

# SUTTER'S FORT STATE HISTORIC PARK DRAFT GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT

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Amended  
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## 2024 AMENDMENT SUMMARY

Sutter's Fort State Historic Park was established primarily to preserve and interpret the significant historic resources related to John Sutter and the development and operation of the Fort. In February of 1990, the California State Park and Recreation Commission approved the General Plan and Environmental Impact Report prepared for this unit. The General Plan document effectively guided the park's management, development, and interpretation for 33 years. Interpretation at Sutter's Fort SHP focused on a period between 1839-1850 and featured themes such as "New Helvetia – The Dream" and "New Helvetia - The Reality." These themes provided an overview of Sutter's life, the rise, fall, and reconstruction of the fort as a Pioneer Memorial. However, interpretive direction at the Fort provided a narrow perspective of California's early history which left out the voices of Native American tribes whose way of life were fundamentally changed by the Fort and subsequent westward expansion.

In 2020, the Department of Parks and Recreation committed to reassessing historic narratives through the Reexamining Our Past Initiative. State Parks Capital District, in consultation with local tribal partners, developed the 2022 Interpretation Master Plan (IMP) for Sutter's Fort State Historic Park with the goal of guiding the creation of interpretive experiences that provide inclusive, and accurate explorations of history. The IMP represents a new chapter for Sutter's Fort by including indigenous experiences, history of Sutter's Fort, analysis of its lasting impacts, and its role in California's complicated and sometimes dark history. Due to the nature of a State Historic Park, the interpretation element is a key component of programs and activities at the Fort. The interpretation of history is so embedded in the 1990 General Plan's goals and objectives that an amendment to the General Plan was necessary to incorporate the new interpretive direction, per Public Resource Code 5002.2.

The purpose of this Amendment to the General Plan is to update the themes, goals, and strategies for interpretation at Sutter's Fort. To support implementation of the IMP, this Amendment removes restrictions on interpretive approaches in the 1990 General Plan and allows for greater flexibility to pursue visitor experiences that encompass a broader historical perspective of the Fort. Several areas within the General Plan have been updated to reflect a shift in interpretive focus and historic inclusivity and are highlighted below:

### General Amendments

Throughout the 1990 General Plan, there are references and statements made that are no longer consistent with the interpretive direction of the IMP or are no longer relevant to interpretation and operation at the Fort. References to living history and living history programs are discussed in multiple areas of the document. While State Parks do not explicitly ban the use of living history concepts in the IMP or this General Plan amendment, it is no longer the preferred interpretive tool at Sutter's Fort State Historic Park. The IMP calls for a more nuanced approach to convey an inclusive, complex, and accurate history.

Generic terminology for identification of Native American peoples, were used throughout the 1990 General Plan. Instances where these terms were used have been amended with the specific name of the tribe(s) or an approved respectful identifier such as "California Native American tribes" and "California Native American".

References to policies, recommendations or actions which preserve the concept of the Pioneer Memorial or Pioneer Museum as a goal or purpose for Sutter’s Fort have been removed to be consistent with the current interpretive approach. However, the Pioneer Memorial/Museum is still discussed and referenced as a part of the Fort’s history which will continue to be a subject for interpretation.

The 1990 General Plan designated spaces as house museum, adaptive use, or mixed use. This amendment removes the house museum restrictions throughout the document and identifies spaces as exhibit space, adaptive use, and mixed use. To allow for maximum flexibility, spaces which have been traditionally used for house museum space are identified in this amendment as exhibit/exhibit space(s)/ exhibit room(s) and may be used in manner that allows for an expanded set of interpretive options and tools such as modern or contemporary displays specifically related to Sutter’s Fort and its history.

### **Cultural Resources – Ethnography**

Consistent with the Department’s Reexamining Our Past Initiative, this plan is amended to include tribal land recognition and remove inconsistencies with more current and accurate information contained in the IMP.

### **Declaration of Purpose**

The Declaration of Purpose in the 1990 General Plan was limited to discussion of Euro-American settlement and preserving the Pioneer Memorial origins. This amendment updates the Declaration of Purpose to the approved purpose identified in the 2022 IMP.

### **Natural Resources Policies**

The 1990 General Plan identifies policies which govern natural resources, how they are to be understood, managed, and protected. Policy recommendations which recognize the historic and cultural value of the McLaren Plan and are consistent with the interpretive direction of the IMP have been included in this amendment.

### **Euro-American Resources Policies**

The 1990 General Plan identifies policies which govern cultural resources, how they are to be understood, managed, and protected. This General Plan amendment updates the Euro-American Resources policies which identify the interpretive periods and updates them to the periods identified in the IMP. Interpretation at the Fort will no longer be restricted to just 1840s pioneer focused history. Interpretive periods are amended to allow for interpretation of California Native American history, the creation and operation of Sutter’s Fort, the impacts of American immigration to California and the role the Fort had in colonial history, and the reconstruction of the fort as a Pioneer Memorial.

### **Recreational Resources**

The 1990 General Plan discusses the use of living history concepts such as first-person interpretation, reenactments, historic trade demonstrations, period clothing, and “pioneer” material culture as a recreational resource at Sutter’s Fort SHP. Consistent with the interpretive direction identified in the IMP, this amendment does not discontinue the use of living history in the park but calls for a more nuanced approach to convey an inclusive, complex, and accurate history of Sutter’s Fort SHP. Currently, Sutter’s Fort’s

living history concepts have been paused. This Amendment recommends that any living history program developed going forward must align with the interpretive objectives of the IMP.

With consideration for the complicated history of Sutter's Fort, the IMP and this General Plan Amendment recognizes that unique attention must be given towards hosting special events. Activities and events at the Fort will be evaluated to determine their consistency with the amended interpretive mission. Using the Park's interpretive principles highlighted in the IMP as a framework, Sutter's Fort SHP and Capital District staff will collaborate with community partners and interested parties to decide on the appropriateness of proposed special events.

### **Guidelines for Future Development Using the Existing State Indian Museum**

The 1990 General Plan discusses how the State Indian Museum will be repurposed and used as a visitor center once the State Indian Museum is moved to its new site, the future California Indian Heritage Center. Recommendations to treat the State Indian Museum as a visitor center for a Sutter's Fort 1840s immersive experience is no longer a primary focus for that space. Previous policies and recommendations that prescribed these uses for the building have been removed from the document. This amendment includes no policies or recommendations for how the museum will be used in the future.

### **Interpretive Element**

The most impactful and substantive updates are contained in the Interpretive Element of the General Plan Amendment. The amendment expands interpretation at the park from the limited scope of interpretive tools and resources identified in the 1990 plan to a broader understanding of the history before, during, and after the Fort's operational period. In alignment with the current IMP, State Parks will have greater flexibility to utilize existing interior rooms and exterior spaces with the aid of an extensive range of interpretive tools such as modern exhibits and displays that are not bound to any one interpretive period or method.

Sections of the Interpretive Element have been updated to align with the direction of the 2022 IMP. The following updates have been made to the Interpretive Element:

- The 1990 General Plan identifies "house museums" as a primary form of static interpretation at the Fort. This amendment updates the term "house museum" to "exhibit/ exhibit space/ exhibit room" and allows for greater flexibility in how rooms are used. The amended plan proposes no structural alterations or additions to the existing footprint of the Fort. Preservation efforts will continue to consider and evaluate the integrity of physical structures.
- The 1990 General Plan limits room utilization to the "Time of Sutter" period. This amendment allows State Parks greater flexibility in how rooms are used for interpretation of multiple periods. Interpretive periods have been updated to align with the Primary and Secondary interpretive periods discussed in the 2022 IMP.
- Interpretive Themes have been amended to the themes of the 2022 IMP which includes a Unifying Theme, Primary Themes, and Secondary Themes. These themes encompass a broader range of history surrounding the Fort and expands interpretation and education to areas such as Native American experiences, the Fort's contribution to American immigration to California, and Pioneer mythmaking and history.
- References to an electronic wand system and its service agreement were removed. The wand system is no longer in use and the service agreement described in the 1990 General Plan is not active. This amendment discusses the potential for inclusive interpretive technologies in the future.

- References to the Sacramento State Parks Docent Association have been removed. The role of the Park's cooperating association, Friends of Sutter's Fort, has been described, including providing interpretive support, managing the Fort's store, and hosting fundraising activities. The role of the Volunteer in Parks Program (VIPPP) is also described.
- The 1990 General Plan discusses displaying livestock at the park and recommends replacement with historically accurate breeds. There are presently no domesticated animals at the Fort; this amendment removes the previous plan's recommendation.
- This amendment adds a recommendation for the development of a Scope of Collections statement to the Museum Collections subsection. Prior to this amendment, the 1990 General Plan did not include or recommend a Scope of Collections statement.
- This amendment removes the 1990 Interpretive Recommendations and amends them with the 11 interpretive goals, each containing objectives and strategies, identified, and discussed in greater detail in the 2022 IMP. A summary is included in this amendment.

#### **Operations Element - Special Events/Programs**

The Special Events/Programs subsection within the Operations Element has been amended to include additional information and direction that is consistent with the IMP.

#### **Operations Element - Interpretation**

The recommendations in this section of the 1990 General Plan focused on the use of demonstrations and living history concepts as the primary method for interpreting Sutter's Fort history. This section has been amended to reiterate that the use of demonstrations and living history are no longer the primary method of interpretation however State Parks will use any interpretive tool at their disposal in a context sensitive manner that aligns with the interpretive direction.



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# 1990 GENERAL PLAN\_INTRODUCTION

## Purpose of Plan

The purpose of the General Plan is to provide guidelines for development, interpretation, and management, in accordance with this unit's approved classification.

The plan is in response to the mandate of the Public Resources Code, which requires that a general plan must be submitted to the State Park and Recreation Commission for its approval before any major work takes place. In addition, the report includes an Environmental Impact Element, conforming to requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act.

The objectives of the plan are:

- To identify the cultural, natural, and recreational resources of the historic unit.
- To establish policies for management, protection, research, and interpretation of these resources.
- To determine visitor activities and uses of the structure that are compatible with the purpose of the park, the available resources, and the surrounding area.
- To determine the potential environmental impact of visitor activities, use of the structures and grounds, and related development.
- To establish guidelines for the recommended sequence and scope of restoration and development.
- To provide an informational document for the public, the legislature, department personnel, and other government agencies.

## Public Involvement

The planning team identified parties and individuals with an interest in this plan and encouraged their participation in the decision-making process. Participation was enthusiastic and very helpful. An active mailing list of more than 100 names and addresses was developed.

The planning team held workshops at three critical stages of the plan's evolution. Planning assumptions and public resources codes were explained to public participants. Workshop recommendations and discussions were used as a guide by the planning team. Newsletters reported the ideas and issues that resulted from the workshops and requested continued public participation.

# RESOURCE ELEMENT

## Purpose

This Resource Element was prepared to meet requirements set forth in Section 5002.2, Subsection (b) of Division 5, Chapter I of the Public Resources Code, and Chapter 1, Section 4332 of Title 14 of the California Administrative Code. In compliance with this section of the Public Resources Code, the Resource Element sets forth long-range management objectives for the natural and cultural resources of the unit. Specific actions or limitations required to achieve these objectives are also set forth in this element; maintenance operations and details of resource management are left for inclusion in specific resource management programs that will be prepared at a later date.

This element also identifies specific resource sensitivities and physical constraints and establishes the department's guidelines for acceptable levels of development and use with respect to these concerns.

The Resource Element has two main parts. The first is a brief summary of the unit's resources. More detailed information on these resources is on file with the Department of Parks and Recreation. The second part deals with policy formulation, which begins with unit classification and declaration of purpose, and concludes with specific management policies.

## Unit Description

Sutter's Fort sits on sixteen town lots on two blocks in downtown Sacramento. The lots are bounded on the west by 26th Street, on the north by "K" Street, on the east by 28th Street, and on the south by L Street.

During the restoration period of the late 1880s and early 1890s, the southwest corner of the fort foundations was noted in the proposed alignment of "L" Street. Officials of the City of Sacramento rerouted "L" Street, and traded enough land to the State of California to the southwest corner of the fort might be reconstructed. The entire site, except for the fort interior, was graded during the restoration, and the grounds, now used as a small city-like part, are in lawn, shrubbery, and mature trees.

Sutter's Fort is only one- and one-half blocks west of Business Interstate 80. From Business 80 eastbound, take the "N" Street offramp, turn left under the freeway, then right on 28th Street to the fort. From Business 80 westbound, take the J Street offramp, and continue parallel to the freeway for one block to K Street, turn right on K Street, and the fort is one block west on the left.

Sacramento, California's state capital, is approximately two hours driving from the San Francisco Bay area, and approximately nine hours from the Los Angeles area.

## Resource Summary

### Natural Resources

#### **Topography**

The project area has undergone dramatic topographic modification since the time of initial settlement. Material was excavated to fabricate adobe brick. The slough which meandered through the northern portion of the property was removed. During the construction planning for the California Pioneer Memorial, in 1890, a site grading plan was developed by civil engineer C. E. Grunsky (Map T-1). The grading of the entire site except for the interior of the fort was completed in 1891. A pond was envisioned by Grunsky to represent the slough which abutted the north wall of the fort during the Sutter period of occupation. The original elevations of the site ranged from 11 feet above mean sea level (msl) at the bottom of the slough to 29 feet above msl in the current fort complex. The elevations following grading ranged from 13 feet above MSL in the bottom of the pond to 29 feet above msl in the fort complex.

The project area is approximately 6.2 acres in size, and roughly rectangular in shape.

#### **Meteorology**

Sacramento enjoys a mild climate, and an abundance of sunshine year-round. Nearly cloudless skies prevail during the summer months. Sacramento experiences an average of 194 clear days per year (531). Summers are also remarkably dry, with warm days and pleasant nights. Because of the shielding influence of the high mountains, winter storms reach the valley in modified form. Excessive rainfall and damaging windstorms are rare in Sacramento.

Prevailing winds in Sacramento are southerly all year. This is due to the north-south direction of the valley and the deflecting effects of the towering Sierra Nevada on the prevailing oceanic winds which move through the Carquinez Straits near the junction of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers. Occasionally, a strong northerly barometric pressure gradient develops, and air is forced southward over the Siskiyou Mountains, reaching the valley floor as a warm, dry north wind. These north winds, or modifications of them, produce heat waves in the summer. Fortunately, they occur infrequently, and are followed within two or three days by the normally cool southerly breezes, especially at night.

Summer nights in the Sacramento Valley are, with few exceptions, cool and invigorating. This is primarily the result of the prevailing oceanic influence.

Precipitation averages 16.3 inches per year, 90 percent of it occurring between November and April 30 of each year. Thunderstorms are few in number, averaging five days per year. Snowfall is rare and falls in such small amounts that its occurrence can be disregarded as a climatic feature. Dense fog occurs mostly in midwinter, seldom in the spring or autumn, and never in the summer. Light and moderate fog is more frequent, and may come anytime during the wet, cold season. Fog is usually of the radiational cooling type, and type and confined to the early morning hours. Under stagnant atmospheric conditions, winter fog can become very persistent, and may continue for several days. Heavy fog averages 35 days per year.

#### **Hydrology**

The project area is located on a high floodplain of the American and Sacramento Rivers. At the time of establishment of the settlement in the mid-1800s, a natural slough existed adjacent to the fort on the north side. During spring flooding, the American River overflowed its banks into the low-lying plains, and flowed along a path (including McKinley Park, Sutter's Fort, the Tower Theatre, and William Land Park) to the Sacramento River.

While the low areas of the current site were periodically inundated, the hummock on which the fort was sited was high enough to avoid most floods.

The slough had one deep area on the north side of the fort which retained water year-round. This was referred to by Sutter as the teich (German for pond) See Kunzel Map, Maps C1 and C2).

The urbanization of Sacramento County has resulted in complete disruption of the natural hydrologic cycle on the site. Construction of a system of flood control levees along the American and Sacramento Rivers, and upstream dams on the Sacramento River and its tributaries, has largely eliminated the period of flooding during spring. Furthermore, the natural slough was filled in.

An artificial lake in the shape of a racetrack oval) was created in the area of the original slough during site grading in 1891 (Map T-1). This lake was subsequently filled in 1897. Then, in 1907, a smaller pond was excavated, in approximately the same location as the original, probably as an integral part of the ongoing landscape development. This pond, which is now the west oval 9ft the current pond configuration, never had a sealed bottom. It does have a rock retaining wall to reduce bank erosion.

The east oval was constructed in 1909-1910. This oval's concrete-lined along the bottom and banks. This project involved considerable expense, indicating that the concrete lining was probably installed during initial construction.

The department added a four-foot-high fence around the two oval pond perimeters to reduce bank erosion, vegetation, and wildlife damage, and increase visitor safety.

This aquatic resource is best described as an urban fishpond. The pond must be periodically dredged of accumulated sediments. Each oval has sprinklers which serve to aerate the water and maintain the water depth at an average of 16 inches.

## **Geology**

Sacramento lies in the northern half of the Great Valley Geomorphic province. This province is a nearly flat alluvial plain 450 miles long and 50 miles wide that ranges in elevation from 1,000 feet above sea level to a few feet below.

The current profile of the northern half of the Great Valley is a deep trough filled with marine and continental sediments from 0 to 10 miles thick. The non-symmetrical V-shaped trough is formed by shallow gradient granitic rock of the uplifting Sierra Nevada on the east, and on the west, the steeply inclined Franciscan Formation of the Coast Range Mountains. The City of Sacramento lies on the east half of the Great Valley, where the sedimentary depositions are more than 2 miles thick.

The deepest sediments below Sacramento, comprising over a third of the total thickness, were deposited under cool seas during the late Cretaceous Period. These deposits are a conglomerate and coarse sandstone, probably reflecting the accelerated mountain building of the Sierra Nevada during that time. The middle third are sediments of the Paleocene, Eocene, and Oligocene periods.

These depositions are composed of silty claystone, sandstone, and conglomerate. The top series of sediments, also encompassing a third of the total thickness, were deposited above sea level on alluvial flood plains during the Miocene and Pliocene.

There are no active faults in the Great Valley near Sacramento. The nearest fault zones are the Bear Mountain fault and the Melones fault in the Sierra Nevada foothills. Two very active fault zones exist in the San Francisco Bay area: the Hayward and Calaveras faults. Although there are no faults in the immediate vicinity, major earthquakes along distant faults can be felt in Sacramento because the energy is easily transmitted across the deep sediments of the Great Valley.

## Soils

The original Sutter's Fort was constructed on a slightly elevated parcel of the high floodplains of the Sacramento and American Rivers. Prior to the construction of a levee system and upstream dams, this area was periodically inundated with spring flood runoff.

The Rossmoor soil series, the dominant soil series of this area, consists of level, very deep, and well-drained soils formed in alluvium derived from mixed rock sources. These soils are neutral to slightly alkaline in pH and have a surface layer from 7-16 inches thick that is high in an organic manner.

Grading of the site (Map T-1) has significantly altered the soil profile in many areas.

## Plant Life

The existing vegetation of Sutter's Fort State Historic Park is a conglomeration of specimen trees and shrubs. This is an urban park in which the plant species and associations bear no resemblance to the original native vegetation community. Existing landscape vegetation is displayed on the vegetation map P-1).

The current landscape consists of scattered individuals or copses of trees, shrubs, succulents, groundcover, and turf. Several species of oak are established as street trees bordering the property: valley oak *Quercus lobata* along 26th Street, live oak (*Q. Agrifolia*) along 28th and L Streets, and English oak (*Q. rober*) along K Street. There are two copses of coast redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*) planted near the northeast corner of the property. The copse of three redwoods adjacent to 28th Street has an understory of Grecian laurel (*Laurus nobilis*) and ivy (*Hedera ssp.*) and bears breech (*Acanthus mollis*). The other copse of three redwoods adjacent to "K" Street appears to have been planted at the same time. This copse has an ivy groundcover.

The existing turfgrass is a mixture of perennial ryegrasses (*Lolium ssp.*), bluegrass (*Poa ssp.*) and fescue (*Festuca ssp.*).

## Historic Plant Life

At the time of Sutter's arrival in the area, the site contained plant life characteristic of the Great Central Valley Landscape Province, specifically riparian and floodplains species (Table 1).

This site is on a high floodplain near the American/Sacramento River confluence. Originally, the site had much topographic relief, with deep, well-drained soils. This would indicate that the lower elevations of the site were dominated by Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*) and black willow (*Salix goddingii*), while the higher ground may have supported sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*). Other tree-shrub species that likely occurred in the area include box elder (*Acer negundo var. californica*), valley oak (*Q. lobata*), black walnut (*Juglans hindsii*), Oregon ash (*Fraxinus latifolia*), California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*), buttonwillow (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*), sand bar willow (*S. hindsiana*), red willow (*S. laevigata*), and Pacific willow (*S. lasiandra*).

Sutter's first task in establishing New Helvetia was to clear existing vegetation from the site. Initially, probably all riparian trees were cut down for their wood. The settlers soon established food crops. To the north of the slough, north of modern-day "K" Street, orchards were established, including apples, pears, plums, pomegranates, and citrus. There were also grape arbors and raised garden beds. Sutter dug deep ditches to protect his fields from cattle. In time, he lined these ditches with willows.

## Pioneer Memorial Landscaping

A landscape plan for the site was developed in 1904 by John McLaren, Superintendent of Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, at the request of the Trustees of Sutter's Fort. The McLaren landscape plan has not been located to date, although its content has been summarized in a newspaper article.

