

Draft  
Cultural Resource Investigation for the  
Solano County, California

## Winters Putah Creek Park Percolation Dam Removal and Floodplain Restoration Project



Prepared for:  
Solano County Water Agency

January 22, 2007

**EDAW** | **AECOM**

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## MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

The Solano County Water Agency (SCWA) is proposing the restoration and enhancement of the Winters Putah Creek Park property along Putah Creek near Winters, California. The Winters Putah Creek Park project area lies at the southern edge of the city of Winters and extends east to I-505. It is further bordered on the south by Putah Creek Road, and by private housing developments to the north.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970 and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) require the consideration of project-related impacts on cultural resources within a project area. To meet the requirements of CEQA and Section 106, SCWA contracted with EDAW to provide an inventory and assessment of cultural resources within the proposed project area. This report does not constitute a CEQA analysis. An analysis for potentially significant cultural resources and, if required, mitigation measures, would need to be conducted as part of the project CEQA review. This report will be submitted to the Northwest Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System for information sharing purposes.

The cultural resource investigation conducted for the proposed project involved a process of archival / repository research, oral history interviews, and a field visit to the project area. This study resulted in the identification of two historic-era bridges; the Yolo-Solano Bridge, and the old Southern Pacific Railroad Bridge. No other historic or prehistoric resources were observed during the field investigation.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
Management Summary.....	i
Introduction .....	1
Project Description .....	1
Project Personnel .....	1
Environmental Setting .....	1
Prehistoric Setting .....	2
Ethnographic Setting .....	3
Historic Setting.....	3
Research Methodology .....	5
Pre-field Research .....	6
Field Investigation .....	7
Survey Results .....	7
Archaeological Resources .....	7
Historic-era Resources.....	7
Resource Significance .....	9
California Register of Historical Resources .....	9
National Register of Historical Places.....	10
Recommendations .....	12
Conclusions .....	13
References Cited.....	14
<b>Exhibits</b>	
1    Project Location Map.....	2
2    Sanborn Map of Winters, 1928 .....	4
3    The Yolo-Solano and Southern Pacific Railroad bridges.....	5
4    Yolo-Solano Bridge.....	8
5    Southern Pacific Bridge.....	9
<b>Tables</b>	
1    Sites within the Putah Creek Corridor .....	6

# INTRODUCTION

The Solano County Water Agency (SCWA) is proposing the restoration and enhancement of the Winters Putah Creek Park property along Putah Creek near Winters, California. The Winters Putah Creek Park project area lies at the southern edge of the city of Winters and extends east to I-505. It is further bordered on the south by Putah Creek Road, and by private housing developments to the north (Exhibit 1).

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project has been divided into two phases. Phase I examines weir construction, habitat enhancement, and the removal of 1930s-era percolation dam remains within the Winters Putah Creek Park area. Phase II involves the development of recreational opportunities within Winters Putah Creek Park. This project is proposed, in part, due to a lack of flood force dissipation on this portion of Putah Creek, and its negative effects on lateral and vertical channel stability in the Winters Putah Creek Park area.

## PROJECT PERSONNEL

Work for this project was conducted by professionally trained historians and archaeologist who meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards qualifications. The following individuals played key roles in the investigation:

**Angel Tomes, M.A.** received her graduate degree in Public History from California State University, Sacramento. She has seven years of cultural resource management experience, with extensive work conducted on historic urban and rural buildings and structures. Ms. Tomes was the primary investigator and report author for this project.

**Brian Ludwig, PhD** received his doctorate degree in Anthropology from Rutgers University. He is a cultural resource specialist with more than 26 years of experience. Dr. Ludwig served in a review capacity for the project and associated report.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

To better understand the origin and meaning of cultural resources located within and in the vicinity of the current project area, a cultural context must be established. The following section provides a cultural setting of the project region. Prehistoric and ethnographic overviews of the project area are more thoroughly covered in the Lower Putah Creek Watershed Management Action Plan (EDAW 2005), so are briefly summarized here. The historic setting is more comprehensive in order to provide a platform with which to view the resources under discussion.



