

## **7.0 CULTURAL RESOURCES**

## 7.0 CULTURAL RESOURCES

This section considers and evaluates the potential impacts of the proposed project on historical, cultural, and paleontological resources. Cultural resources are defined as prehistoric and historic sites, structures, and districts, or any other physical evidence associated with human activity considered important to a culture, a subculture, or a community for scientific, traditional, religious, or any other reason. Paleontological resources include fossil remains, as well as fossil localities and formations which have produced fossil material.

For analysis purposes, cultural resources may be categorized into four groups: archaeological resources (prehistoric and historical); historic properties, buildings, and districts; areas of importance to Native Americans; and paleontological resources (fossilized remains of plants and animals). Cultural resource impacts include those to existing historic resources (i.e., historic districts, landmarks, etc.) and to archaeological and paleontological resources.

### 7.1 CONCEPTS AND TERMINOLOGY FOR EVALUATION OF CULTURAL RESOURCES

The following definitions are common terms used to discuss the regulatory requirements and treatment of cultural resources:

*Cultural resources* is the term used to describe several different types of properties: prehistoric and historical archaeological sites; architectural properties such as buildings, bridges, and infrastructure; and resources of importance to Native Americans.

*Historic properties* is a term defined by the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) as any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in, or eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), including artifacts, records, and material remains related to such a property.

*Historical resource* is a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) term that includes buildings, sites, structures, objects, or districts, each of which may have historical, prehistoric, architectural, archaeological, cultural, or scientific importance, and is eligible for listing or is listed in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) or a local registry of historical resources.

*Paleontological resource* is defined as including fossilized remains of vertebrate and invertebrate organisms, fossil tracks and trackways, and plant fossils. A unique paleontological site would include a known area of fossil-bearing rock strata.

## 7.2 EXISTING SETTING

### 7.2.1 CULTURAL SETTING

#### Prehistory

In the broadest terms, the archaeological signature of the Truckee Basin consists of a trend from hunting-based societies in earlier times to populations that were increasingly reliant on diverse resources by the time of historic contact. The gradual shift in characteristics may be attributed to factors such as paleoclimate, a shifting subsistence base, and demographic changes.

Some of the oldest archaeological remains reported for the Tahoe Region have been found in the Truckee River Canyon near Squaw Valley. These Pre-Archaic remains suggest occupation about 9,000 years ago. Other Pre-Archaic to Early Archaic occupation was documented at Spooner Lake near Spooner Summit overlooking Lake Tahoe, dating from about 7,000 years ago. The most intensive period of occupation in the region may have occurred at varying intervals between 500 and 4,000 years ago. The protohistoric ancestors of the Washoe, also of Late Archaic times, may date roughly from 500 years ago to historic contact in the early 1800s.

Archaeological research relevant to the project site began in the early 1950s when Heizer and Elsasser presented the first cultural chronology for the Sierra Nevada. The chronology was based on survey work conducted to the east of the crest of the Sierra Nevada around Lake Tahoe and parts of the drainages of the Truckee and Carson rivers. In their work, Heizer and Elsasser identified two “complexes.” The earliest cultural group, named the Martis Complex, was followed by the King’s Beach Complex. Both complexes were defined on the basis of surface material. Heizer and Elsasser did not excavate either of the “type sites” for these complexes (Placer County 2004).

Heizer and Elsasser defined the Martis Complex based on nine criteria derived from data obtained from 13 sites. These nine criteria are (1) the use of basalt as the preferred lithic material for tools; (2) the rare use of chert and obsidian for tool production; (3) the use of roughly chipped, large, heavy projectile points in a variety of forms; (4) the use of the mano and metate; (5) the use of bowl mortars with cylindrical pestles; (6) the use of boatstones and atlatls; (7) an economy primarily based on hunting and supplemented by the gathering of seeds; (8) the use of large numbers of basalt flake scrapers; and (9) the frequent use of expanded-base, finger-held drills.

Heizer and Elsasser highlighted the use of basalt as the preferred material for tools as the most distinguishing characteristic of the Martis Complex. They also suggest that the Martis Complex, based on this characteristic, may be related to other basalt-using complexes in the Great Basin, the Mojave Desert, and the Early Horizon in the Central Valley of California. Boatstones from the Martis Complex type site, CA-PLA-5, resemble those from the Central Valley of California, reinforcing the contention of Heizer and Elsasser that the Martis Complex may be related to the Early or Middle Horizon of the Central Valley (Placer County 2004).

Elsasser continued research along both the east and west sides of the Sierra crest and provided additional data to aid in characterizing the Martis Complex and defining its possible relationships to other cultural manifestations. In 1960, he published the results of excavations at three Martis Complex sites: CA-NEV-15, CA-SIE-20, and 26-DO-12. The excavation of these sites expanded the “territory” of the Martis Complex to include the upper elevations of the western slope of the Sierra Nevada. Elsasser suggested that Martis people most likely hunted large, seasonally migratory animals, such as deer and antelope, which they followed between the lower and higher elevations of the Sierra Nevada. Elsasser also emphasized the expanding and apparently widespread distribution of the Martis Complex across the mid-elevations of the Sierra Nevada (Placer County 2004).

Elsasser presented three possibilities for the areal distribution of the Martis Complex:

- It was a high altitude or summer manifestation of a culture that was centered farther out in the Great Basin, to the east; this perhaps had ultimate roots in the Southern California deserts.

- The same as above, except that the center or point of origin was in Central California, during Middle Horizon times.
- It was an essentially autochthonous culture, i.e., one that developed in the Sierra Nevada without strong reference to cultures on either side of the Sierra (Placer County 2004).