This was to be a purely California park, using only native trees and shrubs. The plan called for three species of native oak to be planted as street trees along "K," 26th, and 28th Streets. No street trees were to be established along "L" Street (this was prior to the acquisition of property necessary to realign "L" Street away from the fort building). The oaks along "K" Street were to be deciduous. The interior grounds outside the fort were to be planted with clusters of California trees of different varieties and intermixed with walkways. Beginning in 1904, and culminating in 1908, the Native Daughters of the Golden West planted a variety of trees, shrubs, and flowers on the grounds to create a public park. The copse of redwoods planted in 1904 as a California pioneers memorial and the second copse of redwoods were likely authorized by the McLaren plan.

It appears that the Trustees of Sutter's Fort adopted the McLaren Landscape Plan in 1904, although there is no information as to whether any modifications were also adopted. In any event, use of California native plant material has not been strictly adhered to since then. Existing plants, as well as sketchy historical references, indicate that many plants not native to California have been established since 1904.

Since the late 1950s, the department has gradually reduced the abundant landscape plantings that had previously accumulated. Although no formal landscape plan was prepared, the general departmental philosophy was to manipulate the vegetation toward the historically authentic landscape, and to use only native plant species.

During this time, trees, flower beds, vegetable gardens, rose bushes, vines, and shrubs were removed from inside the fort. There were also numerous plants of all sizes decorating the outside of the fort walls. The department made an initial, determined effort to remove many of these plants from the base of the fort walls. Indirectly, the number of plants over the whole area has dropped ~~during the past 30 years~~, through attrition and non-replacement.

**Native Central Valley Riparian Vegetation**

<b><u>Vegetation Type</u></b>	<b><u>Scientific Name</u></b>	<b><u>Common Name</u></b>
<b>TREES</b>	Acer negundo subsp. Californicum	Box elder
	Aesculus californica*	California buckeye
	Alnus rhombifolia*	White alder
	Fraxinus latifolia	Oregon ash
	Juglans hindsii	Black walnut
	Platanus racemosa	California sycamore
	populus fremontii	Freemont cottonwood
	Quercus agrifolia*	Coast live oak
	Quercus lobata	Valley oak
	Quercus wislizenii*	Interior live oak
	Salix exigua	Narrowleaf willow
	Salix goodingii var. goodingii*	Gooding willow
	Salix leavigata	Red willow
Salix lasiandra	Pacific willow	
<b>SHRUBS</b>	Artemisia douglasiana	Mugwort
	Atriplex lentiformis*	Quail bush
	Baccharis douglasii*	False willow
	Baccharis glutinosa*	Seep-willow
	Baccharis viminea	Mulefat
	Cephalanthus occidentalis	Buttonwillow
	Cornus glabrata*	Brown dogwood
	Cornus occidentalis*	Red osier dogwood



<u>Vegetation Type</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>
	Heteromeles arbutifolia*	Toyon
	Hibiscus californicus*	Wild hibiscus
	Lonicera Involucrata*	Twinberry honeysuckle
	Ptelea crenulate*	Hop tree
	Rosa californicus	Wild rose
	Sallix hindsiana	Sandbar willow
	Salix lasiolepis	Arroyo willow
	Salix melanopsis	willow
	Sambucus mexicana	Elderberry
	Symphoricarpos rivularis	snowberry
<b>GROUNDCOVER</b>	Aristolochia californica	Dutchman's pipe vine
	Clematis lasiantha	wild clematis
	Clematis ligusticfolia	western clematis
	Lonicera hlspidula var. vacillans*	wild honeysuckle
	Rhus diversiloba	poison oak
	Rubus discolor*	Himalayan blackberry
	Rubus ursinus	wild blackberry
	Rubus vitifolius	wild blackberry
	Similax californica	wild grape

\*Uncommon

## **Animal Life**

This unit is located in an urban setting; all of the natural habitat for native wildlife has been drastically altered. All of the species of animals present are those capable of living in close association with civilization.

There are numerous domesticated birds and mammals which are abandoned at the unit by the public each year, especially around the pond.

There are several introduced fishes inhabiting the pond, including koi carp, bluegill, largemouth bass, warmouth, and bullhead. Crayfish have also been found along the edges. Wood ducks and mallards are regular inhabitants of the pond.

## **Ecology**

The site is a highly altered urban landscape with very few of the original biotic or abiotic components of the ecosystem still intact.

## Cultural Resources

### **Previous Investigations**

The records of the California Office of Historic Preservation were examined in order to identify any previous recordation of Native American or Euro-American cultural resources at Sutter's Fort. These records show that a Native American site, CA-SAC-34, was recorded in 1936 (Map C-3). The records also show that the on-site Euro-American resources were registered as a National Historic Landmark in 1965 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. The historic importance of the site has also been recognized by the City of Sacramento and the State of California. Both entities consider the Fort a historic landmark.

### **Inventory Procedure**

Since the entire grounds of Sutter's Fort cover only 6.2 acres, the whole area was surveyed intensively. Although there was no contact with the Regional Archeological Data Center at Sacramento State University specific to this project, such contacts have been made recently enough to ensure that the Resource Protection Division data base is current. Resource Protection Division files contain all site records, excavation reports, and reconstruction documentation known to exist.

### **Archeology**

Archeological values at Sutter's Fort are complex. The fort sits on a known Native American cemetery (Map C-3). The fort is itself a combination of original construction from the Sutter period of occupation in the 1840s, and the inaccurate reconstruction of portions of the fort as a Memorial to California Pioneers done in the 1890s. Based on one newspaper account, it is possible that the fort grounds were the site of the first attempt at historic archeology in California during the reconstruction period. The fort grounds were the site of several historic archeology projects during the late 1950s and early 1960s (Map C-3). Rehabilitation efforts beginning in the mid-1980s have again drawn attention to the archeological potential of the fort and its surroundings.

The Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys were among the first areas of California subjected to a systematic evaluation of known Native American archeological sites for the purpose of developing a chronology of prehistoric cultures. The result was the Central Valley Taxonomy, developed about 1936 by J. B. Lillard and H. K. Purves, both on the staff at Sacramento City College. This "taxonomic" scheme identified three principal prehistoric cultures that could be divided chronologically. These three major culture types are known as the Early, Middle, and Late Horizons. Although there has been considerable subsequent research

in "Central Valley" archeology, and numerous regional variations are documented, this early tripartite taxonomy is still generally accepted as the basic pattern for the Sacramento area of California.

Many taxonomies in archeology throughout the world are based on variation in how prehistoric peoples treated the dead. Human bone, animal bone, and stone artifacts are durable and, in most soils, are those things that last the longest. Also, cemeteries are the easiest archeological resources for the average person to identify. Human bones, especially skulls, are fairly easy to identify, and are frequently discovered during agricultural soil-disturbing activities. Most of the early identifications of prehistoric sites in the Central Valley have been in this manner.

The Early Horizon is characterized by fully extended burials, lying on their backs with the top of the head in a westerly direction. Early Horizon burials nearly always have artifacts (grave goods) buried with them. These funerary offerings include large slate or chert projectile points, charm stones, distinctive shell ornaments, quartz crystals, and, rarely, milling stones/manos.

Middle Horizon (sometimes called Transitional Period) sites are characteristically villages/middens with burials in a dark midden mass. The greater majority of Middle Horizon burials are tightly flexed, knees to chest, and buried in a variety of orientations. It is felt that the body was tied into the flex, and possibly wrapped in an animal skin blanket or organic fiber mat. Most Middle Horizon burials also have funerary artifacts. Projectile points found with these burials are smaller and broader in relation to length than the Early Horizon types. There are numerous differences in the types of shell artifacts found, and more numerous bone tool types in the Middle Horizon. More Middle Horizon dead were buried with milling tools than their Early Horizon counterparts. This difference in burial pattern has led some scholars to propose that the Middle Horizon peoples were intruders who pushed the Early Horizon peoples out of the Central Valley and Sierra foothills.

Changes from the Middle to Late Horizons are more subtle than the differences between Early and Middle Horizons. Late Horizon burials also occur in village middens, and sometimes around the perimeter of a large ceremonial structure. Burials are principally flexed but extended, and partially cremated remains are not infrequent. Principal distinguishing traits of the Late Horizon are an increasingly complex array of food processing tools and more specialized hunting equipment. Burial artifacts reflect these technological changes, and stone, shell, and, after contact, glass bead necklaces become common on both men and women. The addition of a diverse variety of obsidian (volcanic glass) artifacts is also characteristic of Late Horizon.

The Native American cemetery at Sutter's Fort was discovered during investigations of the historic archeology of the fort carried out between 1955 and 1960. One burial was discovered northwest of the central building during excavations designed to rediscover the location of Sutter's original three-room adobe. Twelve more whole and partial burials were discovered off the northeast corner of the central building during a search for the foundations of interior corrals built during the Sutter period. By position and artifact yield, these remains have been determined to be late Middle Horizon.

It is probable that there were no ~~Indians~~ indigenous people living on the site when Sutter chose it for his home and factory. Sutter and several of his staff kept detailed diaries and journals and none of these sources note a Native American village at the site chosen for construction. It is certain that the burials themselves predated the Sutter occupation by several hundred years.

The historic archeology of Sutter's Fort will be addressed in the Historic Structures and Site section.

### **Ethnography**

The Nisenan occupied a territory bounded by the crest of the Sierra to the east, the west bank of the Sacramento River to the west, between Yuba and Feather Rivers to the north, and the Cosumnes River to

the south. The neighboring Miwok, whose main territory was south of the Cosumnes River, occupied a portion of the southern Nisenan territory, from a few miles south of the confluence of the American River to the Cosumnes River. This is thought to have been a recent movement northward by the Miwok because of efforts by the Spanish to remove the Miwok to the missions.

The Nisenan, who with the Maidu and Konkow form a subgroup of the California Penutian linguistic family are often referred to as Southern Maidu. The Nisenan situated their larger, permanent settlements on high ground along the Sacramento and American Rivers and in the foothills; the valley floor was typically used as temporary hunting and gathering ground. Several villages have been identified near the confluence of the Sacramento and American Rivers: Pusune, Momol, Sekumni, and Sama. Sama was considered the southernmost Nisenan village along the Sacramento River. Pusune was an important village, possibly serving as a regional hub for smaller villages along the American River.

Although Sutter's Fort sits in territory claimed by the Nisenan, his principal ~~Indian-indigenous employees-workforce~~ were Northern Foothill Miwok, and secondarily Konkow Maidu. ~~All these peoples are speakers of Penutian languages that are mutually unintelligible.~~ In the ten years preceding Sutter's arrival in August 1839, most of the Native American population of the Sacramento and lower San Joaquin Valleys died of European-introduced disease.

Malaria, commonly called ague or intermittent fever in the mid-19th-century, was first noted along the Pacific coast at Fort Vancouver in 1829. By 1833, the disease had spread into the Sacramento Valley, where according to research by Sherburne Cook, more than half of the ~~Indian-California Native American~~ population died of malaria in 1833. More than half of the remaining native peoples died of smallpox in 1847. The origin of spread for smallpox has not been clearly identified, but the disease was widespread in both Mexican and American populations.

The remnant Nisenan population and most Konkow appear to have abandoned the valley floor and retreated to the foothills after the first of these two terrible epidemics. By 1839, when Sutter arrived, he was met by several hundred ~~California~~ Native Americans who had apparently returned to their riverside villages.

Most of Sutter's ~~Indian-employees indigenous workforce~~ were identified as Cosumnes (Miwok). As is noted in the history section, Sutter used ~~Indians-Native Americans~~ in a variety of ways, from common laborer to trusted personal bodyguards. Records kept by Pierson B. Reading, Sutter's chief trapper in 1845-46, show at least 18 and possibly as many as 24 ~~Indians-indigenous people~~ working as trappers.

~~The ethnographic group of record for the fort site is the Nisenan (sometimes called Southern Maidu). The Nisenan spoke a language classed in the large Penutian linguistic stock, which included most of the Native American groups of the Central Valley of California. The Nisenan language is divided into three dialects. The Valley dialect was spoken around present-day Sacramento.~~

~~The Nisenan and other valley peoples were so reduced by European-introduced disease before Sutter arrived that it is difficult to define an occupation area for the Nisenan. They are thought to have occupied an area from about the Cosumnes River on the south to some distance above the Yuba River on the north and from the Sacramento River east to the Sierra crest.~~

~~Valley Nisenan lived in villages ranging in size from three to about fifty family residences. They settled on the natural levees near watercourses on the valley floor and generally near perennial streams in the foothills.~~

## **History of Sutter's Fort**

### **Amendment Note:**

At the time of the 1990 General Plan, the narrative surrounding John Sutter and Sutter's Fort contained significant omissions that represent a narrowly Euro-American focused interpretation of history. This section contains descriptions which may be oversimplified, biased, and lack the historical accuracy which this amendment and the IMP address.

While John Sutter was the first European to settle in the Sacramento Valley, he did not enter a totally unknown world. The area had been explored by Spanish patrols as early as 1806. The Spanish searched for mission sites, but found "water sources scarce and difficult," and the native population already leery of European contact. The Spanish were replaced by travelers from the Mexican presidios, and by explorers from Fort Ross and American and British trappers. The Hudson Bay Company had attempted to trap the valley beaver out of existence to deflect American trappers entering the Sacramento from the San Joaquin Valley. The real purpose was to protect the fur-rich Snake River country in modern-day Idaho. By the mid-1830s, cattle and horses were being driven north from Mexican settlements up the valley to the Oregon country. In 1837, former fur trapper Ewing Young led a major cattle-horse drive out of Sacramento for the Willamette Valley of Oregon. Sutter spent several days with Young during his layover in Oregon. -

In mid-August 1839, Sutter, a Swiss emigrant to Mexican California, climbed a small hill about a mile south of the American River. The mound was bare and sort of rectangular in shape, pinching in at the east end. Its northern slope eroded at the edge of a stagnant pond of water edged by tules and cottonwoods. Sutter had looked at many places, including a large hill about a mile away to the southeast, but there was no water there. This site, not as good as others, and not like the land he saw along the Rio de las Plumas (Feather River), would do. Here, he would establish his camp, and build his houses; here was the heart of his empire. Two weeks later, Sutter's nearest neighbor, Dr. John Marsh, rode the sixty-odd miles from his rancho near the slopes of Monte Diablo to pay a call. He viewed the tents and the brush huts, and the mosquito and frog-filled pond, and the adobe bricks Sutter's workmen were preparing for a three-room structure and dubbed the whole place: "Sutter's Frog Pond" (Maps C-1 and C-2).

From Sutter's "Frog Pond," the place became "Sutter's Station," as he became a candidate for Mexican citizenship, a representative of the Mexican government, a justice of the peace, and an applicant for a land grant for 11 leagues. Mexican citizenship came in 1840, and the grant for 48,400 acres (more or less) was approved in 1841 (Map C-1). Sutter's grant was for a colonizer, an "empresario," and he would have to place 12 settlers on his colony of New Helvetia to establish the legitimacy of the grant and gain additional acreage in compensation. In July 1844, Sutter was appointed a militia captain in the newly reorganized auxiliary militia of California. With a reinforced militia force, Sutter went to aid the embattled Mexican governor, Manuel Micheltorena, against rebellious Californios. The governor awarded Sutter, in a time-honored and legal manner, 22 more leagues of land as compensation for his governmental loyalty. The governor lost against the rebellious forces and surrendered; Sutter was captured on the bloodless field of battle on the first day. Released by the victorious Californios, Sutter's loyalty, and ability to now support the victors gained him his freedom, restoration of his duties, and command of the old northern frontier of Alta California. Micheltorena had promoted Sutter to the rank of lieutenant colonel, but Sutter retained only the rank of captain, and allowed himself to be called "Comandante" (commander).

While all of this occupied one part of the stage, Sutter's establishment had become the colony of New Helvetia, but "Sutter's Station" was still a three-room adobe hut with a new tule roof. The old roof had burned off during the late winter of 1840. There was an adobe-walled corral immediately east of the house, a collection of tule huts, and a wooden picket palisade to ward off unwanted visitors. In the spring of 1841, the main house was planned inside the palisade. It would be three stories tall, and feature projecting upper floors (in the Swiss style), would have a shingled roof, and would have approximately ten rooms. Then, Sutter received a terrible fright, and all plans changed.

Whether John Sutter planned to wall his establishment from the first or not is not known. He had certainly seen enough protected settlements in his North American travels from Bent's Fort to Fort Vancouver and Fort Hall to Fort Ross and M. G. Vallejo's fortified Petaluma Rancho headquarters. Only John Marsh lived in an unfortified house, though his house was sturdily made, and loop\_holed for rifles. In the early spring of 1841, Sutter became aware that the commanding general of California, Lt. Colonel M. G. Vallejo, was rattling his sword, and threatening harsh action against the Swiss American colonizer. Sutter started a fort around his house.

Naturally, it took time; thousands of adobe bricks had to be made, and to make the bricks, dozens, and dozens of laborers. The two opposite bastions were built first, approximately three stories high (about 27 feet), and then an outer, low wall to connect the bastions and protect an inner courtyard. In secret, Sutter bought ten cannons at San Francisco harbor, and smuggled them up-river. The guns were old Spanish tubes from the revolutionary wars, but they were cannon. He also sent John Sinclair to Honolulu to purchase small arms, but the venture was not successful. By early fall, Sutter had completed the two bastions, the cannon was mounted, a five-foot-high wall encircled the courtyards of the establishment, and plans were in the works to build the walls higher and add an inside wall and rooms between the walls.

Inside the walls, the main building, rectangular in shape, stood empty and unfinished. It lacked doors and windows, and while the gabled roof framework was in place, shingles and more importantly shingle nails were lacking. Apparently in late November 1841, the main (or central) building was covered with a tule thatch for protection. The main building would not be finished until 1843.

Sutter continued to live in his one room in the original three-room house that stood immediately northwest of the new central building. By late 1842, the outer walls had reached approximately 18 feet in height, and the double front gate was finished. On a flattened, reinforced roof on either side of the main (south) gate, a 12-pounder gunnade cannon had been installed to sweep away any foot attack against the portal. A gallery lined the interior side of the outer wall. An inner wall had gone up to approximately 14 feet in height, and the outer wall and inner wall attached with a slanting wooden shed like framework. Roofs were made of tule thatch, hopefully to soon be replaced with wooden shingle. The last wood shingles were put on in April 1846, after the wind stripped the tules off the northeast side of the fort.

Between the inner walls on the west, south, east, and northeast-facing walls, rooms were partitioned off with adobe bricks and whipsawed planks. Doors were made, and as more Americans arrived, Sutter worried about hasps and padlocks to secure the rooms.

In the fall of 1841, Sutter, despite the threat of ouster by the Mexican government, had purchased the movable property of Fort Ross. The former Russian fort was stripped of furniture, lumber, glass windows, doors, and even whole buildings, which were knocked down, bundled up, and shipped to Sutter's developing fort. The majority of the move -- over a two-year period -- was successful, but mishaps did occur, and some Russian structures did not survive to reach Sutter's developing fortress. Several buildings reached Sutter's, but work crews could not define how to reassemble the intricate structures.

The fort, nearing completion in 1843 (it was actually never finished), was described by Lanceford Hastings in some detail:

"In form it is a sexangular oblong, its greatest length being 428 feet, and its greatest width, 178 feet; 233 feet of its length being 178 feet wide, and the residue but 129 feet wide. It is enclosed by permanent 'adobe' walls, which are 18 feet high, and three feet thick, with bastions at the corners, the walls of which are five feet thick. It is entered by three large swinging gates, one on the north, another on the south side, and the third on the east end. The first of these is entirely inaccessible from without because of a deep and impassable ravine, which extends the whole length of the fort on the north; on each side of the second (that is, the south) is a platform, upon each of which, a

nine pounder is planted. The third is completely commanded by one of the bastions. There are two bastions, each of which has four guns, two nine-pounders, and two six-pounders; in all, there are twelve different caliber guns. The inner building of this fort consists of a large and commodious residence, for the various officers, in connection with a large kitchen, a dining room, two large parlors, the necessary offices, shops, and lodging apartments. Besides these, there is also a distillery, a horse mill, and a magazine, together with barracks..."

Inside the main courtyard of the fort, Sutter built, or reassembled from Russian Fort Ross, several wooden structures. In the southwest corner, the largest was the "plank it" (blanket) factory. Several small wooden structures were built in the southeast courtyard near the east gate.

The Mexican-American War passed the fort without serious physical effect; however, Sutter's involvement as a U.S. supporter cost him heavily in financial expenditure. Little of it was ever paid back.

After years of drought and learning to farm in California, Sutter, in 1847, saw agriculture begin to pay. His debts were heavy, and his attempts to pay and keep his creditors at bay were a major stress on him. The year 1848 would be a bumper crop year; everything was coming to fruition. What actually came was the discovery of gold, and while at first, it appeared to be a blessing, it, in turn, became a demon to Sutter. Unable to profit as a miner, he turned to merchandising. but found himself a fish among sharks. Repeatedly, the outclassed and befuddled (by his growing alcohol problem) Sutter was cheated and looted by his partners. The flood of argonauts drawn by the gold strikes swarmed past Sutter's Fort like locusts. They took what they wanted.

Sutter began to rent parts of the fort until mid-1849 he owned but controlled little of the fort. Shortly thereafter, disillusioned and outraged at his son's (John August Sutter, Jr.) creation of Sacramento, overrun by miners, but free of debt by his son's actions, Sutter sold the fort and retreated to his agricultural property at Hock Farm on the Feather River.

### **Historic Structures and Sites**

The only above-ground Sutter period resource at Sutter's Fort State Historic Park is the "Central Building," constructed by John Sutter between 1841 and 1843. Sutter constructed a rectangular structure that could be characterized as a one-story building with a full basement and full attic. It is 65 feet in length on the north-south line, with a width of 35 feet east-west.

