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Southeast Lake Cahuilla Active Volcanic Cultural District (SELCAVCD)

THIS NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION CONTAINS
RESTRICTED INFORMATION

"Indian tribes combine history and geography so that they have a sacred geography... every location has stories linked to the landscape." (Deloria 1994)

The SELCAVCD Landscape is a sacred cultural landscape conveying traditional cultural property and tribal cultural resource cultural landscape values. It includes volcanic domes, mudpots, mud volcanoes, springs, vents, fault lines, ponds, archaeological sites, and trail systems that are physically, visually, and culturally connected. Cultural value relates to both surface and subsurface features, including obsidian plugs and veins, where these systems interface. Affiliated Tribes include the Cahuilla, Kamia, Kumeyaay, Kwaaymii, and Quechan. Major Features include: Obsidian Butte; Rock Hill; Red Island/North Red Hill; Mullet Island; mudpots; springs; trails; landmark rocks; and fault systems. Interconnected features, trail systems, and visual relationships link the District internally and to surrounding mountains and landscapes.

The nomination documents significance as a Cultural District Landscape with Traditional Cultural Place values under Criteria A, B, and D:

Under Criterion A, the property is associated with patterns of Tribal land use along the southeast shorelines of Ancient Lake Cahuilla. It served, and still serves, as a gathering area, ceremonial location, training area, and place for medicine and resource procurement including water, clay, lithium, pumice, minerals, salt, and obsidian.

Under Criterion B, the SELCAVCD is associated with Alvino Siva (Cahuilla), the Great Snake (*Arseweev*), and Mother Earth. These figures are directly tied to the landscape through teaching, origin narratives, and cultural interpretations of geothermal features.

Under Criterion D, the landscape, its features, and location continue to convey knowledge to affiliated Tribes. Obsidian Butte is also the primary regional obsidian source and is present at archaeological sites throughout the region. Obsidian Butte obsidian is sacred to affiliated Tribes.

The property retains integrity of location, setting, design, feeling, and association. Major features remain present, and environmental components supporting the setting are intact. The landscape is naturally dynamic: Geothermal and geological features such as mudpots, vents, fault systems, and water conditions may flux over time. Natural changes are inherent characteristics of the property and do not diminish its significance. Cultural relationships persist as the landscape evolves. It is a living landscape where natural processes and Tribal cultural practices remain connected. Its period of significance is from time immemorial to the present.



Figure 1. Southeast Lake Cahuilla Active Volcanic Cultural District boundary map.