EMERGENCY STORAGE PROJECT
PUBLIC INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM

Prepared for:
San Diego County Water Authority
4677 Overland Avenue
San Diego, California 92123

Prepared by:
EDAW, Inc.
1420 Kettner Boulevard, Suite 500
San Diego, California 92101
(619) 233-1454

Authors:
Carrie Gregory, MA, RPA
and
Rebecca McCorkle Apple, MA, RPA

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INTRODUCTION

The San Diego County Water Authority (Water Authority) retained EDAW, Inc. (EDAW) to provide environmental services in support of the development of the Emergency Storage Project (ESP), a multiyear undertaking. The Water Authority developed the ESP because more than 90 percent of San Diego County’s water supply is delivered through facilities that are vulnerable to damage from seismic activity. To ensure a safe and adequate water supply for the region, the ESP will include construction of approximately 91,100 acre-feet of reservoir storage and appurtenant facilities to supplement existing emergency water supplies. The project includes construction of a new dam and reservoir near the Olivenhain site; raising of the existing dam at San Vicente Reservoir; reoperation of Lake Hodges; and construction of new pipelines, pump stations, and other appurtenant facilities.

EDAW conducted the cultural resources work in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The Water Authority is the lead agency for the ESP under CEQA. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is the federal agency responsible for Section 106 compliance. In 1998, the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation (Advisory Council) executed a Programmatic Agreement (PA) for the ESP. In addition to the Advisory Council, signatories on the PA included the USACE and the California State Historic Preservation Officer. Representatives from the Water Authority, the Kumeyaay Cultural Repatriation Committee, and the San Pasqual Band of Indians signed as concurring parties. The PA guides cultural resources investigations for the project, describing the requirements for Section 106 compliance under the NHPA, including the need for evaluation and treatment of cultural resources within the Area of Potential Effects.

Under the PA for the ESP, it is required that:

…as part of the Treatment Plan, SDCWA [Water Authority]…shall prepare and implement a plan to interpret the prehistory, history, and historic properties of the Project Area. The plan would identify an appropriate location(s) for public interpretation and describe interpretive and displays for the general public (Stipulation III.K 1998).

The goal of the ESP Public Interpretive Program (Interpretive Program) is to educate the public about the cultural resources within the project area. EDAW prepared a Historic Properties Treatment Plan for the ESP in 2001 recommending the Water Authority develop a two-component Interpretive Program, including one or more long-term interpretive exhibits in or near the project area and preparation of nontechnical information for distribution to the general public (Cleland and Apple 2001:57).

An analysis of opportunities for public interpretation and the results of cultural resources investigations for the ESP identified four interpretive themes:
1. Native American settlement of San Vicente Valley and surrounding region
2. Settlement of the town of Foster and transportation through San Vicente Canyon
3. Sneed homestead in San Vicente Valley
4. Engineering of San Vicente Dam

Through discussions with the Water Authority, the location for long-term interpretive exhibits has been identified at the new recreation area planned for the expanded San Vicente Reservoir Marina. The nontechnical information will be made available to the general public as part of the Water Authority’s ongoing public outreach program. This information will be included on the Water Authority’s web site.

This Interpretive Program provides a discussion of the goals and themes of interpretation, the variety of presentation formats, and the approach.
INTERPRETATION

GOALS

The goals of the Interpretive Program are to interpret the prehistory, history, and historic properties within the project area and to share those stories with the public. The National Park Service (NPS) urges that interpretation is the communication of the “essential meaning of the site and of the people and events associated with it” (Thomson and Harper 2000:12). The NPS bases the interpretation of their resources on three tenets:

1. Historic resources possess meanings and have significance.
2. Visitors are seeking something of value for themselves.
3. Interpretation, then, facilitates a connection between the interests of the visitor and the meanings of the resource (Thomson and Harper 2000:12).

These principles will guide the ESP Interpretive Program. The Historic Properties Treatment Plan developed by EDAW recommends a two-part interpretive program (Cleland and Apple 2001:57). The first component is the installation of one or more long-term interpretive exhibits in or near the project area. In addition to conveying information about the prehistory, history, and historic properties within the project area, the exhibits will focus attention on the public’s role in local cultural resources conservation. The second component is nontechnical information for distribution to the public.