Originally, the ground, or basement, floor had no doors or windows. Entry was from the first-floor level via stairs covered by a locked trapdoor for which only Sutter had a key. After the sale of the fort, windows and doors were cut into the adobe walls. Small windows on the west, south, and east sides and a door on the west side were left intact during the 1890s reconstruction of the fort. The small windows in the south wall were walled up during the 1959 rehabilitation of the central building.

The first floor (or second level) was divided into seven rooms. The western half became Sutter's private apartment of four rooms, while on the east was a central hall (dining area with simple furniture). At the north end of the hall was a promo used as a public business office; on the south end of the hall, the room has been identified with the short tenure of Doctor William Gildea. How this room was appointed and furnished is not known.

The attic was unfinished during the Sutter period. It was reached by stairs (or a ladder) located at the north end of the hall, and currently duplicated by wooden stairs. How Sutter used the attic is unknown. During the gold rush, the central building was used as a hotel, and the upstairs became a common (dormitory-like) sleeping area.

The first floor was apparently reached by double approach sets of wooden stairs on the west and east sides of the central building. The stairs were open without railing.

The remainder of the Sutter period portion of the historic unit is archeological in nature. The south and west walls of the pioneer monument and the southern portion of the northwest bastion are close to the original Sutter alignments. Unfortunately, the excavations for the stepped common brick foundation almost certainly destroyed any archeological remnant of the Sutter construction. As noted below, excavations in search of the extension of the south wall and the alignment of the east wall were unsuccessful. Except along the outside of the existing north wall, it is probable that any remaining evidence of Sutter-period construction was destroyed when the site was graded in 1891.

Since the only remainder of the Sutter construction on the site is the central building, the statements of eyewitnesses are critical to understanding the size and shape of the original fort/factory. In addition to the Hastings quote above, there are several other descriptions of the fort.

In his reminiscences, Sutter notes that:

"I built one large building and surrounded it with walls 18 feet high and bastions. The walls enclosed about five acres. They were of adobe blocks about two and one-half feet thick, bastions five feet thick, and under the bastions the prisons. I then erected other buildings, bakery, mill, blanket factory all inside four years were occupied in building the fort."

There are many minor inconsistencies in the various descriptions of the fort. For instance, Hastings notes the exterior walls as three feet thick, while Sutter states that they are two and a half feet thick.

Beginning in 1848, Sutter leased space to individuals for commercial activities, and then sold the fort in 1849. From then through the early 1850s, numerous doors and windows were cut through the exterior adobe walls. In part due to this cutting, and in part due to the salvaging of the wood construction, parts of the fort had fallen into ruin by 1857. By 1858, only the damaged central building and the southeast bastion in ruins remained.

During the period 1849 to about 1875, the sixteen lots on the two blocks bounded by 26th-28th and K and L Streets were in the hands of numerous owners, and subject to a variety of sales, transfers, and tax auctions. During this time, the central building was used as a hotel, residence, and junk depository. Mrs. Olive Lawson and her nine children used the structure as a residence from about 1859 to 1868, when she was evicted by the sheriff, and the property was put up for sale at a tax auction. In 1867, Lawson had replaced the dilapidated adobe south wall of the central building with a common brick wall, which remains today, hidden by an adobe facade.

As time went on, various pioneer groups in California became interested in the historic value of the fort, and attempts were made to gather information about the complex from first-hand sources. This culminated in an 1889 article in *Themis*, a short-lived Saturday Sacramento publication, showing maps of the fort based, to a great degree, on the memory of John Bidwell. As we shall see below, Bidwell's memory was accurate.

In 1888, the Native Sons of the Golden West (NSGW) made a decision to raise funds to purchase the fort property and rebuild the fort as a memorial to California pioneers. The generation of the *Themis* maps was part of their research. The driving force behind the reconstruction, civil engineer Carl E. Grunsky, searched for pioneers who had seen the fort in its original configuration, and took several of them out to walk the grounds. In his account, Grunsky notes that the remainder of portions of the exterior walls showed clearly as low linear mounds that were readily identifiable along the west and south perimeter of the fort. He further notes that the location of the southwest corner was, in part, established by excavating for coal. The blacksmith shop was known to have been along the south wall one room east of the corner, with the colliery (coal and charcoal storage) in the corner room. Apparently, Grunsky and others carried out a



primitive project in historic archeology and discovered the remains of the coal pile. Unfortunately, the north and east walls were not as easy to identify.

After a considerable fund-raising effort in 1889, the NSGW was able to secure the two blocks from Benjamin Merrill, a resident of Chicago, Illinois. Mr. Merrill placed in the papers of transfer a deed restriction stating that the property must always be used for public purposes. The State of California accepted the property from the NSGW in 1891, with the provision that it be managed by a board of trustees appointed at the pleasure of the governor.

Between 1891 and April 1893, the NSGW rehabilitated the central building by filling in various holes with adobe, covering the common brick south wall with a layer of adobe, and digging under the structure and implanting a common brick foundation. At the same time, partially funded by a \$20,000 grant from the state, the NSGW attempted to reconstruct the exterior walls and associated interior shed structures. The exterior walls are of common brick, with portions of the shed walls of adobe, and portions of fired adobe brick. In April 1893, the partially reconstructed fort was formally presented to the State of California in a "Grand Ceremony." The state put up another \$10,000 to finish the shed structures. The shed walls in the west and southwest sections of the fort were completed by the state, and are of adobe bricks fired for the state by Muddox Co. The oval pond was excavated by Grunsky to represent the slough that abutted the north wall of the fort during the Sutter occupation. By 1897, the hole Grunsky had graded for the pond had not yet been improved. The water-filled stagnant oval was cited by the City of Sacramento as a mosquito hazard, and the state contracted for 12,000 cubic yards of soil and filled the pond.

There are numerous differences between Sutter's Fort (as represented in written accounts and on the Kunsel map) and the 1890s Pioneer Memorial. The most important of these differences are as follows:

1. The footprints of the two constructions vary considerably.
  - a) The fort was 428 feet on its east/west axis, while the Pioneer Memorial is 320 feet long.
  - b) The fort was 178 feet north/south at the west end, while the Pioneer Memorial is 163 feet wide at the same point.
  - c) The fort was 129 feet north/south at the east end, and the truncated Pioneer Memorial is 137 feet wide at the existing east end.
  - d) The fort had corrals to the north and northeast of the central building, while the "Kyburz Annex" occupies the space north of the central building in the Pioneer Memorial.
  - e) The east wall of the fort distillery was 72 feet west of the central building, while the "Distillery" (museum) in the Pioneer Memorial is only 25 feet west of the central building.
  - f) Sutter's original three-room adobe, which extended north from the northwest corner of the central building, does not exist in the Pioneer Memorial.
  - g) The large adobe-walled threshing enclosures and corrals which abutted the south exterior wall east of the south gate do not exist in the Pioneer Memorial.
2. Based on the Sutter and Hastings descriptions, the original exterior walls were 18 feet high. The walls of the reconstruction are 15 feet high. Grunsky indicates that the NSGW did not believe that the original walls were 18 feet high. Additionally, he states that the NSGW could not afford to build an exterior wall higher than 15 feet. Sutter estimated his walls at two and a half feet thick, while Hastings states that they are three feet thick. The Native Sons common brick exterior wall is two and a half feet thick. Both Sutter and Hastings note that the adobe bastion walls were five feet thick. The NSGW common brick bastions have walls two and a half feet thick. Sutter notes that the interior shed walls

are 14 feet high, while the NSGW shed walls are only eight feet in height. No comments on the thickness of the shed walls have yet been discovered, so no comparison is possible.

3. All of the exterior walls and some of the interior walls in the fort were of sun-dried adobe, while the Pioneer Memorial walls are combination of sun-dried adobe bricks, kiln-fired adobe bricks, and common bricks.

Except for the Sutter-period central building, the differences between Sutter's Fort and the California Pioneer Memorial clearly separate these constructions. These differences should be accommodated to reduce problems associated with the established interpretive periods for the current version of the fort.

The fort sat partially complete, with no interior partitions or improvements in the shed rooms, until the San Francisco earthquake/fire of April 1906.

In April 1906, the fort was converted into "Camp Sutter" to house refugees from the San Francisco disaster. Newspaper accounts from the period imply that the fort already had some water and electrical lines, and go on to state that these were upgraded, and a sewer installed, which was hooked into the city sewer in the middle of the block on 28th between "K" and "L."

During this period, wood partitions were installed in some of the sheds, and wood and brick flooring was placed throughout the structures. "Camp Sutter" was decommissioned in June 1906, and left in its improved state.

In 1907, the state purchased and gifted to the city enough of the property in the 26th-27th and 27th-28th, "L" and "M" blocks to reroute "L" Street around the southwest corner of the fort, which extended into the original street alignment.

For unknown reasons, the Sutter's Fort Board of Trustees was disbanded by the governor in 1921. Following this action, numerous members of the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West began to put pressure on the governor and legislature to complete the fort as the Pioneer Museum envisioned in the 1890s. To this end, Harry Peterson, curator of the Stanford University Art Museum, was hired as a consultant in 1926 to develop a plan. After submission of his \$20,000 renovation and improvement scheme in 1927, Peterson was hired as curator. He served in that position from 1927 until his death in 1940. During that time, he built the wagon sheds along the north wall, shaked the shed roofed sections as they were during the Sutter period, had many of the shed rooms floored in "adobe," put up numerous "adobe" partitions in the shed rooms, and added a considerable variety of other improvements.

Peterson, more than any other person, was responsible for turning the fort into the Pioneer Museum envisioned by the Native Sons and Daughters as part of the Pioneer Memorial. He solicited pioneer California collections from all over the western United States and developed artifact museums in the fort to display them. He also attempted to recreate what he called "house museums" by using some of the artifacts along with locally constructed "rustic" furniture to furnish several of the rooms in a manner he thought appropriate to the Sutter period. Peterson's career was capped with the elaborate displays prepared for the 1939 Centennial celebration. Part of these displays consisted of a series of massive, bleached oak display cases in the central building, and in a continuous line in the west wing of the shed structure.

Except for periodic maintenance, there was no significant work on the fort between 1938 and the end of World War II. Sometime between 1946 and 1955, the tiles on the central building, Kyburz annex, museum; and bastions were removed and replaced with pine shakes. Much of the archeology noted above was conducted in conjunction with a major rehabilitation of this sole remnant of the Sutter period.

In 1959, the interior of the central building (except for the adobe walls) was removed and then replaced. Workers were able to salvage about 50 percent of the joists supporting the second floor of the structure. As a safety measure, they cut channels in the upper sides of the joists and placed steel "T" rails which are implanted in the exterior with concrete and rebar. The culmination of the work consisted of peeling the south wall down to the masonry and placing a new adobe cover, along with whitewashing and roofing.

In 1955, there began a five-year series of excavations designed to give a clearer picture of the fort as Sutter knew it.

The 1955 excavations were initiated by Sacramento State College (California State University, Sacramento) at the invitation of the Division of Beaches and Parks Department of Natural Resources. The excavations were conducted in the form of an archeological field class under the direction of Professors Richard Reeve and Brigham Arnold.

The 1955 research resulted in excavation of two trenches to the east of the fort, one set of excavation units (XU) against the south wall west of the main gate, four sets of XUs along the exterior of the west wall, and one set of test augerings in the north portion of the east yard (Map C3).

Beginning in the winter of 1957 and extending through the spring of 1958, Charles L. Gebhardt conducted excavations under a Standard Services Agreement with the Division of Beaches and Parks. His report is also very short but gives a clear indication of his goals. Gebhardt was hired to test the research of Hero Rensch, state park contract historian. Rensch began a literature search in 1955 with the intent of discovering the actual size and shape of the original Sutter's Fort. By 1958, Rensch had discovered several documents, including two 1850s maps based on the field notes of the first land survey of the city of Sacramento. Based on these maps, Rensch estimated that the original east wall of the fort was in 28th Street, and that the original north wall was 50 feet north of the existing wall (Map C3).

Gebhardt sited his excavation units with the intent of testing Rensch's data. Gebhardt laid out two north-south trenches between the existing east wall and 28th Street -- the first with its south end parallel to the line of the south wall and 80 feet east of the existing east wall, and the second parallel and adjacent to the east side of the walkway paralleling the east wall. Gebhardt notes that the positioning of his trench "A" 80 feet east of the east wall placed it in one of the areas last graded during the 1890s reconstruction (Map C3). One of the documents located by Rensch was the grading map prepared by C. E. Grunsky for restoration of the fort (Map T-1). This map shows the lot as it existed both prior to and after the restoration grading. The original contours are shown as dotted lines, and the graded contours as solid lines (Map T-1).

These same excavations recovered considerable information on the remains of the Sutter occupation of the site. While the archeologists were excavating, a map was discovered in the Bancroft Library that showed that the fort as reconstructed was much smaller than Sutter's original construction (Maps C1 and C2). These so-called Kunzel maps are based on two maps prepared by John Bidwell and Pierson B. Reading, which Sutter sent to Germany. The map, along with the text describing the wonders of California, was published in Germany in 1848.

### **Esthetic Resources**

The whitewashed fort is a local landmark that can be seen clearly when traveling west from the freeway along "L" Street. The fort and surrounding "city"-type park form an enchanting context. Some of the vegetation outside the fort obscures a clear view of the fort. Furthermore, several trees are visible from within the fort walls. This park is used by locals, much as are the other small parks throughout downtown Sacramento. Unfortunately, Sutter's Fort lies in the middle of an area that is prime for redevelopment. The recently constructed Sutter Hospital complex along the 28th Street side and to the southeast across the intersection of 28th and "L," and the new professional building across the intersection of 28th and "K,"

form a visual intrusion that clearly affects the esthetic qualities of the fort and grounds. Other surrounding structures also affect the fort viewshed, but not to the extreme degree of the hospital and professional complex. Dumping of waterfowl in and around the pond creates both esthetic and health problems. The staff has tried numerous methods to limit the numbers of waterfowl, with little success.

Esthetic intrusions in the fort are limited to the 1968 kiosk, various interior and exterior lighting devices needed for security and safety purposes, interior vegetation (lawn and trees) which are not appropriate to a Sutter ambiance, and various plaques near the east gate. As an anesthetic and educational device, the staff has intermittently maintained small farm animals such as chickens or sheep in the fort.

### Recreation Resources

Recreational activities at Sutter's Fort SHP are both passive and active. The "city"-type park surrounding the fort is a favorite area for local visitors to sit and relax or have a picnic. This area is also used by the numerous visiting school groups for staging and picnicking. The interior of the fort is used in a more active manner. There are frequent demonstrations and hands-on visitor experiences offered in the fort. Sutter's Fort has an active department-sponsored environmental living program (ELP) in which 4th graders stay in the fort overnight and, with the help of staff and volunteers, experience activities appropriate to the Sutter period of occupation. In addition to ELP, ~~in the past there were are~~ other ongoing volunteer programs at the fort. Once a month (in months without a living history program), a special "Pioneer Crafts Demonstration Day" is held wherein docents and volunteers, garbed in Sutter-era clothing, put on informal demonstrations of typical workday activities and answer visitor questions about the fort. Five times per year, the highly respected "Sutter's Fort Living History Program" ~~is-was~~ produced by docents and ~~the~~ Volunteers ~~in~~ Parks Program. Authentically dressed and outfitted program volunteers acting out first-person characterizations attempt to educate visitors as to what might have happened on that day at Sutter's Fort. An increased admission is charged on living history days, and that revenue helps to support the full range of volunteer activities at the facility.

The daytime living history program ~~has~~ spun off an "evening program" which consist~~eds~~ of candlelight tours through the fort with volunteers at various "stations" interacting with each other so visitors can gain a sense of the types of evening activities which might have taken place at the fort during Sutter's occupation. The evening program is by advance reservation, and it has sold out well in advance each year.

Overnight camping is not allowed at Sutter's Fort SHP, and day use is limited to self-guided tours of the fort and the types of passive activities suitable for the surrounding small urban park.

During the year, there are a number of different activities staged by groups such as the Mexican American community, the Sacramento Birthday Celebration, and governmental agencies for dinners or fundraisers. Occasional unique events are held such as family reunions, weddings, or advertising photography. In 1983, Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain toured the fort during her official visit to California.

## Resource Policy Formation

### Classification

The State of California accepted the partially constructed "California Pioneer Memorial" including Sutter's central building from the Native Sons of the Golden West in April 1893. Shortly after state acceptance, the interior shed-roofed portions of the fort were completed. In 1907, acquisition of the current "L" Street alignment brought the property to its present size of 6.2 acres. Most major facilities enhancement was completed with construction of the State Indian Museum and gardener's cottage in 1941. The final addition was construction of the restrooms on the east end of the gardener's cottage in 1963. The property came

under the authority of the Division of Beaches and Parks in 1928, with control of budgeting and finance transferred from the State Department of Finance in 1947. A 1960 legislative act decreed that all state park units be classified. This was accomplished by holding a series of State Park and Recreation Commission meetings throughout the state. Sutter's Fort was classified as a state historic monument at a commission meeting in May 1962. Sutter's Fort and 18 other units were reclassified as state historic parks in 1970.

Section 5019.9 of the Public Resources Code defines a historical unit as follows:

Historical units, to be named appropriately and individually, consist of areas established primarily to preserve objects of historical, archeological, and scientific interest, and archeological sites and places commemorating important persons or historic events. Such areas should be of sufficient size, where possible, to encompass a significant proportion of the landscape associated with the historical objects. The only facilities that may be provided are those required for the safety, comfort, and enjoyment of visitors, such as access, parking, water, sanitation, interpretation, and picnicking. Upon approval by the commission, lands outside the primary historic zone may be selected or acquired, developed, or operated to provide camping facilities within appropriate historical units. Upon approval by the State Park and Recreation Commission, an area outside the primary historic zone may be designated as a recreation zone to provide limited recreational opportunities that will supplement the public's enjoyment of the unit. Certain agricultural, mercantile, or other commercial activities may be permitted if those activities are a part of the history of the individual unit and any developments retain or restore historical authenticity. Historical units shall be named to perpetuate the primary historical theme of the individual units.

### Declaration of Purpose

Amendment: The following Declaration of Purpose was approved with the 2022 IMP and will update the previous Declaration of Purpose.

~~There is no Declaration of Purpose for Sutter's Fort State Historic Park.~~ A Declaration of Purpose is established as part of this Resource Element:

Sutter's Fort catalyzed a pattern of change in California. The purpose of Sutter's Fort State Historic Park is to make available to all people an inclusive, complex, and accurate representation of the Fort's role in the colonization of California. The Fort enticed immigration and sparked the gold-rush, leading to the disruption of life and loss of traditional homeland for Indigenous people who still found ways to persevere. The Fort is central to the state of California's complicated and sometimes dark past, but it is also the key to developing an inclusive future.

~~The purpose of Sutter's Fort State Historic Park is to make available to the people the site of the first Euro-American settlement in the Sacramento Valley of California, and the site of the California Pioneer Memorial, by preserving, restoring, and rehabilitating its historical facilities, and interpreting its significance to the Mexican and American history of California.~~

The function of the Department of Parks and Recreation at Sutter's Fort State Historic Park is to provide an engaging educational platform from which an accurate study of the complex history of 19<sup>th</sup> century California can be explored.

~~foster preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, and interpretation of both the Sutter-period facilities and the California Pioneer Memorial, and to develop interpretive displays of the people and events associated with these structures.~~

## Zone of Primary Interest

The zone of primary interest includes all the land in the unit, including that area of the acreage occupied by the State Indian Museum.

## Resource Management Policies

Broad resource management policies concerning state historic parks are stated in the Public Resources Code (PRC), the California Code of Regulations (CCR), and the department's Resource Management Directives (RMD).

The following policies are intended to be consistent with the provisions of law, policies, and directives, but they are more detailed and specific in their application to Sutter's Fort State Historic Park.

## Natural Resources

### **Plant Life**

The existing vegetation in and around the reconstructed Sutter's Fort bears no resemblance to the pristine landscape of the 1700s, nor does it resemble the appearance of this site during the fort occupation period.

Instead, the vegetation is a mixture of urban city park landscapes composed of scattered specimen trees, shrubs, and turf. The plants next to the fort are a decorative augment and are in stark contrast to the bright white fort walls.

A landscape plan was developed for the park by John McLaren in 1904. This document has not been located, although the brief historical record indicates that much of the existing landscaping conforms to the concept of the plan.

Policy: When considering changes or additions to the landscape, State Parks will develop plans that ensure that the historic and natural value of the park grounds or protected. Future landscape management will protect current park resources while including California native ecology. Native landscaping will be of interpretive value. Changes or additions to the landscaping of the exterior-fort grounds shall be consistent with historic research. Pending discovery of the McLaren plan, all new or replacement plantings on all of the grounds except the perimeter of the fort shall use California native plants.

The artificial lake was envisioned to recreate the destroyed slough. To enhance this effect, the immediate surrounding area should be vegetated with native riparian plants.

Policy: Plants native to the riparian communities of the lower Sacramento and American Rivers as well as non-native plants found on the Park grounds will be used to interpret the changes to California's natural environment over the course of multiple interpretive periods. The grounds-inside the pond perimeter walkways shall be vegetated with plants native to the riparian-communities of the lower Sacramento River and lower American River.

The historic landscaping of the Sutter period in the immediate vicinity of the fort would have been a mix of bare ground and scattered native and non-native grasses and herbs due to intense trampling by the fort occupants. It is impossible to isolate the fort and exterior grounds from the surrounding urban setting; thus, a full-scale recreation of the historic landscaping is impractical. However, it is possible to recreate a more authentic ambience immediately adjacent to the fort.