Elston et al. augmented the work of Heizer and Elsasser by exploring the relationship between the Martis Complex, the Kings Beach Complex, and the historic Washoe. The Kings Beach Complex is commonly divided into two periods: Early Kings Beach (1,300–700 BP), characterized by Rosegate Series points; and Late Kings Beach (700–150 BP), characterized by Desert Series Points. Early Kings Beach is thought to represent the initial phase of the Washoe ethnographic pattern (Placer County 2004).

### **Ethnography**

Before the arrival of Euro-Americans in the region, California was inhabited by groups of Native Americans speaking more than 100 different languages and occupying a variety of ecological settings. Kroeber and others recognized the uniqueness of California Native Americans and classified them as belonging to the California culture area. Kroeber further subdivided California into four subculture areas: Northwestern, Northeastern, Southern, and Central. The Central area encompasses the current project area, but does not include the Washoe, who are considered to be members of the Great Basin culture area. Kroeber however, states that California and the Great Basin are regions of close cultural kinship that should be joined into a larger culture area (Placer County 2004).

The Washoe historically inhabited the region east of the crest of the Sierra Nevada into the Carson Valley, extending from the Walker River in the south to Honey Lake in the north, with peripheral territory extending to the mid-elevations of the west Sierra slope. The Washoe speak a Hokan language and are the only Great Basin group to speak a non-Numic language. Kroeber and Downs postulate an early relationship, prior to 4,500 years ago, between the Hokan-speaking Washoe and other Hokan-speaking groups in California (Placer County 2004).

The contemporary Washoe have developed a Comprehensive Land Use Plan. It includes goals of reestablishing a presence within the Tahoe Sierra and revitalizing Washoe heritage and cultural knowledge, including the harvest and care of traditional plant resources and the protection of traditional properties within the cultural landscape. The Washoe regard all “prehistoric” remains and sites within the Truckee Basin as being associated with their history.

### **Social Organization**

The basic social and economic group for the Washoe was the family or household unit. Washoe households were somewhat loosely combined to form villages, referred to as *bunches* by Downs. The size and composition of bunches varied considerably, depending on environmental and interpersonal conditions. Downs states that the winter camp or village of several households seemed to be the basis for the bunch, but several villages located in close proximity to one another might also be considered a bunch. Each bunch had a headman or chief, which seems to have been a hereditary position passed on through either parent. During prehistoric and early historic times, however, there was never a single chief for all Washoe (Placer County 2004).

## ***Settlement and Subsistence Patterns***

The Washoe practiced seasonal transhumance, moving from one area or elevation to another to harvest plants, fish, and hunt game across contrasting lifezones that are in relatively close proximity to each other. The Washoe ranged across a rather extensive area that included jointly shared territory (e.g., areas claimed by both Nisenan and Washoe) whose entry was subject to traditional understandings of priority of ownership and current relations between groups (Placer County 2004).

## ***Material Culture and Technology***

The Washoe built two basic structures: the winter house, which consisted of a conical framework of poles covered by overlapping slabs of cedar and/or other conifer bark, with a short covered doorway or vestibule; and the summer brush house, which varied from a simple low enclosure resembling a windbreak to a completely covered, dome-shaped house. They also constructed covered fishing platforms over streams that were often described as floating houses by observers. In addition, the Washoe built sweat lodges and large earth-covered dance houses, but there is disagreement regarding whether or not these structures were regularly constructed before the historic period (Placer County 2004).

The Washoe commonly used flaked and ground stone tools including knives, arrow and spear points, club heads, arrow straighteners, scrapers, rough cobble and shaped pestles, bedrock mortars, and grinding stones (metates). Wood was also used for a variety of implements including both simple and sinew-backed bows, arrow shafts and points, looped stirring sticks, flat-bladed mush paddles, pipes, and hide preparation tools. Cordage was made from plant material and was used to construct fishing nets and braided and twined tumplines. Soaproot brushes were commonly used during grinding activities to collect meal and/or flour. Baskets were also manufactured and used for a variety of purposes from carrying items to storing food resources (Placer County 2004).

## ***Intergroup Relations***

The Washoe frequently interacted with the Nisenan and Northern Sierra Miwok as trading partners, at communal ceremonial gatherings, and in armed conflict (often as a result of perceived territorial encroachment). In fact, the ethnographic literature, particularly in reference to the Nisenan, reports rather regular hostilities between Hill and Valley Nisenan, Nisenan and Washoe, and Nisenan and Sierra Miwok. Most interactions among the three ethnographic groups, however, appear to have been civil and friendly in nature. For example, Beals states that the Nisenan and Washoe along the South Fork of the American River frequently interacted and often met for “Big Times” near Kyburz and Myers Station. The Washoe also traveled to Miwok territory during the summer, and often wintered on the west side of the Sierra Nevada. This scenario is not surprising considering the extreme mobility of the Washoe during their seasonal subsistence patterns. Indeed, Downs states that the Washoe often made long trading trips to the Pacific Coast and San Diego to obtain shellfish and particularly fine obsidian knives (Placer County 2004).

## **History**

### ***Early Settlement***

The history of the Truckee community began with the arrival of Joseph Gray, who built a stage station near the present-day downtown in 1863. Gray was soon joined by a blacksmith named

S. S. Coburn, and the fledgling settlement of Gray's Toll Station was renamed Coburn's Station. This tiny way station grew from two structures into a thriving town that accommodated emigrants, stagecoach travelers, and freight wagons en route westward to California's gold fields and eastward to the Comstock Lode in Nevada. In 1868, Coburn's Station burned and the name was changed to Truckee. The completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1868 gave rise to other developments in transportation, lumber, ice, agriculture, and tourism, which were to become the essential economic bases of Truckee (Placer County 2003).