The Water Authority in consultation with EDAW and others has identified a location for long-term interpretive exhibits: the new recreation area planned for the expanded San Vicente Reservoir Marina. The new marina will support an outdoor sign exhibit.

EDAW has conducted cultural resources investigations for several components of the ESP and has gathered both written and graphic data to support the efforts of the Interpretive Program. Layouts for the Interpretive Panels are provided in Appendix A.

The Interpretive Program will also draw on the NPS’s National Register Bulletin, *Telling the Stories: Planning Effective Interpretive Programs for Properties Listed in the National Register of Historic Places* (Thomson and Harper 2000). The purpose of the bulletin is to aid individuals and organizations in developing effective programs to convey the meaning of historic places to the public. It begins with a general discussion of interpretation. The bulletin discusses how to plan interpretive programs, such as how to identify the stories to be told, focus the themes to be interpreted, and define the audiences to be reached. It then provides different ways to tell the stories, including the people presented and self-service programs. Throughout the bulletin are case studies that show how the topic is applied in an interpretive program. In addition, the bulletin provides an extensive list of reference materials and organizations that provide training and support for interpretive programs.
THEMES

Native American Settlement of San Vicente Creek Valley

When the Spanish colonists began to settle California, southern San Diego County was within the territory of Native American cultural groups collectively known as the Kumeyaay (or Diegueño because of their association with the San Diego Mission). At the time of Spanish contact, at least six ethnographic villages were located within 20 miles of the ESP, each of which was politically independent. There are no known ethnohistoric villages within the ESP project area, but the valley flooded by San Vicente Reservoir contained the archaeological remains of Native American settlements, which may have functioned as an autonomous sociopolitical unit. Alternatively, this area may have been used as a temporary settlement area for resource procurement.

Data recovery of archaeological sites in San Vicente Creek Valley provided evidence of a Late Prehistoric/Ethnohistoric period occupation as well as a possible Archaic period occupation. The results of EDAW’s investigations provide information on the ecological and social reasons for Kumeyaay settlement in San Vicente Creek Valley. Archaeological features included a rock shelter, bedrock milling stations, and stone features believed to be fertility symbols, showing the area was used for both subsistence and spiritual practices (Plate 1).

This theme could be interpreted through one or more of the following subthemes:

- The broad history of Native American occupation of San Diego County
- Kumeyaay lifeways and values using stories told by local Kumeyaay; and photos of artifacts, features, or places reflecting the stories

Plate 1. Rock shelter

- Kumeyaay subsistence (ethno-botany) using photos of artifacts, replicative materials, and photos of associated plants and descriptions of Kumeyaay use
- Kumeyaay land-use patterns (missionization/pressure to move inland) using stories told by local Kumeyaay, photos of artifacts, replicative materials, and maps
This theme will be based on interpretive information presented in EDAW’s data recovery report (Willey and Dolan 2004). This theme will be further developed in consultation with Native American representatives of the Kumeyaay Cultural Repatriation Committee (KCRC).

**Settlement of the Community of Foster and Transportation through San Vicente Creek Valley**

The historic town of Foster (archaeological site CA-SDI-13,629H) had its roots first as a homestead, then as a stage stop, and finally as a railroad town that supported outlying towns like Ramona and Julian. Foster was occupied from 1880 until the land was sold to the City of San Diego for the San Vicente Dam site in the late 1930s. Foster’s Stage Station was a welcome stop on the stage line from San Diego to Julian (Plate 2). It also became a popular stop along the few automobile roads through the area, including Mussey Grade, the Atchison Toll Road, and the San Diego-Julian Toll Road. The San Diego, Cuyamaca & Eastern Railway (later to become the San Diego & South Eastern Railway) extended to Foster from San Diego in 1889 (Plates 3 and 4).