Policy: The grounds adjacent to the exterior fort walls shall be landscaped to match the Sutter occupation period setting. The plots shall be regraded to drain water away from the fort walls. The landscaping shall be a mixture of bare ground and scattered native grasses and herbs of the lower

Sacramento Valley and documented introduced grasses and herbs. A porous soil binder shall be used to minimize erosion.

There has been damage to historic structures from root growth and water damage from excessive irrigation drainage.

Policy: The landscaping shall not take priority over the need to maintain the historic structures. Any plant that is found to be damaging a historic structure, either directly through plant growth, or indirectly from horticultural practices necessary for its survival and health, shall be immediately removed and not replaced in kind.

The fort is the dominant esthetic feature of this two-city-block area. Some of the vegetation outside the fort obscures a clear view of the fort. Some of the exterior trees are visible from inside the fort walls.

Policy: Plants selected for landscaping shall not impair the surrounding views toward the fort. No plant shall be established outside the fort at a distance that is less than that plant's expected height or crown spread at maturity.

Passing motorists are offered a splendid view of the south wall and gate as they approach downtown on "L" Street.

Policy: The triangular area bounded by "L" Street, the south fort wall, and the southeast-northwest walkway between the "L" Street/28th Street Intersection and the southeast corner of the fort shall not be landscaped with any plants that exceed three feet in height. Native trees existing in this area shall be transplanted elsewhere on the grounds. Non-native trees in this area shall be removed.

Policy: All existing plants shall be maintained until death unless they become a safety hazard, or they are damaging cultural resources. These plants shall be replaced only if the selected species and location conform to the previous policies.

### **Animal Life**

The pond is an artificial resource. The existing aquatic organisms would be unable to survive without human intervention, including water additions, water aeration, and periodic dredging.

Mammals, fish, and birds are frequently abandoned by the general public in the unit particularly in the vicinity of the pond. Poaching also occurs.

Policy: Animal life management of the pond area is contingent on isolation of the resource from unauthorized use by the public. Management of the pond shall continue unchanged until such time as the area can be effectively isolated from the public during non-visitation periods. Once isolated, the introduced aquatic organisms in the pool shall be replaced with species native to the Sacramento and American Rivers.

### Cultural Resources

#### **Native American Resources**

There is a known Native American cemetery located on the fort grounds. The extent of the cemetery and associated Native American site are not known, in addition to the Native American cemetery, CA-SAC-34, there is a known cache of artifacts buried near the State Indian Museum. This cache consists of a group of ground stone tools buried by department archeologists about ~~30~~50 years ago.

Policy: Due to the unknown extent of the Native American archeological site and associated cemetery, no significant ground-disturbing activities shall take place on the grounds unless supervised by a qualified archeologist.

## Euro-American Resources

The principal Euroamerican resources at Sutter's Fort State Historic Park consist of the historic structures on the site. These structures date variously from the Sutter period (1840s) and the Pioneer Memorial construction period (1890s).

Policy: The primary interpretive periods for Euro-American colonization shall reflect the years 1839-1849, when the fort was the most complete. Three secondary historical periods shall reflect the period of deterioration of the fort and reconstruction by the Native Sons of the Golden West to become the California Pioneer Memorial, 1880-1900, and the period, from 1900 to the present. The flow of history shall reflect the indigenous people who occupied the lands, the arrival of Sutter and his association with the land, and the lasting impacts of Euro-American immigration.  
~~The primary historical period shall reflect the years 1845-1847, when the fort was the most complete. Two secondary historical periods shall reflect the period of construction and operation of the California Pioneer Memorial, 1889-1893, and the Pioneer Museum period, from 1927 to 1939. The flow of history shall reflect the period of Sutter's association with the land, and the various cultures which came in contact with Sutter.~~

Sutter's Fort, a national historic landmark, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and is a state, county, and city landmark. Due to these various listings, Sutter's Fort is clearly protected under the provisions of the California Public Resources Code, Division 5, Chapter 1, Article 2, Section 5024.5, inclusive.

Policy: The external appearance and internal configuration of Sutter's Fort shall be managed in compliance with California Public Resources Code, Division 5, Chapter 1, Article 2, Section 5024.5. To this end, all preservation, restoration, or rehabilitation, including such projects as moving of interior partitions, removal or replacement of walks and interior flooring, and reroofing and any other activity which might disturb the internal or external fabric of the fort, must be reviewed by the Office of Historic Preservation, in addition to normal department review procedures.

Since the central building and portions of the reconstruction are made of adobe bricks, there is a need for special consideration of the qualities of this material. Many past adobe restoration projects in the State Park System have entailed the use of modern materials in stabilizing and restoring historic fabric. There is a considerable body of data which indicate that most of these techniques are actually detrimental to the original historic materials. The federal government is currently studying the problems associated with stabilization and restoration of adobe structures and will produce guidelines for such procedures on completion of the study. The following policies reflect the need to use caution in restoration or rehabilitation of the adobe portions of the fort.

Policy: When replacement or repair of historic common brick or adobe fabric is essential, it shall be done in-kind whenever possible, rather than being replaced with modern materials of a different kind. This policy is to be applied to hidden structural elements, as well as surface finishes. Use of modern materials should be avoided unless absolutely necessary for the safety of the occupants of the structure, as guided by application of the California Historic Building Code and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation. Replacement or repair must be reviewed by the Office of Historic Preservation. The seismic qualities of the site shall be considered when applying this policy.

Policy: Restoration, reconstruction, or rehabilitation shall be undertaken after collecting sufficient information to assure authentic and accurate work, and after proper review by the Office of Historic Preservation. Necessary historical, archeological, and architectural research shall be accomplished to ensure accuracy and authenticity. A historic structures report shall be prepared



prior to restoring or modifying either the exterior or interior of the historic buildings. Further research on the buildings' evolution and the various people who inhabited the site may be required to cover the flow of history.

Policy: To enhance the department's goals of historic preservation of Sutter's Fort SHP, it will be necessary to consider an annual program of restoration, preservation, and maintenance, with a detailed annual budget. The following items shall be considered as part of a regular program of preservation and restoration:

- a) Regular care, painting, maintenance, and replacement (If necessary) of exterior walls, framing, railings, woodwork, whitewash or paint, window frames, glass, porches, and roofs, in a fashion consistent with maintenance of adobe buildings of the historic time period.
- b) Regular care, painting, maintenance, and replacement of interior plaster, walls, molding, woodwork, floors, fireplaces, and other internal fixtures, in a fashion consistent with the maintenance of an adobe structure or common brick structure of the historic period.
- c) A regular evaluation, maintenance, upgrading, and, when feasible, concealment of fire and intrusion alarm systems.
- d) A regular evaluation, maintenance, replacement, and, when feasible, concealment of electrical systems.
- e) An integrated pest management program to be developed for the fort structure.

All restoration planning is to be based on exacting historical and architectural research to determine the authenticity of each step of the process, and/or to determine the correct materials.

Policy: As part of rehabilitation of Sutter's Fort, inappropriate signs and graphics which might exist in the unit shall be removed and replaced, if necessary, with signage or graphics that reflect historic signage of the time.

The appearance of the structures of- the fort shall be maintained as close to the Sutter prime period as is possible, based on available documentation.

Policy: The existing kiosk adjacent to the south gate shall be removed or rebuilt to be more visually compatible.

Policy: A resource management program will be prepared and implemented before any facility changes or new facility development takes place. The resource management program shall include. But not be limited to. Appropriate archeological testing procedures designed to identify the type and magnitude of those Euroamerican and/or Native American cultural resources not readily apparent on the ground surface.

Policy: Identified historic archeological features will be protected from unnecessary damage. And will be carefully investigated and properly mitigated prior to any reconstruction. It is known that as yet unidentified historic archeological features exist in the unit. These consisted of, but were not necessarily limited to, satellite structures such as sheds, wall foundations, and corrals. Since these

unidentified structures constitute an integral part of the historic resources at Sutter's Fort, a qualified archeologist shall monitor all underground work or subsurface disturbances on the fort grounds.

Currently, there are several plaques and monuments on the fort grounds, and three in the courtyard.

Policy: Modern monuments, busts, and plaques calling attention to historic personages or good deeds currently placed about the grounds outside the fort walls shall be allowed to remain. Such monuments currently on view in the courtyard of the fort shall be removed to an interior museum space, and properly interpreted. ~~No new monuments shall be placed in any outside location on either the courtyard or exterior grounds.~~ Monuments deemed to be inaccurate or misleading shall be removed.

It has been apparent for some time that one of the principal problems at the fort is water drainage. Recent replacement of concrete walkways with soil cement has helped to reveal the extent of this problem. Placement of the soil cement has also helped to drain moisture away from parts of the structures.

Policy: The remaining concrete walkways will be removed, replaced with appropriate materials, and graded to drain away from the walls.

Policy: All reasonable effort shall be exerted to reduce the amount of water damage to the fort. To this end, all planting bed borders around the perimeter of the fort shall be removed and regraded to facilitate migration of water away from the walls. On the Interior of the fort, a system of secure downspouts and a drainage pattern shall be established that significantly reduce water flowing down or standing against the walls. To facilitate these drainage considerations, the interior lawn and associated turf buildup shall be removed, and, where feasible, the original grade shall be reestablished. Lawn in the Interior yard shall be planted only if commensurate with interpretive goals while not adversely affecting needed drainage.

### Esthetic Resources

Sutter's Fort State Historic Park is surrounded by an intrusive semi-urban environment. In addition to residences and churches dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the grounds are surrounded by modern apartment buildings and commercial structures. Most of the older buildings are not visible from inside the fort. Unfortunately, the new Sutter Hospital structures form a visible intrusion from within the fort which detracts from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century ambience that is critical to Interpretation of the primary historical period. There is little or nothing that can be done to reduce these intrusions.

Policy: The department shall work with the government of the City of Sacramento to endeavor to ensure that future construction surrounding Sutter's Fort SHP shall be maintained at a height low enough so that no new visual intrusions can be seen from the fort interior courtyard.

### Recreation Resources

Recreational activities at Sutter's Fort SHP are both passive and active. The "city"-type park surrounding the fort is a favorite area for local visitors to sit and relax or have a picnic. This area is also used by the numerous visiting school groups for staging and picnicking. The interior of the fort is used in a more active manner. There are frequent demonstrations and hands-on visitor experiences offered in the fort. Sutter's Fort has an ~~active department sponsored~~ environmental living program (ELP) in which 4<sup>th</sup> graders stay in the fort overnight, and, with the help of staff and volunteers, experience activities appropriate to the Sutter period of occupation. In addition to the ELP, there is an ongoing third-person demonstration program and an 1846 period first-person living history program in the fort which attempt to educate visitors regarding Mexican and American lifestyles of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

Policy: Active recreational activities and values associated with this historic unit must be subordinate to the protection of the unit's resources. Recreational activities, environmental living programs, historical reenactments, and living history programs that support the goals and objectives of the 2022 IMP environmental living program, historical re-enactments, and living history programs will be continually evaluated on a program-by-program basis to assess the impact on facilities and unit administration caused by those activities. If required, Mitigation will be planned in accordance with department regulations and policies.

### Sensitivities and Constraints

The California Public Resources Code, Section 5019.5, requires that a land-carrying capacity survey be made prior to the preparation of any development plan for any park or recreation area. The first step in determining appropriate carrying capacity is the identification of natural and cultural resource values, and sensitivities. And constraints. Information on value, sensitivity, and constraints was used in the analysis and determination of carrying capacity and allowable use intensity, which are found in the Land Use and Facilitates Element. Other factors considered are classification and purpose of the unit, recreation needs, and social carrying capacity. Or the desired quality of the recreation experience.

#### **Resource Value**

Resource value is the relative importance of a cultural or natural resource to society. Resources of national, statewide, or regional significance are considered to be of high value or importance. Archeological sites and features and historical structures (more than 50 years old) are of high value. Specific factors used in evaluating natural resource values include rarity, endangerment, and uniqueness. For example, federal- and state-listed rare, threatened, or endangered species, and remnants of California's once extensive valley oak and riparian habitats, are considered to be of high value.

#### **Resource Sensitivity**

Resource sensitivity is a term used to qualify the degree to which a resource can be adversely affected by human activity. Cultural and natural resource sensitivity play a key role in determining appropriate visitor use in a particular area.

#### **Cultural Resource Sensitivities**

The sensitivity of cultural sites is based on the type of site or feature, the current condition of the site or feature, and the potential for damage or destruction.

High to extreme sensitivities exist in areas with known sites or features that contain significant cultural remains, including those of possible small Native American village and use states, human burials, and artifacts or structures of historic importance, or areas with surface indicators of such sites. Historic features or structures eligible for or already registered on one or more of the federal or state registers of historic properties are always considered to be highly sensitive.

Moderate to high sensitivities exist in areas bordering known highly sensitive Native American or historic sites because such areas have a high potential for containing subsurface cultural remains, based on their context and proximity to known sites or features.

Areas of low sensitivity include lands and resources able to withstand and recover from high levels of disturbance. The land in this category has been significantly modified by past uses.

#### **Resource Constraints**

Resource constraints are physical conditions that could make visitor use of facility development unsafe, more costly, or undesirable. They are determined by evaluating such factors as erodibility and the

compactive potential of soils, geologic hazards, slope stability and relief, hydrologic conditions, the potential for pollution of surface waters, and flooding.

Two physical constraints exist at Sutter's Fort SHP that need to be considered in land use planning: potential flooding and earthquake activity. Hydrologic studies show that the grounds surrounding Sutter's Fort are within the 100-year flood zone for the American River. The potential for seismic activity must be considered throughout California.

# LAND USE AND FACILITIES ELEMENT

## Background

Sutter's Fort State Historic Park presents a unique problem for park planners in that the existing facilities are a combination of historic, non-historic, and recreated structures and landscaping. Most of these recreated elements have since gained historical significance. While they have gained significance, they continue to be overshadowed by the fact that the structure is associated with Sutter and the history of his activities. The fact that the structure is one of the early attempts at preservation is subordinated to the Sutter 1845-1846 historical theme.

## Objectives of the Land Use Element

This element establishes guidelines and recommendations for the use of existing structures and lands for the purposes of interpretation, exhibits, public activities, administration, artifact storage, curation, and maintenance of the facilities.

## Existing Conditions

### General

Across 26<sup>th</sup> Street is a large Catholic church built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Across L Street are several two-story medical office buildings. The expansion of Sutter Hospital on the eastern edge (across 28<sup>th</sup> Street) has burgeoned the area with building growth, mostly medical office buildings. This trend will continue on into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The fort, as it now stands, is largely a reconstruction. The term "reconstruction" is used very loosely since the structure has been constructed with numerous deviations from the original fort configuration. It is the deviations from the original that make the fort unique on several levels of resource interest.

It is through the association with the Native Sons of the Golden West, late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, that the present structure exists. The facility and landscape reflect their knowledge, experience, spirit, and efforts. Since that time, the reconstruction has been slightly modified by the state to reflect its interpretation and requirements.

The intervening years have seen the memorial become the focus of new interests and needs. The public has become much more sophisticated in understanding what "historic" means. Other examples of historic parks have been preserved, restored, or reconstructed to exhibit present knowledge of mid-nineteenth-century life. The fort has seen changes responding to the pressure-need to present a more realistic version of Sutter's world accurate historical narratives. These changes have occurred within a limited realm of possibility, due to the location of the site and the way the structure was reconstructed.

The changes to the fort since reconstruction have not been rigorously documented but are generally described in the Resource Element. Likewise, changes to the landscaping have even poorer documentation. The original design is known to exist only from its being mentioned in a newspaper article.

### Indian Museum and Maintenance/Restroom (Gardener's Cottage) Structures

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, the site was modified with addition of the building for the State Indian Museum. And, soon after, a restroom and maintenance building (gardener's cottage). A portion of the park adjacent to the California Indian Museum on the west side has since been fenced off to provide a secure area for examples of California Indian-Native American structures and living demonstrations. This area functions as a part of the Indian-m Museum.

The maintenance facility and restrooms are located east of the [California](#) Indian Museum and are of a similar architectural style to the museum. The toilets are not handicap-accessible and are in need of restoration or rehabilitation.

Restroom facilities are now open and suffer from vandalism and indigent traffic.

Park vehicles now park on the site, on the paths between the fort and the maintenance building. Construction of a curb cut on K Street and installation of screened parking between the building and the sidewalk will eliminate this problem.

### Interior Uses of the Fort

The spaces in the fort house various interpretive ~~displays, house museum~~ exhibits, staff functions, storage, and ~~interpretive association~~ volunteer uses. Over the history of the fort, some of the portrayed historic room functions have been researched and moved from one location to another to better reflect the actual uses of the rooms in the Sutter period.

The distillery has been the location of the Pioneer Museum exhibits (Reed doll etc.) for many years. The rooms to the north of the east entrance were constructed as quarters for the curator. and now serve as the unit office. A kiosk is located near the south entrance to provide the visitor contact station. The south entrance now functions as the main entrance to the fort, but earlier, the east gate appears to have been used as the entrance.

During the Peterson curatorship of the park, many early pioneer artifacts were collected, and some displayed at the fort. A series of cases was built for display of artifacts, some associated with the fort, and some early pioneer articles. These cases and the artifacts have been stored in the attic of the Kyburz annex and elsewhere; some of the cases were dispersed to other parks.

The artifacts were not cataloged until recently, and adequate facilities for storage have not been available. The space above the Kyburz annex is now being planned and budgeted to be turned into a curatorial and storage facility with environmental controls to serve long-range minimal on-site needs.

The utilities which serve the structure have been modified and upgraded somewhat over the years. but a wholesale reappraisal of the plumbing, electrical, and environmental controls has not been done.

### Exterior Uses Around the Fort

The grounds surrounding the fort were designed as a "city park." The design is integral to the whole concept of the state park existing in the center of a downtown area. By the late 1880s, when the fort was being considered for eventual reconstruction, the site had been subdivided into city lots. The hill the fort was constructed on was cut down to fit the surrounding street level and make the park flow out to the east, rather than having a retaining wall or bank along the eastern edge. The slough to the north was filled in to make the area surrounding the fort as usable as possible.

The site has become a "city park" used by neighbors and workers in the surrounding area as a place to relax and recreate and enjoy the landscape. School groups use the grassy areas for organizing into groups, or for picnics before or after visiting the fort.

During large special events, the west and north areas of the park have been used. A portion of 27th Street has been blocked off to accommodate large events. Despite the ability to use these areas, the site has proven too small to accommodate the largest events, including California Indian Days. This event has now been moved away from the park. Noise and people attending the events have caused disturbance to residents of the area.

The area surrounding the fort structure was planted in the style of city parks being established in that period, using native species for ornamental plantings, and creating a pond and walkways. The interior of the fort was also planted. These deviations are in contrast to the fort and surroundings during the time of John Sutter.

### **Guidelines and Recommendations for Public Use**

The following Land Use and Facilities guidelines are in accordance with the mission of the department, which is to preserve and protect the resources for Interpretation and use by the public.

#### **The Facilities**

This plan intends to preserve the aspects of the resource which are truly unique to this historical structure. It does not, however, attempt to preserve the structure of the fort as it appeared in any previous time period. The plan intends to continue the process of making the structure appear to be a replica of Sutter's Fort during the primary historic period, 1845-47. The basic structure of the fort will not be modified, but the spaces in and around the fort will be modified ~~to represent the 1845-47 time period~~. These changes will be done in conformance with the policies of the Resource Element and the Interpretive Element.

The structure of Sutter's Fort will be preserved and maintained. "Structure(s) is here defined as real property and its attachments, as normally defined in real estate terms. The interior interpretation and use are expected to change over time to meet the needs of the park and the public.

The proposed plan recommends changes to accommodate increased need for ~~interpretation-interpretation-of Sutter's period~~, and to improve the quality of visitor experiences in general.

#### **Functions Recommended to be Accommodated Within the Unit Boundaries**

##### **Visitor contact/entrance function**

- Display functions (of ~~both Sutter and his fort and pioneer~~ artifacts collected for the ~~Pioneer mMuseumMuseum~~).
- ~~House museum~~ Exhibit space functions depicting ~~life in Sutter's time~~ historically accurate activities in the Fort.
- Interpretation ~~of the past of life in Sutter's time~~ by environmental living programs and interpretive association functions.
- Restroom functions.
- Basic maintenance functions for curation of artifacts, materials storage, fixing/working on displays, and collection of trash.
- Office space for site-related staff functions.

This plan recommends the removal of the following functions to a central location from which these functions can be administered and accomplished jointly:

- Maintenance of facilities.
- Maintenance of grounds.
- Principal storage and curation of artifacts.
- Creation of displays.
- Office space for central location functions.

The Kyburz annex space is not accessible to the disabled and, while good for storage, is not appropriate for permanent use for curation or for availability of the area and contents to the staff, ~~docents~~ volunteers, or the public.

In addition, equipment for creating the controlled environment will be both a visual and noise intrusion on the interpretive facilities. These intrusions should be minimized, and, in the long term, avoided.

The existing situation requires that the area above the Kyburz annex be used for storage and curation of artifacts. Since there is no other place for these functions, they should continue until a ~~time~~ when a permanent facility is available for general storage and curation of artifacts for all three historic sites units in Sacramento.

The existing situation also requires almost all staff functions to operate in the existing facilities. There is a need for space for some staff functions in the unit; however, all unnecessary functions shall be moved when appropriate space in a combined historic sites office and maintenance facility is available. This plan recommends that space for grounds and facilities maintenance be moved to the previously mentioned central location, when possible.

### **Guidelines for Development**

#### **General**

Work done to historic structures in this park shall meet the requirements of the State Historic Building Code, Section 8 of Title 24.

Facilities in historic structures, open to the public, and to be used or staffed, shall be made accessible per the requirements of the State Historic Building Code.

