

**Interagency  
Burned Area Emergency Stabilization Plan  
Front Country Fires BAER  
Cultural Resources Assessment  
August 2008**

## **I. OBJECTIVES**

- Assess negative effects of the fire and untreated suppression actions to cultural resources within the wildfire areas.
- Ensure that other emergency stabilization and rehabilitation treatments comply with Section 106 of the National historic preservation Act (NHPA).
- Prescribe emergency stabilization and rehabilitation measures for known heritage degradation problems.
- Provide recommendations for areas where ES&R data for likely fire damaged or endangered cultural resources are lacking.
- Assess effects of proposed stabilization and rehabilitation actions to cultural resources.

## **II. ISSUES**

- Historic mining-related features (including various mines, cabins, millsites, trams and the former Coram town site), and prehistoric middens and lithic scatters are widely distributed within the Motion Fire area. These features are readily accessible and visible due to the fire. Pilfering of artifacts and damage to features and deposits is certain without some mitigation actions. Significant damage from untreated suppression activities and high-intensity burning of the Goldsborough Gulch site in the Noble fire area has created a high resource loss potential from sheetwash, rilling and gulley formation.
- The historic Rector Creek Flume was badly damaged and will need to be replaced with cultural documentation necessary
- Many historic mining-related features are accessible to the public and pose a risk to the unwary. Major areas of burnt-over historic mining complexes remained unevaluated for losses from fire-related erosion/deposition.
- Certain fire suppression features, notably dozer lines, have not been entirely rehabilitated to acceptable Federal standards. These pose hazards to public safety in some cases and exacerbate the potential for erosion losses/resource displacement and pilfering of historic and prehistoric materials, especially within the Noble and Motion Fire areas.
- Unidentified cultural resources within the lower portions of the Deerlick and Moon fire areas are at an unknown risk level due to potential mass-wasting from certain high severity and highly erosive headwater areas. Terrace areas along these lower drainages need assessment for current and potential post fire impacts to extant cultural resources.
- Potential effects to cultural resources from various emergency stabilization actions.
- Serious threat of mass-wasting damage to different heritage values where upper slope vegetation loss is moderate to severe. This is especially the case in the Motion, Noble and Moon fire areas.
- Medicinal and traditional use plant gathering areas of the Wintu may have been damaged.

- USFS lands within the Motion Fire area have not been assessed through field or archival work for cultural resource presence.

### III. OBSERVATIONS

#### A. Background Information

The various fire areas have seen sporadic archaeological inventory, generally less than 15%. Areas of known or predicted sensitivity are mostly within mining districts, along stream courses and near springs, and on saddles and ridge tops. Likely archaeological sites in the fire areas range from one or two sites per square mile to 20 or more per square mile. Certain site types such as quarries and ritual locations are more difficult to predict.

At the time of Euroamerican contact the study location was occupied by the Wintu, hunters-gatherers-foragers. The Sacramento River and Cottonwood Creek and its tributaries provided an abundant supply of salmon, suckers, eels and mussels. Deer were an important resource along with rabbits, squirrels, quail, rodents and certain insects. Acorns, manzanita berries, grass seeds and various nuts, roots, and tubers were very significant foods.

Wintu religion and mythology were intimately involved with the environment, with all natural features having significance. Places of unusual configuration were “holy” and some distinctive rock outcrops, caves, knolls and whirlpools were sanctified.

The Wintu suffered severely from Euroamerican contact which surged in the 1850s with the California Gold Rush. This was also the time government surveyors began laying out township, ranges, sections and mining properties. Early placer mining efforts, sometimes involving Indian people, were gradually replaced in part by later lode, hydraulic and dredge operations.