Although never large, Foster grew into a hamlet that supported agriculture and industry, with the railroad providing support for both of these endeavors. At the turn of the century, Foster was a community of railroad workers, granite quarrymen, farmers, ranchers, and beekeepers. The railroad continued to be important to Foster’s economy until a major flood in 1916 washed out the tracks between Lakeside and Foster (Plate 5). Without tracks to Foster, the area granite quarries closed. The floods washed away crops and killed herds. With the exception of the economic impact, the town site of Foster was unharmed during the flood. The most serious impact of the flood was felt a short time later, when the rail line between Lakeside and Foster was abandoned. As a result, Lakeside became the new terminus of the railway.
Two of the farms near Foster are noteworthy for their ethnic diversity, although there is little information on them in the archival or graphic record. One of the farms was owned and operated by George Sneed, an African American. Born in Texas, Sneed was a long-time resident of Foster. A widower with no children, he homesteaded in Foster, operating a farm, ranch, and bee yard during his stay. Another farm, as on record in 1910, was rented and run by five Issei men. “Issei” refers to the generation of Japanese immigrants who left Japan for America starting in the late 1800s. Japanese immigrants played an important role in the development and refinement of agricultural practices San Diego County, but the Japanese farmers at Foster may have moved to another location after the 1916 flood.

Data recovery and archival research of the Foster town site (archaeological site CA-SDI-13,629H) provides a glimpse of a short-lived railroad terminus, a rarity in San Diego County, and into the daily lives of the town’s residents.

This theme will be interpreted through the written and graphic history of Foster already gathered by EDAW for the 2004 data recovery report (Willey and Dolan 2004). The story of the railroad town will be told through a historic narrative and historic photos. Subthemes include:

- Establishment and settlement of Foster
  - Early rural lifestyles
  - Industries
    - Railroad
    - Agriculture (farming, ranching, bee keeping)
    - Mining (granite quarrying)
- Population / demographics
  - Age, gender, occupation, immigration, ethnicity
  - Potential case studies
    - Sneed – African American
    - Issei – Japanese immigrants
- Social history
- Transportation
  - San Diego, Cuyamaca, and Eastern Railroad (SDC&E)
  - Proposed railroad connection of San Diego County to the eastern markets
  - Mussey Grade / Atchison Toll Road / San Diego-Julian Toll Road

**Sneed Homestead in San Vicente Creek Valley**

George Sneed was an African-American homesteader in San Vicente Creek Valley (Plate 6). According to the city directories, Sneed was a resident of Foster from 1895 to 1921. According to census records, Sneed was the only black in the larger community of Foster from 1910 to 1930. The archival record does not reveal how Sneed came to San Diego, but it could well have been by railroad. Railroads played an important role in bringing African-Americans to the west, by providing opportunities to black railroad porters and waiters and transportation to all.

Born in Texas in October 1849, George Sneed was widowed with no children. His parents were born in Arkansas. Although it is not clear from the documentary record why Sneed chose to homestead in rural San Diego, he may have been encouraged by the fact that rural dwellers were doing well at the time he arrived. Many African-Americans were engaged in mining during that time, whereas Sneed was one of the few to have focused entirely on ranching and farming. There are several possible reasons why farming was not attractive to blacks, including white opposition to black migration, inability to finance the first few years, failure of the federal government to subsidize black farming, and the association of agricultural labor with former slave labor. Sneed seems to have overcome whatever obstacles he may have encountered and was able to own his homestead free and clear after five years.

By the time Sneed “proved up” on his homestead, he was one of only a handful of blacks still living in a rural situation in San Diego. With most blacks moving to the city in the early 1900s, it
is interesting that Sneed chose to go his own way and continue his life in the country. As a widowed man with no children, he had few constraints and would have had fewer reasons to move to the city. He could instead remain on the land that he owned free and clear. He added an apiary that helped to diversify his output and make a better living. Whatever the case, it seems that Sneed chose to spend the last part of his life in the agricultural community above Foster.

Data recovery and archival research of Sneed’s homestead (archaeological site CA-SDI-13,554H) provides a unique story of a 19th-century African-American homesteader in East San Diego County. Sneed occupied the homestead between 1895 and the 1930s. Although he appeared to have lived on his land for far longer than most of the other homesteaders around him, he left little evidence of his presence. The cobble chimney is the most striking evidence that a structure once stood on the site (Plate 7). This theme could be interpreted through the written and graphic history of Sneed’s homestead already gathered by EDAW for the 2004 data recovery report (Willey and Dolan 2004). Through a historic narrative, historic documents (i.e., city directory pages), and historic maps, Sneed’s story could be told. Subthemes include:

