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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Kuchamaa (Tecate Peak)
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number _____ not for publication
city, town Tecate vicinity
state California code LA county San Diego code 073 zip code 92080

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	<u>1</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	<u>1</u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>4</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: _____
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Stade R. Craig _____ Date 5/22/92
Signature of certifying official

John J. Davjak, Preservation Officer, Bureau of Land Management
State or Federal agency and bureau _____ Date 8/18/92

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date _____
SHPO, California
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. Autonietta Glee 10/6/92
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Ceremonial Site or Shrine/Public Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

NA

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation

walls NA

roof

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Tecate Peak (Kuchamaa), located 25 air miles east of the Pacific Ocean, rises to an elevation of 3,885 feet above mean sea level. Located in southern California adjacent to the International Border, the mountain lies largely in the United States between the communities of Dulzura and Potrero. Tecate, Mexico sprawls for several miles along the southeastern base of the peak.

As part of the Southern California Batholith, Tecate Peak is a rugged granitic boulder strewn mountain. The peak is actually an isolated, gigantic outcrop which has differentially weathered. The overgrowth of vegetation creates an illusion that the mountain is covered by thousands of granitic outcrops. The entire region is characterized by precipitous mountains interspersed by broad valleys. The view from the peak is breathtaking. Evans-Wentz puts it aptly: "(the) summit affords an unimpeded view of unique grandeur in every direction, limited only by the immense circle of the world's horizon" (1981:10).

Kuchamaa is the Kumeyaay term for Tecate Peak. This mountain was first identified as sacred in an ethnographic study describing the Kumeyaay Indians of southern California and northern Baja California, Mexico (Cuero 1970). The bulk of data, however, comes from Native American interviews (Woods 1980, Talley 1981, Robertson 1982). The studies by Woods and Talley were initiated in support of environmental documentation to evaluate potential project impacts. The late Mrs. Rosalie Robertson, a recognized Kumeyaay leader, was specially interviewed to augment existing information.

The mountain describes a series of topographic ellipses oriented northeast to southwest. The western flank consists of several dissected subpeaks. Tecate Peak's north edge drops sharply to Highway 94 to an elevation of less than 1,000 feet above mean sea level. The eastern aspect culminates at an upland bench. Finally, the southern segment consists of a spine which continues into Mexico.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Religion

Ethnographic to 1942

Cultural Affiliation

Kumeyaay/Juaneno

Significant Person

NA

Architect/Builder

NA

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

As a sacred mountain to the Kumeyaay Indians, Kuchamaa meets National Register criteria "A", since this mountain has a "quality of significance in American culture which possesses integrity of feeling and association," and which is "associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our (Native American) history." Which is to say that, Kuchamaa is a religious property deriving much of its significance from its historical importance. Even though the mountain has been some what compromised by non-contributing features, it continues to retain its integrity of feeling and association.

Kuchamaa is of paramount religious importance to the Kumeyaay people of today as it was to those of the past. Use of the mountain has attracted Native Americans from both southern California and northern Baja California (Voigt 1990). For these people, the peak is a special place, marking the location for acquisition of knowledge and power by shamans. Oral tradition tells of important shamans who used Kuchamaa as a center to instruct their initiates (Robertson 1982).

Imbued with power by one of the Kumeyaay creator-gods, the mountain was and remains the site for important rites and rituals, including vision quests and purification ceremonies. Contemporary Native Americans most frequently use Kuchamaa during periods of full moon and equinoxes. At these times Native Americans pray for renewal of Earth Mother and peace (Voigt 1990).

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL CONTINUATION SHEET

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

BLM, Palm Springs-South Coast Resource Area

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 510 Acres

UTM References

A 1 1 5 3 0 0 1 0 3 6 0 5 2 8 0
Zone Easting Northing

C 1 1 5 2 7 5 6 0 3 6 0 3 4 1 9

B 1 1 5 2 9 6 8 8 3 6 0 3 6 3 7
Zone Easting Northing

D 1 1 5 2 8 7 8 7 3 6 0 5 1 0 5

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description Kuchamaa is 3885 feet above mean sea level. The nominated area includes all land from the 3000 foot contour level up to and including the peak. On the north it drops abruptly 2885 feet to Highway 94. The western flank consists of several dissected subpeaks and the eastern aspect is an upland spine. The southern boundary conforms to the International Border. This is a total of 510 acres, 320 to the west and 190 to the east. See item #7 (Description) for boundary justification.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Kuchamaa was and remains important to southern California Native Americans as a structural unit. If the mountain lacked its physiographic proportions and regional position, then it is quite possible that the peak would not have been revered. The physical stature of Kuchamaa constitutes one reason that it was used as a place of spiritual learning and worship.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mike Mitchell and Patrick Welch - Archaeologists

organization BLM, Palm Springs-South Coast Resource Area date 5-13-92

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Tecate Peak is not in pristine condition. Both direct and indirect impacts are present. A wide swath, paralleling the International Border, is cleared across the southern face. An access road, built in the late 1930's, snakes its way to communication facilities situated atop the peak. The buildings and associated graded pad for parking, occupy a portion of the summit and create a disturbed zone approximately one acre in extent. The first building is a cinder block communications structure with various attached antenna, dishes, and other miscellaneous communications apparatus. This building is single story, and measures approximately 40 by 20 feet and is surrounded by an eight foot high chain link fence. Outside the fence, about 30 feet to the west, is another cinder block building which measures only about 4 by 4 feet in area and is also single story.