Source: SCWA 2006

**Project Location Map**

**Exhibit 1**

## **PREHISTORIC SETTING**

Native Americans have inhabited coastal and interior portions of California for about 10,000 years. The Putah Creek watershed, with its varied topography and rich floral and faunal resources, has been an important area for settlement and subsistence for at least 5,000 years. Although no direct evidence for the earliest inhabitants has been found in the Putah Creek area, the Paleo-Indian Period (10,000 B.C. to 6000 B.C.) was the timeframe which saw the first entry of humans into California. Many of the earliest sites were probably located along the post-glacial coastal shoreline. Rising water levels have now covered those sites and most interior sites that remain are situated along lakeshores, or areas that used to be lakeshores (Fredrickson 1973). While Paleo-Indian artifacts have never been found in the Putah Creek or Solano County regions, it is likely that these people at least traveled through the region, hunting the prolific game that would have lived in the area and gathering seasonally available plant materials.

## **ETHNOGRAPHIC SETTING**

The region including Putah Creek in the southern portion of the Sacramento River Valley, from the town of Princeton south to San Pablo Bay and Suisun Bay, was occupied by the Patwin from late prehistoric or early historic times until the Mexican and European settlements. Their traditional territory extended 90 miles in length and 40 miles wide, covering three physiographic regions from east to west: both banks of the Sacramento River and its dense tree, vine, and brush vegetation interspersed with great tule marshes; flat open grassland plains with occasional oak groves; and the lower hills of the eastern Coast Range. Most of the population was concentrated along the river in large villages and in smaller settlements along the Putah Creek and Cache Creek drainages (Johnson 1978). Villages along Putah Creek included Chemocu, Putato (or Poo-tah-toi), and Liwai where the present-day cities of Davis and Winters now stand.

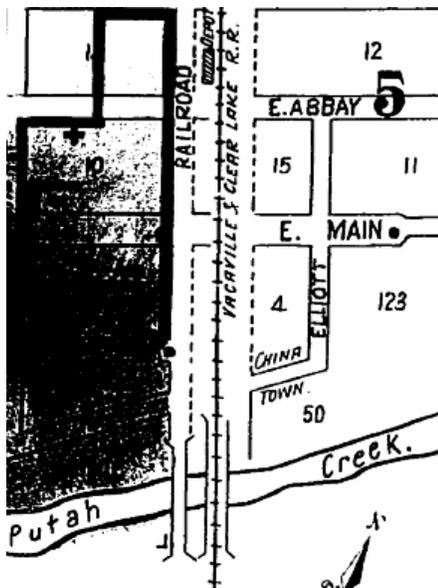
## **HISTORIC SETTING**

Permanent European settlement in the Winters area began in 1842 when John R. Wolfskill was granted the Rancho Rio de los Putos Mexican land grant. Wolfskill, who had undertaken agricultural pursuits and stock raising on the land, was soon joined by his brothers Milton, Mathus, and Sarchel. By the late 1850s, others were settling on the land bordering the rancho's boundaries. Eventually, land within the rancho was subdivided, and the sale of tracts brought in additional settlers, among them Theodore Winters, a racehorse breeder who purchased the Wolfskill holdings in 1865, and established a racetrack in the southern part of what would become Winters (HEC 1983).

The area's first town, Buckeye, was established ca. 1865, approximately 2 miles northeast of Winters. This fledgling community was short-lived, however, and by 1875 was abandoned when the Vaca Valley Railroad bypassed the small town and extended its line into Yolo County. The railroad, having received the commitment of

land from Theodore Winters and D.P. Edwards, and financial assistance from area landowners, made plans for a new depot and town-site named Winters, after the local entrepreneur (HEC 1983).

The town of Winters grew rapidly at this time, largely due to its status as the northeastern terminus of the Vaca Valley Railroad. By the late 1870s, Winters had become a busy agricultural and commercial center, with three trains daily, and rapid business and residential developments, some of which were by a local Chinese population (Larkey, pers. comm., 2006, HEC 1983).



Having originally come to the area in the 1870s to work on the railroad, some Chinese, upon its completion, settled in the Winters area and established a small commercial district of their own along Putah Creek (Exhibit 2), adjacent to and perhaps partly within the area that comprises the current project location. By the 1890s, many Japanese had also come to the region to work on local farms and ranches, and before long, established themselves in the small Asian community (Larkey, pers. comm., 2006). Apricots, peaches, cherries, plums, pears, oranges, almonds, figs, barley, wheat, and vegetables were all grown and harvested in the area, with agriculture being the primary source of economic activity for all segments of the community.

