

MINUTE ITEM

This Calendar Item No. C54
was approved as Minute Item
No. 54 by the State Lands
Commission by a vote of 3
to 0 at its 9/23/92
meeting.

CALENDAR ITEM

A 29

C 54

09/23/92

S 14

WP 7564

Pelkofer

PRC 7564

RENEWAL OF
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY PERMIT - INFORMATION COLLECTION

PERMITTEE:

Mr. Bruce Watkins
582 Humbolt Way
Livermore, California 94550

AREA, TYPE LAND AND LOCATION:

Tide and submerged land in the Pacific Ocean approximately
three miles north of Point Sur, Monterey County, about a
half mile offshore.

LAND USE:

Survey, identify, and map the wreck site of the S. S.
Ventura, which struck two rocks, broke up, and sank on
April 20, 1875. No object recovery will be undertaken and
the survey activity will require only minimal or no
disturbance of the bottom surface.

TERMS OF PROPOSED PERMIT:

Renewal period:

One (1) year from the date the permit is executed on
behalf of the State Lands Commission.

CONSIDERATION:

The public benefit.

BASIS FOR CONSIDERATION:

Pursuant to 2 Cal. Code Regs. 2003(a)(4)(A).

STATUTORY AND OTHER REFERENCES:

A. P.R.C.: Div. 6, Parts 1 and 2; Div. 13.

B. Cal. Code Regs.: Title 3, Div. 3; Title 14, Div. 6.

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AB 884:
N/A

OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION:

1. The S. S. Ventura was a wooden-hulled steamship of 775 tons that was built for the Navy in 1866 and commissioned as the USS Reseca. The ship was purchased by Goodall Nelson and Perkins in 1873 and put into service as a coast-wise steamer between San Francisco and San Diego, with stops in Santa Barbara and San Pedro.

She left San Francisco on the morning of April 20, 1875 with a hundred and thirty passengers, baggage and express, and four hundred tons of freight, destined for Los Angeles. About five P.M., she ran into a fog bank after passing New Year's Island and lowered sail and reduced speed, but proceeded on her passage. About eight o'clock, a crewman reported a light through the fog, which was thought to be a sister ship on her passage northward. Shortly thereafter, she cleared the fog and the lookout shouted "breakers" just before she struck the rocks.

She was close enough to allow a rope to be run to the beach and all the passengers were successfully transferred to shore. They were picked up the next day by the Santa Cruz and taken to Monterey. The ship's hull, which was badly damaged by the rocks and surf, was stripped clean by salvagers and what remained was left to break up in the sea.

2. Applicant has conducted operations under the current permit as time and weather allowed. He has regularly reported activities and results and has consulted with James Allan of the Institute for Western Maritime Archaeology. A brief summary of searching and mapping activities is attached as Exhibit "B". Applicant has complied with all conditions of the current permit and is eligible for a one-year renewal.
3. James Allan, marine archaeologist with the Institute for Western Maritime Archaeology at the University of California at Berkeley, will act as advisor on the

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project. Applicant has provided a satisfactory survey plan and will continue to make survey dives and do research pending the issuance of the permit.

4. Pursuant to the Commission's delegation of authority and the State CEQA Guidelines (14 Cal. Code Regs. 15061), the staff has determined that this activity is exempt from the requirements of the CEQA as a categorically exempt project. The project is exempt under Class 6, Information Collection, 14 Cal. Code Regs. 15306 and 2 Cal. Code Regs. 2905(e)(3).

Authority: P.R.C. 21084 and 14 Cal. Code Regs. 15300 and 2 Cal. Code Regs. 2905.

5. This activity involves lands identified as possessing significant environmental values pursuant to P.R.C. 6370, et seq. Based upon the staff's consultation with the persons nominating such lands and through the CEQA review process, it is the staff's opinion that the project, as proposed, is consistent with its use classification.