New facilities shall meet the requirements of applicable codes for new construction, Title 24.

The grounds and facilities shall be grouped into categories of similar treatment for any proposed work. See plan.

The structures shall be treated as historic and of significance in a period that extends from their construction to the end of the work implemented through the 1940s.

A historic structures report shall be done to establish information regarding the evolution of changes to the buildings since their construction. The structures should be maintained, or deferred maintenance items restored, using materials that match the existing, until a historic structures report is accomplished.

#### **Categories of use**

~~House Museum~~ **Exhibit Space**: Primary space for interpretation of the themes of the park. An accurate (established through research) representation of the original uses and period of the space.

Mixed-use: Space which fulfills multiple functions, such as museum displays, a "~~trade~~ **museum** store," orientation, and special functions.

Adaptive use; Space for service functions by staff and ~~docents/interpretive associations~~ **volunteers and the cooperative association**. Includes restrooms, offices, and curatorial spaces.

#### **Recommended Treatment of Structures**

The following treatments shall be established as the guide for future restoration and maintenance of the facilities.

Historic space: This type of space will reflect the original qualities of the fort, as noted in the general statements above.

Adaptive space: This type of space will reflect the original qualities of the fort but will allow for modern but compatible utilities and other functional requirements for adaptive uses.



~~The plan on page # denotes which spaces have been designated for which treatment. The fort's courtyards are considered historic space. The interior of the fort, with the exception of the following spaces, will be historic space:~~

~~The Pioneer Museum~~

~~Park administration office (curator's residence) Restrooms~~

~~Orientation rooms Docent trade storerooms Kyburz annex~~

~~Ground floor of the northwest bastion Ground floor of the central building~~

~~The top floor of the central building is considered non-accessible space for storage (not adaptive space). The entrance kiosk is considered a non-contributing element in the historic space of the courtyards.~~

~~The maintenance building (gardener's cottage) outside the fort walls should be an adaptive space. The exterior of the structure shall be considered a part of the historical setting, and modifications are generally discouraged. The interior of this building should be renovated and should include new and improved restrooms which will accommodate the disabled.~~

## Grounds

The grounds have established historical significance. Photographs of the grounds indicate that the basic design of the landscaping has been established for more than 50 years. This includes walks, curbs, and much of the planting.

This plan recommends that a historic landscape report be developed to establish the evolution of changes to the landscape over its life.

A landscape plan shall be prepared in accordance with the historic landscape report to guide development and maintenance of the landscape. In the absence of a landscape plan, the landscape shall be maintained, and plantings replaced in accordance with the resource management policies of this plan.

## Maintenance Facilities

This plan recommends that additional property to accommodate maintenance facilities be provided for use by all Sacramento Historic Sites units. After this additional maintenance property is available for departmental use, the following is recommended:

- Maintenance of all historic site's units shall be accommodated at a single location which will not affect historic resources. This maintenance site shall accommodate enough space for all maintenance functions.
- Maintenance facilities shall be removed from historic buildings.
- No vehicles shall park on the site of Sutter's Fort except for occasional unloading of equipment.

## Guidelines for Future Development Using the Existing State Indian Museum

These modifications are based on the assumption that eventually, the State Indian Museum will be moved to a new site/building, and are intended to be implemented only after a new facility has been occupied by the museum and the present building is vacated. As a part of enhancing the visitor experience at the park, a portion of the site is envisioned to be modified in the future. The State Indian Museum structure is intended to provide space for visitor center/entrance/orientation functions. Future development of the

Indian Museum building and the maintenance building should follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

The design of the State Indian Museum structure may be modified slightly, to create an office, an outside entry, and a gathering space. The contact station in the visitor center shall allow security of the doors to the new restrooms, which are to be located inside the State Indian Museum building.

~~An area between the fort and the museum building would be secured with a visually compatible barrier, to allow creation of the "naturalized" area, which would resemble the early wetlands landscape of the area. The naturalized area must be secured to ensure that the naturalized environment is not subject to misuse by the public after normal hours, nor a hazard during operating hours; 2) that the area is a part of the "fee area" of the park; and 3) that plant and animal species are controlled in the area.~~

~~The design of the barrier which will protect the naturalized area shall be minimal in its impact to the existing structures, but especially the views of the fort. The element should be compatible with the existing architecture.~~

~~Park visitors would first enter the visitor center to be oriented to the fort, and to see the pioneer exhibits. After the orientation, visitors will be able to walk through the naturalized area. The east gate of the fort would be encompassed in the secured area of naturalized landscape, allowing visitors to enter the fort.~~

~~When the visitor access is changed, the kiosk/contact station should be removed from the fort, along with the closing of the main gates, which now allow visual disruption from the outside.~~

The north side of the visitor center should be designed to better accommodate school groups being able to gather to enter the park.

## **Carrying Capacity**

### **Explanation and Definition of Carrying Capacity**

The concept of carrying capacity has been with the Department of Parks and Recreation since its adoption in 1957 of Section 5019.5 of the Public Resources Code. The expression "carrying capacity" seems to imply that there is a single and simple maximum number of persons that a given unit of land can accommodate without detrimental effect. There is then a tendency to make the inference that such a number can be arrived at by a simple review of environmental and recreational needs.

It is essential to emphasize at the outset that such ideas represent a gross oversimplification of facts and circumstances. The complexities of designating carrying capacities cannot be overemphasized. The following list indicates some of the variable factors involved:

- Geology and soil characteristics
- Topography Climate Vegetation
- Sociological factors such as public behavior patterns in State Park System units, demand for public use; and quality of visitor experience

Scientific monitoring of public use impacts on State Park System lands would need to be monitored over a period of years to establish a scientific base for determining carrying capacity. Without such long-range scientific monitoring, carrying capacity will be approximate at best.

This plan will use the California State Park System's years of experience designing, managing, operating, and maintaining recreation facilities. This experience should be helpful in estimating carrying capacity and minimizing environmental impacts. and maximizing the quality of visitor experience.

Carrying capacity is an estimated number of visitors that could be accommodated at one time over a period of years without detracting from either - the integrity of the resources or the quality of the visitor experiences.

Carrying capacities can be estimated for any defined area, visitor facility, or type of environment.

Carrying capacity is dependent on three factors: density, turnover rate, and frequency. Density prescribes the number of people that could use a facility/area/environment at one time. Turnover rate prescribes the number of times the prescribed density could be reached in one day with an entirely different group of visitors. Frequency prescribes the number of days in a year the facility/area/environment could reach the prescribed density with the prescribed turnover rate.

Following is a list of various carrying capacity densities which describe different ratios of people to space:

- MINIMUM DENSITY - 2 people/acre, or groups of 2 people with at least 200 feet between the groups.
- LOW DENSITY - 10 people/acre, or groups of 5 people with at least 150 feet between the groups.
- MEDIUM LOH DENSITY - 25 people/acre, or groups of 5 people with at least 95 feet between the groups.
- MEDIUM DENSITY - 40 people/acre, or groups of 5 people with at least 75 feet between the groups.
- MEDIUM HIGH DENSITY - 75 people/acre, or groups of 5 people with at least 55 feet between the groups.
- HIGH DENSITY - 250 people/acre, or groups of 5 people with at least 30 feet between the groups.
- MAXIMUM DENSITY - 450+ people/acre, or group of 5 people with a maximum of 20 feet between the groups.

All of these densities are greatly affected by turnover rates. If a facility/area/environment is filled to its capacity three times in one day, that would represent a turnover rate of 3.

Following is a list of various carrying capacity frequencies which must be used in conjunction with prescribed densities and turnover rates for recommending carrying capacities:

- MINIMUM FREQUENCY - 1 day per year. LOH FREQUENCY - 2 to 10 days per year.
- MEDIUM LOH FREQUENCY - 10 to 60 days per year. MEDIUM FREQUENCY - 60 to 120 days per year.
- MEDIUM HIGH FREQUENCY - 120 to 180 days per year. HIGH FREQUENCY - 180 to 300 days per year.
- MAXIMUM FREQUENCY - 300 to 365 days per year.

### Recommended Carrying Capacity for Sutter's Fort SHP

Of the 6.2 acres at Sutter's Fort SHP, about three acres are in open space/city-like park space and are used for picnics and passive relaxing.

The recommended carrying capacity for this area is MEDIUM HIGH DENSITY, with a TURNOVER RATE of 2, at HIGH FREQUENCY.

Three acres at 75 people/acre 225 people at one time, and with a turnover rate of 2 • 450 people/day, and at 180 to 300 days s 81,000 to 135,000 people/year.

The fort walls enclose about three-quarters of an acre which is available to visitors to circulate, observe displays, or participate in living history programs, etc. The recommended carrying capacity of this area is MAXIMUM DENSITY, with a TURNOVER RATE of 4, at HIGH FREQUENCY.

Three-quarters of an acre at 500 people/acres 375 people at one time and with a turnover rate of 4  
s 1,500 people/day at 180 to 300 days • 270,000 to 450,000 people/year.

The Indian Museum building has about 3,800 square feet of space for visitors, with about the same amount of space at outdoor displays, for a total of about one-sixth of an acre. The recommended carrying capacity of this area is MAXIMUM DENSITY, with a TURNOVER RATE of 4, at HIGH FREQUENCY.

One-sixth of an acre at 500 people/acre • 84 people at one time with a turnover rate of 4. 336 people/day at 180 to 300 days = 60,480 to 100,800 people/year.

Carrying capacity is not relevant for the water pond area, the park utility and administrative spaces, or the area between the street curbing and sidewalks surrounding Sutter's Fort SHP.

## INTERPRETIVE ELEMENT

Interpretation aims at enhancing public enjoyment and benefit in the State Park System through increasing understanding of significant natural and cultural resources and encouraging appreciation of its value. It is founded on the premise that knowledge deepens the park experience, providing lasting benefits not only to individuals but to society in general. The Interpretive Element works toward this goal by identifying park themes, and a variety of facilities and programs appropriate for their presentation.

### Interpretive Considerations

#### Environmental Influences

The urban setting of Sutter's Fort State Historic Park creates negative impacts on interpretation. Modern noises intrude from the Emergency Room entrance of the adjacent Sutter General Hospital, and the bells of St. Francis Catholic Church and the Pioneer Congregational Church. Fortunately, the sound of the nearby Interstate (Business 80) highway is masked by the many tall buildings close to the fort. The construction materials of the fort -- brick, cement, mortar, and adobe -- and the thickness of its walls screen out all but the most insistent and intense modern noises.

The urbanized viewshed of the fort's exterior constitutes another negative influence. In passing through the fort's entrance, visitors are thrust from one century to another without an opportunity for a mental reorientation to the environment. Visual intrusions are minimized once visitors are inside the fort's high walls, but the modern street scene remains visible through the public entry (south) gate, and tall buildings in the vicinity are visible from in the compound.

The fort's interior and exterior grounds do not represent an accurate historic interpretation of the grounds during Sutter's time. The exterior grounds are a manicured city park, with grass, trees, shrubs, and flowers. The interior grounds consist of two grassy courtyards, walkways paved with concrete and soil cement, an orange tree, and an oak tree.

The fort hosts special events throughout the year, such as the annual Cinco de Mayo celebration. The interior grounds are frequently rented for private evening social activities. Filming and videotaping for television programs and commercials take place occasionally.

~~All park facilities are contained within the walls of the fort. This has severely limited options for interpretation because modern exhibit spaces must occupy rooms or areas that otherwise would be devoted to authentic house museums. The limited space available in the fort has also constrained the size and nature of the sales area, and consequently its interpretive impact.~~

#### Existing Interpretive Media and Programs

The physical interpretive resources of Sutter's Fort State Historic Park consist of the reconstructed fort, its ~~house museum exhibit~~ rooms, and two orientation rooms. The orientation room exhibits consisted of panels, artifacts in display cases, graphics, "Pepper's Ghost" installations depicting evolution of the site from the initial hut structures through the reconstruction, and a representational museum room diorama depicting the moment Marshall informed Sutter of the Coloma gold discovery. Interpretive panels located in some of the ~~house museum exhibit~~ rooms describe activities that occurred during the interpretive period.

~~Visitors most frequently experience the fort's story through the use of electronic wands. This concession-operated medium consists of a series of continuous loop taped messages that are picked up by the radio-~~

~~receiver in the earpiece of the wand. The message interprets the historic significance of the particular room or object visitors are looking at.~~

The interpretive program of the fort has many facets. ~~Besides use of the electronic wands, T~~the visitors' experience is often supplemented by the presence of costumed docents demonstrating a craft or trade of Sutter's time. The Sutter's Fort Trade Store, operated by the docents, enables visitors to purchase replicas typical of items available in a trade store during the Sutter period. Several times a year, weekend living history programs take place. These programs are staffed by docents and volunteers and serve to turn back the hands of time to the year 1846, when Captain John Sutter was the proprietor of "New Helvetia." Saturday or Sunday Pioneer Craft Days also bring docents and volunteers to the fort to show park visitors the trades and crafts of the mid-19th century. ~~A rehabilitation program, funded by both the Sacramento State Parks Docent Association and the department, is currently underway. Through this program, the docents and staff are systematically refurbishing each house museum room with replica items and furnishings that can be used by docents, staff, and volunteers to interpret the day-to-day life of the fort.~~

Elementary school children spend a 24-hour period at the fort as part of the very popular Environmental Living Program. The children, usually fourth graders, engage in scaled-down versions of the crafts of Sutter's time, cook their meals over the open fire and in the horno oven, stand guard duty, and generally experience life as pioneers. This program is operated by the fort staff, with docent assistance.

### **Visitors and Their Needs and Expectations**

Reflecting its convenient urban setting, Sutter's Fort SHP annually receives approximately 250,000 visitors. Many are fifth-grade elementary school children participating in the popular Environmental Living Program. The fort is also a field trip destination for school groups who frequently combine a visit to Sutter's Fort with a visit to the adjacent State Indian Museum.

The fort is also popular with local residents and their out-of-town guests. A high percentage of Sacramento's European and Asian tourists frequent the fort, necessitating a series of foreign-language translations. of the electronic wand script.

While the widely renowned historical significance of Sutter's Fort alone assures strong attendance, the enjoyment of visits to Sutter's Fort depends in part on the capacity of the park to accommodate certain comfort needs of visitors. The interior grounds can become uncomfortably hot during the summer months, which may cause visitors to abbreviate their stay. School groups can benefit from defined or enclosed staging areas. which now do not exist. The questions and Interest areas of visitors to Sutter's Fort tend to fall into categories:

- Pioneers - Who were the immigrants who came to Sutter's Fort? What did they do here? How did they get here? Where did they all go?
- Military - Was this a military fort? Was it ever attacked by Indians? Were any battles fought here? What kind of guns did Sutter have, and how did they work?
- Gold Rush - Where was gold discovered? How do we get there? Sutter - Who was John Sutter? Why did he come here?
- Fort - Why is the fort here? Was the fort moved here from somewhere else?
- Is the fort on the original site? Are the buildings original?

While many of these questions are answered in the fort's orientation rooms, some are not. Consequently, this Interpretive Element will recommend appropriate Interpretive methods and media to answer the unanswered questions.

## Interpretive Periods

For many years, the Interpretive period for Sutter's Fort SHP has been recognized as 1839-1850, a span ranging from Sutter's Initial selection of the site to deterioration of the fort during the Gold Rush. ~~As a general interpretive period, this 11-year span works well.~~ However, it is too broad for ~~house-museum exhibit~~ rooms, excludes ~~California Native American history pre-dating the fort, excludes~~ consideration of Sutter's prior and subsequent activities, and is unrelated to the fort's reconstruction and current operation.

~~The operational period of the Fort is one piece of a larger history. Interpreting periods both before and after the 1840s opens the door to a broader understanding of the complex history associated with Sutter's Fort. Rooms and exhibits should not be restricted to presenting any one specific period. Rooms should be designed with flexibility to interpret the periods mentioned above and not be constrained to 1840s appearance alone. Using the best of current scholarship, the Fort will become a place to display the complexities of history and explore the effects of that complicated history on California's communities.~~

~~House-museum rooms require a much narrower focus, preferably one to two years. Sutter lived from 1803 to 1880, in many different places, and under varying circumstances. The fort reconstruction movement began in the mid-1880s, and continues today, with refurbishment of individual rooms and exhibits to better depict the fort's period appearance.~~

To accommodate the many forms interpretation takes at the fort, the variety of interpretive themes, and the broad ~~impact~~ New Helvetia had on California, ~~'s legends and realities, a three-part interpretive period is proposed: this plan proposes five interpretive periods:~~

### 1. ~~I. General Primary Interpretive Periods: 1839-1850~~

#### a. ~~House-museum Interpretive period: 1845-1847~~

~~This period highlights the thriving and complex Indigenous culture of California. As colonization became a harsh reality, this period also demonstrates the hardships incurred and prevailing perseverance of Native cultures through the pressures of colonization. Spanish exploration and the mission system, Mexican-era cattle ranching, trapping expeditions, and Sutter's travels to California all influenced a massive shift in the culture, natural, and political landscape.~~

#### b. ~~Exhibit Interpretive period: 1838-1849.~~

~~This period encompasses the beginning of John Sutter's plan to create a Fort in California, its operational period, to the sale of the Gold Rush-ravaged fort by 1849. Sutter's foothold in the interior of California created new, proximal pressures for Indigenous populations and they resisted this foreign power. The Fort's operation created conflicts between Indigenous and non-Native people as land, resources and people were exploited.~~

#### ~~General-Secondary Interpretive Periods: 1839-1850~~

#### c. ~~1850 – 1880~~

~~This period follows the deterioration of the Fort as a result of the Gold Rush, the growth of the city of Sacramento, and early California statehood. This period also highlights the systematic racism and genocide of Native people largely exacerbated by government legislation post-statehood. The expanding population in California led to increased numbers of conflicts between Native and non-Native people.~~

### 2. ~~Secondary Interpretive Periods~~

a. 1880 – 1890

This period follows the process by which the Fort was reconstructed after John Sutter's death in 1880. Preservation groups like the Native Sons of the Golden West were motivated to memorialize the lives of John Sutter and early pioneers who enabled California's violent transformation. The reconstruction of Sutter's Fort started historic preservation movements across the state. This period can be interpreted using a modern lens as a time when Nativism and white supremacy created a culture in California focused on glorifying people who ultimately enabled Indigenous displacement and dehumanization. Overall, the preservation movement paved the road to an exclusive portrayal of history, honoring only the narratives of immigrants while leaving out the history of institutional racism.

b. 1900 – Present

This period recognizes the modern role of the Fort as an institution and how the role has changed from its designation as a California State Historic Museum in 1917, its inclusion to the California State Parks system in 1947, and shift to a living history museum in the 1950s. Today, Sutter's Fort SHP is an educational institution focused on conveying an inclusive, complex, and accurate history of Sutter's Fort's role in California's past.

~~This period will be used to interpret Sutter's Immediate impact on New Helvetia, and on California history. It will also be used to interpret the growth and decline of the fort's original buildings and activities.~~

~~House Museum Interpretive Period: 1845-1847~~

~~It is recognized that the fort's present size and configuration is a result of the Pioneer Memorial construction of 1891-1893. However, the story of the impact of the fort and its inhabitants on California history is the primary thrust of interpretation of the site. The years 1845-1847 were the period of greatest prosperity and activity at the fort, and this interpretive period will enable the department to depict the fort at its fullest development.~~

~~Therefore, for purposes of furnishing the fort's house museum rooms and determining the appearance of the fort's interior grounds, this short time period will be used.~~

~~Exhibit Interpretive Period: 1803-present.~~

~~This interpretive period will be used for all permanent and changing exhibits installed at the fort, and in future visitor facilities. It will allow interpretation of such subjects as Sutter's early life, the lives of immigrants who passed through the fort, evolution of tools used by fort craftspeople, and the late 19th-century reconstruction of the fort.~~

~~Inclusion of the last, and broadest, interpretive period puts the burden of justification on the fort's curator and interpretive staff when a new exhibit is proposed. The curator and the interpretive staff must make a determination of the relevance of a proposed exhibit theme to the interpretive themes of the fort before a new display is approved.~~

### **Interpretive Themes**

Themes are essential to the development of effective interpretive services. Themes express basic concepts about significant resources through single, complete, easily remembered statements. The use of themes helps differentiate interpretation from simple entertainment or instruction. Themes are a valuable tool for interpreters to use when developing new programs and they help visitors better grasp and remember the interpretive messages being conveyed.



The 2022 Interpretation Master Plan (IMP) identifies the following themes to govern park operations, facilities, and interpretive planning:

**Unifying Theme:**

Built on the traditional lands of Nisenan and Miwok people, Sutter's Fort catalyzed a pattern of change in California leading to the introduction of diverse immigrant communities, disruption of Native life, and ultimately a forced convergence of cultures that affects present-day California relationships and reveals Sutter's Fort's controversial legacy as an institution.

**Primary Theme I: ~~New Helvetia—The Dream~~ Opportunity and Conflict**

The western landscape dramatically changed when perceptions of economic opportunity brought both greed and immigration to California creating immediate and lasting conflicts between Native and non-Native people. ~~Genesis of a California empresario (Sutter's early life and his journey to California)~~

**"First echo of civilization" (The beginnings of New Helvetia)**

~~c. Reluctant neophytes, willing employees (Sutter's relationship with the Native Americans)~~

~~D. Foreign weeds in California's garden (The political climate of California in the 1840s, and the impact of the Americans on it)~~

**Primary Theme II: ~~New Helvetia—The Reality~~ Laboratory of Learning**

Sutter's Fort SHP stands as a "laboratory of learning" where all people can better understand all perspectives of California's diverse, complex, and sometimes tragic past through a visitor experience that is reflective, analytical, and inclusive. ~~Growth and adversity (Growth of New Helvetia and the impact of immigration)~~

~~Sutter's world turned upside down (The Gold Rush)~~

**Primary Theme III: Economic Aspirations and Exploitation**

In pursuit of his economic aspirations, John Sutter built his business enterprises on the exploited labor of indigenous people and minority immigrant groups, along with diverse tradesmen, shaping California's cultural relationships in a manner that persists today.

