

DRAFT Burro Flats Cultural District **DRAFT**

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NOMINATION CONTAINS RESTRICTED INFORMATION**

Archaeological and traditional property locations are considered confidential and public access to such information is restricted by law (Section 304 of the National Historic Preservation Act; Section 9(a) of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act; Executive Order 13007; Section 6254.10 of the California State Government Code). The following summary of the description and significance of the above-named resource is available for public access.

Burro Flats Cultural District is a Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) aligned with the boundaries of the Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL), 2,850 acres of open, rocky terrain above the Simi Valley in the Santa Susana Mountain Range. Elevations measure up to 2,175 feet above mean sea level and the landscape consists of a diverse terrain of ridges, canyons, and sandstone rock outcrops. Natural caves and rockshelters are scattered throughout the area, and Bell Creek crosses the district. The district is situated within a relatively undeveloped, continuous corridor of the Simi Hills, in a border area of southeastern Ventura County, California, twenty-nine miles northwest of Los Angeles. Ethnographically, several Native American groups, generally identified by language group, inhabited the area. In alphabetical order, they include Chumash, Fernandeano, Kizh/Gabrieleño, and Tataviam. The TCP is associated with Native American individuals or groups whose ancestors resided in Ventura County or Los Angeles County; who indicated an interest to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in the nomination of the area as a TCP; who participated in interviews for this nomination; or who have visited the area in the modern era, often for religious purposes. Interviews with these consultants in 2013, 2016, and 2018 determined the boundary and contributing resources of the TCP.

Contributing resources comprise one object and one hundred eighteen sites including the National Register-listed Burro Flats Site (CA-VEN-1072), a rock art and habitation site that includes areas for celebrating the winter solstice and the summer solstice, and a mourning area. Fifty-eight noncontributing resources include SSFL buildings, sites, and structures that do not add to the historic associations for which this the property is significant because they are not related to the documented traditional cultural significance of the property. While the November 2018 Woolsey Canyon Fire burned across much of the district, periodic burning and the new growth that follows are part of the natural environment. According to the community, despite the wildfires, construction, and use of the SSFL for research and testing by various federal agencies and a private company since the mid-twentieth century, the district retains all aspects of historic integrity.

Burro Flats Cultural District is a Traditional Cultural Property eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the areas of Ethnic Heritage: Native American and Religion for its association with ceremonial solstice events. The previously listed Burro Flats Site (CA-VEN-1072) within the district is the only one of its kind in the region, where both winter and summer solstice observations were made and are still made. The TCP is eligible in the area of Archaeology: Prehistoric for the association of archaeological sites and natural features described in stories important to the history of the local Native American community. The district is also eligible in the area of Art for its remarkable examples of prehistoric Native American rock art that possess high artistic value and are important representatives of the aesthetic and possibly religious values of the Native American groups who created them. Based on oral tradition, the period of significance dates from creation of the world to the present. Archaeological study dates the artifact types excavated from CA-VEN-1072 to approximately 5000 BCE. The district satisfies Criteria Consideration A: Religious Properties as a clearly defined property whose importance has been ethnohistorically documented.