

SECTION 4.7

CULTURAL RESOURCES

This section provides a background discussion of the regulatory framework and the environmental setting with regard to cultural resources. Cultural resources consist of archaeological sites from the prehistoric and historic periods, as well as buildings, structures, and objects from the historic period.

The regulatory framework identifies the federal, state, and local regulations applicable to cultural resources. The environmental setting discusses the Area of Potential Effect (APE), the cultural context, records search results, field inventory results, and Native American concerns. Impacts on historic resources (i.e. significant cultural resources) that would result from constructing the project are analyzed based on state and local laws and regulations.

Information contained in this section is summarized from a cultural resource survey report and two letters documenting survey results. Each of these was prepared by ASM Affiliates, Inc. The report and letters include: the *Cultural Resource Survey for the Seville Solar Farm Complex, Imperial County, California* (ASM 2013), the “Results of IID Anza Substation Class III Cultural Resources Survey for the Seville Solar Project” (ASM 2014a) and the “Preliminary Results of IID SA-Transmission Line Right-of-Way Cultural Resources Survey for the Seville Solar Project” (ASM 2014b). These documents are provided on the attached CD of Technical Appendices as **Appendix E** of this EIR.

4.7.1 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

A. FEDERAL

Cultural Resources

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

NEPA establishes national policy for the protection and enhancement of the environment. Part of the function of the federal government in protecting the environment is to “preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage.” Cultural resources need not be determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as in the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (as amended) to receive consideration under NEPA. Instead, NEPA is implemented by regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality, 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1500-1508. NEPA provides for public participation in the consideration of cultural resources issues, among others, during agency decision-making.

The new transmission line would extend east from the solar farm complex site across approximately two miles of public land managed by the BLM (Sections 14 and 15) to the IID Anza Substation located in Section 13. This land is not within a designated utility corridor and is not within an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) per the California Desert Conservation Area Plan (CDCA) (BLM 1980). However, Lots 4 and 5 are immediately west of ACEC 61 (San Sebastian Marsh/San Felipe Creek). Modifications to the Anza Substation would occur on IID land.

On November 15, 2002, BLM granted IID right-of-way (ROW) CACA 044554 to construct the overbuilt 92 kV transmission line as part of a larger IID project. The ROW through BLM land is 50 feet wide and 18,480 feet long and contains approximately 21.21 acres. The BLM has confirmed that the granted ROW remains valid (BLM 2012) and no future environmental review is necessary.

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

Federal law concerning cultural resources which could be affected by certain federal undertakings is the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended. Section 106 of the NHPA requires that federal agencies take into account the effects of a “federal undertaking” on properties listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The agencies must afford the Advisory

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Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) a reasonable opportunity to comment on the undertaking. A federal undertaking is a project that is federally funded or that requires a federal permit or license.

Regulations which stipulate the procedures for complying with Section 106 (36 CFR 800) require:

- Definition of the Area of Potential Effects (APE);
- Identification of cultural resources within the APE;
- Evaluation of the identified resources in the APE using NRHP eligibility criteria;
- Determination of whether the effects of the undertaking or project on eligible resources will be adverse; and
- Agreement on and implementation of mitigation measures if there will be adverse effects.

The federal agency must seek concurrence from the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and, in some cases, the ACHP, for its determinations of eligibility, effects, and proposed mitigation measures. Section 106 procedures for a specific project can be modified by negotiation of a Programmatic Agreement (PA) between the federal agency, the SHPO, and the project proponent.

Effects to a cultural resource are potentially adverse only if the resource has been determined eligible for the NRHP by the lead federal agency with concurrence by the SHPO. The NRHP eligibility criteria are contained in the following statement:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects of state and local importance that possess aspects of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, association, and

- (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.

In addition, the resource must be at least 50 years old, except in exceptional circumstances (36 CFR 60.4).

Archaeological sites are usually evaluated under Criterion D, the potential to yield information important in prehistory. An archaeological test program may be necessary to determine whether the site has the potential to yield important data.

Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (1990); Title 25, United States Code (USC) Section 3001, et seq.

The statute defines "cultural items," "sacred objects," and "objects of cultural patrimony;" establishes an ownership hierarchy; provides for review; allows excavation of human remains, but stipulates return of the remains according to ownership; sets penalties; calls for inventories; and provides for the return of specified cultural items.

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California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

CEQA is the state law that addresses the evaluation of a project's impacts on cultural resources. A "project" is an activity that may cause a direct or indirect physical change in the environment and that is undertaken or funded by a state or local agency, or requires a permit, license, or lease from a state or local agency. CEQA requires that impacts to "Historical Resources" be identified and, if the impacts will be significant, that mitigation measures to reduce the impacts be applied.

A "Historical Resource" is a resource that 1) is listed in or has been determined eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) by the State Historical Resources Commission, or has been determined historically significant by the CEQA lead agency because it meets the eligibility criteria for the CRHR, 2) is included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in Public Resources Code 5020.1(k), or 3) has been identified as significant in a historical resources survey, as defined in Public Resources Code 5024.1(g) [CCR Title 14, Section 15064.5(a)].

The eligibility criteria for the CRHR are as follows [CCR Title 14, Section 4852(b)]:

- (1) It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States;
- (2) It is associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history.
- (3) It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values; or
- (4) It has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.

In addition, the resource must retain integrity. The integrity of a resource is evaluated with regard to the retention of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association [CCR Title 14, Section 4852(c)]. Resources that have been determined eligible for the NRHP are automatically eligible for the CRHR.

Archaeological sites are usually evaluated under Criterion 4, the potential to yield information important in prehistory. An archaeological test program may be necessary to determine whether the site has the potential to yield important data. Imperial County, as the CEQA lead agency, makes the determination of eligibility based on the results of the test program.

AB 4239

AB 4239 established the NAHC as the primary government agency responsible for identifying and cataloging Native American cultural resources. The bill authorized the NAHC to act in order to prevent damage to and insure Native American access to sacred sites and authorized the Commission to prepare an inventory of Native American sacred sites located on public lands.

Public Resources Code 5097.97

No public agency and no private party using or occupying public property or operating on public property under a public license, permit, grant, lease, or contract made on or after July 1, 1977, shall in any manner whatsoever interfere with the free expression or exercise of Native American religion as provided in the United States Constitution and the California Constitution; nor shall any such agency or party cause severe or irreparable damage to any Native American sanctified cemetery, place of worship, religious or ceremonial site, or sacred shrine located on public property, except on a clear and convincing showing that the public interest and necessity so require.

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Public Resources Code 5097.98(b) and 5097.98 (e)

Public Resources Code 5097.98 (b) and 5097.98(e) require a landowner on whose property Native American human remains are found to limit further development activity in the vicinity until he/she confers with the NAHC-identified Most Likely Descendants (MLDs) to consider treatment options. In the absence of MLDs or of a treatment acceptable to all parties, the landowner is required to reenter the remains elsewhere on the property in a location not subject to further disturbance.

California Health and Safety Code, Section 7050.5

California Health and Safety Code, Section 7050.5 makes it a misdemeanor to disturb or remove human remains found outside a cemetery. This code also requires a project owner to halt construction if human remains are discovered and to contact the county coroner.

Paleontological Resources

CEQA Guidelines Appendix G provides a checklist of questions that a lead agency should typically address if relevant to a project's environmental impacts. Appendix G Section (V)(c) asks if the project will directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource, site, or unique geological feature.

B. LOCAL

Cultural Resources

Imperial County General Plan

The Imperial County General Plan provides goals, objectives, policies and/or programs for the identification and protection of significant cultural resources. The Open Space Element of the General Plan includes goals, objectives, policies and/or programs for the protection of cultural resources and scientific sites that emphasize identification, documentation, and protection of cultural resources. **Table 4.7-1** provides a consistency analysis of the applicable Imperial County General Plan policies relevant to cultural resources as they relate to the Project. While this EIR analyzes the Project's consistency with the General Plan pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15125(d), the Imperial County Board of Supervisors ultimately determines consistency with the General Plan.

