren land before the larger reservations were set up. The quality of the land, both on the allotments and the permanent reservations, forced many tribespeople to supplement their meager food supply with a return to their traditional migratory way of life. However, the settlers and their livestock had changed the environment, eliminating much of the natural foodstuffs on which the natives had previously relied.

The area's indigenous people continued to adapt to their constantly changing environment. Many of the native children attended Anglo schools, and frequent marriages took place between natives and settlers. In the early part of the 20th century, the Bureau of Indian Affairs established the North Fork Rancheria for the California natives.

The Rancheria Act in 1958 terminated the recognition of 41 California native tribes, including the North Fork Mono, and the North Fork Rancheria was no more. A class action suit was filed in 1979 and following a protracted legal battle, the federal government in 1983 restored recognition to some of the tribes and eventually reestablished the old North Fork Rancheria boundaries. By this time, lands previously within the North Fork Rancheria were held in private ownership and could not be restored to the North Fork Mono.

In the years since 1993, the tribe has formed a tribal council and adopted a constitution. Through continuing efforts to enroll tribal descendants, the North Fork Mono is now the largest restored tribe in California. The tribe is currently (2009) seeking to build a casino north of Madera and is working with Madera County, other government agencies, and private citizens to obtain the required approvals.

Historic Places in January 2001, in an evaluation prepared as part of the environmental analysis of a nearby roadway project. The building was found eligible under criteria A-Significant Event and C- Architecture/ Engineering. The important event is the buildings association with “the development of education in Madera, which played an integral role in the settlement and growth of the community.”

The Dixie Motel, which is currently known as “3D’s Motel” was found eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in an evaluation prepared in April 2001 as part of the environmental analysis of a nearby roadway project. The motel was found eligible under criteria A-Significant Event and C-Architecture/Engineering. The important event cited in the analysis is the property’s “association with the commercial development of Highway 99, after the advent of the automobile and when small motel complexes were built along the improved highways of the 1930’s.”

PALEONTOLOGY (FOSSILS)

Paleontology is defined as a science dealing with the life of past geological periods as known from fossil remains. Paleontological resources include fossil remains, as well as fossil localities and formations that have produced fossil material. Such locations and specimens are important nonrenewable resources.



A Mammoth, one of the Pleistocene animals whose fossils may be found in Madera.

The Madera County Fairmead Landfill is home to perhaps the largest single fossil site in California if not the West Coast. Since it was discovered in 1993 more than 13,000 fossils and 5,000 specimens have been uncovered over 16 acres of land. The fossils were buried in earth 15-60 feet below the surface and are up to 780,000 years old. In January 2009 groundbreaking took place on the new Madera County Fossil Discovery Center that will house finds from the site. As they continue to uncover new discoveries every year, Paleontologists expect to be working the site until 2030.

Fossils of Pleistocene mammals such as mammoths, horse, camels, and big cats (saber-tooth cats) may be found in the Madera area.

HISTORIC, CULTURAL, AND FOSSIL RESOURCES GOAL

GOAL HC-1

HISTORIC/CULTURAL/FOSSIL RESOURCES

Protection and preservation of Madera's significant historical, archaeological, cultural, and fossil resources.

HISTORIC, CULTURAL, AND FOSSIL RESOURCES POLICIES

Policy HC-1 ►

HISTORIC RESOURCES POLICIES

The City encourages the preservation and enhancement of existing historical and archaeological resources in the City.

Action Item HC-1.1

Seek grant or alternative funding to develop and update an inventory of locally significant historic resources using the National Register, the California Register, California Historical Landmarks, California Points of Historical Interest, and other available sources to identify structures or properties the City Council determines to have historic value. The Inventory should contain a map that shows the location of all of the structures with a historically significant designation, and a list of all of the historically significant structures in Madera.

Policy HC-2▶

Action Item HC-1.2

Provide information to the public on historic preservation efforts and financial incentive programs. This may include:

- Creating a historic preservation page on the City's website with links to federal and state historic preservation programs and financial incentive programs.
- Creating pamphlets that outline and discuss the City's historic preservation program.