The general area is rich in prehistoric evidence with residential and special use sites widespread and of variable ages. Human occupation locally may have begun in earnest about 4000 years ago with small family groups of hunters and foragers. These groups with their use of the atlatl and incised stone industry may have been related to historic Hokan speaking groups. Around 2500 years ago a new group of people began using the area, a group more fisheries oriented. In time this group was replaced by the ancestors of the Wintu, a group with a diversified subsistence round with an intensification of use of such foods as the salmon, acorn and certain other plant foods.

The first Euroamerican use of this area was by trappers and explorers beginning in 1828 through the early 1840s. By the 1850s the Old Sacramento Trail could be negotiated up the west side of the Sacramento River Canyon. Packers and livestock folks began using the southern portions of Shasta County and the northern fringes of Tehama County into Trinity County soon after the Gold Rush. Higher elevations eventually became dominated by timber interests well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century with ranching activities at favorable locales.

After the initial Euroamerican mineral explorations and small scale Gold Rush and post-Gold Rush operations in the area, the locality on the Motion Fire saw an intensive development

related to copper mining and smelting. Peak productions in the locality occurred from 1897 to 1919 and again between 1924 and 1925. Copper/iron pyrite mining was relatively intense until 1947 with secondary level recovery until 1969. Copper smelting in connection with mining operations caused severe environmental damage in the general area. Experimental and full reclamation efforts began in 1922 and continue to some extent today, a situation exacerbated by the current fire activities. A related operation was a tramway and transfer station at Matheson for shipment of iron pyrite ore to plants elsewhere for production of sulfuric acid. The transfer was to railroad cars using the Central Pacific/Southern Pacific railroad line placed up the river in 1884. Further south and west toward Trinity County chrome mining was undertaken, especially during WW II.

Three ethnographic locations are within the Motion Fire area. These include *sat cakton'*, a gathering area for almagre (red rock for coloring); *balaklil'*, the Balaklala Mine area; and *hop tcin nomwagat*, or Squaw Creek.

## **B. Reconnaissance Methodology**

This assessment is not intended to address the separate but related impacts to cultural resources from fire suppression activities, notably bulldozers. However, a few recommendations are made in regard to residual impacts yet addressed or when those impacts coincide with emergency stabilization needs.

Field observations regarding heritage resources during and after the fire were conducted by vehicle and on foot within portions of the Motion and Moon fires by BLM and CALFIRE archaeologists and archaeological technicians. Other observations were made by additional BLM and USFS employees assigned to the various fires. None of these observations were systematic or thorough and it is estimated that less than 1% of the burnt areas were examined in the field with respect to cultural resources. A focus of observations on the Motion and Noble fires was directed at previously recorded or known cultural resources considered most at risk. Professional judgment was employed to predict areas with high likelihood for cultural resources, especially within limited areas susceptible to major erosion impacts. Information on the effects of the fire came from interviews with knowledgeable fire suppression and BAER personnel as well as fire area reconnaissance conducted between July 28<sup>th</sup> and August 2<sup>nd</sup>. Some photos taken by other BAER personnel from aircraft and ground perspectives were also reviewed. Lastly, maps produced by BAER personnel describing high fire severity, erosion potential and likely treatments were searched.

With regard to the Motion fire CALFIRE archaeologists Richard Jenkins and Scott Mattingly obtained information concerning previously recorded archaeological sites from the Northeast Information Center for the California Historic Resources Information System at California State University, Chico. Jenkins also obtained information from the various agencies involved and local citizens. Furthermore, Jenkins consulted with the Native American Heritage Commission in Sacramento with regard to sacred or sensitive Native American Indians locations. Jenkins and Mattingly (2008) have completed a report on their cultural work and recommendations with regard to fire suppression on some of the Motion fire sites.

The archaeological data base at the Redding BLM office was consulted with regard to all fires. Since this data base is incomplete with regard to USFS and Bureau of Reclamation sites (obtained by Jenkins for the Motion Fire where BOR lands are situated), information from Sherry Chilcott and Mark Arnold, USFS archaeologists in the Hayfork-Weaverville offices was sought and obtained with respect to the Telephone/South Fork, Deerlick/Deadshot and Noble fires. Lacking is information with regard to some of the USFS lands within the Motion Fire area. An examination was also conducted of historic topographic maps and, partially, of Government Land Office Mineral Survey maps.