**TABLE 4.7-1
IMPERIAL COUNTY GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS**

General Plan Goals, Objectives Policies and/or Programs	Consistent with General Plan?	Analysis
CONSERVATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT		
Preservation of Cultural Resources		
<p>Goal 3: Important prehistoric and historic resources shall be preserved to advance scientific knowledge and maintain the traditional historic element of the Imperial Valley landscape.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The proposed Project would not impact any important prehistoric or historic resources. Mitigation measures are identified to address impacts to a potential CRHR-Eligible Resource as well as any unrecorded subsurface archaeological resources, subsurface human resources or unknown fossil resources. Therefore, the proposed Project is consistent with this goal.</p>

**TABLE 4.7-1
IMPERIAL COUNTY GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS**

General Plan Goals, Objectives Policies and/or Programs	Consistent with General Plan?	Analysis
<p>Objective 3.1 Protect and preserve sites of archaeological, ecological, historical, and scientific value, and/or cultural significance.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>A cultural resources survey was conducted for the proposed Project. As discussed under Impact 4.7.1, a potentially eligible CRHR site is in close proximity to the solar farm complex site access as well as construction activities associated with the 92kV transmission line. Mitigation measure MM 4.7.1 has been identified to reduce potential impacts to the potential CRHR-Eligible Resource. No other known archaeological, ecological or historical sites with scientific value or cultural significance are known to exist on the solar farm complex site nor within the 92 kV transmission line alignment or the area of the Anza Substation modifications. Therefore, the proposed Project is consistent with this objective.</p>

4.7.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The Project lies within the southwest corner of the Colorado Desert, an extension of the Sonoran Desert. The area is located in west-central Imperial County, California, approximately eight miles west of the junction of SR 78 and SR 86, and approximately three miles east of the San Diego County line. The Project is also approximately 14 miles from the southern tip of the Salton Sea and one-half mile west of Pole Line Road. The topography in the solar farm complex site is comprised of flat-lying, very low gradient agricultural fields that are separated by dirt access roads or rows of mature tamarisk trees that serve as a windbreak. Most of the land that comprises the solar farm complex site was formerly used for agricultural production. However, all agricultural activities have been suspended within the last few years with the only exception being a small area in the southeast corner of the solar farm complex site which contained grain crops in 2012. Vegetation within the solar farm complex site is generally limited to the several rows of tamarisk trees planted as a windbreak and sporadic weeds.

A. PALEONTOLOGY

Paleontological resources (fossils) are the remains of prehistoric plant and animal life. Fossil remains, such as bones teeth, shell, and wood, are found in geologic deposits (rock formations) within which they were originally buried.

No paleontological field survey was performed of the Project area as the lands to be disturbed by the Project were all previously disturbed in some manner. The solar farm complex site has been tilled and farmed for decades. The agricultural tenant since 1993 has indicated that the fields are routinely plowed to a depth of 30 inches. Due to the disturbance created by plowing, a survey of the agricultural lands

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would not identify any resources, especially any that would be intact. Augering for the replacement 92 kV transmission line poles could produce identifiable rock materials at the surface, although the water well drilling process breaks the rock into fine particles prior to being circulated to the surface in the drilling fluid/mud. A survey of the surface would not be representative of subsurface resources and thus, no paleontological field survey was performed as a part of the resource survey (Carey 2013). Likewise, the modifications to the Anza Substation would also occur in an area that had been previously disturbed based on its proximity to the existing facility.

B. CULTURAL RESOURCES CONTEXT

Prehistory

Prehistoric development of the Colorado Desert area can be traced back to at least 9,000 years to 12,000 years or more. Development patterns in the area are generally sparse and are marked by settlement pattern driven by hunting and gathering practices and availability of resources (ASM 2013, p. 22).

Approximately 7,000 years ago the Archaic Tradition began with the use of advanced means of acquiring and processing food than their earlier relatives. Specifically, the use of spear-like weapons were utilized for hunting. Advancements in the processing of plant crops such as nuts and seeds with mechanisms of mortars, pestles, manos, metates and bedrock milling are characteristics of Archaic period sites in the Colorado Desert area (ASM 2013, p. 23). Settlement patterns during the Archaic period were temporary seasonal camps in rockshelters, stream channels and springs, and in sand dunes where mesquite trees flourish (i.e. present-day Indian Hill in Anza-Borrego Desert and Tahquitz Canyon in Palm Springs). Residential settlements along the north shore of Lake Cahuilla were also present during this period.

Further occupation at the Lake Cahuilla shore occurred in the Late Prehistoric Period when adaptive strategies and settlement patterns, known as the Patayan pattern, began along the eastern portion of the desert closest to the Colorado River and the eastern shoreline of Lake Cahuilla. During this period, advancement in crafting pottery with the paddle-and-anvil technique, flood plain agriculture, cremation burial and bow-and-arrow technology occurred. People lived in multi-seasonal residential bases along the lake, depending on the water and resource availability. A series of temporary shoreline camps established for the processing of specialized resources began along Lake Cahuilla as it recessed. Lake Cahuilla continued to recess and exposed a wetlands habitat (ASM 2013, p. 27). It is believed that the prehistoric people living along the Lake Cahuilla were ancestors of the Kumeyaay who later occupied the Indian Village of San Sebastian (ASM 2013, pp. 25 & 29).

The Indian village at San Sebastian lies approximately four miles east of the Project area and accounts for early native life in the area before European colonization. It is believed that the current Project area is within the transportation and travel corridor utilized as a crossing to and from the San Sebastian Indian Village. Observation of similar villages in the area suggests that people migrated from linked camps as far away as Baja California where Kumeyaay residential sites existed (ASM 2013, pp. 27-28).

By AD 1700, it is believed that the San Sebastian marsh had formed and within 70 years, the Anza Expedition passed through the area and evidence of Spanish colonization began to transpire while the Indian Village at San Sebastian began to experience population scarcities. During this time, the San Sebastian occupants were also exposed to European traditions and disease, such as smallpox brought by the last Spanish immigrant group to arrive at mission San Gabriel in August 1781. Uprisings began to take place between the indigenous peoples and the European colonialists and the Anza trail was closed until the American period. The Indian Village at San Sebastian began to deform to other lands or groups; or were subsided by mortality from the smallpox epidemic in 1862 and drought in 1863-1871 (ASM 2013, pp. 28-29).

History

Imperial Valley

Initial development in the region is marked by the use of the Anza trail by cattle camps from the 1880s to the early 1900s, which later became the Julian-Kane Springs Road (ASM 2013, p. 31). In 1901, oil industrialists who attempted drilling for oil accidentally struck water and a new well named the 'Harpers Well' was utilized. Improvements to the Julian-Kane Springs Road and a potable water source facilitated further brief developments in the area. A small settlement, San Felipe, was created in 1910 about 3.5 miles west of Harpers Well. It included a derrick accompanied by a house, shed and a couple of farmhouses all of which were abandoned by 1920 (ASM 2013, pp. 32).

At the intersection of Julian-Kane Springs Road and Split Mountain Road, just west of San Felipe, Tom Hawn, an Alhambra realtor, developed the town of Little Borrego. In 1924, buildings began to erect including the Borrego Hotel, followed by a general store, service station and garage, barber shop/pool hall and an office building that housed a school and a realty office.

Development of Little Borrego was halted with the onset of the Great Depression. By 1930, Eugene P. Woillard bought the Borrego Hotel and renamed it the Miracle Hotel. The Miracle Hotel went out of business in the late 1930s ending development of Little Borrego altogether (ASM 2013, pp. 32).

The Julian-Kane Springs Road allowed for continued agricultural development of Imperial Valley and speculative developments to the west. The area around Harper's Well was occupied by the operation of a goat ranch in the 1930s, followed by the U.S. Army's Seventh Cavalry Regiment around 1937-1938. The Julian-Kane Springs Road continued as a local transportation route until 1932 when it was devastated by a snowstorm and subsequently bypassed by Highway 78 (ASM 2013, p. 32).

Project Area Development

Ted Jacobs developed the solar farm complex site in 1950 as the "Ranch Oasis" or "Jacobs Ranch." Initial development consisted of two wells in 1953: the "San Felipe Well" and the "Jacobs Domestic Well." Farming occurred from 1954-1973 on 320 acres that had been prepared for farming purposes. Within the last few years, agricultural activities within the solar farm complex site have been suspended with the only exception being a small area in the southeast corner of the solar farm complex site which contained grain crops as recently as 2012 (ASM 2013, pp. 32-33).

C. CULTURAL RESOURCES IN THE PROJECT AREA

Solar Farm Complex

Records Search

A cultural resources records search was conducted by the South Coastal Information Center (SCIC), a component of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS). The SCIC archives site records, maps, and reports for cultural resources in San Diego and Imperial Counties. The SCIC is located at San Diego State University in San Diego, California. The purpose of the records search was to determine the extent of previous cultural resources investigations within a one-mile radius of the solar farm complex site, and to determine whether any archaeological sites or architectural resources have been previously identified within the Project area. Materials reviewed as part of the records search included archaeological site records, historic maps, and listings of resources on the NRHP, the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), California Points of Historical Interest, and California Historical Landmarks.

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The records search revealed that 18 cultural resources reports have been documented within one mile of the Area of Potential Effect (APE). As shown in **Table 4.7-2**, of the 18 investigations, 10 intersect the solar farm complex site and three are in areas adjacent to the APE. For the purposes of this discussion, the APE is defined as follows: portions of Sections 22, 23, 26 and 27, Township 12 South, Range 9 East at the intersection of the Shell Reef, Kane Springs, Borrego Mountain, and Harpers Well 7.5 minute quadrangles northwest of Brawley in Imperial County, California. **Figure 4.7-1** shows the boundaries of the APE.