Throughout most of the nineteenth century, Truckee thrived on the related fields of lumber, railroading, and ice. By the 1920s, this industrial economy and society had largely disappeared, due to the relocation of the train-switching yard to Roseville, the depletion of local timber supplies, and the development of mechanical refrigeration. In its place, the community began to develop a recreation-based economy, boosted by the completion of a good state highway over Donner Summit. The 1960 Winter Olympics at nearby Squaw Valley secured Truckee's position as a center point for year-round recreation. In 1993, Truckee was incorporated as a town (Placer County 2003).

Virtually all of the Town of Truckee is considered moderately to extremely sensitive with regard to the presence of cultural resources. The downtown is home to a high concentration of structures that have historical significance. The area consisting of Donner Pass Road, Jibboom Street, Bridge Street, Church Street, and East and West River Street comprise the commercial and early residential area of Truckee. The downtown area is formed around the Southern Pacific railroad line that runs through the heart of the town. The Truckee station was an integral part of the first transcontinental railroad and became an important hub of train service for the western United States (Placer County 2003).

### ***Transportation***

Some of the first Euro-American visitors to the Truckee area were members of the Stephens-Murphy-Townsend Party, who ascended the Truckee River in mid-November of 1844. Subsequent emigrant travelers followed an alternate route to avoid the rugged Truckee River Canyon, leaving Nevada in the vicinity of Dog Valley and then angling back down to the Truckee River east of the route of present-day State Route 89. This route later became known as the Truckee Route of the Emigrant Trail (Placer County 2003).

The Emigrant Trail was a route that thousands of people followed in order to reach California or Oregon. Between the years 1841 and 1869, it is estimated that 300,000 to 500,000 individuals traveled 2,000 miles across the continent to California or Oregon in search of a new life or gold. A portion of the Emigrant Trail follows a route through the Truckee Basin. The trail passes through Truckee and continues toward Donner Lake. This area is where the ill-fated Donner Party was stranded during a harsh Sierra winter from 1846 to 1847 (Placer County 2003).

In 1864, the Dutch Flat and Donner Lake Wagon Road (DFDLWR) was opened over Donner Pass. The road followed basically the same route through Truckee that the earlier emigrants had followed, entering the northeast end of the town along a present-day dirt road that runs between the Old Truckee Cemetery and the Old Catholic Cemetery. This freight and passenger wagon road was situated near the proposed alignment of the Central Pacific Railroad, as it was designed to aid in transporting supplies to points along the line. It formed the final link in a continuous freight and passenger road from Dutch Flat to the Comstock mines near Virginia City. Used as a wagon haul road until 1909, the DFDLWR was rebuilt as an auto and truck road between 1909 and 1915. This new road was renamed the Lincoln Highway in 1915, forming the Verdi-Truckee

link in the nation's pioneer transcontinental automobile highway. In the 1920s, the Lincoln Highway was redesignated the Victory Highway, which subsequently became US Highway 40 in 1925. Travel along Highway 40 was short-lived, as later that year the route was moved into the Truckee River Canyon. Today, Interstate 80 provides a vital east-west route over the Sierra Nevada range (Placer County 2003).

### ***Logging***

Logging was first initiated in the Martis Valley area after the discovery of the Comstock Lode in 1859. The Martis Valley area soon became one of the major lumbering centers. Intensive cutting in the project area commenced in 1863. Lumber mills were prevalent throughout the area with lumber mills located at Hobart, Truckee, the Martis Valley, and the Squaw Valley area. Sawmills owned by George Schaffer were scattered throughout the Martis Valley. Railroad lines were constructed to connect Truckee with the Hobart lumber mill. A narrow gauge line was also constructed between Truckee and Tahoe City to haul freight, forest products, and tourists. Logging continued to be a major industry in the area until the 1920s (Placer County 2003).

### ***Grazing***

The Martis Valley Community Plan area has historically been used for cattle grazing. The meadows provided feed for cattle herds from the Sacramento Valley during the hot summer months. The historic Joerger Ranch is located between Schaffer Mill Road and State Route 267 north of the Lahontan development (Placer County 2003).

### ***Charcoal Production***

Charcoal production formed an important adjunct to the lumber industry. The organization of Sisson, Crocker & Company was created in 1866 at Truckee exclusively for the purpose of importing Chinese labor for railroad construction. With the completion of the railroad, the Chinese immigrants were channeled to the lumber industry, among other occupations. Such engagement forced immigrant Chinese into direct competition with Euro-Americans. Subsequent anti-Chinese sentiment resulted in the initial expulsion of Chinese from Truckee in 1878 and the ultimate demise of Truckee's Chinese community in 1886. Between those dates, the project area and adjoining lands were apparently under the ownership of Sisson, Crocker & Company, who employed large numbers of Chinese in the production of charcoal to supply the railroad and the smelting works of Nevada and Utah (Placer County 2003).

### ***Ice Production***

Truckee played an important role as an ice production area for the transcontinental railroad from the 1880s until the early 1900s. Truckee was a vital railroad switching yard, and the cold climate of the Martis Valley allowed for perishable goods on board trains to be packed with ice before being shipped east across Nevada or west toward Sacramento. The ice industry came to an abrupt halt with the introduction of mechanized refrigeration (Placer County 2003).

### ***Recreation***

Skis, which were once the only available means of winter transportation, are now a major form of winter recreation. "Snowshoe" racing, on skis 14 feet long, first became a popular sport during the 1860s. The Truckee Basin contains several winter recreational resorts. Squaw Valley, the oldest ski operation in the area, was started in 1947 and was the home of the 1960 Winter

Olympic Games. The Martis Valley Community Plan area contains the Northstar California resort that provides skiing as well as year-round recreational opportunities (Placer County 2003).

