

Topanga Cultural Preserve

Cultural Preserve Definition: Cultural Preserves consist of distinct non-marine areas of outstanding cultural interest established within the boundaries of other state park system units for the purpose of protecting such features as sites, buildings, or zones which represent significant places or events in the flow of human experiences in California. Areas set aside as cultural preserves shall be large enough to provide for the effective management and interpretation of the resources. Within cultural preserves, complete integrity of the cultural resources shall be sought, and no structures or improvements that conflict with the integrity shall be permitted (Public Resource Code 5019.74).

Proposed Size: 150 acres

Location in Park: Trippet Ranch Zone

Archaeological Sites: 13 recorded sites (9 Native American, 4 Historic) fall within the proposed preserve boundaries.

This is the densest concentration of archaeological sites within the park.

Justifications for creation of the Topanga Cultural Preserve:

- Area contains the largest (9.5-acre) known Native American Village Site within the park (CA-LAN-1), of which less than 1/8 of an acre has been excavated (<1½%)
- CA-LAN-1 was radiocarbon dated to at least 6,080 years before present (BP) and contains other indications that it may be even older
- Sites contain early and significant artifact types such as cog-shaped stones, large stone tools, and grinding stone implements that could add to the understanding of some of the earliest peoples in California
- Sites show evidence of habitation during early, middle, and late periods of California Precontact History, which could help define the cultural history of this region and identify changes or similarities through time
- Eleven human burials were documented at CA-LAN-1 and seven burials have been identified at CA-LAN-2
- Modern Chumash and Tongva consider this area sacred and special to themselves and to their ancestors
- CA-LAN-1 is the first site recorded in the State Trinomial System within Los Angeles County
- Location of early, important archaeological excavations in 1940s and 1950s by notable California archaeologists Robert F. Heizer (one of the founders and first director of the University of California Archaeological Survey), Adan E. Treganza (who along with Heizer and others wrote and published the first book on field methods for California Archaeologists), and others.
- CA-LAN-1 and CA-LAN-2 are the sites where the “Topanga Archaeological Complex” was identified and defined and the “Millingstone Horizon” was documented and refined
- 1977 Topanga State Park General Development Plan called for a cultural preserve here
- Preserve status would help protect the sites and discourage unauthorized trails, vandalism, and other site disturbances that are currently damaging and destroying portions of some of the sites