**TABLE 4.7-2
PREVIOUS CULTURAL RESOURCE REPORTS WITHIN 1 MILE OF APE**

NADB No.	SHPO ID	Author(s)	Year	Title	Proximity to APE
1100206	VONWEJ112	Von Werlhof, Jay	1980	The Archaeological Examinations of proposed Access Roads for Ranch Oasis, LTD.	Intersects
1100354	DPR02	Department of Parks and Recreation	1986	Ocotillo Wells East Acquisition Final Environmental Impact Report.	Directly Adjacent
1100415	CLEWLT01	Clelow, Theresa	1988	Final Report on an Archaeological Reconnaissance of the 15 Mile Proposed San Felipe Corridor in Lower Borrego Valley, Imperial County, California.	Outside
1100563	CLEWLC01	Clelow, C. William, Jr. and Theresa Clelow	1990	Treatment Plan for Archaeological Sites CA-IMP-5959, CA-IMP-5961, and CA-IMP-5963, Imperial County, California.	Outside
1100584	JOHNBO01	Johnson, Boma	1976	San Felipe Race Corridor.	Outside
1100658	SCHAEJ30	Schaefer, Jerry, Drew Palette, and Collin O'Neill	1998	Archaeological Survey for a Shoulder Widening and Pavement Rehabilitation Project on State Route 78, Imperial County, California.	Intersects
1100660	CRAFTK04	Crafts, Karen C.	1998	Historic Property Survey Report - Negative Findings for the Pavement Rehabilitation and Shoulder Widening of a Thirteen Mile Section of State Route 78.	Intersects
1100714	SCHAEJ35	Schaefer, Jerry and Ken Moslak	2000	An Inventory and Evaluation of Lake Cahuilla Cultural Resources Along Imperial Irrigation District's SA-Line, San Diego and Imperial Counties, California.	Intersects
1100726	ROSENM16	Rosen, Martin	1984	First Supplemental Historic Property Survey Material Sites for Imperial 86 Expressway.	Intersects
1100727	ROSENM17	Rosen, Martin	1984	Third Addendum Archaeological Survey Report Highway 86 Expressway Material Sites (Diversion Dikes, Six One-Half Mile, and Hazard Fish Springs).	Adjacent to Corner

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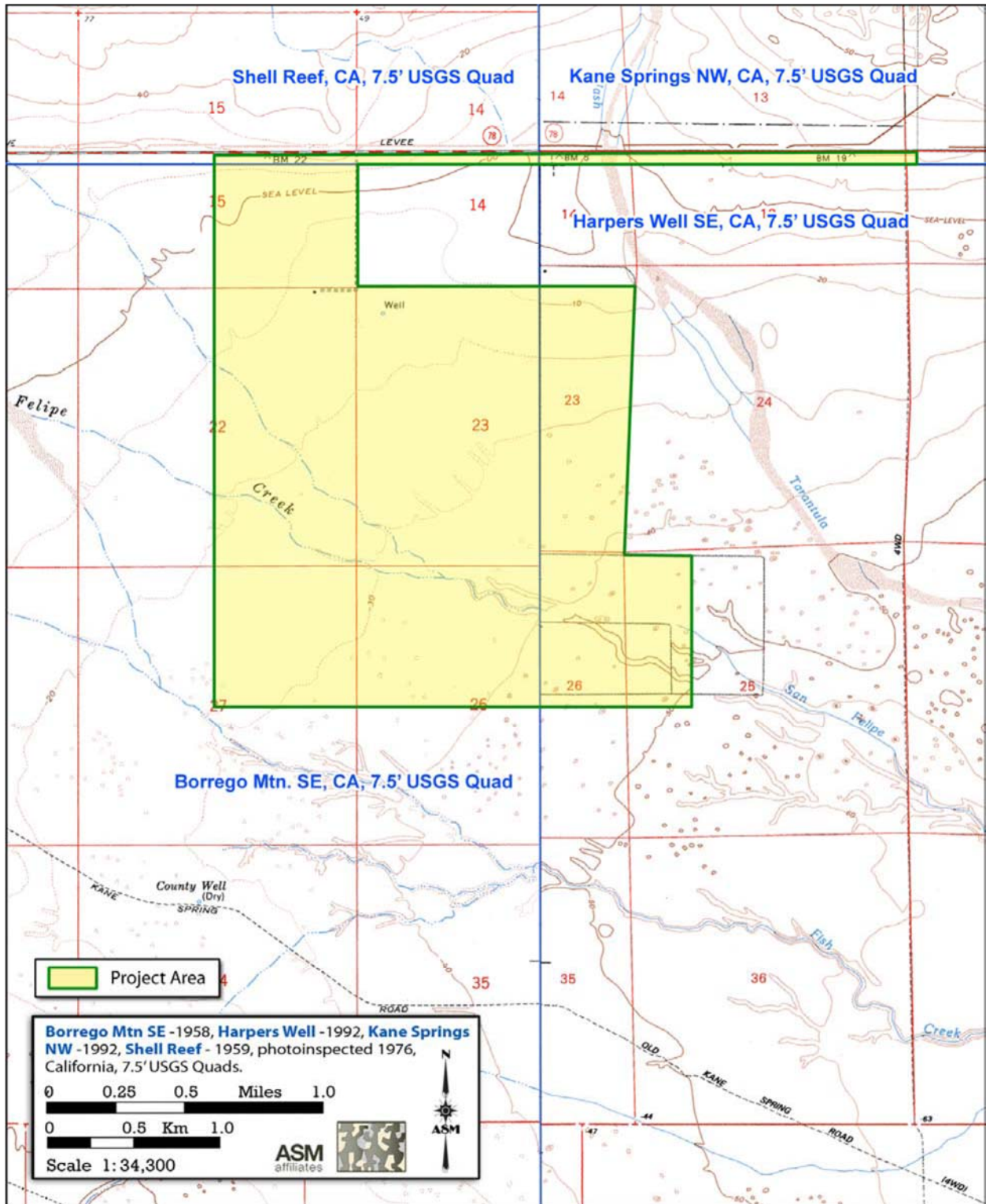
**TABLE 4.7-2
PREVIOUS CULTURAL RESOURCE REPORTS WITHIN 1 MILE OF APE**

NADB No.	SHPO ID	Author(s)	Year	Title	Proximity to APE
1100752	CALTRA15	Caltrans	2001	Historic Property Survey Report for Biological Mitigation Parcels Associated with State Route 86 Projects Imperial County, California.	Outside
1100789	SAPPHO01	Sapphos Environmental, Inc.	2002	SA-Line Transmission System Maintenance Repair/Replacement Project – Environmental Assessment.	Intersects
1100790	SAPPHO02	Sapphos Environmental, Inc.	2002	SA-Line Transmission System Maintenance Repair/Replacement Project – Environmental Assessment.	Intersects
1100979	UNDERJ13	Underwood, Jackson	2003	Archaeological Survey of Four Rio-Tel Cellular Tower Locations: Tamarisk, Hawk 2E, Holtville and Blu-In-Park Imperial County, California.	Intersects
1101115	HINESP01	Hines, Phillip	1999	Proposed Survey Design for Lands to be Transferred from the Bureau of Land Management, El Centro District to the State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation.	Adjacent to Corner
1101208	SWCA01	SWCA Environmental Consultants	2008	Cultural Resources Inventory for the Bureau of Land Management California Desert District in Imperial, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties, California.	Intersects
1101348	SCHAEJ71	Schaefer, Jerry	2006	A Class I Cultural Resources Inventory of the Truckhaven Geothermal Leasing Area, Imperial County, California.	Outside
1101350	GALLED20	Noah, Anna and Dennis Gallegos	2008	Final Class III Archaeological Inventory for the SDG&E Sunrise Powerlink Project, San Diego and Imperial Counties, California.	Intersects

Source: ASM 2013: Seville Solar CRS, 14, Table 4.

There are 153 previously recorded cultural resources located within one mile of the APE, all of which are outside the APE. Many of these previously recorded cultural resource sites were recorded as a part of the California Department of Parks and Recreation surveys in the Ocotillo Wells Off-Road Recreational Area and are within the vicinity of the prehistoric/ethno historic period village of San Sebastian and/or have associations with Lake Cahuilla during the time it was receding. No Native American cultural resources sites are currently recorded within the current boundaries of the APE.

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Source: ASM 2013.

**FIGURE 4.7-1
PROPOSED PROJECT AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECT**

Native American Consultation

According to a NAHC Sacred Lands File search, there are no Native American cultural resources sites currently recorded within the boundaries of the solar farm complex site. Dave Singleton of the NAHC noted that this does not exclude the possibility that Native American cultural resources may exist within the current boundaries of the solar farm complex site. As such these unknown resources may be identified during future work in the area. Of particular concern is the area north of SR 78 as it is identified as being potentially sensitive. However, this land is outside of the Project area. The NAHC recommended contacting the appropriate tribal authorities for further inquiries and consultation (Singleton 2013). Per the direction of the NAHC, the County of Imperial initiated Tribal Consultation in October 2013. No responses have been received as of the writing of this EIR.