### **Known Cultural Resources**

#### ***Prehistoric Resources***

While several prehistoric sites and resources have been identified, there is a high probability that many additional cultural resources remain undiscovered in the project region. A comprehensive cultural resources inventory was completed by the Placer County Department of Museums. Phase III of the Placer County Cultural Resources Inventory focused on unincorporated areas of the county, including the Martis Valley. While this survey did not indicate that prehistoric resources had been located in the Martis Valley Community Plan area, it is a well-known fact that the Martis Valley was home to the Washoe people. Prehistoric campsites, lithic scatters, and bedrock milling stations are known to be present throughout the area. Many sensitive resource sites are adjacent to waterways and meadow areas (Placer County 2003).

A cultural resources record search was requested of the North Central Information Center (NCIC) at California State University, Sacramento. Using the information from the NCIC record search, the following prehistoric cultural resources have been identified in the project area.

The Cultural Resources Baseline Data for Northstar-at-Tahoe (KEA 2001) indicated eight prehistoric sites in the Northstar California project area. Most of the prehistoric remains consist of isolated artifacts such as single projectile points or flakes. The sections where the prehistoric resources were discovered exhibit relatively level ground and close proximity to at least seasonal water sources. Both of these features are consistently present on most prehistoric archaeological sites. Most of the terrain on the Northstar property is steep, rocky slope that is not attractive for a living environment and consequently was most likely infrequently occupied or visited by prehistoric peoples (Placer County 2003). The following resources were found to be prehistoric in nature near the proposed Northstar Mountain Master Plan (NMMP) project- and program-level components:

- (NS-32) Sawmill Flat Site I
- (NS-35) Sawmill Flat Site II
- (NS-36) Sawmill Flat Site III
- (NS-38) Sawmill Flat Prehistoric Isolates
- (NS-29) Sawmill Flat Site IV
- (NS-16) Middle Martis Creek Site I
- (NS-18) Middle Martis Creek Site II
- (NS-20) Middle Martis Creek Site III
- (NS-21) Middle Martis Creek Site IV
- (NS-43) Backside Prehistoric Site

- (NS-44) Backside Prehistoric Isolate Flake
- (NS-46) Backside Prehistoric Site
- (NS-47) Sawtooth Ridge Isolate Flake
- (NS-48) Mount Pluto Isolate Flake

### ***Historic Resources***

Properties of historical importance in California are currently designated as significant resources in three state registration programs: State Historical Landmarks, Points of Historical Interest, and the California Register of Historic Places. Below is a list of three State Historical Landmarks in the region (Placer County 2003).

- No. 134 Donner Monument (or) Pioneer Monument: Located at Donner Memorial State Park, Old Highway 40 at Interstate 80 and Truckee exit, Truckee, the memorial commemorates the ill-fated Donner Party of California-bound emigrants, who wintered here in 1846–1847. Many of the party died of exposure and starvation.
- No. 780-6 First Transcontinental Railroad, Truckee: While construction on Sierra tunnels delayed the Central Pacific Railroad, advance forces at Truckee began building 40 miles of track east and west of Truckee, moving supplies by wagon and sled. The Summit Tunnel was opened in December 1867. The line reached Truckee on April 3, 1868, and the Sierra was conquered. Rails reached Reno on June 19, 1868, and construction advanced eastward toward the meeting with the Union Pacific Railroad at the rate of 1 mile daily. On May 10, 1869, the rails met at Promontory, Utah, to complete the first transcontinental railroad. The site is located at the Southern Pacific Depot, 70 Donner Pass Road, Truckee.
- No. 724 Pioneer Ski Area of America, Squaw Valley: The VIII Olympic Games of 1960 commemorated a century of sport skiing in California and took place at Squaw Valley Sports Center, northeast corner of Blyth Olympic Arena Building, Squaw Valley Road, Squaw Valley. By 1860, the Sierra Nevada, particularly at the mining towns of Whiskey Diggings, Poker Flat, Port Wine, Onion Valley, LaPorte, and Johnsville, some 60 miles north of Squaw Valley, saw the first organized ski clubs and competition in the western hemisphere.

There is one National Historic Landmark in the region: Donner Camp located at Donner Memorial State Park, National Register Number 66000218. This site is a memorial to the Donner Party. In the winter of 1846–1847, a group of 89 California-bound emigrants led by Jacob and George Donner was trapped by the heavy snows of the High Sierra. Bitter cold and dwindling food supplies reduced the wagon train to a group of desperate individuals unable to cooperate, driven to terror and degradation. Four relief expeditions eventually rescued 47 of the party (Placer County 2003).

The Northstar-at-Tahoe North Lookout Ski Pod Project Final Environmental Impact Report indicates that the project area's likelihood to contain historic resources is considered moderately high. Sawmills, logging roads, skidways, and wood camps associated with logging are the principle historical sites. The Cultural Resources Baseline Data for Northstar-at-Tahoe prepared by KEA Environmental (2001) identifies historic resources on the Northstar California property. In general,

these features are located in two main areas near the eastern extent on Northstar property. One group of resources is located near the Middle Martis Creek drainage, which includes several sections of logging roads, a cabin site, and sections of the Richardson Brothers railroad grade, which would have been associated with the Richardson Brothers logging operations. The second cluster of sites is found on Sawmill Flat near the Sawmill Flat Reservoir. Present in this area is a large section of the Richardson Brothers log chute, associated supply depots, and two structures that may have been related to the logging operation or served as hunting cabins in the early years of the twentieth century (Placer County 2003). The following are the identified historic resources near the proposed NMMP project- and program-level components:

