

Cienega Creek Natural Preserve

Cultural Resource Site Descriptions*

Site AZ BB:14:16

This site is approximately 22 acres in area and is described as a large artifact scatter with locally dense concentrations. The only surface feature present is a check dam located in a small wash.

The site was recorded in 1959 and re-examined in 1982. Artifacts observed included Rincon Red-on-brown and Tanque Verde Red-on-brown ceramics, flaked stone, metates, a pestle, and a mano. The ceramics date the site's occupation to the Rincon phase of the Sedentary period and the Tanque Verde phase of the early Hohokam Classic Period (A.D. 950-1300). The site most likely represents the remains of an extensive village. A dirt road has been bulldozed through the site.

Site AZ BB:14:62

Recorded in 1969, this is an Archaic period site that is representative of the Cochise Culture (9500-1500 years ago). The site consists of an artifact scatter of lithics and ground stone; no ceramics are present. The site is approximately 0.6 acres in area, covering the north and south banks of a tributary wash to Cienega Creek.

Site AZ BB:14:63

Located on the southern bank of Cienega Creek, this Hohokam habitation site covers approximately one acre. Recorded in 1969, this site consists of ceramics, utilized flakes, scrapers, knives or projectile points, and ground stone. Red-on-brown ware and plain ware ceramics are listed, but no temporal affiliation was provided on the site card. No information is available regarding structures or other features. A dirt road has been bulldozed through the site.

Site AZ BB:14:66

This 2.5 acre site consists of an artifact scatter located on a flat terrace above the north side of Posta Quemada Canyon. Records date the site to the Tanque Verde phase of the Hohokam early Classic period (A.D. 1150-1300). Although no trash mounds were noted when the site was recorded in 1972, and the presence of rooms or pit houses is unknown, the scatter probably represents trash associated with a village.

The only artifacts noted at the site are Tanque Verde Red-on-brown and plain ware ceramics. A variety of lithics and ground stone are most likely present as well. The site was recorded during a survey made at the request of Edward Akers, the previous land owner, of Akers' Ranch.

* Source: McGann & Associates, Inc. 1994. Cienega Creek Natural Preserve Management Plan: Background Report. Prepared for the Pima County Department of Transportation and Flood Control District. Funding assistance provided by the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Heritage Fund.

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Site AZ BB:14:67

This 2.5 acre site is an artifact scatter located on the north side of Posta Quemada Canyon overlooking the confluence of Aqua Verde and Cienega Creeks. The presence of plain ware ceramics dates the site to the Hohokam period, although the precise time is unknown.

Although no trash mounds were noted when the site was recorded in 1972, and the presence of rooms or pit houses is unknown, the scatter probably represents trash associated with a village. Its proximity to the confluence of Agua Verde Creek and Cienega Creek suggests that this may have been a major habitation site.

Plain ware ceramics and a basalt flake knife were the only artifacts noted, although it is likely that a variety of other ceramic, lithic, and ground stone artifacts are present. The site was recorded during a survey made at the request of Edward Akers, the previous land owner, of Akers' Ranch.

Site AZ BB:14:68

This two acre site represents a small historic camp, probably Anglo, that was discovered in 1972 during a survey conducted for the Akers' Ranch. Artifacts consist of several rock alignments and a small room that was dug into an old river terrace. A single tin can found on the site dates its occupation to post-1900. According to the Arizona State Museum (ASM) site card, the site is difficult to find because it is located in a dense mesquite thicket between Site AZ BB:14:69 and Cienega Creek.

Site AZ BB:14:69

This site is located on a terrace on the north side of Cienega Creek. Recorded in 1972 during a survey of the Akers' Ranch, the site appears to have been used for habitation based on the presence of a midden. Although cultural affiliation remains undetermined, it is believed that the site dates to the later Archaic period of the Cochise culture. The only artifacts found were lithics. The 2.5 acre site is considered extensive for an Archaic period village.