~~c. Family, retreat, and livelihood (Sutter's life in California after the Gold Rush).~~

~~An honored but neglected pioneer (Sutter's legal struggles, and his death in Washington, D.C.)~~

~~Rebuilding the New Helvetia dream (Reconstruction of the fort, and the interpretive programs offered there today these themes provide an overview of Sutter's entire life and the fort's existence, giving visitors fundamental information on which to build an understanding of the fort. Of the orientation room themes, the following are partially or wholly applicable to the other interpretive facilities of the park:~~

~~"First echo of civilization"~~

~~Reluctant neophytes, willing employees Growth and adversity~~

~~Sutter's world turn upside down Rebuilding the New Helvetia dream.~~

~~Additional themes are needed to give today's visitors an understanding of the operation of New Helvetia, and of the people who either lived at the fort or used its facilities. Therefore, an expanded theme outline is proposed for use in the remainder of the fort:~~Secondary themes have been developed to guide interpretation outside the primary themes and primary interpretive period of Sutters Fort:

### Secondary Theme 1: Resource Extraction and Natural Ecosystems

- Trapping parties drastically altered California's natural ecosystems and introduced foreign diseases into the Sacramento Valley, both to the detriment of Indigenous people.

### Secondary Theme 2: Alta California and Mexican Rule

- Mexican rule of Alta California accelerated the exploitation of Native labor and resources and opened the door to international trade routes for the hide, tallow, and fur trapping industries.

### Secondary Theme 3: Historic Refuge of Overland Immigrants

- Overland immigrants, including the Donner Party, viewed Sutter's fort as a place of refuge and hospitality arriving at the end of the long journey to California.

The approved interpretive plan for the fort's two orientation rooms includes the following interpretive themes:

Theme I: New Helvetia—The Dream

———Genesis of a California empresario (Sutter's early life and his journey to California)

"First echo of civilization" (The beginnings of New Helvetia)

c. —————Reluctant neophytes, willing employees (Sutter's relationship with the Native Americans)

D. Foreign weeds in California's garden (The political climate of California in the 1840s, and the impact of the Americans on it)

Theme II: New Helvetia—The Reality

Growth and adversity (Growth of New Helvetia and the impact of immigration)

Sutter's world turned upside down (The Gold Rush)

c. —————Family, retreat, and livelihood (Sutter's life in California after the Gold Rush).

An honored but neglected pioneer (Sutter's legal struggles, and his death in Washington, D.C.)

———Rebuilding the New Helvetia dream (Reconstruction of the fort, and the interpretive programs offered there today these themes provide an overview of Sutter's entire life and the fort's existence, giving visitors fundamental information on which to build an understanding of the fort. Of the orientation room themes, the following are partially or wholly applicable to the other interpretive facilities of the park:

"First echo of civilization"

Reluctant neophytes, willing employees Growth and adversity

Sutter's world turn upside down Rebuilding the New Helvetia dream.

~~Additional themes are needed to give today's visitors an understanding of the operation of New Helvetia, and of the people who either lived at the fort or used its facilities. Therefore, an expanded theme outline is proposed for use in the remainder of the fort:~~

Primary Theme: New Helvetia—the myth and reality of a California landmark Secondary Themes:

Sutter's Fort was the "first echo of civilization" in California's central valley.

Sutter's Hawaiians—a little known but valuable part of the colony.

The valley's Native Americans were reluctant neophytes, but willing employees.

The Immigrants' trip west was a journey of more than miles.

Sutter's Fort was a factory as well as a land grant.

The fort and its occupants experienced growth and adversity.

The Gold Rush turned New Helvetia upside down.

Reconstructing the fort was rebuilding the New Helvetia dream.

### Expanded Themes

Primary Theme: New Helvetia—the myth and reality of a California landmark

New Helvetia has many myths associated with it. To the people who lobbied for reconstruction of the fort buildings in the 1890s, New Helvetia was a memorial to their illustrious pioneer beginnings, and to the pioneers who had passed on. The fort was, in a way, a symbol of the pioneer spirit. John Sutter was looked on as the founding father of Sacramento—even though the city was begun more than a mile away, and Sutter considered it a poorly planned rival to his "Montezuma" (or Sutterville, as the immigrants called it). To some pioneers, Sutter's Fort was the end of the trail, and a place where they should be given everything, they wanted free of charge because they had worked so hard to get there. California, symbolized by Sutter's establishment, was the land of milk and honey, where land was free and unbelievably fertile, and there were herds of cattle and horses for the taking. The fort was, and is, thought by some to be the place where gold was discovered. Today's visitors, perhaps influenced by decades of Hollywood movies to believe that all frontier forts were built as defensive bastions, ask if the walls were ever threatened by attacking Native Americans.

These are the realities of New Helvetia: To John Sutter, it was his establishment, his factory, his livelihood, and his home. To the Mexican Californians, it was both an empresario grant in the central valley of the Department of Alta California, and the stronghold of an ever-increasing number of Americans who were casting covetous eyes on the Californios' land. Many Native Americans saw the fort as an intrusion on their lands. Others saw it as a source of protection and European goods. And, to the American immigrants who traveled over the mountains, it was a safe haven after a treacherous journey. Some of these immigrants stayed at the fort to become part of the work force, and others moved on to land of their own, often remembering New Helvetia and its proprietor favorably. Today's visitors see a seemingly old structure in—the midst of a modern city and wonder whether the fort is original or a reconstruction.

Secondary Themes:

Sutter's Fort was the "first echo of civilization" in California's central valley: The settlement that came to be known as Sutter's Fort was built on a site previously used by Native Americans. This information, the early physical growth of the fort, the additions to the colony that acquisitions of Fort Ross provided, and the changes in the function of the area will be discussed under this theme.

——— Sutter's Hawaiians—a little known but valuable part of the colony: Sutter's initial work force included ten Hawaiians or "Kanakas," as they were derisively called. These people, eight men and two women, were important members of the colony, and possibly the most loyal of Sutter's followers. The Hawaiians were overseers for the Native American workers, supervised the settlement's boats, taught the

Native American women how to spin and weave, and stood by Sutter through the turbulent years of the colony's founding and financial troubles.

—————The valley's Native Americans were reluctant neophytes, but willing employees: Sutter employed many Native Americans at the fort. The jobs they performed ranged from skilled to unskilled labor and included service in a quasi-military guard. Sutter also acted as a peacekeeper between the native people and the American settlers. However, the survival of the fort required Sutter to at times engage in military action against his Native American neighbors.

The immigrants' trip west was more than a journey of miles: The routes taken by the American immigrants, the hardships they faced, what they brought with them, and what they left behind are all questions covered under this theme.

—————New Helvetia was a factory as well as a land grant: Sutter's Fort was more than one man's land grant. It was a center for manufacturing in northern California. Sutter initiated several industries and was often the only source in the region for their products. Among these were salted fish, tanned leather, sawn lumber, and milled flour.

—————The fort and its occupants experienced growth and adversity: The people who traveled from the eastern United States to California were a hardy breed. They overcame many obstacles on their journey here and were often changed by the experience. There were both outstanding and average people in this migration, and all had stories to tell. Why did they leave their eastern homes? Who were they? When did they arrive? Where did they go from here?

The Gold Rush turned New Helvetia upside down: The discovery of gold had an inexorable effect on Sutter, and on New Helvetia. Although Sutter's Fort was not the site of the discovery of gold, it is the place many visitors come to learn about that event. Besides the financial impact of the discovery, there was also a demographic and physical impact on New Helvetia. This is the time when the myths about the position of Sutter's Fort in California history really began.

—————Reconstructing the fort was rebuilding the New Helvetia dream: Reconstruction of Sutter's Fort in the 1890s was a monumental undertaking. The construction methods used and the historical information the work was based—and not based—on are briefly examined in the orientation rooms but can be more fully interpreted. The archeological work done in the 1960s has added a great deal to the current interpretation of the fort's appearance and operation, and the rehabilitation program underway in more recent years has brought a new level of historical authenticity to its house museums and other interpretive resources. These, too, are subjects worthy of interpreting to the public. Reconstruction of the fort as a memorial to the California pioneers, and, in some ways, a shrine to their memory is an often-overlooked facet of California history that merits interpretation at the site.

The areas in the park proposed for interpretation of the preceding themes are shown on Chart I, Interpretive Themes and Spaces.

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## Proposed Interpretation

### Facilities and Media

#### Amendment Note:

This section of the General Plan identifies house museums as a primary form of static interpretation at the Fort. House museum layouts were directed to follow the Kunzel map and rehabilitation programs attempted to recreate the 1840s aesthetic of the Fort. The accuracy of room designations may not be accurate and are based on after-the-fact accounts and research of sometimes incomplete records. Reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts aided the approach for the mission for interpretation at the park at the time of the General Plan. The future of the park will rely less on living history and house museum concepts and instead utilize the interior and exterior spaces to present history in a manner described in the IMP.

This amendment, in alignment with the interpretive direction in the IMP, will allow the rooms and interiors of the Fort to be open to multiple interpretive periods. Flexibility for interpretive approach and tools is necessary to represent an accurate history to visitors. This amendment will update the term "house museum" to "exhibit" or "exhibit space/room" to allow flexibility in how interior spaces will be utilized.

This amendment also recognizes that at the time of the 1990 General Plan the Sacramento State Docent Association was the sole interpretive assistance program operating at the park. The plan was written to identify their roles in park functions and needs regarding room usage, preparation, storage, and training areas. The Friends of Sutter's Fort and the VIPP may share some of the same roles and responsibilities as the previous docent association but operate as two separate entities whose primary role is to support State Parks staff.

#### Public Facilities and Media

~~The existing and proposed interpretive facilities at Sutter's Fort SHP fall into four categories: house museums, formal exhibits, changing exhibits, and interpretive sales areas. House museums are defined as an association of interrelated features, including architectural elements, furniture, and other objects, consolidated into an accurate setting for the historic interpretation of a person, event, place, or era. Emphasis should be given to using replica items as much as possible to enable the fort's staff and volunteers to use these rooms/spaces as sites for demonstrations and living history activities.~~

~~Media in formal and changing exhibits include interpretive panels, graphics, artifacts, audio-visual programs, and equipment. interactive displays, dioramas, replica items, mannequins, live animals, etc. Interpretive sales areas are operated by the Sacramento State Parks Docent Association.~~

~~House museums are the most important form of static interpretation at Sutter's Fort because they effectively recreate the appearance and operation of the fort during Sutter's residence. House museum facilities, however, are limited to the existing grounds, and are further constricted by the need to reserve a portion of the historical spaces for modern orientation or other exhibits.~~

~~The reconstructed fort does not include all of the structures or function areas Sutter had in his establishment, nor is the capability to recreate such outbuildings as the Vaquero House or the barracks present. The department does not own the property on which all of Sutter's structures and cultivated areas stood; therefore, only a representation of Sutter's establishment is possible.~~

~~As much as possible, the house museum facilities installed in the fort shall follow the layout of the Kunzel map prepared by Sutter and his staff prior to 1847 and published in 1848. There are some areas on the Kunzel map indicating redundant functions, such as multiple storage areas and more than one blacksmith-~~

shop. It is not necessary to duplicate these spaces. Where redundancy is present, alternative administrative, docent, or interpretive functions may be assigned. Further, if the original use of a space is already adequately interpreted elsewhere, the space can be used for other purposes, as in the example of the distillery (current room 36). Interpretation of that aspect of Sutter's manufacturing activities can be carried out by means of exhibits elsewhere, leaving a large, enclosed space (the original distillery location) in the fort available for other uses. However, the overall goal respecting interpretive media within the fort's walls is to devote as much space as possible to house museum development.

Ideally, the interior open space of the fort should complement the historical accuracy of the museum spaces that surround it. Sutter had several small buildings, sheds, or covered areas in his courtyards that were used for workspaces and temporary storage. A representative sampling of these structures should be constructed as archeological evidence indicates their locations and purposes.

The remaining open courtyards of the fort interior pose an interpretive dilemma. Uncompromising restoration of the historic appearance of Sutter's time would require returning the surface to bare, unshaded earth, in contrast to the grass and trees growing there now. The difficulty is in part that the benefits of such accuracy must be balanced against increasing the potential discomfort of visitors, and other negative interpretive effects.

Discomfort levels have a direct impact on visitors' ability to respond to interpretation and must be taken into consideration. Much of the year, grassy lawn areas are used as seating for school children during interpretive demonstrations or talks. During the warmer months, visitors afflicted with dust and heat may cut visits short, or avoid them altogether. Older or frail visitors are particularly affected by the increased heat and dust levels that bare earth would certainly entail. Additionally, an increase in dust levels due to churning up of loose soil may eventually cause a level of harm to artifacts and other interpretive resources that outweighs the benefits of a truly authentic appearance. During wet weather, the mud caused by the bare soil would also be a significant deterrent to visitors.

In accordance with the proposal in the Resource Element, the grade of the courtyards should be returned to a level approximating that of 1845-1847. However, because of the reasons described above, lawn will be permitted on the new courtyard surfaces. Care should be taken to prevent the build-up of thatch that has caused detrimental runoff toward the buildings, as well as emphasizing the incongruous presence of the lawn. The trees currently in the courtyards shall be removed via natural attrition. The loss of tree shade may be partially mitigated by use of temporary shelters and lean-to structures, or awnings that are historical to the fort, in connection with outdoor crafts activities. The bare appearance of the courtyard surface during the 1845-1847 Interpretive period will be related by means of exhibits.

The saw pit located in front of the carpenter shop on the west side of the fort should be removed. Saw pits of this type were much larger and were found at or near the sites of tree felling. Consideration should be given to replacing the saw pit's interpretive function with an authentically constructed replica of a mobile version that is more historically plausible within the fort walls.

Modern monuments and plaques are currently present in the east courtyard of the fort. In keeping with the house museum appearance of the courtyards, these items shall be removed to the curatorial space, and will later be incorporated physically or interpretively in the formal exhibits.

Interpretive signs and graphics installed as part of previous interpretive development in the fort should also be removed as soon as their purpose is usurped by the audio wand tour script and/or the orientation room exhibits.

There are currently two sheep living in a pen on the north side of the east courtyard. These sheep are supposed to represent the many types of livestock Sutter had on his grant. However, the sheep are not of a

historically accurate breed. Any animals acquired in the future for display at Sutter's Fort shall be of historically accurate breeds.

Formal and changing exhibit areas in the fort are limited and compete with house museum use. The optimum interpretive situation would be removal of all such areas to an outside facility. For this reason, among others, the most important long-term interpretive need at Sutter's Fort is acquisition of the building now occupied by the State Indian Museum, for use as the Sutter's Fort visitor center.

In the short term, in order to accommodate modern exhibits in the fort, a space must have electrical wiring substantial enough to handle the extra load, have reasonable open spaces, and be adaptable for climate-controlled areas or cases. The two orientation rooms immediately east of the entrance kiosk fall into this category. The historic distillery building also meets these qualifications. Until availability of the State Indian Museum building, the historic distillery building should be designated the Sutter's Fort Pioneer Museum. Those themes that pertain to, the early residents of the fort, the California immigrants, their journey to California, their experiences at the fort and in California before the Gold Rush, and the effect the Gold Rush had on them should be interpreted here in depth. Space should be allotted in the building for a substantial audiovisual area, for a small sales counter, and for changing exhibits. The Mora diorama now housed in this space should be integrated into the Pioneer Museum design.

As much as possible, interpretation of themes outside the house museum interpretive period of 1845-1847 shall take place in formal and changing exhibit areas. When the State Indian Museum building becomes available, the functions of the Pioneer Museum and other formal and changing exhibits should be relocated to that structure, as part of a visitor center complex. With the availability of more adequate theater space, an audio-visual orientation presentation should be prepared.

Changing exhibits can become an important part of the Sutter's Fort experience. Many of the themes proposed for the fort have sub-themes that, supported by artifacts from the department's collection, could be expressed in interesting, informative exhibits. Traveling exhibits on subjects that pertain to the westward expansion, for example, could also be accommodated at the fort. In addition to space in the Pioneer Museum, proposed above, changing exhibit space is proposed for the western half of the central building's ground floor. This area would require some physical work, including flooring and wiring, before it could be used.

Development of modern exhibit spaces inside the fort should be considered as temporary solutions to this interpretive need. On relocation of the State Indian Museum, the building it currently occupies should become the Sutter's Fort visitor center. All formal and changing exhibits of the Pioneer Museum, along with the audio-visual component and the orientation rooms, should be moved there, and the visitor center should become the visitor entry point to the historic park. The rooms in the fort that would become available on the moving of exhibits to the visitor center should be converted to appropriate house museums.

At that time, the east gate will become the public entrance, via the visitor center. The south gate should be closed in order to further visually isolate the interior of the fort from the modern street.

There are two interpretive sales areas in Sutter's Fort: the Sutter's Fort Trade Store, located in rooms 52 and 53, and the sales window in the entrance kiosk. The trade store is operated under contract with the docent association, and sells items of the type that would have been available during Sutter's time. The Trade Store should remain in its present location until the State Indian Museum building becomes available. At that time, the trade store function should be moved to that building. This action is in keeping with the return of the interior rooms of the fort to their function during the house museum interpretive period. Possibly, the sale of period (present trade store) and non-period (present entrance kiosk) items could be

merged into one outlet in the Visitor Center. When the Pioneer Museum facility is developed, a small sales counter could be operated out of that location to take the place of the kiosk sales window.

Its offerings should be expanded to include a wide variety of interpretive materials, including history books, pamphlets, art and photographic productions, and audio-visual offerings. When the State Indian Museum building is converted to a Sutter's Fort visitor center function, the sales area should be relocated there, in an expanded form as a gift shop, and with more varied inventory of materials for sale.

Vegetation that obscures visitors' view of the exterior of the fort should be trimmed back or removed where appropriate. The area to the north, between the present State Indian Museum and the north wall of the fort, was occupied by a slough in the Sutter period. When the new visitor center is established, this area should be vegetated to in part evoke the sense of the historic wetland, and to more accurately portray the nature of Sacramento Valley's pre-Euro-American appearance.

### **Support Facilities**

There is a lack of interpretive support facilities, both in the Sacramento District and at Sutter's Fort. The extent of the interpretive collection associated with Sutter's Fort and the interest in that collection on the part of docents, historians, and others makes it important that this information be readily available. The various components of the collection should be assessed for their relevance to the interpretive themes of the unit, and non-relevant materials removed. Space for artifact, records, manuscript, and library storage and work areas is needed. An exhibit preparation area for use of both district staff and persons associated with traveling exhibits is also important.

Docents working at the fort have amassed a considerable amount of replica items and supplies that are used during demonstrations, and for living history events. The docents also need space for meetings and training sessions. The school groups that attend the environmental living programs bring with them a large amount of support equipment, such as sleeping bags and overnight bags, which need short term storage space.

Ultimate removal of as many non-interpretive period functions from the fort interior as possible is the goal of this element. However, the lack of space outside the fort is recognized. Until appropriate space can be made available, the following recommendations are made: 1) The second floor of the Kyburz annex, and the anteroom to it, should be renovated for curatorial needs. Climate control facilities should be installed in a portion of this area. 2) The third floor of the central building shall be used as shared storage space for curatorial and docent staff. 3) The eastern half of the ground floor of the central building should be designated the exhibit preparation area.

For docent purposes, the following recommendations are made: 1) The western half of the first floor of the annex shall remain in use as the docent meeting and training space. 2) The ground floor room of the northwest bastion shall remain as storage for docent staff supplies and equipment. 3) The third floor of the central building shall be used as shared storage space for curatorial and docent staff.

Although these space uses are outside the house museum interpretive period of the fort interior, they are justified. The Kyburz Annex did not exist during the house museum interpretive period. Therefore, while the building is considered part of the Pioneer Memorial, use of its interior need not be representative of the interpretive period. The ground-floor room of the northwest bastion was used as a jail, as was the same space in the southeast bastion. Interpretation of Sutter's punitive measures is covered in the southeast bastion and need not be repeated. Should storage for docent supplies and equipment be found elsewhere or no longer needed, this space could be used to elaborate on Sutter's peacekeeping actions. The third floor of the central building is not handicap accessible, and has only one entrance/exit, therefore



it cannot be open for public viewing. In addition, Sutter's use of the space as storage is comparable to the current function.

For environmental living program purposes, the following recommendation is made: The small bunk room next to Room 11, the private living quarters, shall continue in use as storage space for support equipment of ELP groups. Should another space be made available for ELP use, this room shall be returned to house-museum use in its historic function of private living quarters.

### Visitor Activities

The ~~currently available~~ visitor activities of self-guided tours ~~with the electronic wands~~, demonstration days ~~living history days~~; the environmental living program, viewing ~~existing formal~~ exhibits, ~~interpretive sales opportunities~~, and various special events that take place at the fort should continue. Expansion of these activities is limited only by the amount of space available in the fort, the creativity, enthusiasm, and availability of staff and volunteers, and appropriateness with the interpretive theme guidelines.

