
BANNING RANCH

Project Overview

Pat Maxon is Cultural Resources Manager for the ongoing Cultural Resources services for the Newport Banning Ranch Project which would have initially allow for the development of hundreds of residential dwelling units; thousands of square feet (sf) of commercial uses; a resort inn; and public parks on the 401-acre site. A large portion of the site was proposed for permanent open space including restored habitat, public trails, and consolidated oil production facilities. Cultural resources studies conducted included archaeological, historical, and paleontological investigations to support the project's EIR. Initial investigations consisted of (1) a Phase I reconnaissance of the Project site to confirm that the existing conditions of the site were the same as found during the previous survey in 2008; (2) Phase II test-level excavation of eight prehistoric and three historic archaeological sites present on the site to characterize the sites and determine eligibility for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources; (3) an assessment and evaluation of the built-environment resources associated with the West Newport Oil Company development on site; and (4) a paleontological assessment of the project site's potential for the presence of sensitive rock formations and fossil resources. Three archaeological sites were deemed significant as a result of the study, and the project site's paleontological significance was deemed "high". However, no historical resources associated with oil extraction operations were identified. Mr. Maxon oversaw the completion of fieldwork, the preparation of archaeological, historical and paleontological technical reports, and subsequently prepared the cultural resources section of the EIR for the project.

LOCATION:	Newport Beach, California
PROPONENT:	Brooks Street
CONTACT:	Michael A. Mohler 949-439-6630
START DATE:	June 2009
END DATE:	In-Progress

This initial work was followed by extensive Native American and California Coastal Commission (CCC) consultations; preparation of an Archaeological Research Plan; and excavation and monitoring of shovel and backhoe test pits to test the boundaries of five known archaeological sites on the property that would be impacted by the planned development. After the CCC denied the residential project in late 2016, we were retained by Armstrong Petroleum to assist with the cultural resources investigations necessary to facilitate the planned consolidation of the oil production facilities on site. This included the development of an Archaeological Mitigation and Monitoring Plan to guide monitoring during ground disturbing activities at the site and an Archaeological Avoidance Plan to facilitate the avoidance of one known archaeological site that lies near the planned development. These plans were approved by the California Coastal Commission and are in place when project activities commence. Future work will include data recovery excavations and/or site protection/preservation of significant cultural and paleontological resources impacted by the proposed project. Archaeological/Paleontological monitoring will be undertaken during grading of the project site.