**Exhibit 2. Sanborn Map of Winters, 1928**

The city of Winters was incorporated in 1898, and by the first part of the twentieth century, had undertaken many civic improvements including: new water, sewer, and lighting systems; concrete sidewalks, a public drinking fountain, and the construction of two new bridges for railroad and highway traffic. The two bridges are depicted in Exhibit 3. Although the growth of the town slowed from 1920–1940, the strong agricultural base sustained the community during the Depression years (HEC 1983).



**Exhibit 3. The Yolo-Solano and Southern Pacific Railroad bridges.  
Asian district buildings visible on right, 1908.  
Photo courtesy of J.R. Chapman and Joann Larkey.**

Like many other communities across the country, World War II re-invigorated the town of Winters which, in these later years, saw a gradual transition from the fruit industry to the nut industry. Rather than expand the town boundaries, many of the buildings in town were enlarged or otherwise remodeled around this time. The buildings in what was then referred to as “Japanese Town” were abandoned when the Japanese were interred during World War II, and later burned down immediately before their release from the internment camps. Much of this area is now occupied by the Winters Community Center (Larkey, pers. comm., 2006).

Today Winters remains a small town with a strong agricultural economic foundation. While the rapid growth that occurred in the late nineteenth century has not been repeated, Winters retains a stable population base, and maintains a strong sense of community.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

EDAW’s research into cultural resource issues included a review of pertinent background information on the study area. Project personnel made visits to a number of libraries and repositories including: the California State Library’s California History Room, the California State University, Sacramento library, and the Winters Branch Library. An oral history interview was conducted with local historian Joann Larkey in order to obtain additional information on the history of the project area.

## PRE-FIELD RESEARCH

In order to determine the presence of any recorded sites, features, or artifacts that could be affected by the proposed project, EDAW archaeologists conducted a record search through the Northwest Information Center (NWIC) of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS). According to NWIC files, at least 14 archaeological sites or isolates are known to be within the Putah Creek corridor (Table 1.).

An additional 27 sites or isolated artifacts have been found within ¼ mile of Putah Creek; however, are situated away from any potential impacts resulting from activities related to the proposed project, and are not listed here. The known resources within the current project area include the two historic-era structures, the Yolo-Solano Bridge, and the old Southern Pacific Bridge. No other sites or isolates are known to occur within the proposed project area.

Table 1 Sites within the Putah Creek Corridor		
Site Number		Site Type
P-48-433		Farmstead
P-48-509		Lithic Scatter
P-48-510		Concrete Bridge
P-48-517		Battered basalt cobble
P-57-187		Lithic Scatter
CA-Sol-10		Occupation Site
CA-Sol-19		Occupation Site
CA-Sol-21		Mound / Occupation Site
CA-Sol-253		Occupation
CA-Sol-257		Lithic Scatter
CA-Yol-164		Village of ku'ndihi
HR1 3/089		Yolo-Solano Bridge (1907)
HR1 6/194		Stevensen Bridge (1923)
Old Southern Pacific Railroad		Truss Bridge

The records search also included, but was not necessarily limited to, a review of the following resources and publications:

- ▶ *Directory of Properties*, Office of Historic Preservation (2006)
- ▶ *California Points of Historical Interest*, State of California (1992)
- ▶ *California Inventory of Historic Resources*, State of California (1976)
- ▶ *California Historical Landmarks*, State of California (1996)

- ▶ *National Register of Historic Places*, Office of Historic Preservation
- ▶ *California Register of Historical Resources*, State of California (database maintained)
- ▶ *Survey of Surveys* (1989)
- ▶ General Land Office (GLO) Plat map (1854 – 1867)

## FIELD INVESTIGATION

A field visit was made to the project area by an EDAW archaeologist on December 6, 2006. Visibility within the project area was heavily obscured by blackberry stands and other understory vegetation that covered much of the ground surface. Relatively open areas were periodically scraped by the archaeologist in an attempt to view the soil. No archaeological resources were observed during the survey.

Two historic-era resources were noted during the field visit, the Yolo-Solano Bridge, and the old Southern Pacific Railroad Bridge. Both of these structures are documented on the *Winters Architectural Heritage* list, which inventories buildings and structures of importance to the community. An EDAW architectural historian photographed and recorded both bridges on the appropriate Department of Parks and Recreation forms.

