

Task Force Recovery Assessment Appendix B - Archaeological

Archaeological Overview

In an attempt to mitigate the after effects of the Southern California fires the Burn Area Recovery Task Force (BARTF) Teams were formed. An archaeologist was assigned to work with the teams to serve as a technical expert, regarding archaeological work that may be necessary prior to the implementation of any rehabilitation projects. However, due to time constraints imposed on the BARTF teams archaeological evaluation was limited. In most cases, the BARTF teams relied on written reports from local counties, tribes or federal agencies to assess the cultural resource compliance.

The impacts of fire on cultural resources in regards to the Southern California Fires extend beyond those areas within the fire perimeter. Cultural resources outside of the burn can be subject to vandalism, erosion, flooding, landslides and debris flows. These forces can result in inundation, displacement or destruction of archaeological sites and artifacts. Unfortunately, measures designed to reduce the post-fire dangers can also result in damage to archaeological sites. Treatments that have the potential to damage cultural resources include ground disturbing actions such as cleaning out drainages, repairing or replacing culverts, and the installation of plastic, wood, straw, or fiber netting to secure slopes.

Recommendations

Documentation, assessments, implementation treatments, and consultation should be conducted in a manner that meets federal legal requirements for the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Archaeological Resources Protection Act, and Native American Graves and Repatriation Act.

In the event that an archaeological site is located adjacent to a proposed treatment area that involves soil movement an Archaeologist should be present at the time of construction to ensure that archaeological resources are identified and protected.

Environmental Compliance

All the projects funded by Federal Emergency Management Agency through the BARTF Reports are subject to compliance with environmental law, policy, and directives including the NHPA specifically related to the protection of cultural resources. Section 106 of the NHPA requires “Federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties”; therefore, the federal agency has a mandate that impacts to cultural resources should be considered, documented, and avoided or mitigated as possible as Federal undertakings are

proposed. Section 106 of the NHPA is implemented through regulations provided under 36 CFR Part 800.