

adequate cover. They may also be found in areas where sandy substrates occur in creosote bush scrub and desert saltbush, or desert sink scrub that supports herbaceous growth.

### 3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cultural resources include archaeological sites and historic structures and features that are protected under the NHPA. Cultural resources also include traditional cultural properties that are important to a community's practices and beliefs and that are necessary to maintain a community's cultural identity. Cultural resources that meet the eligibility criteria for listing on the *National Register of Historic Places* (NRHP) are considered "significant" resources and must be taken into consideration during the planning of Federal projects. Federal agencies also are required to consider the effects of their actions on sites, areas, and other resources (e.g., plants) that are of religious significance to Native Americans, as established under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (P.L. 95-341). Native American graves and burial grounds, including human remains, sacred and funerary objects, and objects of cultural patrimony, are protected by the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (P.L. 101-601).

#### 3.5.1 Background

Human settlement in the Colorado Desert region extends back roughly 10,000 years. While a considerable amount of information has been collected for the Baja Peninsula Region, more archaeological research has taken place on coastal areas rather than inland areas because of the higher density of development on the coast. Evidence of past activities in the projects area is primarily associated with Lake Cahuilla, which was formed by the periodic overflowing of the Colorado River into the Salton Basin (Figure 3.1-1). The lake would form every 100 to 150 years (Redlands Institute 2002). Most archaeological sites in the region are associated with this lake.

##### 3.5.1.1 Prehistoric Period

The oldest evidence for people in the Baja Peninsula Region is associated with the San Dieguito Complex (10,000 B.C.–5,000 B.C.). People from this culture appear to have lived primarily along the coast, although some sites have been found inland. Artifacts attributed to this culture include large stone tools that are only worked on one side (unifacial worked stone), stones where flakes were removed in a single direction (unidirectional flake cores), and massive bifacial tools. Tools were made from numerous types of stone. People from this culture appear to have relied on hunting for their main food supply, stopping in any location for short periods of time only (Berryman and Cheever 2001a).

The Pinto Complex (5,000 B.C.–1,500 B.C.) represents a transition to a more refined way of life. This time period is characterized by an expansion into locations away from the coast and a growing reliance on vegetation for food; however, hunting still supplied a major portion of the diet. Artifacts associated with the Pinto Complex include well-made projectile points, knives and scrapers, and grinding stones. The projectile points are large and likely were used on spears

rather than arrows. Sites from this time period are found near the margins of old watercourses and dry lakesides.

The period associated with the advent of bow and arrow technology is the Amargosa/Elko Period (1,500 B.C.–900 A.D.). The development of this new technology is identified by the smaller projectile points that appear during this time period. The sites are mainly found on the coast and on the Baja Peninsula Region; some sites from this period, however, have been found inland.

During the late prehistoric to early historic period, the populations had expanded considerably. The groups living in what was to become southern California include the Cahuilla, Tipia, Mohave, Halchidhoma, Quechan, and Copcopa. The projects area was inhabited by the Cahuilla and Tipai. These groups had extensive trade networks and relied on horticulture. They utilized Lake Cahuilla when it was present (i.e., when the Colorado River changed its course). The Kumeyaay, part of the Tipai group, lived in the projects area at the time of Spanish contact. These groups lived along permanent waterways until they were forced out by European settlement (O’Leary and Levinson 1991).

### **3.5.1.2 Historic Period**

The first Europeans to explore southern California were the Spanish in the mid-1500s. Extensive exploration did not take place until the establishment of missions on the coast beginning in 1769 (Redlands Institute 2002). The Colorado Desert was an obstacle to avoid during these years of European exploration. The first Spaniard to cross the desert was Juan Bautista de Anza, who crossed a portion of the Colorado Desert in the mid-1770s. European settlement in the California area greatly expanded when gold was discovered in 1849 on the American River near Sutter’s Mill. California achieved statehood in the following year. Statehood and gold helped encourage the establishment of railroads into California. The first rail lines into the Salton Basin were laid in 1875. The railroads extended to Yuma in 1877. The introduction of irrigation into the Colorado Desert in 1900 spurred settlement of the region. The towns of Imperial, Silsbery, Calexico, Hester, Holtville, and Brawley all were established by 1904, largely because of the introduction of irrigation to the region. Throughout the 20th century, the Salton Basin has provided rich farmland. Agriculture remains the primary economic activity for the area in the 21st century.

### **3.5.2 Known Cultural Resources**

Five archaeological surveys have been conducted in the project area. The first two were conducted by Cultural Systems Research, Inc., in 1981 and 1982 (Schaefer 1981; Cultural Systems Research, Inc. 1982) and included a part of the existing transmission line ROW. Greenwood and Associates (Greenwood 1983) surveyed areas impacted by construction of the existing line ROW in 1983. WESTEC Services, Inc., also surveyed a portion of the existing ROW area in 1984 (WESTEC Services, Inc. 1984). The fifth survey was conducted by RECON Environmental, Inc., San Diego, California, in 2001, specifically for the proposed projects.

RECON examined an approximately 2,150-ft-wide (655-m-wide) corridor that included the 120-ft (37-m) easement for the existing IV-La Rosita line and 1,000 ft (305 m) on either side of this line. BLM has designated the projects area an ACEC, partially because of the high density of cultural resources found in the region (BLM 1999).

The surveys identified 26 prehistoric sites and 1 historic site. Nine of these sites had been identified prior to the 2001 survey. The majority of these sites are associated with the late prehistoric period. The projects area is located on a portion of the shoreline of Lake Cahuilla. This is the primary reason for the large concentration of sites in such a relatively small area. Most of the sites represent locations where prehistoric peoples were camping along the edge of the lake. Of the 26 prehistoric sites, 23 are recommended as eligible for the NRHP (Berryman and Cheever 2001b). Sites found in the projects area include residential bases, field camps, lithic scatters, ceramic scatters, lithic and ceramic scatters, isolate ceramics, and isolate lithics. A single historic scatter dating to the 1930s was also identified in the projects area but was not eligible for NRHP listing.

### **3.6 LAND USE**

The proposed transmission line routes are located in Imperial County, California (Figure 3.6-1). The land needed for these projects is owned by the Federal government and managed by BLM. The two 120-ft (37-m) wide and 6-mi (10-km) long ROWs would be located within BLM's Utility Corridor N in the Yuha Basin portion of the Colorado Desert. The proposed transmission lines would run from the U.S.-Mexico border to the IV Substation.

#### **3.6.1 Imperial County**

Imperial County encompasses 4,597 mi<sup>2</sup> (11,906 km<sup>2</sup>). It is bordered on the west by San Diego County, on the north by Riverside County, on the east by Arizona, and on the south by Mexico. Roughly 50% of the county is undeveloped. The primary economic activity in the county is agriculture, with nearly 3 million acres (1 million ha) under irrigation. Water for irrigation is drawn from the Colorado River. The Salton Sea, a 381-mi<sup>2</sup> (987-km<sup>2</sup>) lake, is located in the northern portion of the county. The New and Alamo Rivers are found in the southern part of the county as well as the All American Canal.

#### **3.6.2 Federal Land**

In 1976, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, Section 601, established the CDCA in southeast California. Roughly 12 million acres (5 million ha) of the 25 million-acre (10 million-ha) CDCA are public lands managed by BLM. Management practices for this area are defined in the CDCA Final Environmental Impact Statement and Plan issued in 1980 and amended in 1999 (BLM 1999). The current projects area is located on a portion of the public land discussed in this plan.