



15.0 SCENIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Scenic and aesthetic resources and views are one of the study area's greatest assets. The forested nature of the town and the surrounding areas, the number of vegetation communities and the range of topography combine to offer a fairly unique variety of visual experiences within a relatively compact geographic area. Views range from valley and canyon panoramas to forest and ridge lines. From some vantage points, the Sutter Buttes and the Coastal Range are visible on clear days.

Residential development is located primarily in forested areas. Trees have been cleared for various commercial and industrial development, some of which is less visually pleasing. The overall ambience is rustic and natural, a genuine community asset which can be enhanced through local policies, guidelines and/or ordinances.

Table 15-1 lists identified historical landmarks and historic structures within and near the study area.

Ethnographic Background

Paradise lies within territory formerly held by the Northwestern *Maidu* or *Konkow* Indians, who inhabited much of what is now Butte County. These people spoke dialects similar to the Northeastern or Mountain *Maidu*, who occupied the upper Feather River basin in much of what is now Plumas County, and the Southern *Maidu* or *Nisenan*, who occupied portions of the mountains and the Central Valley to the south within the Bear, Yuba, and American River basins. Like most native Californians, the *Konkow* were divided into territorial groups known to anthropologists as "tribelets" or "village communities." These consisted of two or more politically confederated villages led by the head man of the most prominent village. Each tribelet was sovereign in matters of land ownership, reaction to trespass, war, and ceremonies. The head man was often assisted by lesser officials and a council of elders. Most tribelet leaders "ruled" by virtue of their wisdom, experience, and acquired respect, rather than through any real authority. Tribelets were the largest social and political unit among most California Indians.

The *Konkow* tribelet was centered around Concow Valley, while the *Michoopda* tribelet claimed the area around Chico and are believed to have foraged within the foothills east of Chico. Some anthropologists believe there was a tribelet in the vicinity of present-day Cherokee called *Ti'-mah*, who may also have foraged on portions of Paradise Ridge. It may be impossible to determine which of these groups actually claimed or inhabited Paradise. All of these tribelets could have maintained settlements or exploited resources in the area at various times. Major villages were located atop the crests of ridges high above the rivers or part of the way down the walls of the canyons on mid-slope benches, particularly where there were springs.



Acorns, deer, and fish provided dietary staples, which were supplemented by a vast variety of small game, seeds, nuts, fruits, and berries. The *Konkow* exploited their environment very systematically. Far from being randomly nomadic, they planned seasonal hunting and foraging rounds to arrive at specific places during peak productivity of certain resources. Their semi-sedentary lifestyle would be impossible without technologies for preserving and storing food resources. For example, these technologies enabled them to convert vast, but seasonal surpluses of acorns and salmon into reliable year-round staples.

Even before the arrival of large numbers of Euro-American settlers and miners, the Indians were affected by white civilization. In 1833, an epidemic of what is believed to have been malaria was brought into the California Central Valley from Oregon by fur trapping parties. As many as seventy-five percent of the native people in the Valley and lower foothills died. The Indians never recovered from this catastrophe and were thus unable to resist the invasion of their homeland during and after the Gold Rush.

Along with epidemics and armed attacks, the Indians had to contend with the destruction of the fisheries and other resources by gold miners and the exclusion of Indians from prime hunting and food gathering lands claimed by white settlers. They were soon reduced to poverty, becoming homeless refugees in their own country. During the late 1850s and 1860s, many surviving Northwestern *Maidu* were removed to the Round Valley Indian Reservation.

A few *Maidu* Indians reside in Butte and Plumas Counties today. Many are involved in efforts to revive their native language and culture.

Prehistory

Archaeological excavations in Messilla Valley in the southeastern corner of the study area suggested to archaeologists that five distinctive cultural expressions had occupied the region over the last three or four thousand years. From youngest to oldest, they are called the Historic Complex (A.D. 1830 to 1850), which clearly represents the archaeological remains of the Northwestern *Maidu*, the Oroville Complex (about A.D. 1500 to 1830), the Sweetwater Complex (about A.D. 800 to 1500), the Bidwell Complex (about A.D. 1 to 800), and the somewhat enigmatic Mesilla Complex (possibly 1000 to 2000 B.C. to A.D. 1). Many archaeologists feel that the Bidwell Complex marks the appearance of *Maidu*-speaking people in the area, although this has not yet been confirmed. At least one prominent archaeologist has hypothesized that the *Konkow* arrived no earlier than about A.D. 1400, while several archaeologists have recently unearthed evidence they believe suggests even the Mesilla Complex people were Maiduan.

The Mesilla Complex bears certain similarities to Central Valley and high Sierran cultures of the same period, including the Martis Complex of the Lake Tahoe and Truckee basin areas. However, most archaeologists now recognize the Martis and Mesilla as distinct cultures.