- (NS-1) Richardson Brothers Log Chute
- (NS-1 contd.) Richardson Brothers Log Chute & Railroad Grade
- (NS-2) Beaver Pond Aspen Carvings
- (NS-7) Richardson Brothers Railroad Grade
- (NS-4, NS-9) Logging Road Sections
- (NS-11) Terry's Cabin
- (NS-12) Terry's Cabin Stone Wall
- (NS-13) Sawmill Flat Cabins
- (NS-29) Sawmill Flat Historic Scatter, Site IV
- (NS-50) Backside Mine
- (NS-27) Middle Martis Mining Feature
- (NS-8, 9) Middle Martis Logging Roads
- (NS-24) Old Brockway Road
- (NS-42) Schaeffer Log Chute and Cabins
- (NS-45) Backside Carving
- (NS-51) Sawtooth Ridge Tree Blazes

The Historic Brockway Road Grade has partial pavement remaining. It runs parallel to the present-day State Route 267 for approximately one-half mile before disappearing in road fill from the present route (Placer County 2003).

### **Native American Coordination**

A sacred lands search and a list of Native American contacts were requested from the Native American Heritage Commission, and formal requests for Native American consultation (as required under Senate Bill 18) were made on April 29, 2013.

## 7.1.2 PALEONTOLOGICAL SETTING

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, which have produced fossil material in other nearby areas. This resource can be an important educational resource for the reasons mentioned before and is nonrenewable once destroyed. CEQA offers protection for these sensitive resources and requires that they be addressed during the EIR process.

The Martis Valley area has been under study from universities and academics from all over the country. The area consists of mostly volcanic flows that have been carved out by glaciation. The glaciation that occurred in the area thousands of years ago provides academics with potential for paleontological finds in the area. These finds are of particular concern and of great value since they contain data about the geologic past.

Two specific geologic units in the Martis Valley area are considered to have a high sensitivity regarding paleontological resources.

- *Pleistocene nonmarine sedimentary rocks—Prosser Creek Alluvium (Qc, Qos, Qlpc)*: This is a sedimentary unit composed of multiple facies including sandstones, siltstones, and mudstones and was deposited in river-stream and lake environments. A record search of the paleontologic collections of the Museum of Paleontology at the University of California, Berkeley, indicated that no fossils have been collected from deposits mapped as Prosser Creek Alluvium or Pleistocene nonmarine in the project area. However, two terrestrial fossil vertebrate localities are recorded in the Martis Valley area to the north of the Truckee River.
- *Quaternary alluvium*: This unit consists of unconsolidated gravels, sands, silts, and muds that have accumulated in Recent to sub-Recent time. No fossils or localities have been discovered in these deposits in the project area.

## KNOWN OCCURRENCES OF PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES IN THE REGION

Within Placer County, there are more than 30 localities where substantial fossil specimens of paleontological significance have been found. These localities have been discovered in the western part of the county, where it is more urbanized. The urbanization and development of this area is the impetus to these finds. While there have been some paleontological finds in the region, there have been no finds to date in the Martis Valley Community Plan area. In 1993, a mastodon was found just north of the Martis Valley Community Plan area near Boca Reservoir in Nevada County. The mastodon is hypothesized to have originated from a more northerly location and was relocated in a glacier that slowly moved into the region.

## 7.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

### 7.2.1 FEDERAL

#### National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is the nation's master inventory of known historic resources. The NRHP is administered by the National Park Service and includes listings of buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts that possess historic, architectural,

engineering, archaeological, or cultural significance at the national, state, or local level. Structures, sites, buildings, districts, and objects over 50 years of age can be listed in the NRHP as significant historic resources. However, properties under 50 years of age that are of exceptional importance or are contributors to a district can also be included in the NRHP. The criteria for listing in the NRHP include resources that:

- a. Are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history;
- b. Are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- c. Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- d. Have yielded or may likely yield information important in prehistory or history.

The Section 106 review process for cultural resources under the NRHP is required for any federal action or permit approval associated with a project. The review process is implemented using a five-step procedure:

1. Identification and evaluation of historic properties.
2. Assessment of the effects of the undertaking on properties that are eligible for the National Register.
3. Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and other agencies for the development of a memorandum of agreement (MOA) that addresses the treatment of historic properties.
4. Receipt of Advisory Council on Historic Preservation comments on the MOA or results of consultation.
5. Implementation according to the conditions of the MOA.

Depending on the circumstances, the Section 106 compliance process may not consist of all five steps noted above. For example, if the identification and evaluation process results in a conclusion that the properties are eligible for the National Register, further implementation of the above steps is required.

### **7.2.2 STATE**

#### **California Environmental Quality Act**

Under CEQA, public agencies must consider the effects of their actions on both “historical resources” and “unique archaeological resources.” Pursuant to Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21084.1, a “project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment.” Section 21083.2 requires agencies to determine whether proposed projects would have effects on unique archaeological resources.

“Historical resource” is a term with a defined statutory meaning (PRC Section 21084.1; determining significant impacts to historical and archaeological resources is described in the State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064.5[a], [b]). Under State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a), historical resources include the following:

1. A resource listed in, or determined to be eligible by, the State Historical Resources Commission for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (Public Resources Code Section 5024.1).
2. A resource included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in Section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code or identified as significant in a historical resource survey meeting the requirements of Section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code, will be presumed to be historically or culturally significant. Public agencies must treat any such resource as significant unless the preponderance of evidence demonstrates that it is not historically or culturally significant.
3. Any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California may be considered to be a historical resource, provided the lead agency’s determination is supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record. Generally, a resource will be considered by the lead agency to be “historically significant” if the resource meets the criteria for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (Public Resources Code Section 5024.1), including the following:
  - a. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California’s history and cultural heritage;
  - b. Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
  - c. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or
  - d. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.
4. The fact that a resource is not listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, not included in a local register of historical resources (pursuant to Section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code), or identified in a historical resources survey (meeting the criteria in Section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code) does not preclude a lead agency from determining that the resource may be an historical resource as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(j) or 5024.1.