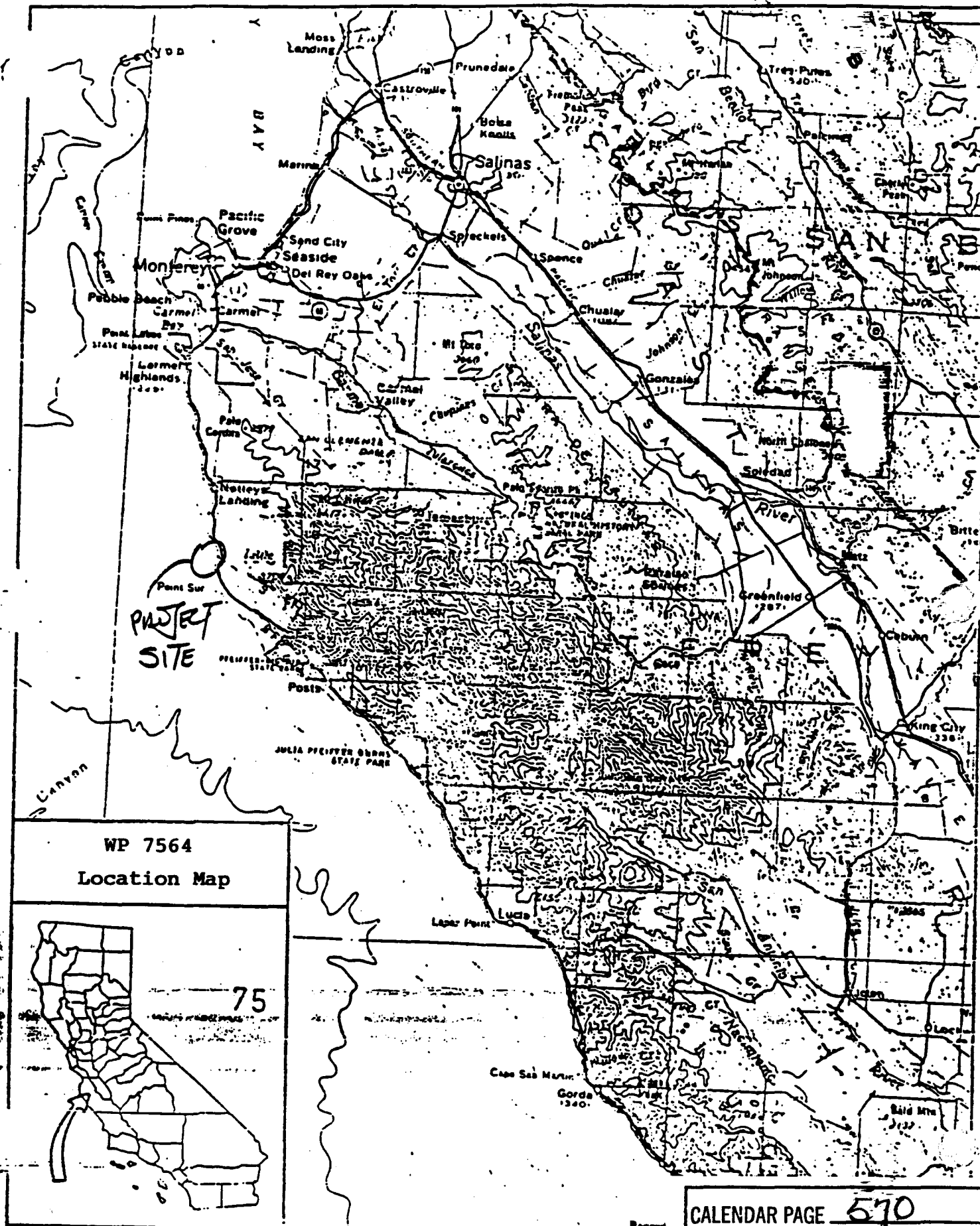
EXHIBITS:

- A. Location Map
- B. Activity Report

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE COMMISSION:

1. FIND THAT THE ACTIVITY IS EXEMPT FROM THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE CEQA PURSUANT TO 14 CAL. CODE REGS. 15061 AS A CATEGORICALLY EXEMPT PROJECT, CLASS 6, INFORMATION COLLECTION, 14 CAL. CODE REGS. 15306, 2 CAL. CODE REGS. 2905(e)(3).
2. AUTHORIZE ISSUANCE OF A ONE-YEAR ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY PERMIT - INFORMATION COLLECTION, COMMENCING ON THE DATE THE PERMIT IS EXECUTED BY THE STATE LANDS COMMISSION, IN CONSIDERATION OF THE PUBLIC BENEFIT, FOR THE SURVEY, MAPPING, AND IDENTIFICATION OF ARTIFACTS FROM THE WRECK SITE OF THE S. S. VENTURA IN THE GENERAL LOCATION SHOWN ON EXHIBIT "A" ATTACHED.

EXHIBIT A



WP 7564
Location Map

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EXHIBIT "B"

Summary of mapping the wreck of the SS Ventura. (9/13/91 to 7/13/92)

A Phase One permit to map the wreck of the SS Ventura was issued on September 13, 1991. That permit gave us the clout to seek permission to access the site. The wreckage lies just offshore and off of a privately owned ranch. The landowner refused us permission to trespass to get to the wreck site. We then sought and received permission from the State Department of Parks and Recreation to launch small inflatable boats from the State Historic Park at Point Sur, some one mile south of the site. A Special Event Permit was issued in November, allowing us access to State Property and to have a key to the gate.

The winter storms of the past season and the strong northeasterly winds of spring and early summer have kept us off of the site. The wreck sits in 5-15 feet of water and is directly exposed to northwesterly swell. We did get to spend two weekends mapping the site. On one we searched the area around Ventura Rocks, where the SS Ventura initially ran aground. We searched the seaward side of the rocks down to 120 feet and found no signs of the wreck.

On the other weekend we were able to begin mapping the major debris field. Bolts were epoxied onto several wash rock as permanent markers and the inshore area was surveyed. A heavy layer of sand covers the area at this time of year, consequently few artifacts could be mapped. A survey of the beach was conducted and numerous surf-polished iron and iron-concretion artifacts were found. These were different from the ones encountered on a similar survey in the winter of 1990 and on a different part of the beach. Seems that the artifacts are reshuffled each winter.

Our plans for the upcoming year are to finish mapping the larger, exposed artifacts this summer/fall and then perform a more detailed mapping this winter when the sand has receded.

Bruce