



Santa Susana Field Laboratory

Archaeological Resources Survey

This is a description of the survey conducted to identify and evaluate archaeological resources in the portions of the Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL) that are administered by NASA.

Engines tested by NASA at the Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL) were the engines used in rockets that landed modern man on the surface of the moon - the same moon ancient cultures had looked upon for thousands of years. Just as modern man left footprints on the moon's surface, ancient cultures left behind cave paintings, tools and other proof of their presence long ago in the Simi Hills of Southern California. NASA recognizes the importance of the historic resources and culture of the people who called the rocky terrain "home" in a place known today as the SSFL.

NASA's Archaeological Survey

A site-wide Cultural Resources Inventory of federally-owned Areas I and II was completed in April 2008. The goals of this survey were twofold: to determine whether there were any previously unrecorded cultural resources on the lands administered by NASA, and to better understand the nature and extent of the previously recorded Burro Flats Painted Cave site (see page 3). This effort assists NASA in complying with Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), which directs Federal agencies to identify historic properties, including archaeological resources. Having this comprehensive inventory enables NASA to better manage these resources.

Archival Search and Field Investigation

A CHRIS (California Historical Resources Information System) search was conducted by archaeological professionals as part of NASA's survey. This involved reviewing all previously recorded archaeological sites on federally-owned land in Areas I and II, and the cultural resources reports already on file. Next, a thorough field investigation was performed. Archaeologists conducted a systematic survey on federally-owned land in Areas I and II from June 2007 to February 2008. This was conducted as an intensive pedestrian survey, with archaeological staff walking at distances of 30 meters apart along long sampling tracts. Entry was prevented into some areas because rocky terrain was too steep to access or there were high concentrations of poison oak. In these, and in the areas of developed land, a visual inspection was performed. Archaeologists were able to evaluate approximately 80 percent of the acreage in NASA's Area I and 40 percent of Area II.



This photograph shows a flat rock surface into which a round hole called a bedrock milling feature has been formed.

for your information

Survey Results

The Cultural Resources Inventory recommended two archaeological sites as eligible for listing in the National Registry of Historic Places and the California Registry of Historic Places. The first site, Burro Flats Painted Cave, was already listed. NASA's survey examined all recorded studies of the Burro Flats Painted Cave and incorporated the 25 identified features into one report. The site boundary was re-drawn to encompass the locations of all features of the site and the artifacts. The total area of the site on federal property is approximately 10 acres.

A second site was reported as eligible for listing. The California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) did not concur with eligibility because of the lack of artifacts that would substantiate the site. SHPO requested that NASA treat the site as eligible for listing in the California Registry and re-evaluate the site later should there be a proposed project with a potential to cause disturbance. Survey results consistent with the SHPO comments were finalized and sent to the California State University at Fullerton for archival purposes.

Having completed the archaeological resources survey, NASA now has an inventory of the historic and prehistoric resources located on federal lands in Areas I and II. (A separate information sheet describing NASA's Historic Resources Survey is available.) This inventory provides NASA with the location and details necessary to develop ways to protect and manage these treasured resources. ■

For further information, please contact

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