Field Survey

A field survey of the portion of the Project are on private lands was conducted by ASM Affiliates, Inc. from January 23 to January 31, 2013. **Figure 4.7-2** depicts the outline of the survey area which is defined as approximately 1,700 acres including all of Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7, as well as the eastern portion of Lot 6. (ASM 2013, p. 2).

During the field survey, systematic pedestrian transects, spaced at intervals of 15 to 20 meters, depending on the landscape, were utilized. The survey team closely examined the ground surface for evidence of cultural resources. Field survey efforts were focused on searching for previously undocumented cultural resources and recording artifacts in the field for understand and interpretation of site character. All newly identified archeological and historic sites associated with the APE were recorded. An archaeological site was defined as at least three associated artifacts or a single feature in a 25 meter square area. Cultural resources not meeting the site criteria were recorded as isolated finds and Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) 523 Forms were completed for assignment of formal numeric identifiers. Native oversight and monitoring was also provided by the Environmental/Cultural Office of the Campo Kumeyaay Nation approved and authorized personnel Ronald Cuero Jr. and Frank Salazar (ASM 2013, p. 3).

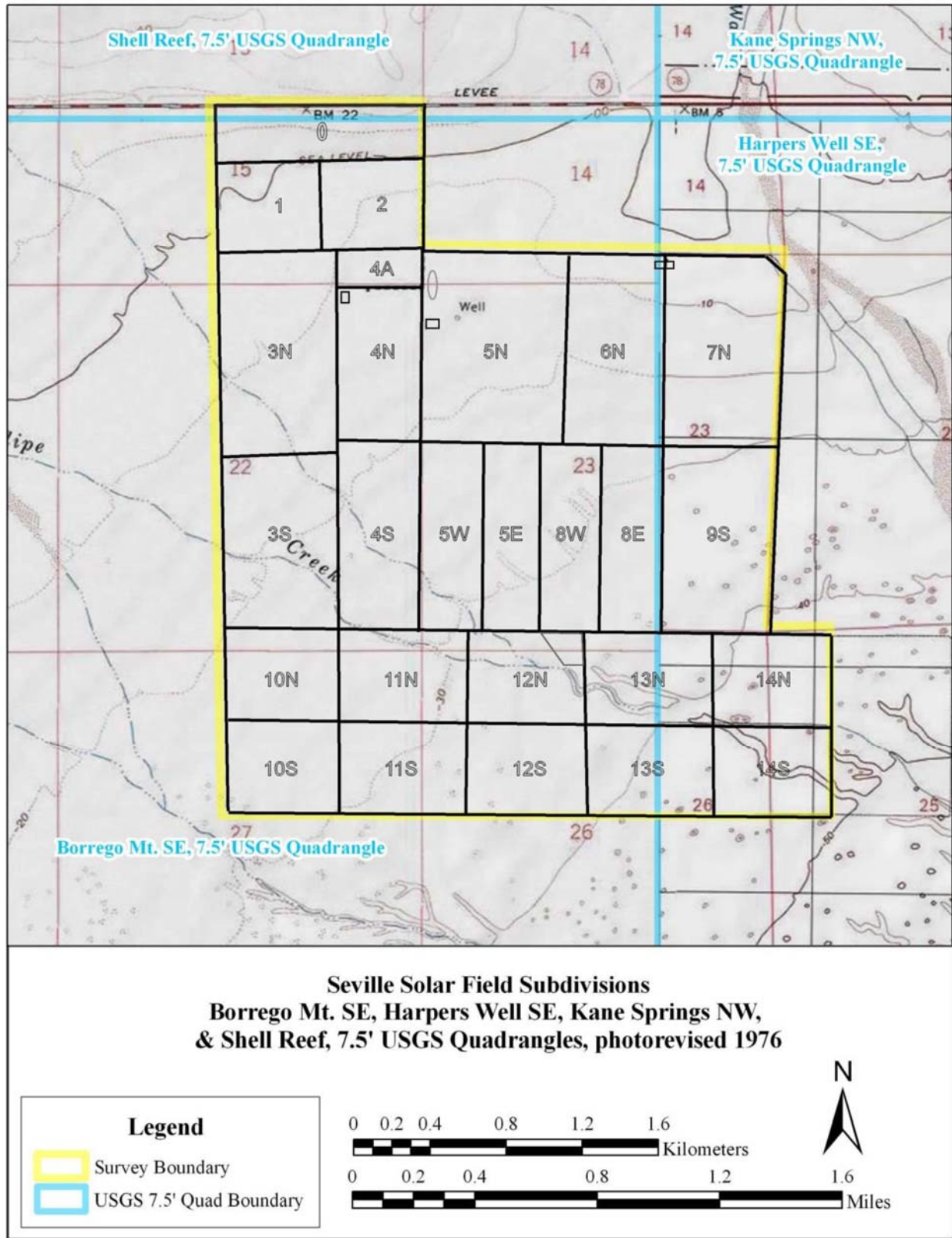
As shown in **Table 4.7-3**, the field surveys identified one prehistoric pot drop site, and 14 prehistoric isolates. The isolated finds, which have no potential to be eligible resources, were in areas where recent agricultural plowing occurred and therefore the potential for primary contextual information cannot be established. The pot drop site appears to maintain integrity as it is located in a section of the solar farm complex site that has not previously been distributed by plowing.

**TABLE 4.7-3
NEWLY RECORDED RESOURCES FROM FIELD SURVEY**

Numeric Identifier	Description	Resource Type	Age	Location
SDI-12151	Pot Drop (10 pieces) Buffware	Pot Drop	Not Available	Field 0
P-13-14431	Multidirectional Metavolcanic Core	Core	Prehistoric	Project boundary
P-13-14432	Denticulated Quartz Modified Cobble	Core Tool	Prehistoric	Project boundary
P-13-14433	Denticulate Metasedimentary Retouched Flake	Flake Tool	Prehistoric	Project boundary

ASM 2013.

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Source: ASM 2013.

FIGURE 4.7-2
SURVEY BOUNDARY

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**TABLE 4.7-3 (CONTINUED)
NEWLY RECORDED RESOURCES FROM FIELD SURVEY**

Numeric Identifier	Description	Resource Type	Age	Location
P-13-14441	Metavolcanic Interior	Flake	Prehistoric	Project boundary
P-13-14442	Metavolcanic Interior	Flake	Prehistoric	Project boundary
P-13-14443	Quartz Interior	Flake	Prehistoric	Project boundary
P-13-14444	Metavolcanic Interior	Flake	Prehistoric	Project boundary
P-13-14434	Water Worn Pot Shred	Pottery	Prehistoric	Project boundary
P-13-14435	Water Worn Pot Shred	Pottery	Prehistoric	Project boundary
P-13-14436	Quartzite Shatter	Flake	Prehistoric	Project boundary
P-13-14437	Sandstone Metate Fragment	Metate	Prehistoric	Project boundary
P-13-14438	Sandstone Metate Fragment	Metate	Prehistoric	Project boundary
P-13-14439	Quartzite Retouched Flake	Flake Tool	Prehistoric	Project boundary

ASM 2013.

Transmission Line Corridor

Records Search

As shown in **Figure 4.7-1**, the APE included the proposed transmission line extension to the area of the Anza Substation modifications. The results of the records search conducted in association with the APE encompassed the transmission line corridor and Anza Substation property (ASM 2014a). **Table 4.7-2** above summarizes the results of the records search for the APE.

Native American Consultation

As previously noted, although there are no Native American cultural resources sites currently recorded within the boundaries of the solar farm complex site, this does not exclude the possibility that Native American cultural resources may exist in the Project area. As such these unknown resources may be identified during future work. The NAHC recommended contacting the appropriate tribal authorities for further inquiries and consultation (Singleton 2013). Per the direction of the NAHC, the County of Imperial initiated Tribal Consultation in October 2013. No responses have been received as of the writing of this EIR.

Field Survey

An intensive Class III cultural resources investigation was conducted by ASM Affiliates on March 14, 2014. The investigation included a supplemental field survey of the 2.25-mile corridor alignment of the proposed 92 kV transmission line extending through BLM land south of SR 78 between the Anza Substation and the solar farm complex site. **Figure 4.7-3** depicts the transmission line survey area (shown in red). [Note: The transmission line ROW was previously surveyed for IID by ASM Affiliates in

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2000 as part of a line upgrade project. No cultural resources were recorded at that time along this portion of the ROW] (ASM 2014b).