Site AZ BB:14:71

This 5.5 acre site is described as a habitation site on a cobblestone and conglomerate ridge located at the confluence of an unknown wash and Cienega Creek. The ASM site card indicates possible habitation units are identified by large rocks in clusters and a possible mount "wall" that may have been used for water diversion. A chipping station is also present at the site. Artifacts noted at the site include Rincon Red-on-brown, Rincon red and plain ware ceramics, lithics, and cores. The ceramics date the occupation of the site to the Rincon phase of the Hohokam Sedentary period (A.D. 950-1150). Subsurface structures may be present at the site, which is believed to be approximately 50 centimeters deep.

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Site AZ EE:2:147

Recorded in 1982, this 0.2 acre site most likely represents a small habitation or limited activity area located near the Siemond Ranch House. The site is an artifact scatter consisting of Gila Plain ceramics, lithic debitage, utilized flakes, and mano fragments. The presence of Gila Plain ceramics associates the scatter with the Hohokam culture. No artifact concentrations or surface features are present and the site is heavily impacted by roads and the construction of small rock cairns.

Site AZ BB:2:160

This site is a grinding station consisting of five water-worn bedrock outcrops exhibiting 21 mortar holes or cupules and four or more grinding areas located along Davidson Canyon. Each outcrop is approximately four square meters in size. Based on its close proximity, this grinding station may be associated with Site AZ BB:14:161, which is a Hohokam habitation site located above Davidson Canyon to the southeast, outside the Preserve boundaries. No other artifacts were observed at the site other than a pestle that was made from the same material as the outcrop.

Site AZ BB:14:498

This site is the location of the Cienega Stage Station, situated on an east-side terrace of Cienega Creek opposite the mouth of Davidson Canyon. The station was erected in 1858 by the Butterfield Overland Mail Line and consisted of a large adobe building incorporating living quarters, storage space and corrals. It was abandoned by the company in 1861 due to the Civil War, but saw further use by various individuals until the 1870's. Very little of the station is visible on the surface today because the area was impacted by realignment of the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks in 1887-1888. The surface of the site has also been heavily collected.

Site AZ EE:2:46

This site is the location of the Mescal Stage Station, founded in 1872 or 1874 by the Southern Pacific Mail Line. The station was in use by the company until 1878, when it ceased business. It is unknown if the station was reused after 1878. In 1961, the site was reported to contain the ruins of three adobe buildings and other features.

Site AZ EE:2:50

This site, which is estimated to be two to five acres in size, is a buried San Pedro base camp that has been exposed by erosion along a 180 meter reach of an arroyo. Rock filled hearths and two burials are the only recorded features.

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Cultural Resource Site Descriptions*

Site AZ EE:2:164

Site AZ EE:2:44 (a Hohokam Village) and Site AZ EE:2:51 (a Hohokam and Mogollon Scatter) have been renumbered and included into Site AZ EE:2:164. This combined site is probably the most significant site in the vicinity of the Preserve. However, no site cards are available at ASM.

Site AZ EE:2:165

This site is a construction area related to either the building of the railroad tracks or Interstate Highway 10. It consists of two concrete footings at the south end of the site and a few tin cans, most of which are less than 50 year old.

Site AZ EE:2:(1985-1)

No site card or ASM number is available for this site because it has not been recorded. The 1985-1 is a designation for the survey that found the site.

The site is described as a large Hohokam village that appears to date from the Rillito phase of the late Colonial period through the Rincon phase of the Sedentary period (A.D. 850-1150). Noted artifacts include ceramics (types not specified), lithics, ground stone, and shell bracelet fragments. The survey indicates that several features are present, but only discusses an intact hearth and pit house (number not specified). Also observed were a mammoth tooth fragment and a cremated human bone. The site is located east of Cienega Creek to the south of Siemond Ranch and is apparently disturbed by two roads.

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