- African-Americans in San Diego County
- Early rural lifestyles in San Diego County
  - Agriculture (farming, ranching, bee keeping)

**Engineering of San Vicente Dam**

San Vicente Dam was constructed from 1941 to 1943 and has played an important role in the San Diego water system for the last 60 years (Plate 8). San Diego’s history has long been interlaced with that of water resources. From early settlement, water supply has been a constant concern. Because most of San Diego’s rain falls primarily in winter onto nearly impermeable clay soils, flooding has also been an ever-present threat. Tropical storms can also reach the region during the spring and summer months. Significant floods in 1916 and 1937 played a pivotal role in the decision to build several dams throughout the county. Many of these dams created reservoirs that were used to control the county water supply. From 1917 to 1943, seven dams including San Vicente Dam were constructed in San Diego County.
The history of San Vicente Dam began more than a decade before its construction. After much debate about local water rights in San Diego County, the Supreme Court ruled in 1930 that the City of San Diego had prior and paramount rights to the water of the San Diego River through the rights of the pueblo of San Diego. This ruling left the City of San Diego free to continue to look for ways to capitalize on local water sources to supply the county’s burgeoning population. By the late 1930s, City officials began stressing the need for a new reservoir to supplement the Sutherland and El Capitan reservoirs. The proposed San Vicente Dam would be connected by pipes to the El Capitan and Sutherland reservoirs and would store runoff from both the San Vicente watershed and these reservoirs. This would allow for increased capacity during unusually rainy periods. Soon after construction, San Vicente Dam also fulfilled its duty as a reservoir for Colorado River water. San Vicente Dam was one of the last structures to complete the system of reservoirs, aqueducts, and dams that brought and/or held water for San Diego County (Plate 9).

Since the 1880s, more than 55 dams have been constructed in San Diego County. San Vicente Dam was the last of the gravity dams to be built and is one of only five in the county. More than half of the California gravity dams were built in either the 1920s–1930s or the 1950s–1960s. Only nine were built in the 1940s, and San Vicente Dam was the only one built in that decade in southern California. Despite being the only gravity dam in that decade, San Vicente was one of 70 dams built in the United States between 1932 and 1942.

Although it was not the first dam in San Diego County, it supports a system of dams and reservoirs and plays a crucial role in storing both local runoff and water brought to San Diego from the Colorado River. The period during which the dam was constructed represented the end of a significant era of dam building that attempted to meet San Diego’s water needs through local sources and to control the threat of disastrous flooding.

This theme could be interpreted through the written and graphic history of San Vicente Dam already gathered by EDAW for the 2004 Historic American Engineering Record (Dolan and Apple 2004). Through a historic narrative, historic photos, and contemporary photos, the story of the engineering of San Vicente Dam will be told.
PRESENTATION FORMATS

The Interpretive Program recommended for the ESP is a self-service system of communication composed of an outdoor exhibit and web-based information. This system is appropriate for the ESP, as interpretation is provided to the public on an as-wanted/as-needed basis. Like in-person interpretations, such as talks and tours, self-service interpretations depend on good research, which will ensure that interpretation is both accurate and inclusive (Thomson and Harper 2000:35).

EXHIBITS

An outdoor exhibit at the new recreation area planned for the expanded San Vicente Reservoir Marina will provide an opportunity to interpret the ESP to lake visitors. This exhibit will consist of four separate panels, each focusing on the identified themes: Native American settlement of San Vicente Valley; settlement of the town of Foster and transportation through San Vicente Canyon; Sneed homestead in San Vicente Valley; and the Engineering of San Vicente Dam. Figure 1 provides an example of an outdoor panel interpreting the town of Foster. The outdoor exhibit will include the public’s role in local cultural resources conservation, which begins with an appreciation of the region’s history.

An outdoor exhibit is beneficial to the Interpretive Program because it will be available any time the marina is open and visitors will be able to read at their convenience. Permanent signage at the marina will provide a sense of place to visitors, whether they live locally or out of town. The exhibit will combine maps with interpretive text and photographs to communicate directly with the public. Photographs and color will draw attention to the exhibit, as effective signs should not depend on visitors seeking them out.