INTEGRITY

Tecate Peak is located in rural south central San Diego County. Aside from the intrusions and non-contributing structures discussed above, the only other major modern impairment to the mountain is to its viewshed. This impairment pertains to the small city of Tecate, Mexico, located approximately 5 miles to the southeast. As a consequence, other than the communication facilities et cetera, the physical integrity of the mountain and its viewshed is good.

In terms of the spiritual integrity of the mountain, the religious feeling available to Native Americans has been compromised since the intrusion of the first communication facility in 1942 (Robertson 1982). The Kumeyaay community, however, still reveres the mountain within their belief systems and also continues to hold, although compromised, its ideological integrity within their cultural context. The variety of intrusions, therefore, do not entirely cancel the ethnic values associated with the peak. With the elimination of the communication sites, which has been proposed by the recently completed South Coast Resource Management Plan, the spiritual integrity and importance of the mountain will be restored (Voigt: Personal communication).

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The premise behind this nomination is that Kuchamaa is unique and meaningful to Kumeyaay ethnic identity. The combined spiritual aspects of the mountain make it an outstanding example of Native American religious values. Preserving this area and taking steps to reclaim the mountain top to a natural condition will help to insure that it will be appreciated by future generations of Kumeyaay. This nomination is therefore significant on the local level.

The spirituality of the mountain could well make it the ultimate Kumeyaay cultural resource because it is where "you get your power" (Robertson 1982). Other sacred areas occur in the region, but none are as significant as Kuchamaa. During an interview atop Tecate Peak, Mrs. Robertson stated that...

This is one of the biggest ones's here. I would have heard something if there were other mountains. There are other mountains, sure they're important, but this is one of the main powers where you get your power. We got a lot of sacred peaks, but that's for a lot of different things, but where you get your power it's here, this mountain. Cuyapaibe is famous too, for religion, but they didn't do the things over there that happened here (Robertson 1982).

Our primary informant, Mrs. Rosalie Pinto Robertson, was born in 1918 on the Campo Indian Reservation in San Diego County, the great granddaughter of Pion Hilmeup, the last traditional (hereditary) Tribal Chief of the Kumeyaay.

As a child, Mrs. Robertson learned to speak both English and her native Kumeyaay language, as well as Cocopa and Quechan. Both her grandfather and great grandfather were a major influence on her life; before their deaths they had passed down to young Rosalie, and her brothers, both the spiritual and cultural traditions of the Kumeyaay. In the absence of her brothers during World War II, Rosalie was handed the duty of leadership by her grandfather at his death.

As a result of the information and training received from her grandfather and great grandfather, Mrs. Robertson became one of the primary sources of her tribe's traditions, history, and culture. Because of her ability to speak both English and Kumeyaay, and being knowledgeable of both Euro-American and Indian ways, Rosalie became an intermediary between tribal elders and the various public and private agencies with which they dealt.

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Before her death on January 16, 1984, Mrs. Robertson passed on her knowledge of the Kumeyaay cultural tradition to others of her tribe and the scientific community, in order that the rich Kumeyaay heritage might be saved for future generations.

Several interpretations have been proposed for the word Kuchamaa. The noted linguist, John Harrington, considered the term to mean "exalted high place" (Evans-Wentz 1981:17). Ruth Almstedt provides an alternate translation. She renders: "the ones that cure" or "the ones that lift up" (Staniford 1977:44).

Local folklore provide other possibilities regarding the meaning of Kuchamaa. Ella McCain (1955:27) believed that the term originated from an Indian named Chuchamow who lived on the side of the mountain. She knew this man in 1878 when he was quite old. Oral traditions also tell of an Indian bandit, known as Kuchamaa, who used the mountain as a stronghold. Evans-Wentz, however, points out that the peak was named Kuchamaa well before the time of this individual (1981:18). Most probably these individuals were named after the mountain, not vice versa.

Knowledge of the peak appears to have been widespread. In addition to the Kumeyaay, members of the Luiseno, Juaneno, Paipai, Quechan, Mohave, and possibly the Cahuilla and Cocopa used or visited Kuchamaa (Robertson 1982). One Juaneno individual recollects travelling to the mountain's base in 1928 to undergo part of his puberty initiation ceremonies (Lobo 1982a).

DATA LIMITS

Before discussing Kuchamaa's significance further, it is important to outline data limitations. Principal prohibitions still exist within the Indian community regarding discussion of the shaman's role within their traditional society (Pinot 1982; Robertson 1982; Shipek 1982b). As a result, ethnographic and contemporary information represent only a partial picture, at best, of southern California Native American religious beliefs.

Shamans were select, special members of Kumeyaay and most other Native American cultures. These were individuals with connections to the spirit realm; people to be feared. Mrs. Robertson believes that kwisiyai (kumeyaay for shaman) are important because "he's a boss to us. He's very respected. We're afraid because we don't know what he can and can't do. We just have to show him respect"



OVERVIEW OF KUCHAMAA, Looking WEST-Southwest. NOTE STEEP, HEAVY ROCK EXPOSURES
NOMINATION is for that portion ABOVE 3,000'

CA, SAN DIEGO



THE ROAD LEADING TO THE PEAK AND THE COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES AT THE SUMMIT. BOTH ARE NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES OF KUCHAMA.