The area was systematically surveyed in 10-meter (30-foot) intervals. Two prehistoric isolates and two historic isolates were identified during the survey. Isolates are defined as five or less artifacts in a 25 square meter area (ASM 2014b). Two of the isolates identified were prehistoric and consisted of a single brownware body pottery shred and an isolate consisting of two water-worn pottery body shreds. The other two isolates were historic and consisted of two United States Coast and Geodetic Survey benchmarks (E-579 and F-579) with date stamps of “1939”. A search of the respective National Geodetic Survey (NGS) survey marker data sheets (PID-DW0309, and PID DW310) likewise verifies an original installation in 1939. These markers were apparently installed as datum points for SR 78, possibly in association with later improvements to the road after its initial construction in 1920 and incorporation into the State Highway system in 1934 (ASM 2014b).

Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) 523 Forms were completed and submitted to the SCIC for assignment of formal numeric identifiers for each of the four isolates. Each isolate was evaluated as not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, and likewise not eligible for the California Register of Historic Resources (ASM 2014b).

IID Anza Substation

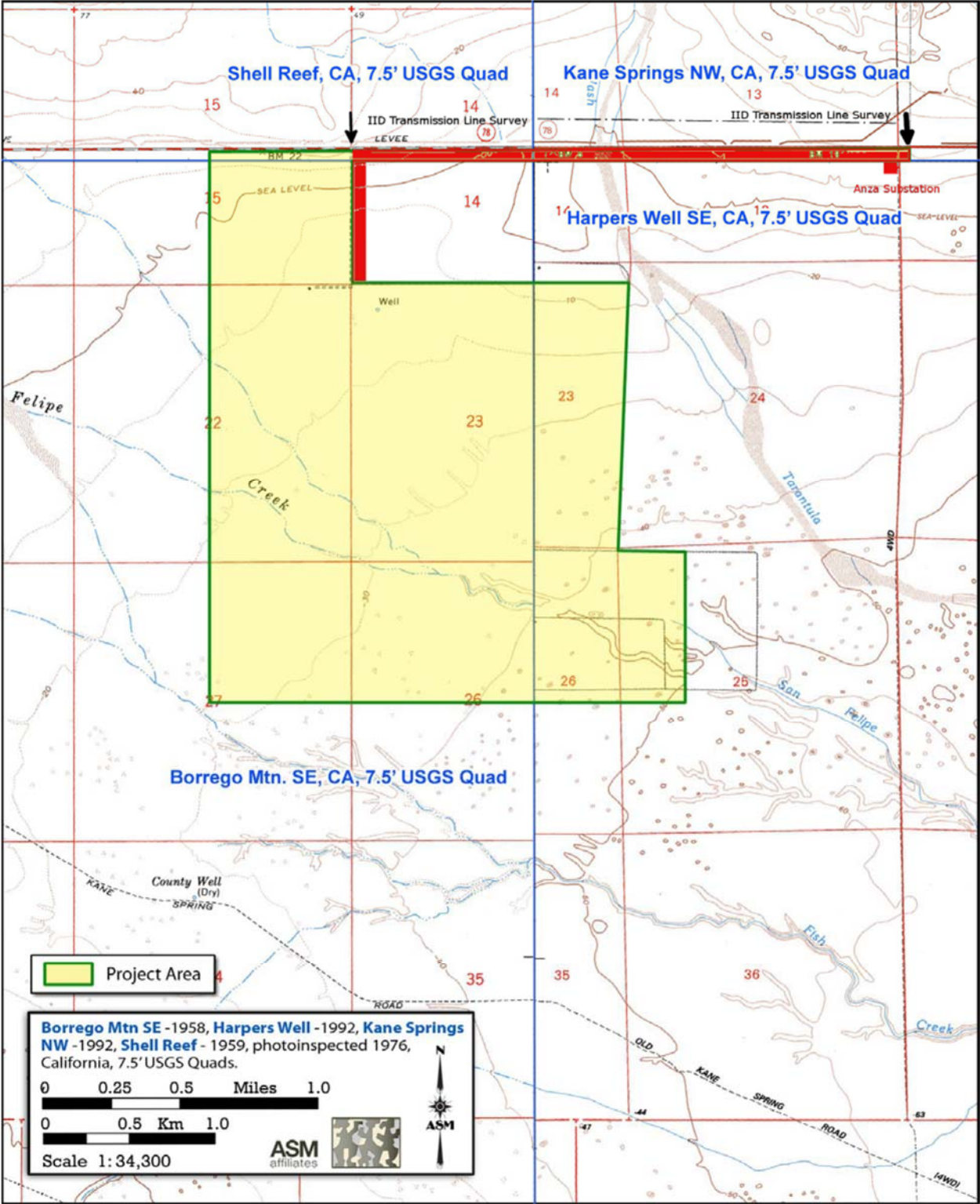
Records Search

As shown in **Figure 4.7-1**, the APE included the proposed transmission line that extends to the area of the proposed Anza Substation modifications. The results of the records search conducted in association with the APE also encompassed the Anza Substation property (ASM 2014a.) **Table 4.7-2** above summarizes the results of the records search for the APE, including the area encompassed by the Anza Substation modifications. The records search was negative in that no cultural resources were previously recorded on the IID property where the Anza Substation modifications were proposed (ASM 2014a).

Native American Consultation

As previously noted, although there are no Native American cultural resources sites currently recorded within the boundaries of the solar farm complex site, this does not exclude the possibility that Native American cultural resources may exist in the Project area. As such these unknown resources may be identified during future work. The NAHC recommended contacting the appropriate tribal authorities for further inquiries and consultation (Singleton 2013). Per the direction of the NAHC, the County of Imperial initiated Tribal Consultation in October 2013. No responses have been received as of the writing of this EIR.

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ASM 2014b.

**FIGURE 4.7-3
IID TRANSMISSION LINE SURVEY AREA**

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Field Survey

A supplemental intensive Class III cultural resources investigation of the IID Anza Substation property was conducted by ASM Affiliates, Inc. on March 14, 2014. **Figure 4.7-4** depicts the survey area associated with modifications to the IID Anza Substation. The green lines represent the GPS control transect lines.



ASM 2014a.

**FIGURE 4.7-4
IID ANZA SUBSTATION WITH GPS SURVEY CONTROL TRANSECT LINES**

The field survey included portions of IID property where the Anza Substation modifications are proposed as well as a 46-meter (150 foot) buffer around the fenced edges of the Anza Substation. The 150 foot buffer extended the survey area onto BLM land. The area was systematically surveyed in 10-meter (30-foot) intervals. A Native American Monitor from the Campo Indian Reservation was present during the survey (ASM 2014b). [Note: The BLM portion was surveyed under a BLM Fieldwork Authorization and the reports of the entire survey of the Anza Substation was under review by the BLM at the time this EIR prepared.] (ASM 2014b).

The field survey was negative in that no cultural resources were found on the IID property where the Anza Substation modifications are proposed nor within the BLM buffer area (ASM 2014a). As a result, ASM Principal Investigator Jerry Schaefer concluded that the potential for buried cultural resources on the IID property is negligible based on observed surface disturbance and the surficial character of sites that have been recorded in the general vicinity (ASM 2014a).

4.7.3 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

A. STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The impact analysis provided below is based on the following questions from the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. The Project would result in a significant impact to cultural resources if it would result in any of the following:

- a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5.
- b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5.
- c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature.
- d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.

Impacts to a Historical Resource, as defined by CEQA (listed in an official historic inventory or survey or eligible for the CRHR), are significant if the resource is demolished or destroyed or if the characteristics that made the resource eligible are materially impaired [CCR Title 14, Section 15064.5(b)]. CEQA Historical Resources include resources that are eligible for the NRHP or the CRHR [CCR Title 14, Section 15064.5(a)]. Such resources can be buildings, structures, and facilities from the historic period and prehistoric and historic archaeological sites. Demolition or alteration of eligible buildings, structures, and features to the extent that they would no longer be eligible would result in a significant impact. Whole or partial destruction of eligible archaeological sites would result in a significant impact. In addition to impacts from construction resulting in destruction or physical alteration of an eligible resource, impacts to the integrity of setting (sometimes termed “visual impacts”) of eligible buildings and above-ground structures and facilities in the Project area could also result in significant impacts.

D. METHODOLOGY

The identified cultural resources in the survey areas were evaluated to determine if they are eligible for the CRHR. If evaluated as eligible for the CRHR, the resources were found to be Historical Resources as defined by CEQA. Construction activities were analyzed to determine whether they would demolish or destroy the Historical Resource or if they would materially impair the characteristics that made the resource eligible for the CRHR. If the construction activities would demolish or destroy the Historical Resource, or if they would materially impair the characteristics that make it eligible, the impact is determined to be significant. If a cultural resource is not a Historical Resource as defined by CEQA, there is no potential for impacts.

C. ISSUES SCOPED OUT AS PART OF THE INITIAL STUDY

Criterion “a” was scoped out as a part of the Initial Study. The solar farm complex site has been disturbed by past farming activities but is essentially vacant. Several structures associated with farming such as outbuildings, an above-ground diesel fuel storage tank within a concrete block secondary containment structure, a covered material storage, a truck weigh scale and shed are in the north central portion of the solar farm complex site. Two residences are also located in the northeast corner of Lot 5. None of these structures were identified as historical resources as part of the “Baseline Cultural Resources Survey Report” prepared for the solar farm complex site. These areas are disturbed and have been previously cultivated. Therefore, no impacts to historical resources would occur.