The City supports the goals and objectives for the Comprehensive State-wide Historic Preservation Plan for California 2000-2005. (See *info box below*)

The U.S. Secretary of the Interior's **Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties** is a set of guidelines that outlines four potential approaches for historic structures: **Preservation**, **Rehabilitation**, **Restoration**, and **Reconstruction**.

- The first treatment, **Preservation**, places a high premium on the retention of all historic fabric through conservation, maintenance and repair. It reflects a building's continuum over time, through successive occupancies, and the respectful changes and alterations that are made.
- **Rehabilitation**, the second treatment, emphasizes the retention and repair of historic materials, but more latitude is provided for replacement because it is assumed the property is more deteriorated prior to work. (Both Preservation and Rehabilitation standards focus attention on the preservation of those materials, features, finishes, spaces, and spatial relationships that, together, give a property its historic character.)
- **Restoration**, the third treatment, focuses on the retention of materials from the most significant time in a property's history, while permitting the removal of materials from other periods.
- **Reconstruction**, the fourth treatment, establishes limited opportunities to re-create a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object in all new materials.

Source: National Parks Service at www.nps.gov

Policy HC-3▶

The City encourages restoration, renovation, and/or rehabilitation of buildings which retain their historic integrity.

Action Item HC-3.1

Provide incentives to residents as encouragement for rehabilitation and restoration of historic resources located on private property, such as:

- Participating in the Mills Act Tax Abatement Program as an economic incentive for private property owners to actively participate in the restoration of their properties.
- Establishing an award program to recognize preservation efforts.
- Allowing the use of the Historical Building Code (HBC) for buildings which are officially designated as historic. (The HBC provides more flexibility to persons renovating historic buildings and helps preserve the building's historic character.)

Action Item NC-3.2

Use grants and funds available to the City for historic preservation, such as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the California Heritage Fund (provided by the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2000).

Policy HC-4▶

Support use of federal financial incentive programs to encourage preservation of historic structures.

Action Item HC-4.1

Provide information on applying for the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentive.

Policy HC-5▶

Action Item HC-4.2

Provide information on claiming income and estate tax deductions for charitable contributions of partial interest in historic property, per The Tax Reform Act of 1986.

Maintain and improve buildings which help contribute to the downtown's historic character.

Action Item HC-5.1

Use the latest Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties as a guideline for the preservation of historic buildings. *(See info box above)*

Policy HC-6▶

The preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, reuse and maintenance of existing Downtown buildings which have historic value (that is, buildings which are on a local, state, or federal register) is encouraged.

Action Item HC-6.1

Create and maintain a Local Register of Historic Resources.

Policy HC-7▶

The City shall require quality architecture that preserves the Downtown's historic integrity. "Franchise architecture" that detracts from the unique and distinctive setting of the Downtown shall not be allowed.

Policy HC-8▶

Building renovations in the Downtown shall be complementary to the character of historic Downtown architecture.

Policy HC-9▶**ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND FOSSIL POLICIES**

The City will endeavor to protect and preserve prehistoric and historic archaeological resources and fossils.

Action Item HC-9.1

In areas identified with a significant potential for containing archaeological artifacts,² require completion of a detailed on-site study as part of the environmental review process. Implement all feasible mitigation measures.

Action Item HC-9.2

Impose the following conditions on all discretionary projects which may cause ground disturbance:

- “The Planning Department shall be notified immediately if any prehistoric, archaeological, or fossil artifact or resource is uncovered during construction. All construction must stop and an archaeologist that meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualifications Standards in prehistoric or historical archaeology shall be retained to evaluate the finds and recommend appropriate action.”
- “All construction must stop if any human remains are uncovered, and the County Coroner must be notified according to Section 7050.5 of California’s Health and Safety Code. If the remains are determined to be Native American, the procedures outlined in CEQA Section 15064.5 (d) and (e) shall be followed.”

² Please see the Environmental Impact Report prepared for this General Plan for information on areas which have a significant potential for containing archaeological artifacts.