## SURVEY RESULTS

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

No archaeological resources were observed during the survey conducted for this investigation.

### HISTORIC-ERA RESOURCES

Two historic-era bridges were identified within the project area. Both of these structures, described below, are documented in the *Winters Architectural Heritage* list.

#### YOLO-SOLANO BRIDGE

This concrete arch bridge (Exhibit 4) carries Railroad Avenue over Putah Creek. Constructed in 1908, the bridge measures 461 feet long and 22 feet wide. At the time of its construction, this structure was hailed as the longest bridge of its kind west of the Mississippi. This bridge was built by W.N. Concannon of 4,500 yards of concrete and reinforced by 70 tons of iron.

Yolo and Solano Counties shared the expense of the structure, which cost \$50,000. A shared dedication for this bridge, and the Southern Pacific Railroad Bridge, was held on April 1, 1908 at East Main and Elliott Streets. Over 3,000 people attended the affair, which included musical programs, various speeches, a barbeque, and a dance at the Opera House (HEC 1983).



**Exhibit 4. Yolo-Solano Bridge. Photo by EDAW, 2006**

## **SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD BRIDGE**

This Pratt through truss bridge was built in 1906 by the Southern Pacific Railroad Company (Exhibit 5), and was the fourth attempt to bridge Putah Creek in this location. The first two railroad bridges were washed out by storms in 1877. The third structure, a combination wagon and rail bridge, served until 1906, when the current truss bridge was constructed.

With the decline and eventual stoppage of rail service, the tracks were removed from the bridge in the 1970s, and the property sold to the city of Winters for a community center. Subsequently, former Winters resident and Southern Pacific president, Alan Furth, presented the bridge to the town for use as a bike path (HEC 1983).



Exhibit 5. Southern Pacific Bridge. Photo by EDAW, 2006.

## RESOURCE SIGNIFICANCE

### CALIFORNIA REGISTER OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

The significance of cultural resources within the project area is measured against the criteria outlined in the CRHR. The California and National registers require that sites eligible for listing be afforded degrees of protection ranging from preservation to the mitigation of adverse impacts. Determining the CRHR eligibility of historic and prehistoric sites located within the study area is guided by Sections 21083.2 and 21084.1 of the Public Resources Code (PRC), and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations Title 14) Section 15064.5. In the CRHR, cultural resources are defined as buildings, sites, structures or objects that may have historical, architectural, archaeological, cultural or scientific importance. A cultural resource may be eligible for listing on the CRHR if it:

1. is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
2. is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;

3. embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of an important creative individual or possesses high artistic values; or
4. has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

In California, if a prehistoric or historic resource does not necessarily meet any of the four CRHR criteria, but does meet the definition of a “unique” site as outlined in the PRC (Section 21083.2), it may still be treated as a significant resource. This is the case if it is an archaeological artifact, object or site about which it can be clearly demonstrated that, without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that it meets any of the following criteria:

1. It contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and that there is a demonstrable public interest in that information.
2. It has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type.
3. It is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event.

These two sets of criteria operate independently to ensure that potentially significant effects on archaeological and historic resources are considered as a part of a project’s environmental analysis. PRC guidelines Section 5097.98, also recommend provisions be made for the accidental discovery of archaeological sites, historical resources or Native American human remains during construction.

## **NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORICAL PLACES**

Determining the NRHP eligibility of cultural resources under Federal administration is guided by the specific legal context of the site’s significance as set out in Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (16 USC 470), as amended. The NHPA authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to expand and maintain a National Register of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture. A property may be listed in the NRHP if it meets criteria for evaluation defined in 36 CFR 60.4:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association and:

- (a) That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;

- (b) That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- (c) That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess a artistic value, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- (d) That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Most prehistoric archaeological sites are evaluated with regard to Criterion d of the NRHP which refers to site data potential. Such sites typically lack historical documentation that might otherwise adequately describe their important characteristics. Archaeological methods and techniques are applied to gain an understanding of the types of information that may be recovered from the deposits. Data sought are those recognized to be applicable to scientific research questions or to other cultural values. For example, shellfish remains from an archaeological deposit can provide information about the nature of prehistoric peoples' diet, foraging range, exploited environments, environmental conditions and seasons during which various shellfish species were taken. These are data of importance to scientific research that can lead to the reconstruction of prehistoric life-ways. Some archaeological sites may be of traditional or spiritual significance to contemporary Native Americans or other groups, particularly those sites which are known to contain human burials.