Finally, an examination was made of the Theodoratus (1985) sacred/sensitive Native American resource base maps and listings on file with BLM and USFS Redding encompassing the entire area of the fires.

### C. Findings

It is clear that the various fires have had and will most likely continue to have deleterious effects on tangible heritage resources without various mitigation measures. In cases of some known sites there has simply not been enough time to properly evaluate the preciseness of possible negative effects to their values. In cases this can only be predicted through an examination of fire severity and topographic setting. In other areas of the fires, approximately 80% or higher, there has never been prior archaeological inventory so there are no documented sites to discuss. Still, there will most probably be damage to sites as yet unknown to the professional community that will occur from these fires.

The most severe impacts to known heritage resources from the fires are within the Motion Fire. This is mostly because of the rich mining history of this location and the major drainages within the general area, especially the Sacramento River and its tributaries. This also happens to be the area with the most cultural inventory but also the less severe topography as a whole. Furthermore, prior denudation of the area and severe erosion from copper smelter fumes has left the area particularly susceptible to renewed mass-wasting of a large scale.

At least one major prehistoric site within the Noble Fire was severely impacted. The most likely avenues of degradation to known sites are mass-wasting impacts and looting and vandalism from increased access and visibility.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Both general and very specific recommendations apply to various sites and site complexes. And many of these treatments will need to be accomplished for a variety of resources and for public health and safety needs. These include limiting vehicular access to many areas of these fires. Furthermore special signing can be developed for all sensitive areas to be posted at select locations: **PROTECT AND RESPECT FIRE-DAMAGED NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES. AREA TEMPORARILY CLOSED TO MOTORIZED VEHICLES.** Such signing will serve to alert the visitor to resource protection needs and reasons behind the closure. Selective patrols of sensitive site areas should be undertaken on a weekly basis.

Each fire area is discussed from southwest to northeast beginning with the **Lime Complex** fires first:

### **Telephone/South Fork Fire**

#### Shiell Ranch (PRIVATE)

While this location was subject to low to moderate burning, the presence of historic structures and cultivars suggest that, subject to owner permission, a further evaluation of protection/stabilization needs be undertaken.

The Wildwood historic trail also passed through the area but it does not appear to have been damaged or subject to further impact.

### **Noble Fire**

#### CA-SHA-2561 Goldsborough Gulch Site (BLM)

Serious damage occurred to this prehistoric midden. The exact extent of the damage with respect to the site boundary and features needs to be accurately mapped by precision instrument. Seeding and mulch should be applied to the severely burned site (about 1 acre in extent). Blading and berm areas should be selectively assessed for their cultural contents prior to recontouring by hand and mulching. This would include passing materials through fine screens under professional control. Bank edges of Goldsborough Gulch along the side edge should be stabilized with 50-75 sandbags or rock veneer. Nearby roads need to be blocked and signed to prevent access. Antiquity signs will need to be placed around and near the site as well.



*Damaged Goldsborough Gulch Prehistoric Site*

CA-SHA-648 Seeliger Ranch (PRIVATE)

While this location was subject to low to moderate burning, the presence of historic structures, a midden and old cultivars suggest that, subject to owner permission, a further evaluation of protection/stabilization needs be undertaken.

Chrome Mine (USFS)

This mining complex, including standing structures, was subject to low or no burning (not field visited). A further reconnaissance to check integrity and possible protection measures is warranted.

**Deerlick/Deadshot Fire**

Deer Lick Spring Site (USFS/PRIVATE)

A lithic scatter at Deer Lick Springs was likely not affected but a brief reconnaissance to this site would be worthwhile.

