

COYOTE CANYON CULTURAL PRESERVE

Purpose and Intent of the Cultural Preserve Zone

The purpose of a Cultural Preserve is to protect and preserve “**culturally significant sites, buildings, or zones that represent significant places or events in the flow of human experience in California.**”(PRC 5019.74)

Coyote Canyon is located in the northwestern portion of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park® (ABDSP). The main features of this large, 20-mile long topographic feature, is the central course and flood plain of Coyote Creek. This is the only perennial stream in the eastern Peninsula Ranges. A number of tributary canyons that are culturally important in their own right also contribute to the greater cultural landscape. Coyote Canyon represents the most concentrated, significant, and sensitive evidence of human existence in northern ABDSP. The canyon was an ancient prehistoric and historic travel route between the desert floor and mountain peaks. The route was established and used for hundreds, and likely thousands, of years by the Native Peoples of the region. Coyote Canyon was adopted as the preferred route of historic expeditions including those of Juan Bautista de Anza in 1774 and 1775-1776 as well as a multitude of European colonists traveling toward the Pacific coastal areas from places to the south and east. Cattle and horses were also brought into California on what came to be called the “De Anza Trail” until about 1785 when a new route through the San Felipe Valley came into use. This left Coyote Canyon, for the most part, to the indigenous Cahuilla and their neighbors. Diaries of the Anza Expeditions of 1774 and 1775-1776 described both the route and the indigenous inhabitants of the canyon.

Coyote Canyon is extremely important to living Cahuilla and Cupeño Peoples living in adjacent reservations. Five lineages of the Mountain Cahuilla Coyote Clan, the *Wiwaiistam*, have named ancestral village locations within the proposed Preserve.

The proposed preserve also includes the locations of many events associated with the 1851 “Garra Uprising,” the last organized rebellion of Indians in southern California. The Native rebels, after decades of settler encroachment on Native lands, being taxed without representation, and repeatedly disappointed by the failure of the new U.S. government to complete and then ratify treaties between the government and the Indians, were incited to revolt by Antonio Garra and his son. Indians raided the ranch of J.J. Warner near Coyote Canyon, burned the ranch house, stole livestock and other property, and killed several Americans who were at the hot spring (Agua Caliente) nearby. An army unit from San Diego responded by marching into Coyote Canyon where the Revolt participants were hiding, killing a chief, burning settlements, and taking several suspects into custody. An impromptu military tribunal in Coyote Canyon convicted four Indians; the four were executed by firing squad in the Canyon the next day, Christmas 1851.

After these incidents, the Cahuilla lineages began to move out of the Canyon. Several smallpox epidemics, especially one in 1875, were the final blow to permanent Cahuilla residence in Coyote Canyon. As was traditional, Cahuilla homes were burned when the people left in response to disease. The Cahuilla continued to hold occasional gatherings and ceremonial events within the Canyon during the historic era, even after the permanent villages were abandoned.

Cultural sites are rich in Coyote Canyon. In addition to prehistoric and contact era Native American village sites, Coyote Canyon hosts the De Anza National Historic Trail, the First Child Monument marking the location of the first European birth in California, and several historic structures that mark the more recent homesteading and ranching eras. Because of the ready availability of water, rich plant and animal resources, Coyote Canyon provided the necessities of life and so was a natural lifeline from prehistoric times to the present.

The name of the proposed Cultural Preserve: Coyote Canyon Cultural Preserve is derived from the English translation of the Cahuilla clan name of *Wiwaiistam*, the Coyote People. The Cahuilla social order is based on a moiety system that divides the people into two major groups: the Wildcats and the Coyotes; according to Cahuilla Elder Katherine Saubel, Coyote Canyon was the ancestral home of the Coyote People.

The following represent management goals and guidelines put forth by the Department of Parks and Recreation for the proposed Coyote Canyon Cultural Preserve in ABDSP.

Primary Goal

The Primary goal for this and all Cultural Preserves is to protect and preserve the numerous cultural resources located here.

“Complete integrity of the resources shall be sought, and no structures or improvements that conflict with the integrity shall be permitted.” (P.R.C. 5019.74)

Guideline:

CC-G1

- Projects, activities or facility development that may affect the integrity cultural resources or impacts the cultural landscape and or the historic viewshed within the Cultural Preserve zone will not occur.

Roads and Parking

Goal:

“The use of motor vehicles in units of the state park system is subject to the following limitations: In state wildernesses, natural preserves, and cultural preserves, use is prohibited.” (P.R.C. 5001.8)

Guidelines:

CC-G2

Existing routes used by motor vehicles in Coyote Canyon will be excluded from the Cultural Preserve.

Motorized vehicles use will continue on these existing open routes.

CC-G3

- The Public Use Plan for Coyote Canyon will continue to be implemented.

CC-G4

- Parking will be available at the designated camping areas at Sheep Canyon, Alder Canyon, Horse Canyon, the Bailey Cabin area in Fig Tree Valley, and lower Coyote Canyon.

CC-G5

- Parking and day use will be available at Santa Catarina but not camping.

CC-G6

- 10 feet on either side of all roads will be excluded to allow for parking in non-sensitive areas.

Camping

Goal:

The open camping policy at Anza Borrego Desert State Park within this area has the potential to cause damaging or degrading impacts to known and unknown historic and archaeological resources. Cultural Preserve status will allow for further protection of these sensitive resources.

Guidelines:

CC-G7

- Overnight car-camping areas will be designated at established camping areas in Sheep Canyon, Alder Canyon, Horse Canyon, the Bailey Cabin area in Fig Tree Valley, and at three designated areas in lower Coyote Canyon (see map). These areas will be excluded from the Cultural Preserve Zone so as to allow motorized vehicle access.

CC-G8

- Camping activities that impact the integrity of the cultural resources present will not be allowed.

CC- G9

- Informal camping within the Cultural Preserve will be continued, provided that it doesn't impact cultural resources. Sensitive areas identified in the future as being impacted by camping will be closed to camping.

Social Experiences, Interpretation and Activities

GOAL:

“Areas set aside as cultural preserves shall be large enough to provide for the effective management and interpretation of the resources” (PRC 5019.74)

Guidelines:

CC-GC10

- The Coyote Canyon Cultural Preserve will encompass approximately 29,752 acres.

CC-GC11

- Visitors will continue to have the opportunity to experience the Cultural Preserve Zone in a manner that does not compromise the integrity of the existing significant resources.

CC-GC12

- Interpretive signs at appropriate and strategic locations such as entrances to the main and tributary canyons, Lower, Middle, and Upper Willows areas, and at trailheads.

CC-GC13

- These signs, when appropriate will reflect the Native Voice and will enhance the visitor experience while recognizing the previous inhabitants of the Cultural Preserve Zone and encouraging respectful visitation as well as alerting visitors to the sensitivity of both the cultural and natural resources.

CC-GC 16

- Interpretation will include the vital riparian ecosystem within the Canyon and explain the interaction of humans with this ecosystem through time.

CC-GC17

- Efforts will be made to reestablish native vegetation where it has been heavily impacted.

CC-GC18

- Trained Archaeological Site Stewards will make regular periodic visits to particularly sensitive areas and report any continuing impacts so that management of the Cultural Preserve Zone may be adjusted.

CC-GC19

- The four month canyon closure (June 1 –October 1) to all visitors will remain in order to protect the vital ecosystem and big horn sheep of Coyote Canyon.

CC-GC20

- The permanent closure to all vehicles from the region between Middle Willows and Upper Willows will remain in effect.