Historic bridge inventories typically identify four attributes that assist in defining significance in the area of bridge engineering:

- ▶ rarity,
- ▶ use of new or innovative design or construction methods,
- ▶ daring engineering achievement,
- ▶ and aesthetics.

Bridges are also further evaluated for significance within the general context of their design type.

## **YOLO-SOLANO BRIDGE**

Research did not indicate that this bridge was significantly associated with persons considered important in local history (Criterion 2/B). This bridge type is relatively common in California and throughout the United States, and does not represent distinctive architectural characteristics or engineering qualities (Criterion 3/C). This type of resource is well represented in both written and visual sources, and does not appear to be a source of important primary information (Criterion 4/D).

However, the Yolo-Solano Bridge, as a reinforced concrete arch structure, represents the popularity concrete bridges were gaining during the early part of the twentieth century. While not a rare bridge type, it served as a major travel and communication access point for the town of Winters during its early development; a role it continues to play today. Because of its association with the early development of Winters, this bridge appears to be eligible for listing on the CRHR under Criterion 1 (NRHP Criterion A), at the local level.

## **SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD BRIDGE**

The Southern Pacific Railroad Bridge is another common bridge type ubiquitous in California. The Truss bridge design dates back as early as the mid-nineteenth century, when various forms of trusses were being developed primarily as railroad bridges. The earliest of such structures were of wood and iron. Eventually, three truss designs would dominate the landscape: the Howe truss, the Warren truss, and the Pratt truss. Of these, the Pratt truss came to dominate truss bridge construction. Invented by Thomas Pratt, a Boston architect/engineer, and his father Caleb Pratt, the Pratt truss bridge was distinctive in that it included vertical compression members and diagonal tension members. This design was especially adaptable to the all-metal bridges that were being constructed in the United States in the early nineteenth century; first in iron, and later in steel.

Pratt truss bridges were constructed in great numbers as railroad structures during the period of rapid highway improvement that took place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. By the end of World War I, newer materials and designs began to surmount the popularity of the truss (Mikesell 2001).

Research did not indicate that this bridge was significantly associated with persons considered important in local history (Criterion 2/B). This bridge type is relatively common in California and throughout the United States, and does not represent distinctive architectural characteristics or engineering qualities (Criterion 3/C). This type of resource is well represented in both written and visual sources, and does not appear to be a source of important primary information (Criterion 4/D).

While not an uncommon type of bridge, the Southern Pacific Railroad Bridge in Winters appears eligible for listing on the CRHR under Criterion 1 (NRHP Criterion A) at the local level for its association with the early development of Winters. Although not the first crossing at this location, this bridge was constructed during a time of great growth and civic improvement in the town of Winters, and represents a period of prosperity for the then burgeoning community.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Although no new archaeological resources were discovered during the reconnaissance survey conducted for this project, the possibility remains that subsurface resources could be present. If an inadvertent discovery of cultural

materials (e.g., unusual amounts of shell, animal bone, glass, ceramics, etc.) is made during project-related construction activities, ground disturbances in the area of the find shall be halted and a qualified professional archaeologist shall be notified regarding the discovery. The archaeologist shall determine whether the resource is potentially significant per the CRHR and develop appropriate mitigation. Mitigation may include, but not necessarily be limited to, in-field documentation, archival research, archaeological testing, data recovery excavations or recordation.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

EDAW, under the auspices of the SCWA, undertook a cultural resource investigation of the Winters Putah Creek Park area in conjunction with the Winters Putah Creek Percolation Dam Removal and Floodplain Restoration project. Two historic-era bridges located within the project area appear to be eligible for listing on the CRHR at the local level, for their association with the early development of Winters; however, neither of the two bridges would be affected by project activities

Although no archaeological resources were observed during the field investigation, cultural material could be present subsurface or beneath the underbrush covering the ground surface. Because of previously recorded archaeological sites in the vicinity of the project area, it is recommended that an archaeological monitor be present during any project-related ground disturbing activities.

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## Maps

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Dixon. 1928

## Personal Communication

Larkey, Joann. Local Dixon historian and author. December 7, 2006—personal communication with Angel Tomes of EDAW on regarding history of the project area.