As noted above, CEQA also requires lead agencies to consider whether projects will impact unique archaeological resources. Public Resources Code Section 21083.2, subdivision (g), states:

*“Unique archaeological resource” means 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:*

- a. *Contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and that there is a demonstrable public interest in that information.*
- b. *Has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type.*
- c. *Is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.*

Treatment options under Section 21083.2 include activities that preserve such resources in place in an undisturbed state. Other acceptable methods of mitigation under Section 21083.2 include excavation and curation or study in place without excavation and curation (if the study finds that the artifacts would not meet one or more of the criteria for defining a unique archaeological resource).

Section 7050.5(b) of the California Health and Safety Code specifies protocol when human remains are discovered. The code states:

*In the event of discovery or recognition of any human remains in any location other than a dedicated cemetery, there shall be no further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent remains until the coroner of the county in which the human remains are discovered has determined, in accordance with Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 27460) of Part 3 of Division 2 of Title 3 of the Government Code, that the remains are not subject to the provisions of Section 27491 of the Government Code or any other related provisions of law concerning investigation of the circumstances, manner and cause of death, and the recommendations concerning treatment and disposition of the human remains have been made to the person responsible for the excavation, or to his or her authorized representative, in the manner provided in Section 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code.*

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5, subdivision (e) requires that excavation activities be stopped whenever human remains are uncovered and that the county coroner be called in to assess the remains. If the county coroner determines that the remains are those of Native Americans, the Native American Heritage Commission must be contacted within 24 hours. At that time, the lead agency must consult with the appropriate Native Americans, if any, as timely identified by the Native American Heritage Commission. Section 15064.5 directs the lead agency (or applicant), under certain circumstances, to develop an agreement with the Native Americans for the treatment and disposition of the remains.

In addition to the mitigation provisions pertaining to accidental discovery of human remains, the State CEQA Guidelines also require that a lead agency make provisions for the accidental discovery of historical or archaeological resources, generally. Pursuant to Section 15064.5, subdivision (f), these provisions should include “an immediate evaluation of the find by a qualified archaeologist. If the find is determined to be an historical or unique archaeological resource, contingency funding and a time allotment sufficient to allow for implementation of avoidance measures or appropriate mitigation should be available. Work could continue on other parts of the building site while historical or unique archaeological resource mitigation takes place.”

Paleontological resources are classified as nonrenewable scientific resources and are protected by state statute (Public Resources Code Chapter 1.7, Section 5097.5, Archeological, Paleontological,

and Historical Sites, and Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines). No state or local agencies have specific jurisdiction over paleontological resources. No state or local agency requires a paleontological collecting permit to allow for the recovery of fossil remains discovered as a result of construction-related earth-moving on state or private land in a project site.

**7.2.2 LOCAL**

**Placer County General Plan**

The Placer County General Plan Policy Document was adopted by the Placer County Board of Supervisors in 1994. **Table 7-1** lists the General Plan policies that relate to cultural resources and the proposed project and provides an analysis of the project’s consistency with these policies. While this Draft EIR analyzes the project’s consistency with the Placer County General Plan pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15125(d), the determination of the project’s consistency with this General Plan rests with the Placer County Board of Supervisors. Any environmental impacts associated with any inconsistency with General Plan policies are addressed under the impact discussions of this EIR.

**TABLE 7-1  
PLACER COUNTY GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS –  
CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Policies	Consistency Determination	Analysis
<b>Policy 1.I.1:</b> The County shall require that significant natural, open space, and cultural resources be identified in advance of development and incorporated into site-specific development project design. The Planned Development and Commercial Planned Development provisions of the Zoning Ordinance can be used to allow flexibility for this integration with valuable site features.	Consistent	This EIR utilized the 2001 Northstar-at-Tahoe Expansion Projects Cultural Resources Study to evaluate potential impacts. A cultural resources record search was requested of the NCIC at California State University, Sacramento, in order to identify any known cultural resources in the project area. The results of these searches are summarized in this section. The proposed NMMP project- and program-level components largely avoid these resources.
<b>Policy 5.D.6:</b> The County shall require that discretionary development projects identify and protect from damage, destruction, and abuse, important historical, archaeological, paleontological, and cultural sites and their contributing environment. Such assessments shall be incorporated into a Countywide cultural resource data base, to be maintained by the Department of Museums.	Consistent	This EIR utilized the 2001 Northstar-at-Tahoe Expansion Projects Cultural Resources Study to evaluate potential impacts. A cultural resources record search was requested of the NCIC at California State University, Sacramento, in order to identify any known cultural resources in the project area. The results of these searches are summarized in this section. The proposed NMMP project- and program-level components largely avoid these resources, and mitigation measures 7-1 and 7-3 would ensure these resources are not impacted.
<b>Policy 5.D.7:</b> The County shall require that discretionary development projects are designed to avoid potential impacts to significant paleontological or cultural resources whenever possible. Unavoidable impacts, whenever possible, shall be reduced to a less than significant level and/or shall be mitigated by extracting maximum recoverable data. Determination of impacts,	Consistent	The proposed NMMP project-level and program-level components largely avoid these resources, and mitigation measures 7-1 and 7-3 would ensure these resources are not impacted.