Locations within the **SHU Lightning Fires:**

## **Moon Fire**

### CA-SHA-1565-H Jerusalem Creek Log Cabin and Ditch (BLM)

This site burned low but the effects on the historic remains have not been evaluated. A visit to see potential damage or damage susceptibility from the fire should be undertaken.

### Rector Creek Flume

This historic flume site burned and will to be replaced. Historic documentation will be necessary prior to dismantling.

## **Motion Fire**

### Coram Townsite and Smelter Complex (PRIVATE)

One of the most significant sites in the County was partially burned severely with steep, highly erodible slopes within and immediately uphill of this complex. The 80 acres complex should be mulched and seeded to prevent mass-wasting and feature/artifact translocation/destruction. Fencing and gating along the main Coram road should be implemented to prevent unwanted vehicular and pedestrian access where collection and digging could occur. No trespassing signs need to be erected. The stone boardinghouse foundations are being undercut and will have enhanced erosion without placement of sandbags along select areas of the foundations.

### Eiler Mine Complex (BLM)

A narrow mining road to this site is now open and would allow passage of vehicle and potential collection of artifacts at this site. Road barrier construction and signing are proposed.

### Iron Mountain Mine Complex (PRIVATE)

This extensive mining complex and former community has generally been off-limits to the public. Newly opened and improved roads could allow access to sensitive historic resources and their collection and/or damage. Furthermore, since much of this historic complex, including structures, dumps, mines and other features are on steep, easily erodible slopes, some burned moderately to hot, an evaluation of heritage losses to erosion is warranted subject to owner permission and working with the EPA.

### Mad Ox Gulch Mining Complex (BLM)

Various mining features, including a 10-stamp mill, rock walls and trails, artifacts, foundations and other features are within a steep canyon subject to low to moderate burns. How these various heritage resources fared in the fire and what their future is with fire-related erosion and deposition is unknown. This area needs to be assessed and access roads gated and signed.

Spreadeagle Mine (PRIVATE)

Due to the fire there is now increased visibility and access to this historic mine. It is proposed that gating and signing be installed to limit access and prevent looting and vandalism to features.

Stowell Mine Complex (PRIVATE)

Due to the fire there is now increased visibility and access to this historic mine. It is proposed that gating, fencing and signing be installed to limit access and prevent looting and vandalism to features.

Richmond Mine Tramway (BLM)

The historic tram access road was opened during the fire. Since these structures are easily subject to vandalism and theft of components, blockage of road components is proposed using fencing.

Copley-Cottonwood Cabin (T. 32N, R. 5W, Sec. 20) (BLM)

This cabin and prehistoric midden was subjected to moderate to high burn intensity. It is also adjacent to a road. Burn effects and aftermath in terms of erosion and slope stabilization need to be assessed.

CA-SHA-646 (BLM)

This prehistoric site was burned over at a low intensity and damage and future fire-related impacts are not known. A field assessment should be undertaken.

Keystone/Balakala Mine Complex (PRIVATE)

This extensive mining complex was subjected to low to moderate burn intensity and the extensive historic remains are under an unknown threat from post-fire erosion/deposition and translocation. An archaeological assessment, pending permission of the owners, is recommended.

Insure that prior to any mine closure that these features be evaluated for their historic values.

Historic penstock (riveted) culverts should be left in place as practical.

Historic road rehab should be completed so as to return the road as close as possible to its pre-fire condition without damaging adjacent historic road bed remnants.

Ditch cleaning of historic ditches should be completed so as to retain as close as possible the original configuration and historic character.

Care should be taken so that removal of exotics does not include portions of a historic landscape (e.g. figs, black locust, and vinca).

