

Appendix G

Cultural resources of the KRP represent a record of human land use. This record is contained in properties with archaeological research value, locations of cultural importance to local Native American groups, and the intangible beliefs and values connected with Forest land use by various ethnic and occupational groups (LRMP FEIS 3.5.18.1 in USDA 1992).

Archaeological research values are derived from data that reside in classes of archaeological constituents, typically found in archaeological sites, and that contribute to important research topics. Data are scientifically meaningful when they can be related to a theoretical framework that supports a coherent interpretation of the cultural past.

Analysis of the contents of archaeological sites, pollen cores, and other paleoenvironmental data can provide information about environmental conditions and ecosystems that existed before contact (Woolfenden 1996), but the information derived is patchy. Tribal traditional knowledge regarding landscapes can improve societal understanding and management of ecosystems. Oral histories about ethnobotanical management from Indian people about past ecosystems and ecosystem components (e.g., the presence/absence of culturally important plants and the visual characteristics of landscapes) can provide important baseline data to describe and explain change and continuity of cultural landscapes.

Reverence and Links to the Land for Cultural Survival: Wherever Indians from Sierra Nevada tribes might reside, many retain a deep, abiding concern about what occurs within their aboriginal territory, including the SNF. These lands are considered the center of their universe, their homeland; spiritual reverence for the land is often expressed by tribal members. Thus, land management affects not only cultural survival, but spiritual survival as well; among many Indian people the concepts are inseparable—inherently united. It has been expressed at several Forest Service/tribal meetings that Indian people also feel that they also have a responsibility to manage the land properly; that the Creator put them there to do just that.

The SNF honors the traditional ties that many tribal communities have to this portion of the Sierra Nevada. Access to and use of the SNF and other public lands is critical. For many Indian people, community identity and cultural survival are dependent on continued access to ceremonial and sacred places, and access to resources at a variety of locations on forest land. Certain plants (e.g., sedges), animals (e.g., deer), and locations (e.g., fishing spots) provide for many needs, including food, medicine, utilitarian type materials, and ceremonial items. Specific resources insure that significant cultural traditions, such as basket weaving, survive and continue.

Relevant topics with respect to tribes associated with the SNF are 1) social and economic; 2) Federal responsibility to federally recognized and non-recognized tribes; 3) traditional knowledge; 4) reverence and links to the land for cultural survival; and 5) consultation and collaboration.

Social and economic: The Federally recognized tribes operate from a politically sovereign position and may have different political, social, and economic needs from those tribes and individuals not federally recognized.

Federal Responsibility to Federally recognized and non-recognized tribes: Federally recognized tribal governments associated with the SNF, as elsewhere in the United States, have a special political and legal relationship with the Government of the United States. Tribes possess inherent powers of limited sovereignty.

Recognized tribes are also beneficiaries of a trust relationship with the Federal government. Federal agencies, such as the Forest Service, consult with tribes as with other governments and are responsible for protecting tribal interests. The Forest Service also consults with non-recognized tribes (USDA 1997).

Consultation and Collaboration: An ongoing process of tribal consultation and collaboration for ecosystem management and specific projects is beginning to establish firmer institutional roots in the Sierra Nevada. For many tribal communities whose reservations lie next to National Forests, Forest Service management affects their quality of life. Since forested ecosystems extend beyond land ownership boundaries, it is essential that the Forest Service and tribes collaborate to protect everyone's interests in such issues as fire protection, water quality, air quality, and other resources in National Forests

The spiritual and cultural survival of Indian people is to a large extent dependent upon National Forest lands because areas of cultural importance to tribal people are located there; namely, ceremonial locations, cemeteries, traditional gathering areas, and archaeological sites. These areas contribute to the tribal communities' way of life, their identity, their traditional practices and cohesiveness. Because ecosystem management within the forest may affect tribes in various ways, there are some important aspects that need to be considered.