Policies	Consistency Determination	Analysis
significance, and mitigation shall be made by qualified archaeological (in consultation with recognized local Native American groups), historical, or paleontological consultants, depending on the type of resources in question.		

**Martis Valley Community Plan**

**Table 7-2** lists the Martis Valley Community Plan policies that relate to cultural resources and the proposed project and provides an analysis of the project’s consistency with these policies. While this Draft EIR analyzes the project’s consistency with the Martis Valley Community Plan pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15125(d), the determination of the project’s consistency with the Community Plan rests with the Placer County Board of Supervisors. Any environmental impacts associated with inconsistency with Community Plan policies are addressed under the impact discussions of this DEIR.

**TABLE 7-2  
MARTIS VALLEY COMMUNITY PLAN CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS –  
CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Policies	Consistency Determination	Analysis
<b>Policy 1.G.2:</b> The County shall require that significant natural, open space, and cultural resources be identified in advance of development and incorporated into site-specific development project design. The Planned Development and Commercial Planned Development provisions of the Zoning Ordinance can be used to allow flexibility for this integration with valuable site features.	Consistent	This EIR utilized the 2001 Northstar-at-Tahoe Expansion Projects Cultural Resources Study to evaluate potential impacts. A cultural resources record search was requested of the NCIC at California State University, Sacramento, in order to identify any known cultural resources in the project area. The results of these searches are summarized in this section. The proposed NMMP project- and program-level components largely avoid these resources.
<b>Policy 8.A.5:</b> The County shall require that discretionary development projects identify and protect from damage, destruction, and abuse, important historical, archaeological, paleontological, and cultural sites and their contributing environment. Such assessments shall be incorporated into a Countywide cultural resource data base, to be maintained by the Department of Museums.	Consistent	This EIR utilized the 2001 Northstar-at-Tahoe Expansion Projects Cultural Resources Study to evaluate potential impacts. A cultural resources record search was requested of the NCIC at California State University, Sacramento, in order to identify any known cultural resources in the project area. The results of these searches are summarized in this section. The proposed NMMP project- and program-level components largely avoid these resources, and mitigation measures 7-1 and 7-3 would ensure these resources are not impacted.
<b>Policy 8.A.6:</b> The County shall require that discretionary development projects are designed to avoid potential impacts to significant paleontological or cultural resources whenever possible. Unavoidable impacts, whenever possible, shall be reduced to a less than significant level and/or shall be mitigated by extracting maximum recoverable data. Determination	Consistent	The proposed NMMP project- and program-level components largely avoid these resources, and mitigation measures 7-1 and 7-3 would ensure these resources are not impacted.

Policies	Consistency Determination	Analysis
of impacts, significance, and mitigation shall be made by qualified archaeological (in consultation with recognized local Native American groups), historical, or paleontological consultants, depending on the type of resources in question.		

**7.3 IMPACTS**

**7.3.1 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Following PRC Sections 21083.2 and 21084.1, and Section 15064.5 and Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, cultural resource impacts are considered to be significant if implementation of the project considered would result in any of the following:

- 1) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Public Resources Code Section 21084.1 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5, respectively.
- 2) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource as defined in Public Resources Code Sections 21083.2 and 21084.1, and CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5, respectively.
- 3) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geological feature.
- 4) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 defines “substantial adverse change” as physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of an historical resource is materially impaired.

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5, subdivision (b)(2), defines “materially impaired” for purposes of the definition of “substantial adverse change” as follows:

*The significance of an historical resource is materially impaired when a project:*

1. *Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion in, or eligibility for, inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources; or*
2. *Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics that account for its inclusion in a local register of historical resources pursuant to Section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code or its identification in an historical resources survey meeting the requirements of Section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code, unless the public agency reviewing the effects of the project establishes by a preponderance of evidence that the resource is not historically or culturally significant; or*

- Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of a historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its eligibility for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources as determined by a lead agency for purposes of CEQA.*

CEQA requires that if a project would result in an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, or would cause significant effects on a unique archaeological resource, then alternative plans or mitigation measures must be considered. Therefore, prior to assessing effects or developing mitigation measures, the significance of cultural resources must first be determined. The steps that are normally taken in a cultural resources investigation for CEQA compliance are as follows:

- Identify potential historical resources and unique archaeological resources;
- Evaluate the eligibility of historical resources; and
- Evaluate the effects of the project on eligible historical resources.

### 7.3.2 METHODOLOGY

Efforts to identify cultural resources that could be affected by the project included review of the 2001 Northstar-at-Tahoe Expansion Projects Cultural Resources Study, a records search completed by the North Central Information Center at California State University, Sacramento, and review of cultural resource assessments performed for previous projects in the project area. The potential impacts of the proposed project on cultural resources were evaluated by considering both construction and operational activities of the proposed project.

The analysis evaluates both project- and program-level components identified in Section 3.0, Project Description.

### 7.3.3 IMPACTS

**IMPACT 7.1:** Potential Destruction or Damage to Known Cultural, Prehistoric, or Historic Resources

The following prehistoric and historic resources have been identified near the following project- and program-level components of the proposed NMMP:

#### Project-Level Components

- C lift base and associated lower trail improvements (NS-13, NS-31, NS-34, NS-36, NS-37, NS-38, NS-39)
- V and W lift associated lower trail improvements and bridges (NS-42, NS-43, NS-44, NS-45, NS-46)
- Top of V lift (NS-47)

#### Program-Level Components

- Cross-country center relocation and skier services near C lift (NS-13, NS-31, NS-34, NS-36, NS-37, NS-38, NS-39)

The project design appears to avoid these resources; however, there is potential that these resources would be impacted by project construction. Therefore, the proposed project could have a **potentially significant** impact on historic or prehistoric resources.