## TREATMENTS

### Lime Complex

#### Telephone/South Fork Fire

##### Shiell Ranch (PRIVATE)

One day of evaluation by a professional archaeologist: \$\*\*\*\*\*  
(All evaluations and much of the other work can be accomplished  
by one temporary Archaeologist or by purchase order/contract)

### Noble Fire

##### CA-SHA-2561 Goldsborough Gulch Site (BLM)

Seeding/mulching: \$\*\*\*\*\*  
Mapping: \$\*\*\*\*\*  
Berm damage assessment/recontouring: \$\*\*\*\*\*  
Bank erosion protection with sandbags: \$\*\*\*\*\*  
Native American consultation: \$\*\*\*\*\*  
Gating/signing: \$\*\*\*\*\*

##### CA-SHA-648 Seeliger Ranch (PRIVATE)

One day of evaluation by a professional archaeologist: \$\*\*\*\*\*

##### Chrome Mine (USFS)

One day of evaluation by a professional archaeologist: \$\*\*\*\*\*

### Deerlick/Deadshot Fire

##### Deer Lick Spring Site (USFS/PRIVATE)

One day of evaluation by a professional archaeologist: \$\*\*\*\*\*

### SHU Lightning Fires

#### Moon Fire

##### CA-SHA-1565-H Jerusalem Creek Log Cabin and Ditch (BLM)

One day of evaluation by a professional archaeologist: \$\*\*\*\*\*

##### Rector Creek Flume

Fully assess and document damaged flume segments prior to removal \$\*\*\*\*\*

**Motion Fire**

Coram Townsite and Smelter Complex (PRIVATE)

Treatment and costs discussed in OHV section

Eiler Mine Complex (BLM)

Treatment and costs discussed in OHV section

Iron Mountain Mine Complex (PRIVATE)

Treatment and costs for access issues discussed in OHV section

Three days of evaluation by a professional archaeologist: \$\*\*\*\*\*

Mad Ox Gulch Mining Complex (BLM)

One day of evaluation by a professional archaeologist: \$\*\*\*\*\*

Other treatment discussed in OHV section

Spreadeagle Mine (PRIVATE)

Treatment and costs discussed in OHV section

Stowell Mine Complex (PRIVATE)

Treatment and costs discussed in OHV section

Richmond Mine Tramway (BLM)

Treatment and costs discussed in OHV section

Copley-Cottonwood Cabin (BLM)

One day of evaluation by a professional archaeologist: \$\*\*\*\*\*

CA-SHA-646 (BLM)

One day of evaluation by a professional archaeologist: \$\*\*\*\*\*

Keystone/Balakala Mine Complex (PRIVATE)

Three days of cultural resource assessment will be necessary \$\*\*\*\*\*

**Considerations for all areas:**

Protection sign fabrication (100 copies x \$25.00) \$\*\*\*\*\*

Patrolling/monitoring built into other activities

Further assessments could lead to added protection/stabilization needs and costs.

**PROPOSED EMERGENCY STABILIZATION ACTION EFFECTS:** No suppression rehabilitation or emergency stabilization actions shall be undertaken to adversely affect National Register of Historic Places.

## V. CONSULTATIONS

| NAME, AGENCY, TITLE  | TELEPHONE    |
|--|--------------|
| Richard Jenkins, CALFIRE Archaeologist                           | 530-224-4749 |
| Francis Berg, Assistant Field Manager, BLM, Redding Field Office | 530-224-2120 |
| Sherry Chilcott, USFS Archaeologist                              | 530-628-1227 |
| Mark Arnold, USFS Archaeologist                                  | 530-628-5227 |
| Eric Ritter, BLM Archaeologist                                   | 530-224-2131 |

## VI. REFERENCES

Jenkins, Richard, and Scott Mattingly  
2008 Cultural Resource Narrative for the Shasta Lightning Complex Final Report CA-SHU-004727, Shasta County, California. On file with CALFIRE, Redding.

Theodoratus Cultural Research  
1985 *Mapping Project, Ethnographic Inventory Shasta-Trinity National Forest, Mendocino National Forest (Corning and Stonyford RD) and Redding Resource Area, Bureau of Land Management*. On file with Bureau of Land Management, Redding.