There is tantalizing evidence for much earlier human presence in many northern Sierra Nevada locations, although none of the evidence is as yet unequivocal. This evidence, in the form of large, relatively crude projectile points that were used for spears – the bow and arrow was not introduced until about A.D. 500 –



indicates Great Basin origins. In 1990, fairly substantial radiocarbon evidence was found for settlement of the central Sierra Nevada in Calaveras County nearly 10,000 years ago.

The California Archaeological Inventory, Northeast Information Center, California State University, Chico, has prepared a map of archaeologically sensitive areas for the Town of Paradise. The map indicates a preponderance of known sites roughly south of Honey Run Road and Pearson Road, with a particular concentration in the Lime Saddle area. The map indicates that "land disturbing projects" south of the line must be surveyed by a qualified archaeologist prior to land disturbance, and that projects north of the line must be reviewed by the center to determine if an archaeological survey will be necessary.

TABLE 15-1
HISTORICAL STRUCTURES AND LANDMARKS

SITE/STRUCTURE/ LANDMARK	TYPE	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
"Thankful" Lewis Landmark	Sign	Pentz and Williams Road (before Butte College)	Landmark to "Thankful" Lewis, only survivor of an Indian attack on herself and two brothers while they were walking to school in 1863
Clear Creek Cemetery Lewis Children Memorial	Marker	Clear Creek Cemetery Road (off East Clark Road)	Memorial to James and John Lewis who were captured and killed by the Mill Creek Indians in July 1863
Elliott Springhouse	Structure with plaque	Lower Neal Road	In memory of Alexander McClure Elliott 1829-1917, who settled on this site in 1867. Elliott Road was named for this early resident
Sierra Polytechnic Institute	Sign	Pearson Road and College Hill Road	This institute offered education for ninth-fourteenth grades so ridge residents did not have to travel to Chico. Established in 1904, it was the equivalent to two years of college
Skyway and Foster Triangle Park	Park	Skyway and Elliott Roads	Dedicated to the beautification of Paradise by the Paradise Chamber of Commerce
Southern Railroad Depot Building and the Washington Plaza Memorial Park	Depot with park	Black Olive Drive and Pearson Road	This depot was built by Southern Pacific in approximately 1903. The Washington Plaza Memorial Park was the area that surrounds the depot. It was created by the community of Paradise and beautified in 1929
Old Paradise Historical Marker	Marker	East side of Clark Road and Elliott Road	Commemorates the original business section of Paradise, known in the 1860s as Leonard's Mill. The first community hall, school, church and post office were located at this site. Then it was bypassed when the railroad was build in 1903
Dogtown Nugget Monument California Historical Landmark No. 771	Plaque	Skyway at Inspiration Point, Magalia	This marker symbolizes the discovery of the first large gold nugget in California weighing fifty-four pounds on April 12, 1859

SITE/STRUCTURE/ LANDMARK	TYPE	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
Magalia Depot Building	Site	Skyway and Coutolenc Road	This was built in 1903 on the Southern Pacific Line for lumber and passenger service from Stirling City. Last passenger service was in the 1950s and all log hauling was discontinued in May 1974, when the Stirling City Mill was closed
Magalia Cemetery	Plaque	Magalia Cemetery Road	On July 15, 1973 a plaque was dedicated at the Magalia Cemetery honoring the pioneers who settled Dogtown in 1850 and Mr. and Mrs. John Hupp donors of the land.
Eugene J. DeSabra, Jr.	Plaque	West side of Skyway near DeSabra Reservoir Dam	Eugene DeSabra was a promoter and developer of the hydroelectric system on the ridge, which later became PG&E
Stirling City Historical Marker	Sign	Stirling City	A sign describing the early history of Stirling City and explaining the history of the famous Diamond Match Company
Stirling City Historical Marker	Sign	Inskip	The first hotel was built in 1857 by Mr. Kelly. John Stakes purchased the hotel in 1866. It was destroyed by fire in March 1868. The present building was erected later in the same year. The gold strike of the 1850s brought the population to over a thousand making it a booming township
Inskip Pioneer Cemetery	Plaque	Inskip	The names on the wooden markers have completely disintegrated with the passage of time. Inscribed on the surrounding fence are the words: "Those who rest here are only known to God."
Sank Spring	Plaque	Chaparral	Dedicated by Jesse Sank, pioneer, to his wife Cornelia Lott.
Nimshew Cemetery	Plaque	Nimshew	Honoring pioneers of the area, Saul and Rebecca Rugh
Honey Run Covered Bridge	Monument	Honey Run Road and Butte Creek	Monument of early pioneering which connects the Honey Run grade with the Humbug Road. It was built for the purpose of providing a shorter route to the mountains as well as a closer access to points of shipping on the Sacramento River. The bridge was erected in 1894 by George Miller

SITE/STRUCTURE/ LANDMARK	TYPE	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
Gold Nugget Museum	Museum	502 Pearson Road	While this building is not a historical landmark, most of the history of Paradise and historical artifacts are located here.

Source: State Office of Historic Preservation; 1982 Paradise General Plan; Draft Butte County Energy, Natural Resources and Recreation Element, 1989.