**MITIGATION MEASURE 7-1** Mitigate for Known and Potential Cultural, Prehistoric, and Historic Resources

In order to ensure that no unanticipated disturbance occurs to sites NS-13, NS-31, NS-34, NS-36, NS-37, NS-38, NS-39, NS-42, NS-43, NS-44, NS-45, NS-46, and NS-47 during project construction, protective orange field fencing will be installed around the site perimeters to keep construction debris and construction support vehicles from impacting the resources. This shall be included on improvement plans for the following project components:

- C lift base and associated lower trail improvements
- V and W lift associated lower trail improvements and bridges
- Top of V lift
- Cross-country center relocation and skier services near C lift

Potential Prehistoric and Historic Resources: Final improvement plans approved by the County shall include a note that states: If, during the course of construction cultural resources [i.e., prehistoric sites, historic sites, exotic rock (non-native), or unusual amounts of shell or bone, isolated artifacts, or other similar features] are discovered, work shall be halted immediately within 50 feet of the discovery, and the Placer County Community Development Resource Agency shall be notified. A professional archaeologist that meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards in archaeology shall be retained to determine the significance of the discovery. Determination of impacts, significance, and mitigation shall be made by a qualified archaeologist (in consultation with recognized local Native American groups). Mitigation for significant cultural resources located on-site shall consist of one or more of the following to ensure protection of the resource consistent with Public Resources Code Section 21083.2:

- Redesign of improvements to avoid the resource.
- Capping or covering the resource in a manner that protects the resource.

The Placer County Planning Department and Department of Museums shall also be contacted for review of the archaeological find(s). Prior to the commencement of project excavations, all construction personnel shall be informed of the potential to inadvertently uncover cultural resources and human remains, and shall also be informed of the procedures to follow should an inadvertent discovery of cultural resources or human remains occur. The County Coroner shall be notified, according to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 and Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, if human remains are discovered. If the remains are determined to be Native American, the coroner shall notify the Native American Heritage Commission and the procedures outlined in CEQA Section 15064.5(d) and (e) shall be followed.

### SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

Implementation of mitigation measure 7-1 would reduce this impact to a **less than significant** level by avoiding the identified resources during project construction as well as evaluating resources inadvertently discovered during construction.

**IMPACT 7.2:** Potential Destruction or Damage to Undiscovered Cultural, Prehistoric, or Historic Resources

As described previously, the region surrounding the project site was home to the Washoe people, and prehistoric campsites, lithic scatters, and bedrock milling stations are known to be present throughout the area. The locations of these discovered resources generally exhibit relatively level ground and are in close proximity to waterways and meadow areas. However, most of the terrain on the Northstar property is steep, rocky slope that is not attractive for a living environment and consequently was most likely infrequently occupied or visited by prehistoric peoples. Regardless, numerous prehistoric sites have been identified within and adjacent to the proposed NMMP project- and program-level components, and there is potential for undiscovered cultural resources in the region. Construction and operation of the proposed NMMP components could result in the accidental discovery, destruction, damage, and/or disruption of previously undiscovered cultural resources and/or human remains. Therefore, the proposed project could have a **potentially significant** impact.

Mitigation measure 7-1 includes measures to evaluate and mitigate potential cultural resources discovered during construction activities.

### SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

Implementation of mitigation measure 7-1 would reduce this impact to a **less than significant** level.

**IMPACT 7.3:** Potential Destruction or Damage to a Unique Paleontological Resource or Geological Feature

As described previously in Section 7.1.2, there have been no paleontological finds to date in the Martis Valley Community Plan area. Two geologic units in the project area are considered to have a high sensitivity regarding paleontological resources (Pleistocene nonmarine sedimentary rocks-Prosser Creek Alluvium and Quaternary alluvium); however, according to the geotechnical studies prepared for development in the project area, the Northstar property does not contain either of these geologic units. Regardless, construction of the proposed NMMP project- and program-level components would have the potential to destroy or damage previously undiscovered unique paleontological resources or geologic features. Therefore, the proposed project could have a **potentially significant** impact on paleontological resources.

**MITIGATION MEASURE 7-3** Mitigate for Potential Disruption of Paleontological Resources

Final improvement plans for the project components shall include a note that states: If paleontological resources are discovered on-site, the applicant shall retain a qualified paleontologist to observe all grading and excavation activities throughout all phases of project construction and shall salvage fossils as necessary. The paleontologist shall establish procedures for paleontological resource surveillance and shall establish, in cooperation with the project

developer, procedures for temporarily halting or redirecting work to permit sampling, identification, and evaluation of fossils. If major paleontological resources are discovered that require temporarily halting or redirecting of grading, the paleontologist shall report such findings to the project developer and to the Placer County Community Development Resource Agency and Department of Museums. The paleontologist shall determine appropriate actions, in cooperation with the project developer, that ensure proper exploration and/or salvage. Excavated finds shall first be offered to a State-designated repository such as the Museum of Paleontology, University of California, Berkeley, or the California Academy of Sciences. Otherwise, the finds shall be offered to the Placer County Department of Museums for purposes of public education and interpretive displays. These actions, as well as final mitigation and disposition of the resources, shall be subject to approval by the Department of Museums. The paleontologist shall submit a follow-up report to the Department of Museums and the Community Development Resource Agency that shall include the period of inspection, an analysis of the fossils found, and the present repository of fossils.

### **SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION**

Implementation of mitigation measure 7-3 would reduce the impact to a **less than significant** level by evaluating and mitigating the impacts on discovered paleontological resources.