~~The mobile living history program off site interpretive program (see Interpretive Associations for definition) should be continued.~~ The outreach program to schools and community groups, now conducted by staff on special request, should be expanded. Other programs that should be developed are specialized, theme-oriented tours of the fort that would have special appeal and historical relevance for tour groups consisting of architects, ~~a~~ agriculturalists, and military visitors. ~~When the visitor center is established in the State Indian Museum building, an orientation presentation and slide shows and talks should be offered in the audio-visual area of that facility. Temporarily, slide shows and talks should be presented in the new Pioneer Museum (distillery building).~~

Local commercial tour guide companies that now bring visitors to Sutter's Fort should be encouraged to provide additional tour packages based on ~~the the primary and secondary themes~~ theme of John Sutter and Sutter's Fort. ~~Such tours would include various sites in Sacramento and surrounding areas (such as the Coloma gold discovery site).~~

Additional effort should be concentrated on encouraging tourists to the Sacramento area to visit the fort. ~~The A~~ multiple language self-guided wand tour ~~soon to be available~~ is a positive approach to increasing attendance by non-English-speaking visitors.

The department's primary goal in installing exhibit spaces ~~house museum rooms~~ in the fort is to interpret with the greatest possible accuracy the ~~appearance~~ historical significance of the fort during the interpretive periods. The exhibits ~~house museums~~ will be most often seen by visitors as static displays, with no live interpreters present. However, the development of exhibit space should allow for the visitor experience to be meaningfully enhanced through live interpretation delivered by either staff or volunteers. ~~The secondary purpose of these rooms is their use during living history programs and demonstration days. The long term goal of the Sutter's Fort docents' rehabilitation program is to revitalize the entire fort. Should the various shops and work areas of Sutter's Fort be completed to such an extent that they are usable by a craftsman on an everyday basis, a recreation of the working community of 1840s New Helvetia would become possible. Crafts persons, through concession agreements or other appropriate means, could work in the various shops, selling their products through the trade store, and interpreting both their crafts and the realities of working for Captain Sutter. Over time, the fort would evolve into a year round living history center, in which static exhibits would be infused with human activity and live interpretation, and the interpretive theme of Sutter's Fort as a factory would receive its most effective elaboration.~~

## Interpretive Concessions

~~A service agreement is now active at Sutter's Fort State Historic Park. An~~ In the past, an audio wand~~t~~ tour concessionaire furnishe~~d~~s the electronic wands, audio equipment, and tapes that conveye~~d~~ the room-by-room interpretation of the fort. Although the system offer~~eds~~ no Interactive visitor experience, it effectively deliver~~eds~~ a great deal of information to a large number of visitors. Visitors retain control of the pace of their tours, and do not have to listen to the entire tape at each stop If they do not wish to.

Alternatives to the now obsolete wand system include button-activated message repeaters at each audio point, tours led by guides or docents, interpretive panels in each room, and interpreters stationed in the rooms to tell the story of each space. These alternatives each have benefits and drawbacks. Messages broadcast through speakers remove the control visitors now have to decline to receive the recorded Interpretation. Those that involve guides or Interpreters necessitate augmentation of park staff, although the effectiveness of Interpretation would improve significantly because of interaction with visitors and human contact. ~~Interpretive panels degrade the realism of museum rooms and their use on living history and demonstration days, lessen interpretive opportunities for the visually impaired, and make understanding more difficult for persons with poor English-reading skills.~~

Until an alternative can be developed that offers flexibility, the ability to handle large numbers of people speaking various languages, the capacity to convey large amounts of information, and visitor interaction, ~~the~~ Park will continue with guided and self-guided tours~~audio wand tour service agreement should be continued. With the ubiquity of personal cellphones, t~~The district ~~would ultimately prefer to own the audio wand equipment outright and operate the system as part of the park unit~~may in the future pursue an tour experience using cellphones or other audio-visual equipment for park visitors to access. The tour would allow non-English speaking visitors and those with low vision or are hard of hearing to participate in the Fort's laboratory of learning. This would enable the funds generated through use of the wands to be returned to the department as a revenue-generating program.

This is a viable goal.

~~While no additional Interpretive concessions are recommended for the near or intermediate term, the long-range goal of creating a year-round living history and demonstration center will entail concession agreements with a variety of skilled craftspeople.~~

## Interpretive Associations and Volunteers

A ~~very active~~ cooperative association: the ~~Sacramento State Park Docent Association~~Friends of Sutter's Fort, assists in interpretation and other activities such as operating the museum store at of Sutter's Fort SHP. ~~The docent association serves all units of the Sacramento District state parks, with sub-groups at each park. Approximately 60 members of the docent association~~

~~are actively involved at Sutter's Fort in some capacity. in addition, a large cadre of volunteers participates in special programs throughout the year.~~

A new class of docents-volunteers is trained each year in the interpretation of the fort. ~~The first floor of the Kyburz annex is used as a meeting and training space.~~ Training is conducted by ~~veteran docents,~~Parks staff, and occasional outside speakers.

The fort's docents-volunteers are active in all the interpretive programs conducted at the fort, and in off-site programs. ~~a~~As described in the Interpretive Considerations section of this element. The docents-volunteers participate in daily interpretation of the fort, the environmental living program, ~~the living~~

~~history program, and Saturday and Sunday demonstration days, and the Sutter's Fort rehabilitation program.~~ All of these depend extensively on docent involvement for their continued effectiveness.

~~A trade store is operated under contract with the docent association. The store sells only items that are historically accurate to Sutter's time period. The fort's docents also sell, through the entrance kiosk, books and postcards that pertain to the fort.~~

~~Off site programs conducted by the Sutter's Fort docents include the annual mobile living history program, and participation in special events such as conventions, conferences, and history fairs that relate to California history. The mobile living history program, or "river trip," as it is commonly called, takes place each October. A group of docents, attired as trappers and hunters, sets up typical base camps of Sutter's hunters and trappers at selected locations along the Sacramento and American Rivers. At these sites, the docents interpret the life of 1840s hunters and trappers to groups of school children. The program has been very successful and promises to continue to be so.~~

## **Interpretive Collections**

### **Existing Collections**

Much of the existing 50,000 (approximate)-piece collection for Sutter's Fort began with the Pioneer Collection. This collection developed from the time the fort was reconstructed, and became the core Pioneer Collection when, in the 1930s, Harry Peterson, the fort's first curator, began organizing and cataloguing the mass of artifacts collected. Most of the objects were assembled around the theme of the early pioneers and the Gold Rush, and the collection consists not only of three-dimensional objects, but also of a variety of documents and graphics. Since that time, other assemblages of artifacts have become part of the fort's interpretive collections.

Aside from the Pioneer collection, other important collections are the Reed document collection, the Margaret Kelly collection of the James Marshall Museum, the P. B. Reading collection, the D. H. Thompson collection, and what might be called the reconstruction collection -- that is, that group of objects original to construction of the fort and collected during and since its reconstruction. Many of these objects are on display, and others are in a variety of storage areas.

Another important collection consists of objects acquired over the years to use in the various exhibits. These may be artifacts, modern equivalents, or reproduction or replica items manufactured for the fort. They represent a variety of quality and historical veracity. Again, some are still on exhibit, and many are in storage.

Separate from the exhibit collection, the park unit controls a collection of modern replications purchased with volunteer-generated funds, volunteer enhancement funds, and other state funds, for use in the living history programs and docent demonstration programs. It is the responsibility of the district superintendent to execute agreements with participating organizations specifying conditions regulating use, care and maintenance, and safety procedures of any such materials used by volunteers. If the specified conditions cannot be met, the materials should not be made available for use.

### **Museum Collections**

There are several reasons museum collections are developed and maintained by a park. One reason is to preserve natural, cultural, and historical elements that are original to the site. Another reason a park acquires and maintains museum objects is to preserve documentation of people, events, cultural features, or natural features central to the park's purpose. A third reason is to support interpretive themes relevant to the park.

A Scope of Collections Statement is a comprehensive museum collection management plan that defines the types of objects and archival documents a park unit collects and why it does so. It describes the museum collection and associated interpretive themes, sets policies, and gives general direction for collecting objects, deaccessioning, and managing the collection. A Scope of Collections Statement is required for all state park units with museum collections (Department Operations Manual, Chapter 2000, Section 2010.2).

Museum collections policy: Develop a Scope of Collections Statement for Sutters Fort SHP.

### Present Interpretive Use of Objects

The present collection supports interpretation for the existing exhibit rooms, ~~orientation rooms, and house museum settings~~; many of the exhibits are currently undergoing a great deal of change. Artifacts have recently been withdrawn from the older exhibit room (room 36) and have been placed in a new orientation room exhibit in rooms 3 and 4; objects have also been taken out of storage to be included in this new exhibit. This has been done under a capital outlay program for statewide exhibit and artifact rehabilitation.

Also under this program, two ~~house museum exhibit~~ rooms (room 17, the weaving factory, and room 49, the blacksmith shop) are ~~undergoing~~ ~~underwent~~ rehabilitation, with much if not all of the existing artifacts being removed from display and replaced with newly acquired objects.

~~Several other rooms are undergoing or have undergone rehabilitation, the work in these instances being done by docent groups or by the curator for historic sites, Sacramento District.~~

Much of the impetus for this rehabilitation is the need to update and upgrade deteriorating exhibits, as well as the need to protect the existing collection. In most cases, historic items are being replaced with consumable items, that is replications, reproductions, modern equivalents, and artifacts that fit the conditions of DOM 1340.I, "Use of Objects in 'Hands-on' Interpretation."

~~A secondary but important goal of the various rehabilitation programs is to have house museum settings which are adaptive to ELP, living history, and demonstration programs. More rehabilitation projects are expected to take place in the future. For these new projects, as they fall under the constraints of the General Plan, each exhibit should be defined as formal or adaptive. In a formal exhibit or formal house museum exhibit, the objects must be secure from consumption, that is, from hands-on usage, and from the negative effects of the environment. In an adaptive exhibit or an adaptive house museum exhibit, the objects have been chosen as "hands only" objects and are expected to be consumed by human usage as well as by the effects of the environment. These objects are to be reasonably easy to replace. However, in both cases, the objects are to be made secure from theft, fire, vandalism, and careless maintenance and storage.~~

### Future Acquisition of Collections

Acquisition of collections should be focused and in harmony with the General Plan. However, in recognition of the substantial costs of storage and processing, acquisition should concentrate on immediate rather than future needs. No acquisitions are to be made without having facilities available that are adequate for their protection and preservation.

In general, future acquisition of collections, other than reproductions for hands-on use by staff or ~~docents~~ ~~volunteers~~ as defined by the district superintendent, should be tied to specific projects as they arise out of the development process as defined by a ~~n~~ ~~furnishing plan or~~ exhibit plan on an approved DPR-38, or through the capital outlay program). There are some important exceptions to this, which, given the

guidelines below, should in general be left to the discretion of the curator for the fort. These would be acquisition, by gift, of 1) objects that are specific to the Fort at any period in time that are related to people who are part of the Fort's history. This would exclude random 19<sup>th</sup> century pioneer history with no connection to the Fort. ~~would constitute a continuation of the Pioneer Collection, that is, objects that are directly related to known pioneers who passed through the fort, objects that are directly associated with Sutter's Fort, or to the fort's participation in the Gold Rush; and~~ 2) Artifacts and artwork, both historic and contemporary, which are specific to the Fort and not pioneer memorabilia. ~~various memorabilia, e.g., from the 100th and the upcoming 150th anniversary of the fort, or from the reconstruction of the fort and its upcoming 100th anniversary.~~

None of the collections for interpretive use at Sutter's Fort SHP need to be exhaustive or definitive. Interpretive artifacts in the Sutter's Fort collections are subject to the same policies and procedures affecting all other collections under the care of the Department of Parks and Recreation. These are outlined in the Department Operations Manual and in the Museum Collections Management Handbook, published by the Office of Interpretive Services Cultural Resources Division.

### Security

As each exhibit area is rehabilitated, a security plan for that area should be developed to be incorporated into a larger security plan for the fort as a whole. As a corollary, a risk management plan should be developed to enable the unit to identify and correct potential areas of risk for the collections, and provide direction in case of theft, fire, flood, or earthquake.

## Recommendations

### Research Needs

Additional research is needed for an accurate interpretation of John Sutter and Sutter's Fort SHP. The following topics are highlights (not in priority order):

1. Sutter's early life in Europe.
2. Sutter's life in the United States before he came to California. A compendium of letters to and from John Sutter.
3. Detailed research on the immigrants who came to Sutter's Fort.
- 3-4. Detailed research on the history of women who lived and worked at Sutter's Fort.
- 4-5. Detailed research on the Hawaiians, Native Americans, Hispanics, and Black Americans who worked for Sutter.
- 5-6. A complete chronology of reconstruction of the fort, and all subsequent structural work accomplished to date.
7. Archeological investigations and document searches on the fort grounds to determine the locations and purposes of original structures, including temporary ones.
8. The fort's role in creating the pioneer myth and how it shaped views of colonial California history.

### Future Acquisitions

No additional property is proposed for acquisition by the Department of Parks and Recreation for Interpretive purposes. ~~However, optimum interpretation of the park's historic resources and delivery of visitor services requires the future availability of the building and grounds currently occupied by the State Indian Museum.~~

Acquisition of artifacts, papers, and other items directly associated with people who occupied ~~John Sutter, New Helvetia, and~~ Sutter's Fort should be pursued.

## Interpretive Recommendations

**Amendment:** In the 1990 General Plan, this section provided short term and long-term interpretive recommendations that focused primarily on returning the Fort to a more historically appropriate aesthetic. In this amendment, State Parks' focus for interpretation at the park will rely less on historically accurate reconstruction of pioneer living style and aesthetic. This amendment removes the 1990 recommendations and is updated with reference to the goals found in the 2022 IMP which provides guidance through objectives and strategies for implementation of interpretation at the park.

The mission of interpretation at Sutter's Fort State Historic Park is to create a laboratory of learning to empower all visitors to discover an inclusive, complex, and accurate history of Sutter's Fort and California order to develop deeper understanding and personal meanings in the events of the past. The use of themes is essential to the development of effective interpretive services. The 2022 IMP identifies 11 interpretive goals, each with objectives and implementation strategies to accomplish the goal. While the goals Interpretive Goals are broad, interpretive objectives are categories for actionable and measurable implementation strategies. The following provides a summary of the goals, objectives and strategies which can be found in greater detail in 2022 IMP:

Goal 1: Represent an inclusive, complex, and accurate history of Sutter's Fort role in the colonization of California.

Goal 2: Foster and environment for visitors to study the full complexity of history through current scholarship and varying perspectives of the cultures, events, people, and institutional history associated with Sutter's Fort.

Goal 3: Explore the changes to California catalyzed by Sutter's Fort including the consequences of those changes on Native people and on native lands over time.

Goal 4: Promote stewardship of Sutter's Fort SHP rooted in the values of ongoing learning, truthful representations of the past, and a diversity of historical perspectives.

Goal 5: Cultivate an inclusive visitor experience by removing barriers for engagement and encouraging the involvement of underserved and underrepresented audiences.

Goal 6: Support the ongoing development and refinement of a wide range of visitor experiences that encourage both new and repeat visitors.

Goal 7: Expand Sutter's Fort SHP outreach efforts to build relationships with new and geographically distance audiences.

Goal 8: Promote educational programming that is inclusive, complex, and relevant to a wide range of student grade levels.

Goal 9: Nurture partnerships for the development of interpretation with Native American tribes, cultural institutions, community organizations, universities, historically relevant places, and all groups of people with cultural connections to the Fort.

Goal 10: Explore the effects of colonial commerce and industry on Indigenous life, land, and resources.

Goal 11: Enable staff and volunteers to deliver high quality, thematic interpretive services focused on inclusion, complexity, and accuracy.

The Interpretive recommendations for Sutter's Fort SHP are divided into immediate (1-3 years), short term (4-10 years), and long term (over 10 years) categories. This division is based on the fiscal, personnel, and feasibility characteristics of each proposal. Time designations are approximations only and may overlap. No priorities within categories are implied. It is recognized that several of the measures proposed in these recommendations—such as curatorial and exhibit uses—appear to negate the ultimate interpretive goal of returning the Interior of the fort to its appearance during the house museum interpretive period of 1845-1847. Until space is available outside the fort walls to accommodate these functions, concessions to the reality of the situation must be made. The proposed future use of the State Indian Museum building as a visitor center for Sutter's fort will alleviate several of these anomalies.

#### Immediate (1-3 years)

Complete rehabilitation of house museums, under the current rehabilitation program.

Remove the present saw pit and replace with a more historically appropriate substitute.

Begin the process of vegetation conversion through natural attrition and selective replacement, according to policies.

Study the feasibility of returning the appearance of the interior grounds to the house museum interpretive period, with due consideration to conflicting interpretive needs. When available, a satisfactory method should be implemented in concert with measures mitigating any negative interpretive impacts on visitors and resources.

Remove modern plaques and markers to curatorial space as soon as interpretation of these items can take place in the exhibit spaces.

Remove interpretive signs and graphics as soon as the information included in these items can be interpreted elsewhere on the fort grounds.

Trim back vegetation from the fort walls to increase visibility.

Remove or transplant trees and tall shrubs between L Street and the south wall of the fort, to improve visibility.

Institute expanded outreach programs to schools and community groups as soon as staff levels permit.

Institute specialized theme based tours of the fort,

Encourage commercial tour guide companies to provide tour packages based on the theme of Sutter's Fort, which would include various sites in Sacramento and surrounding areas (such as the Coloma gold discovery site).

Formalize curatorial spaces on the second floor of the Kyburz annex, and in its anteroom, for minor on-site curatorial care. Climate control capability should be added to these spaces.

Formalize use of the third floor of the central building as storage space for both curatorial and docent purposes until a central location is provided.

—Move relevant collections to the curatorial space, for necessary cataloguing and conservation. Remove non-relevant materials from the collection.

Plan, design, construct, and install the Sutter's Fort Pioneer Museum in room 36; as a temporary expedient pending availability of the State Indian Museum building.

#### Short-Term (4-10 years)

Construct, consistent with archeological findings, supplementary structures on the interior grounds of the fort. Furnish such structures with appropriate house museums.

Construct the adobe-walled corral on the southeast side of the fort, insofar as possible within the state's property line.

Permanently remove all trees inside the fort walls through natural attrition. Mitigate the loss of shade through historically appropriate use of awnings, temporary sheds, and the like.

Construct a changing-exhibit area in the western side of the first floor of the central building, as a temporary expedient pending availability of the State Indian Museum building.

With the demise of the sheep on display in the fort, replace them with historically accurate breeds of sheep or other small animals appropriate to the size of the site.

Construct an exhibit preparation area in the east side of the first floor of the central building until a central location is provided.

Develop and present audio-visual programs and talks in the space provided in the Pioneer Museum, as a temporary expedient pending availability of the State Indian Museum building.

#### Long-Term (more than 10 years)

Upon its availability, convert the State Indian Museum building to use as the Sutter's Fort visitor center and park contact point. Remove all permanent and changing modern exhibitory and audio-visual presentation facilities from within Sutter's Fort, and integrate them, as feasible, into the new visitor center. Reroute visitor flow from the new visitor center to the fort.

Install landscaping in the area between the fort and the new visitor center to represent the appearance of the area during the historic period.

Develop spaces made available by the moving of exhibits to the visitor center as house museums, according to theme needs, the Kunzel map, and another pertinent research.

Produce an orientation audio-visual presentation for use in the visitor center.

Establish Sutter's Fort SHP as a living history center. Operate the shops and craft areas as actual businesses, either through interpretive concessions or by hiring persons to interpret the fort as it was in the 1840s.

#### CHART 1

##### INTERPRETIVE THEMES AND SPACES

###### Future

Orient. House Court Pioneer Changing Visitor Rooms Museums Yards Museum Exhibits Center

Genes' s of a X X X

###### California empresario

Sutter's Fort was X X x X X

the "first echo of civilization" in California's central valley

Sutter's Hawaiians X X X X

a little known but valuable part of the colony

The valley's Native X X X X X



Americans were reluctant neophytes, but willing employees.

Foreign weeds in California's garden

California's garden

The immigrants' trip west was a journey of more than miles.

Sutter's Fort was a factory as well as a land grant

The fort and its occupants experienced growth and adversity

The gold rush turned New Helvetia upside down

Family, retreat, and livelihood

An honored but neglected petitioner.

Reconstructing the fort was rebuilding the New Helvetia dream.

## OPERATIONS ELEMENT

The purpose of the Operations Element is to Identify the present and future operational needs of Sutter's Fort State Historic Park. The effect on policies outlined in other elements of this General Plan on park operations will be addressed.

### Summary of Existing Operations

#### Organization

Sutter's Fort State Historic Park is one of ~~four-eight~~ historic parks managed as part of the ~~Historic Sites Park units of the Sacramento District~~ Capital District State Museums and Historic Parks. Sutter's Fort, the State Indian Museum, the Governor's Mansion, the California State Capitol Museum, the California State Railroad Museum, Old Sacramento State Historic Park, Woodland Opera House, and Stanford House State Historic Park are all managed from the Historic Sites Capital District office at ~~802 N 101 J~~ Street in downtown Sacramento. ~~The Historic Sites Superintendent, Chief Ranger, Maintenance Supervisor, Office Assistant II, and Volunteer Coordinator all work out of this office.~~

#### Jurisdiction

Sutter's Fort State Historic Park is located in downtown Sacramento. All law enforcement services are the primary responsibility of Sacramento District state park peace officers. ~~Two~~ Rangers assigned to Sutter's Fort provide law enforcement services for the fort, with assistance from the State Indian Museum Ranger.

The California State Police provide support law enforcement services for all of the state parks in Sacramento. Their assistance consists of periodic back-up services to state park peace officers during after-hours alarm calls and technical reviews of security systems.

The Sacramento City Police Department is the local law enforcement agency in the city that has concurrent jurisdiction.