Outdoor signs will help visitors understand the history and pre-history of the San Vicente Reservoir area. The NPS explains that outdoor signs are like photos in a book, with captions that only address a portion of the story. They recommend that text must be short, as “outdoor signs
are very site specific and usually express a single thought” (Thomson and Harper 2000:42). Some experts recommend limiting signs to 50 words.

The outdoor exhibit at the marina will be made of a durable material, such as porcelain enamel metal, fiberglass, or vinyl. Layout and design could be provided by EDAW or another design firm. Historic maps and aerial photographs are available from the County of San Diego’s Department of Planning and Land Use. EDAW’s data recovery report (Willey and Dolan 2004) provides interpretive text and some photographs. Additional graphic materials are available at the Water Authority, the San Diego Historical Society Archives, and the San Diego Railroad Museum Archives.

PUBLICATIONS

Leaflet-type publications and web sites are a popular interpretive choice. They are typically inexpensive and easy to revise. They can provide general orientation as well as specific information. The NPS recommends creatively written and visually appealing communications that evoke vivid images and stir the emotions. They warn of written materials that are too broad. “Published materials often lack focus. They try to do too much. They become over-burdened with too many tasks, for too many audiences. …Publications intended to meet everyone’s needs meet no one’s. Successful publications must address specific goals and be directed at defined audiences” (Thomson and Harper 2000:35).

The Water Authority’s website routinely provides environmental and other information pertaining to water resources, water conservation, and its Capital Improvement Program. The San Vicente Dam Raise Project is the final phase of the ESP. It is anticipated that the Interpretive Program will be included in the section of the website dedicated to the San Vicente Dam Raise Project. The information from the interpretive panels prepared for outdoor display at the San Vicente Marina will be available online at www.sdcwa.org.
**APPROACH**

The planning and implementation of the Interpretive Program will be a collaborative effort. It will provide for an integration of ideas and resources. The team will include the Water Authority ESP Environmental Project Manager and Public Affairs Department, the City of San Diego, interested Native Americans, and representatives from the Lakeside Historical Society. Native American input is crucial with respect to exhibits discussing Native American lifeways. San Vicente Reservoir is owned and operated by the City of San Diego, so their input is key to ensuring that outdoor exhibits will be maintained in the long term. The Lakeside Historical Society will be consulted as they have a keen interest in the accuracy of the historic panels. In addition, the KCRC will be consulted regarding the exhibit that discusses Native American lifeways.

The design team will be included in the creation of the format and materials used to implement the Interpretive Program to make the presentation an integral part of the overall design. Meetings and detailed review of the proposed wording and graphic representations are planned and will facilitate the collaborative approach to the ESP Interpretive Program.
REFERENCES

Cleland, James, and Rebecca McCorkle Apple

Dolan, Christy C. V., and Rebecca Allen

Thomson, Ron, and Marilyn Harper

Willey, Lorraine M., and Christy Dolan
San Vicente Dam plays a crucial role in storing both local runoff and water brought to San Diego from the Colorado River and Northern California. The original dam, built by the city of San Diego, was completed in 1943, and in 1947 became the terminus of the first San Diego Aqueduct.
The town of Foster grew from a 1870s homestead near this site to a stage stop and then a thriving railroad town. At its height this transportation center included a hotel, school, post office, railroad depot, and homes for 120 residents. The 1916 flood wiped out the railroad, isolating the town and contributing to its eventual abandonment. Today the only evidence of Foster is archaeological.
A cobblestone chimney is all that remains of an early 20th century cabin owned by George Sneed, an African-American homesteader. Sneed farmed and ranched in San Vicente Valley until 1936. A 2004 archaeological study done before San Vicente Reservoir was expanded found farm-related artifacts and domestic items at his now-submerged cabin site.
For thousands of years and continuing to the present, the region that includes San Vicente Valley has been the homeland of the Kumeyaay Nation. Oral history and archaeological materials found here, including bedrock food grinding areas, rock shelters, tools, and ceramics, reflect Kumeyaay lifeways and are protected by tribal, state and federal laws. Sacred sites remain important to the Kumeyaay today.

A. Stone Arrowheads
B. Fish Hooks
C. Basket
D. Bedrock Grinding Area
E. Ceramic Vessel