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D. PROJECT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Prehistoric Isolates

Impact 4.7.1 A total of sixteen prehistoric isolates and two historic isolates were identified during field surveys of the Project area. None of the isolates are considered Historical Resources for the purposes of CEQA. Therefore, **no impact** to prehistoric isolates would occur.

Solar Farm Complex

Construction

The survey of the APE for the solar farm complex site identified fourteen prehistoric isolates including: two sandstone metate fragments; one core; one modified cobble; three retouched flakes; five pieces of debitage; and two wind and/or water worn pot sherds. The isolates found in the survey area were found in a state which suggests recent agricultural plowing. Therefore, the current state of the isolates cannot provide primary contextual information as potential archeological resources. Likewise, the potential for subsurface deposits below the plow zone in the survey area is very low (ASM 2013).

The isolates have no architectural or engineering characteristics and cannot be associated with historically important events or persons. Therefore, they are not eligible for the CRHR under Criteria 1, 2, and 3. In addition, the isolates (each of which consist of less than five artifacts) do not have sufficient information potential to be eligible under Criteria 4. The isolates exist in an area that has experienced disturbance from recent agricultural plowing, they do not hold any integrity and would not yield any additional information and therefore are not considered Historical Resources for the purposes of CEQA. Therefore, there would be **no impact** on Historical Resources at the locations of the isolates as a result of construction of the solar farm complex site.

Operation

As noted under the discussion of Construction for the solar farm complex, no impacts to the fourteen prehistoric isolates would occur based on their existing state and lack of contextual information. Similarly **no impact** would occur to the prehistoric resources during operation of the proposed solar farm complex.

Reclamation

Reclamation activities would involve dismantling and demolition of above-ground structures; concrete removal; removal and dismantling of underground utilities; excavation and removal of soil; and final site contour. Because the fourteen prehistoric isolates have no primary contextual information and are not considered eligible for the CRHR, **no impact** would occur to the isolates during reclamation of the solar farm complex site.

Transmission Line

Construction

The survey for the transmission line identified two prehistoric isolates and two historic isolates. The two prehistoric isolates consisted of a single brownware body pottery shred and an isolate consisting of two water-worn pottery body shreds. The two historic isolates consisted of two United States Coast and Geodetic Survey benchmarks (ASM 2014b). All of the isolates were evaluated as not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and likewise not eligible for the California Register of Historical

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Resources (ASM 2014b). Therefore, **no impact** on Historical Resources is anticipated in association with construction of the 92 kV transmission line.

Operation

As noted under the discussion of Construction for the transmission line, no impacts to two prehistoric isolates and two historic isolates would occur based on their existing state and lack of contextual information. Similarly **no impact** would occur to the prehistoric resources during operation of the 92 kV transmission line.

Reclamation

The IID-owned facilities (IID switchyard and 92 kV transmission line on the Property; 92 kV transmission line with underbuilt 12.5 kV distribution line; 12.5 kV distribution line system constructed on the Property; and the IID Anza Substation modifications) would not be decommissioned until IID determined that these improvements were no longer needed and could be retired and removed. The two prehistoric isolates and two historic isolates were evaluated as not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and likewise not eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources. As a result, no impact on historical resources is anticipated at the time reclamation of the transmission line occurs.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance After Mitigation

Not Applicable.

Impacts to Potential CRHR-Eligible Resource

Impact 4.7.2 Implementation of the proposed Project would result in possible disturbance of archaeological pot drop SDI-12151 located outside the solar farm complex site. The pot drop could potentially be eligible for the CRHR. Therefore, this impact is considered **potentially significant**.

Solar Farm Complex

Construction

The pot drop site, located in the area outside of the solar farm complex site, consists of ten buffware sherds. While the pot drop site is not within the boundary of solar farm complex site, it would be in close proximity to the solar farm complex site access road and activities associated with construction of the 92kV transmission line. The pot drop appears to retain some measure of spatial integrity as all the encountered fragments lie within close proximity and in the only section of the solar farm complex site not previously disturbed by plowing. While it is very likely that additional sherds exist below the surface, it is highly unlikely that the entire vessel is represented.

According to the *Cultural Resource Survey for the Seville Solar Farm Complex, Imperial County, California*, the pot drop is unlikely to be eligible for listing on the CRHR but may minimally contribute to the understanding of regional land use and travel through identification of the ceramic type and shape (ASM 2013, p. 44).

Disruption of SDI-12151 (primarily during construction and to a lesser degree during operation) could compromise the integrity and characteristics of this resource that could potentially make it eligible to yield information. Avoidance and preservation of all significant cultural and historical resources within

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the solar farm complex site, while strongly recommended, may not be feasible. Because changes to the pot drop site could occur as a result of Project construction, impacts to this CRHR-eligible resources are considered **potentially significant**.

Operation

As noted under the discussion of Construction, disruption of SDI-12151 during Project operation could compromise the integrity and characteristics of this resource that could potentially make it eligible to yield information. Because changes to the pot drop site could occur as a result of Project operation, impacts to this CRHR-eligible resource are considered **potentially significant**.

Reclamation

Reclamation of the solar farm complex would involve removal of all on-site facilities. No PV or CPV panels, O&M buildings, gen-tie lines, etc., would remain and the solar farm complex site would be reclaimed to its end state to approximate the existing idle farmland. However, the IID-owned facilities (IID switchyard and 92 kV transmission line on the Property; 92 kV transmission line with underbuilt 12.5 kV distribution line; 12.5 kV distribution line system constructed on the Property; and the IID Anza Substation modifications) would not be decommissioned until IID determined that these improvements were no longer needed and could be retired and removed. Likewise, the roads constructed on Lot B to access each of the parcels created under the major subdivision and all of the water wells would not be decommissioned or reclaimed. During reclamation, no additional impacts to the potential CRHR-eligible resource would be anticipated if it is possible to avoid SDI-12151. However, if it is not possible to avoid SDI-13151, impacts to this CRHR-eligible resource are considered **potentially significant** during reclamation.

Mitigation Measures

MM 4.7.2 If avoidance is not possible, SDI-12151 shall be assessed by a qualified professional archaeologist to evaluate significance for eligibility to the CRHR. The evaluation shall be conducted prior to commencing construction.

A qualified and experienced archaeological monitor will monitor the installation of temporary orange construction fencing around the boundaries of site SDI-12151. The on-site Construction Manager (defined as the individual with the authority to halt all construction-related activities) shall stake the line where the fence will be installed and provide a minimum of 48 hours advance notice to the archaeological monitor before fence installation occurs. The Construction Manager shall be responsible for maintaining the fencing throughout the duration of construction, including periodic maintenance or replacement. The Construction Manager shall not allow passage of non-authorized personnel to enter the boundaries of the fence. All potentially significant finds shall remain confidential.

The Archaeological Monitor shall oversee the effectiveness of the protective measures described in this measure at least twice per month during construction to ensure that unanticipated cultural resources are avoided. If an unanticipated cultural resource is discovered, the monitor will immediately notify the Construction Manager and give interim directions for protecting the site, which may include mandatory cessation of activity within 100 feet or more of the discovery. The Construction Manager will be responsible for promptly implementing those interim measures. The Archaeological Monitor shall oversee the removal of the temporary fencing after construction is

completed. The Construction Manager shall be required to provide a minimum of 48 hours advance notice to the archaeological monitor before fence removal occurs.

Timing/Implementation: Evaluation shall occur prior to commencing construction; Implemented during construction and operation of the solar farm complex.

Enforcement/Monitoring: Applicant, Qualified Archaeologist Archaeological Monitor and Imperial County Department of Planning and Development Services.

Significance After Mitigation

In the event that avoidance is not possible, implementation of mitigation measure MM 4.7.2 requires evaluation of the pot drop for eligibility in the CRHR in order to preserve the integrity of SDI-12151 and its potential to reveal understanding of development pattern of the area. If the integrity of SDI-12151 is found to be significant, MM 4.7.2 requires proper monitoring and protection of SDI-12151. Following implementation of mitigation measure MM 4.7.2, impacts to this potential CRHR resource would be **less than significant**.

Unrecorded Subsurface Cultural Resources

Impacts to Unrecorded Subsurface Archaeological Resources

Impact 4.7.3 Unrecorded subsurface archaeological resources in the Project area could be damaged during construction of the proposed Project. This is considered a **potentially significant impact**.

Solar Farm Complex and Transmission Line

Construction

Due to agricultural plowing which caused the loss of primary contextual information, the potential for subsurface archaeological resources within the boundaries of the solar farm complex site is very low. Nevertheless, there remains a possibility that unrecorded cultural resources are present beneath the ground surface of the Project area, and that such resources could be exposed during construction of the solar farm complex, 92 kV transmission line and Anza Substation modifications. Therefore, potential to encounter subsurface archaeological resources is considered a **potentially significant impact**.