#### Workload

Self-guided tours with staff-led orientations are offered at the fort throughout the year. Guided tours and craft demonstrations are provided periodically as staffing allows. Reservations for children's groups are offered Tuesday through Friday during the school year. Off-site programs are offered on request.

An active volunteer program demands a substantial amount of time from park staff to coordinate a variety of programs.

An important artifact collection is housed both on-site and in a central collections care facility. Sutter's Fort acted for years as a central acquisition site for the Department of Parks and Recreation, so the collection is extensive and varied. Years of backlogged artifact care and records work constitutes an extensive workload.

The fort structure itself is old, and it is a significant historic structure. Years of deferred maintenance remain to be addressed, and both the structure and the artifacts in the fort collection require ongoing housekeeping, maintenance, and curatorial care.

Sutter's Fort State Historic Park is located on the same property as the State Indian Museum. The fort and museum grounds feature large trees, extensive turf, limited flower beds, and a large, artificial pond with vegetation. Year-round groundskeeping services are required to maintain these grounds.

## Current Staffing

Current staffing at Sutter's Fort consists of the visitor services staff assigned full-time to the fort, and maintenance, grounds, and curatorial staff - who work at the fort ~~on an intermittent basis~~.

A part-time volunteer coordinator assists with volunteer coordination.

## Visitation

Visitation patterns follow an annual cycle. From September to mid-June, the fort is booked with tours for school children studying California history.

From February through May-June, all reserved tours are filled, and many tour requests are turned away. An ever-increasing number of "drop-in" groups request access to the park. ~~It is not unusual to have all 400 audio wands checked out to visitors at one time~~. This high number of simultaneous visiting school groups can have a negative effect on the interpretive experience of all. Staff is monitoring the effects of this intensive carrying capacity of the fort.

During the summer, visitor profiles change to family groups. The park is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. 362 days per year. It is closed only on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

## Special Events/Programs

Sutter's Fort is located in an urban environment in downtown Sacramento. It has historically been a focal point in the community. This focus continues today in two types of scheduled special events.

The first type of special event is the department-sponsored public event, ~~as, for example, living history programs and Pioneer Craft days~~. These events are co-coordinated by the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Sacramento District State Parks-Docent Association. Open to the general public, these events are designed to meet special interpretation goals of the unit, and to supplement daily tour interpretation.

The second type of special event is one in which the fort is rented by an organization or member of the general public as a unique site for a private event. Fund raisers and large parties are frequently held at the fort in the courtyard during the late spring, summer, and early fall months. A rental fee is paid to the department by the renting party, and there are more requests for use of the fort than operational logistics allow. Both types of special event programs require scheduled overtime for visitor services and maintenance staff, as well as increased vigilance for care of both the historic structure and its artifacts.

Programs, special events, and exhibits at Sutter's Fort SHP should represent an inclusive, complex, and accurate history relating to all the interpretive periods. Fort programs will explore a variety of perspectives about historic events to: 1) interpret complex historical events using various available narratives and 2) facilitate an understanding that the pursuit of historical truth will remain ongoing.

Program delivery will emphasize facilitated discussion among participants and should attempt to engage visitors in discussing even the most difficult histories of each interpretive period. Topics like racism, genocide, slavery, and institutional oppression may be uncomfortable but necessary to deliver programs that accurately portray Sutter's Fort in the scope of a larger California history.

After experiencing Fort programs, special events, and exhibits visitors should be inspired to dig deeper into finding personal meaning in the events of the past that can be applied to their relationships today.

### Maintenance/Housekeeping

Maintenance and housekeeping at the fort are focused on artifact care and the care of a significant historic structure. The fort facility is more than 90 years old and requires ongoing maintenance care sensitive to the historic nature of the structure. The availability of adequate funding to address the backlog of deferred maintenance for artifacts and for the structure itself is an ongoing concern. Because of the lack of a fully equipped maintenance shop, maintenance support functions are difficult to provide.

### Recommendation

Provide a fully equipped maintenance facility off-site which can adequately support ongoing maintenance.

Policies and guidelines for grounds care are discussed in the Resource Element and the Land Use and Facilities Element.

### Curatorial Services

Curatorial services are provided from a central location to all ~~four Historic Sites~~ Capital District units. Because of the lack of space at the fort, a large portion of the fort collection is located in another facility. There is tremendous demand for access to this collection, which historically was never organized for easy retrieval. Ongoing work to rehabilitate all of the ~~house-museum~~ exhibits at the fort is underway with the aid of teams of volunteers, as is work to organize the collection in storage.

Daily artifact housekeeping is the responsibility of the maintenance staff, and specific artifact care is being provided through the art artifact conservation program.

### Visitor Services

Visitor services staff provide on-site Interpretation, public contact, fee collection, volunteer coordination, and law enforcement services. The visitor services staff reports to the fort and provide periodic back-up to the staff at the State Indian Museum.

Because of the high visitation to the fort and the correspondingly small staff, the staff spends the bulk of its time greeting the public and orienting people to the fort and the fort audio program. The opportunity for staff-presented interpretive programming is minimal.

## **Special Considerations and Recommendations**

### Curatorial Program

Curatorial services for Sutter's Fort are provided by ~~one Curator~~ State Park staff who is also responsible for these services at the State Indian Museum, Stanford House State Historic Park, and the Governor's Mansion. As a result, the skilled curatorial care provided to the fort is necessarily limited.

The major curatorial issues at the fort are the lack of temperature-controlled storage and the backlog of artifact care needed for artifacts in storage off site. Currently, artifacts not on display are stored in non-temperature-controlled conditions at the fort. It is important to have some storage and workspace on site to provide timely care for artifacts when needed, and reasonable access for exhibitory.

### Recommendation

Provide a temperature-controlled environment in the artifact care/storage facility at the fort, which will provide for minor maintenance of artifacts.

Provide adequate curatorial staff to meet the backlog of curatorial work.

## Volunteers

The fort enjoys one of the most active volunteer programs in the State of California. ~~The list of programs includes the environmental living program, living history, the rehabilitation program, Pioneer Craft demonstration programs, the mobile living history program, and daily drop-in interpreters. The Volunteers in Parks Program provides an organized, and legally based approach to managing a wide range of volunteer programs in California's state parks.~~ The variety and number of volunteer programs at this site require extensive staff support. This support is currently presented by one staff Volunteer Coordinator and the fort lead Ranger. ~~The volunteer coordinator is currently a part-time seasonal position, which is inadequate for the extensive volunteer coordination workload.~~

## Recommendation

Provide full-time volunteer coordination to meet the volunteer coordination workload at the fort.

## Group Reservation Use

Sutter's Fort is a popular site with fourth-grade school groups studying California history. School group reservations between September and mid-June fill every year, and many requests to visit must be turned down. An increasing number of school groups are visiting the fort as "drop-ins," hoping to be able to enter even though they did not receive a reservation. The impact of ~~these~~ drop-in visitors combined with the reserved visitors is to raise the noise level and diminish the opportunity for adequate viewing of the fort for all involved. The quality of the interpretive experience is weakened, and ~~can be a challenge for park~~ staff concerned with fee collection, brief welcomes, and ~~wand cleaning, do may~~ not have time to provide interpretive programming.

## Recommendation

Determine the practical carrying capacity of the fort for a quality interpretive experience by school children and initiate and enforce a maximum visitor capacity for the fort. Develop and implement self-guided programs that will provide the visiting public the optimum quality experience.

## Interpretation

The mission of interpretation at Sutter's Fort is to create a laboratory of learning to empower all visitors to discover an inclusive, complex, and accurate history of Sutter's Fort and California in order to develop deeper understanding and personal meanings in the events of the past.

~~In the past, ~~non~~ living history and Pioneer Craft days, the fort literally "lives," and visitors received the full Interpretive experience of life at the fort in its heyday. These programs ~~are were~~ offered approximately 14 days per year and are supported by large numbers of volunteers. Most of these volunteers work and are not available mid-week.~~

~~One of the Interpretive goals at the fort is to develop a self-sustaining Interpretive program which offers daily Interpretation, especially during the busy summer months. This program should make use of paid staff who can be scheduled for daily craft and interpretive demonstrations.~~

## Recommendation

Develop a financially self-sustaining interpretive program which offers five to six interpreters per day during the peak visitor seasons of the year. While live demonstrations and living concepts are no longer the primary focus of interpretation at the park, State Parks will utilize any interpretive tool at their disposal to effectively execute the goals and objectives of interpretation at Sutter's Fort.

## **Concessions Element**

A Concessions Element consists of an evaluation of any existing concession activities, the potential for additional visitor services and revenues, and appropriate concession policies and guidelines consistent with the unit's classification.

Under legislation effective in September 1982, a Concessions Element is required in the general plan for future concessions considerations. The Public Resources Code, Section 5080.03, describes the manner in which concessions can be operated in the State Park System.

### **Definition**

A concession is defined as authority to Permit specific uses of state park lands and/or facilities for a specified period of time. The Intent is to provide the public with goods, services, or facilities the department cannot provide as conveniently or efficiently, or to permit limited use of state park lands for other purposes, compatible with the public interest and consistent with the Public Resources Code.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Concessions Element, which is part of the general plan for a park unit, is to evaluate existing and potential concessions in accordance with the Public Resources Code, Section 5080.03, and the classification of the park unit.

### **Scope**

The Concessions Element is a guide to assist in the development of concessions in state parks. The Concessions Element should provide direction as to the appropriateness of a concession in a specified unit, and to ensure consistent management practices.

It is the policy of the department to cultivate and encourage small businesses as well as ethnic and racial minority-owned/operated businesses as concessionaires in the State Park System.

It is the department's policy to generally avoid entering into convenience-type concession agreements for facilities, products, or programs that are adequately provided for a short distance outside state park unit boundaries.

It is the policy of the department that concessions shall provide facilities, products, programs, or services at prices competitive with similar businesses outside State Park System units.

Public Resources Code, Section 5080.03(c) states:

"With respect to any unit of the State Park System for which a general development plan has been approved by the commission, any proposed concession at that unit shall be compatible with that plan."

### **Concession Recommendations**

At this time, concession activities are not expected. However, if specific proposals are made, they will be studied on a case-by-case basis for feasibility and appropriateness, consistent with this General Plan.

## Environmental Impact Element

Amendment Note: The existing natural, cultural, and historic resources at the unit will be interpreted in a manner that explores a deeper understanding of the history of the park. This may include new exhibits, displays, and works of art that will utilize the interior and exterior spaces of the unit. The IMP and this General Plan amendment propose no alterations, projects or recommendations that would alter the physical landscape or the historic structures of the fort in any manner that is not consistent with 1990 environmental documentation. As a result, State Parks views the Environmental Impact Element as relevant and consistent with this General Plan amendment.

The Environmental Impact Element (EIE) predicts the environmental effects that may result from Implementation of the General Plan. Combined with the other elements of the General Plan, the EIE constitutes an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), as described by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This is done for all State Park System general plans, whether or not significant environmental effects are expected.

The General Plan describes the long-term plans and policies for a state park unit in a generalized way. This element focuses on the likely effects of these generalized plans and policies, suggests mitigation measures, and considers alternative actions.

As the development proposals in the General Plan are Implemented, the department will document their environmental effects as required by CEQA and the CEQA guidelines.

### SUMMARY

Class 1 Impacts: Unavoidable Significant Environmental Effects

Implementation of the General Plan should cause no unavoidable significant impacts on the environment.

Class 2 Impacts: Mitigable Significant Environmental Effects

<u>Impact</u>	<u>Mitigation</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Unearthing of archeological materials	No digging done below "critical depth" in forth courtyard  On-site archeologist present when digging occurs	Will allow installation of new surface water catch basins and piping.
Damage to historical structures	Replacement of gutters and downspouts to be completed with caution to protect historic structures.	Any change or repairs to historic features to be coordinated with State Office of Historic Preservation.

Class 3 Impacts: Adverse But Not Significant Effects

<u>Impact</u>	<u>Mitigation</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Dust and mud generated during construction.	Dust control (i.e. sprinkling) if necessary.	Short-term, limited effort.
Removal of plants, resulting in more austere appearance of fort's immediate surroundings.	Alternate methods of planter construction that prevent water intrusion into walls but allow plants to remain.	Removal of plants may be necessary, but goal of historic preservation would still be achieved.
Noise from events at fort disturbing neighbors.	No live bands allowed for private parties	Limited effect (only on a few days per year).
Erosion of soil from base of outer walls due to sloping.	Porous soil binder could be incorporated in soil, or decomposed granite used in landscaping to minimize erosion.  Grass or other low groundcover could be planted to stabilize sloping soil.	Measures will limit erosion of soils in planting areas.

**Project Description**

A description of the General Plan is contained in the General Plan Summary. For more detailed descriptions, refer to the following sections of the General Plan: Resource Element, for the description and policies of natural and cultural resources; Land Use and Facilities Element, regarding proposed facilities. Other aspects of the fort's environment are described in the following section of the EIE.

**Environmental Setting**

The environmental setting is described in the following section of the EIE, as well as in other elements of the General Plan. Information about the fort grounds was obtained from the "Condition Assessment of Sutter's Fort," prepared in December 1988, by Gilbert Sanchez, A.I.A., and Daryl Allen, M.A. This document provided a summary of the plant intrusion problems at the fort.



## **Existing Conditions. Environmental Impacts, and proposed Mitigations**

Environmental impacts of the General Plan were anticipated in the category of "hydrology."

### **Hydrology**

The General Plan proposes to improve water drainage by regarding the ground in the courtyard and improving the roof and surface water drainage systems. These are fully described in the Resource Element of the General Plan.

### **COURTYARD**

#### Existing Conditions:

The gently sloping ground in the courtyard forms depressions at several areas adjacent to adobe or brick structures. A large build-up of thatch on the two lawn areas has trapped soil, raised these plots, and contributed to the drainage pattern. Rainwater runoff collects in the following areas: near the east entry gate; against the west side of the central building, and generally, at the base of all the walls in the north wing of the fort, especially in the northeast corner. The concrete walk in the northwest section of the courtyard also serves to trap moisture in the underlying soil. These sources of moisture seep up into the adjacent adobe and brick and saturate the ground and wall foundations. Moisture intrusion was especially noted in the central building, where cracking has occurred.

#### Adverse Effects:

Regrading in the courtyard may disturb the Native American burial site known to underlie the fort. Removal of the concrete walks and leveling of the lawn areas will produce dust and/or mud.

#### Beneficial Effects:

Leveling the ground in the courtyard will direct runoff away from walls that are susceptible to water intrusion.

#### Mitigation:

Turf and cover may be replanted after regrading to control mud.

To replace the concrete walks, decomposed granite or some other porous paving material may be used.

As required by policy of the Resource Element, removal of the concrete walk must be reviewed by the Office of Historic Preservation, as well as the usual departmental staff.

To avoid unearthing any archeological materials, ground disturbance could be limited to a depth that would avoid contact with the level at which the cemetery begins. An archeologist will be consulted to determine the "critical depth," and should be present if any digging occurs.

### **ROOF DRAINAGE**

#### Existing Conditions:

The rainwater conducting system on the roof leaks water onto the masonry walls in many places and does not properly direct water away from the buildings.

Adverse Effects:

Establishment of a secure system or downspouts may result in damage to historic structures in the fort during construction. Addition of modern pipes and gutters onto the structures of the fort may be inconsistent with interpretive policy.

Beneficial Effects:

Improvement of the roof drainage system should result in more efficient drainage of rain runoff and prevent further damage to structures from leaking.

Mitigation:

Removal of the existing gutters and downspouts and installation of new ones should be completed with caution to minimize damage to historic structures.

**Effects Not Found to Be Significant**

Plant Life

The General Plan incorporates changes that will have effects on plant life on the fort grounds.

**INTRUSIVE PLANTS**

Existing Conditions:

Succulents planted at the base of the west fort wall have an extensive root system that may disrupt the foundation of the wall. A grapevine growing on the wall near the east entry gate is intruding into the wall and shading the masonry from drying out after rains (Sanchez and Allen, 1988).

Adverse Effects:

Removal of these intrusive plants will contribute to the stark appearance of the fort walls, a result that could make the fort less attractive to visitors.

Beneficial Effects:

Removal of the plants will allow proper drying of wet masonry and prevent structural damage to the foundations. This will fulfill the resource management objective to preserve structures at the expense of vegetation.

Mitigation:

Plants could be maintained at the base of the walls if a planter is constructed that could prevent irrigation water from reaching the walls; some sort of moisture barrier could be employed in the planter bed to contain water.

**PERIMETER PLANTINGS**

Existing Conditions:

The vegetated areas adjacent to the perimeter walls of the fort are bounded by a concrete planting border, which forms a basin where water collects. The saturated soil may cause differential settling and cracking of the heavy masonry walls. The pooled water also tends to wick up into the walls, leaching out the lime mortar between the bricks, and causing spalling of the brick. Water has risen in the walls as much as five feet.

### Adverse Effects:

The Resource Element proposes to regrade the grounds adjacent to the perimeter walls to allow water to drain away from the walls. The new grade may be vulnerable to erosion from runoff, particularly if the areas are left as bare ground.

### Beneficial Effects:

The new grade should decrease collection of water next to the walls, and

·Present further water intrusion of the brick.

### Mitigation:

A porous soil binder may be incorporated into the soil, or decomposed granite could be used in landscaping to minimize erosion.

Grass cover could be planted to stabilize erodible soil on the grade.

## **Noise**

### Existing Conditions/Effects:

Use of the fort grounds for private parties, especially after 10:00 p.m., is an occasional source of noise and disturbance for nearby residents. Firing of antique weapons, especially cannon, also creates a substantial amount of noise during occasional interpretive events at the fort. However, rangers report that few complaints are received, and that neighbors apparently have become accustomed to the noise.

### Mitigations:

In anticipation of potential noise problems, use of live bands at private parties at the fort has been discontinued.

Due to the lack of disturbance that has been caused by noise at the fort, further mitigation is unnecessary.

## **Aesthetics**

### Future Effects:

The creation of a "screen" to direct visitors from the present Indian Museum to the fort may detract from the appearance of the fort, particularly if fencing is used.

### Mitigations:

In building the screen, materials besides metal fencing should be investigated. Alternative materials such as wood or tall vegetation may be used to provide a comparable level of security and direction between the fort and the Indian Museum building.

### **Other categories from Initial study**

An initial study (appendix) found that the proposed General Plan would cause no significant adverse effects in the following areas: air quality, water supply and quality, animal life, light, and glare, land use, natural resources, risk of upset, population, housing, traffic, public services, utilities, human health, and recreation.

### **Significant Effects That Cannot Be Avoided**

No unavoidable significant effects are expected from implementing the General Plan.

## **Relationship Between Short-Term Uses and Long-Term Productivity**

**Amendment Note:** As stated earlier in this document, this amendment updates the Declaration of Purpose to one that aligns with the current interpretive direction of the park. The park will no longer focus solely on interpretation on 1840s and 1890s Pioneer history but will expand into California Native American history and experiences and the lasting impacts of the Fort.

The long-term management of Sutter's Fort State Historic Park has been determined largely by previous acquisition and classification actions. The specific purposes and restraints of these actions are found in the Resource Element.

In 1962, the State Park and Recreation Commission classified the unit as a state historic monument. In 1970, most of the historical units of the State Park System -- including Sutter's Fort -- were reclassified as state historic parks.

The General Plan for this unit is consistent with the classification approved by the State Park and Recreation Commission. The Declaration of Purpose, which is included in the Resource Element, calls for preservation and restoration, rehabilitation, and interpretation of ~~features from both the 1840s (John Sutter's period) and the 1890s (California Pioneer Memorial)~~ an inclusive, complex and accurate representation of the Fort's role in the colonization of California.

Under these management objectives, short-term uses of the unit will protect and enhance the cultural and aesthetic resources for the public's benefit. They will not affect any future productive uses.

### **Growth-Inducing Impacts**

The proposed improvements to Sutter's Fort State Historic Park will protect the fort's historical and cultural resources and improve operation and interpretation of the unit. These Improvements, however, will not induce new growth in the area.

### **Cumulative Impacts**

Implementation of the General Plan will have no cumulative environmental impacts in the area.

## **Alternatives**

### **Alternatives Alternative #1: Proposed General Plan**

#### **Description:**

The proposed General Plan is the department's preferred alternative. It is described in the various elements of the General Plan.

#### **Environmental Impacts:**

The environmental effects of Alternative #1 are discussed above, in this Environmental Impact Element.

### **Alternative #2: No-Project Alternative**

#### **Description:**

This alternative would incorporate no modifications to existing facilities or landscaping at the fort.

#### **Environmental Impacts:**

This alternative would avoid possible adverse effects on archeological materials and the exterior appearance of the fort that might otherwise occur with Alternative #1.

However, retaining existing runoff drainage systems and plants may cause eventual water intrusion and damage to the walls of the fort. Consequent cracking and differential settling of the walls may endanger the structural stability of the fort, thereby damaging structures of historical significance.

### **Organizations and Individuals contacted in Preparing the Environmental Impact Element**

The following agencies were provided with the Notice of Preparation of this EIR. No comments were received.

- Sacramento City Planning Department 1231 "I" Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
- Sacramento County Planning Department 827 - 7th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
- SACOG, 106 "K" Street, Suite 200, Sacramento, CA 95814

State of California:

- Office of Planning and Research 1400 - 10th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
- Office of Historic Preservation 1416 - 9th Street, Room 1442-7, Sacramento, CA 95814

Information was obtained from the following individuals:

In the Resource Protection Division, Department of Parks, and Recreation:

Stephen Bakken, Forester II,  
John Kelly, State Archeologist II,  
George Stammerjohan, State Historian II

At Sutter's Fort (2701 "I" Street, Sacramento, CA 95816):

Jeff Jones. State Park Ranger I

Additional Reference:

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