Operation

During operation of the Project, no additional impacts to unrecorded subsurface archaeological resources would be anticipated because the soil disturbing activities would have already occurred and been mitigated during construction. Therefore, **no impact** to unrecorded subsurface archaeological resources would occur during Project operation.

Reclamation

Reclamation of the solar farm complex would involve removal of all on-site facilities. No PV or CPV panels, O&M buildings, gen-tie lines, etc., would remain and the solar farm complex site would be reclaimed to its end state to approximate the existing idle farmland. However, the IID-owned facilities (IID switchyard and 92 kV transmission line on the Property; 92 kV transmission line with underbuilt 12.5 kV distribution line; 12.5 kV distribution line system constructed on the Property; and the IID Anza Substation modifications) would not be decommissioned until IID determined that these improvements were no longer needed and could be retired and removed. Likewise, the roads constructed on Lot B to

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access each of the parcels created under the major subdivision and all of the water wells would not be decommissioned or reclaimed. Despite the amount of disturbance occurring during reclamation activities, the potential for additional impacts to unrecorded subsurface archaeological resources is unlikely because any impacts to subsurface archaeological resources would have already occurred and been mitigated during construction. Therefore, impacts to unrecorded subsurface archaeological resources during reclamation are considered **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measure

MM 4.7.3 If subsurface deposits are discovered during construction, all work shall halt within a 200-foot radius of the discovery. A qualified professional archaeologist shall be retained to evaluate the significance of the find. A Native American monitor, following the Guidelines for Monitors/Consultants of Native American Cultural, Religious, and Burial Sites established by the NAHC, may also be required. Work cannot continue at the discovery site until the archaeologist conducts sufficient research and data collection to make a determination that the resource is either 1) not cultural in origin; or 2) not potentially significant or eligible for listing on the NRHP or CRHR. If a potentially-eligible resource is encountered, then the archaeologist, lead agency, and project proponent shall arrange for either 1) total avoidance of the resource, if possible; or 2) test excavations to evaluate eligibility for the CRHR and, if eligible, data recovery as mitigation.

Timing/Implementation: During construction.

Enforcement/Monitoring: Qualified Archaeologist and Imperial County Department of Planning and Development Services.

Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of mitigation measure MM 4.7.3 requires construction activities to be halted in the event that potential subsurface resources are discovered during construction. No further construction would occur until after an assessment of the resource by a qualified professional archaeologist has been made. Following implementation of mitigation measure MM 4.7.3, impacts to unrecorded subsurface archaeological resources would be **less than significant**.

Impacts to Subsurface Human Remains

Impact 4.7.4 It is unknown whether there are human remains in the Project area that could be discovered during construction. Therefore, impacts to subsurface human remains are considered a **potentially significant impact**.

Solar Farm Complex and Transmission Line

Construction

The Cultural Resource Survey did not reveal any evidence that would suggest subsurface human remains (ASM 2013, p. 38). However, there is a possibility that unknown human remains could be present beneath the ground surface which could be exposed during construction. Therefore, potential to encounter subsurface human remains is considered a **potentially significant impact**.

Operation

During operation of the Project, no additional impacts to subsurface human remains would be anticipated because the soil disturbing activities would have already occurred and been mitigated during construction. Therefore, **no impact** to subsurface human remains would occur during Project operation.

Reclamation

Reclamation of the solar farm complex would involve removal of all on-site facilities. No PV or CPV panels, O&M buildings, gen-tie lines, etc., would remain and the solar farm complex site would be reclaimed to its end state to approximate the existing idle farmland. However, the IID-owned facilities (IID switchyard and 92 kV transmission line on the Property; 92 kV transmission line with underbuilt 12.5 kV distribution line; 12.5 kV distribution line system constructed on the Property; and the IID Anza Substation modifications) would not be decommissioned until IID determined that these improvements were no longer needed and could be retired and removed. Likewise, the roads constructed on Lot B to access each of the parcels created under the major subdivision and all of the water wells would not be decommissioned or reclaimed. Despite the amount of disturbance occurring during reclamation activities, the potential for additional impacts to subsurface human remains is unlikely because any impacts to subsurface human remains would have already occurred and been mitigated during construction. Therefore, impacts to subsurface human remains during reclamation are considered **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measure

MM 4.7.4 In the event that evidence of human remains is discovered, construction activities within 200 feet of the discovery shall be halted or diverted and the Imperial County Coroner shall be notified (Section 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code). If the Coroner determines that the remains are Native American, the Coroner will notify the NAHC which will designate a Most Likely Descendant (MLD) for the Project (Section 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code). The designated MLD then has 48 hours from the time access to the property is granted to make recommendations concerning treatment of the remains (AB 2641). If the landowner does not agree with the recommendations of the MLD, the NAHC can mediate (Section 5097.94 of the Public Resources Code). If no agreement is reached, the landowner must rebury the remains where they will not be further disturbed (Section 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code). This will also include either recording the site with the NAHC or the appropriate Information Center; using an open space or conservation zoning designation or easement; or recording a document with the county in which the property is located (AB 2641).

Timing/Implementation: During construction.

Enforcement/Monitoring: Applicant; NAHC; Imperial County Department of Planning and Development Services; and Imperial County Coroner.

Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of mitigation measure MM 4.7.4 requires construction activities to be halted or diverted in the event that human remains are discovered. The County Coroner and NAHC will be notified as appropriate. Following implementation of mitigation measure MM 4.7.4, impacts to subsurface human remains would be **less than significant**.

Paleontological Resources

Impacts to Unknown Fossil Remains

Impact 4.7.5 Unknown fossil remains, if discovered in the Project area, could be destroyed by excavation and other earth-moving activities occurring during construction. This is considered a **potentially significant impact**.

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Solar Farm Complex and Transmission Line

Construction

As previously identified, a paleontological field survey was not performed due to the highly disturbed nature of the solar farm complex from past agricultural activities. Although the potential for encountering paleontological resources (fossils) in the Project area is unknown, there is a possibility that fossil remains, such as bones teeth, shell, and wood found in geologic deposits (rock formations), are present beneath the ground surface, and that such remains could be exposed during construction of the solar farm complex, 92 kV transmission line and Anza Substation modifications.

In addition, the proposed Project includes the construction of new wells that would disturb the subsurface to depths ranging from 400 to 950 feet (Todd 2013). Therefore, Project-related drilling, excavation and other earth-moving activities have the potential to physically destroy unknown non-renewable scientifically important paleontological resources resulting in a **potentially significant impact**.

Operation

During operation of the Project, no additional impacts to unknown fossil remains would be anticipated because the soil disturbing activities would have already occurred and been mitigated during construction. Therefore, **no impact** to unknown fossil remains would occur during Project operation.

Reclamation

Reclamation of the solar farm complex would involve removal of all on-site facilities. No PV or CPV panels, O&M buildings, gen-tie lines, etc., would remain and the solar farm complex site would be reclaimed to its end state to approximate the existing idle farmland. However, the IID-owned facilities (IID switchyard and 92 kV transmission line on the Property; 92 kV transmission line with underbuilt 12.5 kV distribution line; 12.5 kV distribution line system constructed on the Property; and the IID Anza Substation modifications) would not be decommissioned until IID determined that these improvements were no longer needed and could be retired and removed. Likewise, the roads constructed on Lot B to access each of the parcels created under the major subdivision and all of the water wells would not be decommissioned or reclaimed. Despite the amount of disturbance occurring during reclamation activities, the potential for additional impacts to unknown fossil remains is unlikely because any impacts to unknown fossil remains would have already occurred and been mitigated during construction. Therefore, impacts to unknown fossil remains during reclamation are considered **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measure

MM 4.7.5 A qualified paleontological monitor shall be present during ground-breaking activities associated with Project construction. The depth of excavation that requires paleontological monitoring shall be determined by the paleontological monitor and the construction contractor based on initial observations during construction earth moving.

The paleontological monitor will be equipped to salvage fossils as they are unearthed (to help avoid construction delays) and to remove samples of sediments that are likely to contain the remains of small fossil invertebrates and vertebrates. Monitors are empowered to temporarily halt or divert equipment to allow removal of abundant or large specimens. Recovered specimens shall be prepared to a point of identification and permanent preservation, including washing of sediments to recover small invertebrates and vertebrates. Fossil specimens shall be curated by accessioning them into an established, accredited museum repository with permanent retrievable paleontological storage. A report of findings with an appended itemized inventory of specimens will be

prepared. The report and inventory, when submitted to the Imperial County Department of Planning and Development Services, along with confirmation of the curation of recovered specimens into an established, accredited museum repository, will signify completion of the program to mitigate impacts to paleontological resources.

In general, a paleontological monitor will not be required after possible fossil bearing sediments have been fully explored.

Timing/Implementation: During construction.

Enforcement/Monitoring: Imperial County Department of Planning and Development Services; Paleontological Monitor; and Construction Contractor.

Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of mitigation measure MM 4.7.5 requires that a qualified paleontological monitor be present when conducting construction ground-breaking activities. The monitor would be empowered to halt or divert construction away from fossil specimens and to access and report findings as appropriate. Implementation of MM 4.7.5 would reduce impacts to fossil remains to **less than significant**.

4.7.4 CUMULATIVE SETTING, IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

A. CUMULATIVE SETTING

The geographic scope of the cumulative setting for cultural resources includes surrounding desert-like land within a one mile radius of the solar farm complex per the scope applied during the SCIS records search. There are 153 cultural resources previously recorded located within one mile of the solar farm complex, all of which are outside the Project boundary. Many of these previously recorded cultural resource sites were recorded as a part of the California Department of Parks and Recreation surveys in the Ocotillo Wells Off-Road Recreational Area and are within the vicinity of the prehistoric/ethno historic period village of San Sebastian and/or have associations with Lake Cahuilla during the time it was receding. During the survey, only one cultural resource within the one mile scope, a single quartzite flake, was documented (ASM 2013, p. 13). Thus, there is a possibility that ongoing and future development projects in the vicinity of the defined one mile scope could disturb landscapes that may contain known or unknown cultural resources. It should be noted that none of the cumulative projects listed Table 3.0-1 in Chapter 3.0, Introduction to the Environmental Analysis and Assumptions are within one mile of the Project site. The closest project is the Ocotillo Wells Solar Project approximately 3.5 miles to the west.

A. CUMULATIVE IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Cumulative impacts to Archaeological and Historic Resources

Impact 4.7.6 Implementation of the proposed Project, in combination with large scale proposed, approved and reasonably foreseeable renewable energy projects in the region, has the potential to result in impacts to archaeological and historic resources. However, impacts are addressed on a project-by-project basis. Therefore, this is considered a **less than cumulatively considerable impact**.

Solar Farm Complex and Transmission Line

Construction

Cumulative development of the large scale proposed, approved and reasonably foreseeable renewable energy projects identified in Table 3.0-1 in Chapter 3.0, Introduction to the Environmental Analysis and

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Assumptions Used, would result in the loss and/or degradation of archaeological and historic resources. The potential disturbance of human remains would also increase. These cumulative effects of development on cultural resources would be addressed on a project-by-project basis. As discussed under Impact 4.7.2, the pot drop site is potentially eligible for listing in the CRHR. This potential impact would be mitigated through implementation of mitigation measure MM 4.7.2.

In addition, the potential exists for previously unrecorded subsurface archaeological resources and human remains to be located within the boundaries of the Project site and the cumulative projects listed in Table 3.0-1. Project-specific mitigation measures would also reduce potential project impacts to unrecorded subsurface archaeological resources (MM 4.7.3) and human remains (MM 4.7.4) during construction of the proposed Project. Future projects with potentially significant impacts to archaeological and historical resources would be required to comply with federal, state, and local regulations and ordinances protecting cultural resources through implementation of similar project-specific mitigation measures during construction. Therefore, through compliance with regulatory requirements, standard conditions of approval, and mitigation measures MM 4.7.2, MM 4.7.3 and MM 4.7.4, the proposed Project would have a less than cumulatively considerable contribution to impacts to archaeological and historical resources. Likewise, because individual projects must also comply with applicable regulatory requirements and site-specific mitigation on a project-by-project basis, cumulative impacts to cultural and historical resources are considered **less than cumulatively considerable**.

Operation

During Project operation, no additional cumulative impacts to archeological or historical resources or human remains would be anticipated because the soil disturbance would have already occurred and been mitigated during construction. Thus, the proposed Project would result in **less than cumulatively considerable impacts** to archaeological and historic resources during operation.

Reclamation

Reclamation of the solar farm complex would involve removal of all on-site facilities. No PV or CPV panels, O&M buildings, gen-tie lines, etc., would remain and the solar farm complex site would be reclaimed to its end state to approximate the existing idle farmland. However, the IID-owned facilities (IID switchyard and 92 kV transmission line on the Property; 92 kV transmission line with underbuilt 12.5 kV distribution line; 12.5 kV distribution line system constructed on the Property; and the IID Anza Substation modifications) would not be decommissioned until IID determined that these improvements were no longer needed and could be retired and removed. Likewise, the roads constructed on Lot B to access each of the parcels created under the major subdivision and all of the water wells would not be decommissioned or reclaimed. Despite the amount of disturbance occurring during reclamation activities, additional cumulative impacts to archeological or historical resources or human remains are anticipated to be low. This is because potential impacts to these resources resulting from soil disturbance that occurred during construction would have been mitigated. Thus, the proposed Project would result in **less than cumulatively considerable impacts** to archaeological and historic resources during reclamation.

Mitigation Measures

Implement mitigation measures MM 4.7.2, MM 4.7.3 and MM 4.7.4.

Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of project-specific mitigation measures MM 4.7.2, MM 4.7.3 and MM 4.7.4 would address potential impacts to archaeological and historic resources through the expertise of a qualified

archaeological monitor; halting construction and analyzing the find; and proper handling of human remains if discovered. Therefore, following implementation of these mitigation measures, cumulative impacts associated with archaeological and historic resources would be **less than cumulatively considerable**.

Cumulative Impacts to Paleontological Resources

Impact 4.7.7 Implementation of the proposed Project in combination with large scale proposed, approved and reasonably foreseeable renewable energy projects in region, has the potential to result in impacts to fossil remains and fossil bearing geological formations. However, such impacts are addressed on a project-by-project basis. Therefore, this is considered a **less than cumulatively considerable impact**.

Solar Farm Complex and Transmission Line

Construction

Cumulative development in the Imperial Valley portion of the Salton Trough physiographic province of Southern California has the potential to destroy or otherwise impact paleontological resources. Excavation activities associated with the proposed Project in conjunction with other large scale proposed, approved and reasonably foreseeable renewable energy projects in the region could contribute to the progressive loss of fossil remains. While the potential for paleontological resources beneath the Project area is unknown, this does not negate the presence of such resources. If present, paleontological resources beneath the Project area, as well as within the boundaries of the cumulative projects listed in Table 3.0-1, could be impacted during construction. A cumulative impact would occur if the proposed Project, in combination with other cumulative projects, would damage or destroy paleontological resources. However, with the implementation of mitigation measure MM 4.7.5, the proposed Project would have a less than cumulatively considerable contribution to impacts to paleontological resources. Likewise, other projects in the cumulative setting would be required to comply with existing regulations and undergo CEQA review to assure that any paleontological impacts are appropriately evaluated and, if necessary, mitigated on a project-by-project basis. Therefore, through compliance with regulatory requirements and standard conditions of approval, cumulative impacts to paleontological resources are considered **less than cumulatively considerable**.

During operations, maintenance and decommissioning of the Project, no additional cumulative impacts to paleontological resources would be anticipated because the soil disturbance would have already occurred and been mitigated during construction.

Operation

During Project operation, no additional cumulative impacts to paleontological resources would be anticipated because the soil disturbance would have already occurred and been mitigated during construction. Thus, the proposed Project would result in **less than cumulatively considerable impacts** to paleontological resources during operation.

Reclamation

Reclamation of the solar farm complex would involve removal of all on-site facilities. No PV or CPV panels, O&M buildings, gen-tie lines, etc., would remain and the solar farm complex site would be reclaimed to its end state to approximate the existing idle farmland. However, the IID-owned facilities (IID switchyard and 92 kV transmission line on the Property; 92 kV transmission line with underbuilt 12.5 kV distribution line; 12.5 kV distribution line system constructed on the Property; and the IID Anza Substation modifications) would not be decommissioned until IID determined that these improvements

4.7 CULTURAL RESOURCES

were no longer needed and could be retired and removed. Likewise, the roads constructed on Lot B to access each of the parcels created under the major subdivision and all of the water wells would not be decommissioned or reclaimed.

During reclamation, on-site soils would be ripped to the depth necessary to remove all miscellaneous buried solar project equipment. However, despite the amount of disturbance occurring during reclamation activities, additional cumulative impacts to paleontological resources are anticipated to be low. This is because potential impacts to these resources resulting from soil disturbance, excavation and well installation that occurred during construction would have been mitigated. Thus, the proposed Project would result in **less than cumulatively considerable impacts** to paleontological resources during reclamation.

Mitigation Measures

Implement mitigation measure MM 4.7.5.

Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of mitigation measure MM 4.7.5 would require a qualified paleontological monitor to be present during Project ground-breaking activities. If potential resources are identified, the paleontological monitor would temporarily halt or divert equipment to allow removal of abundant or large specimens. Mitigation measure MM 4.7.5 would reduce project-related impacts to paleontological impacts as well as cumulative impacts to paleontological resources. Therefore, Project impacts to paleontological resources would be **less than cumulatively considerable**.