

Luißeño (Pechanga) Heritage and Culture

The Payómkawichum, meaning "the People of the West," have lived in the area for 10,000-plus years. It was Spanish missionaries who called them "Luißeño" after the Mission San Luis Rey de Francia which was established within their ancestral territory. Today they are the Pechanga Band of Indians, no longer wanting to be known as Luißeño.

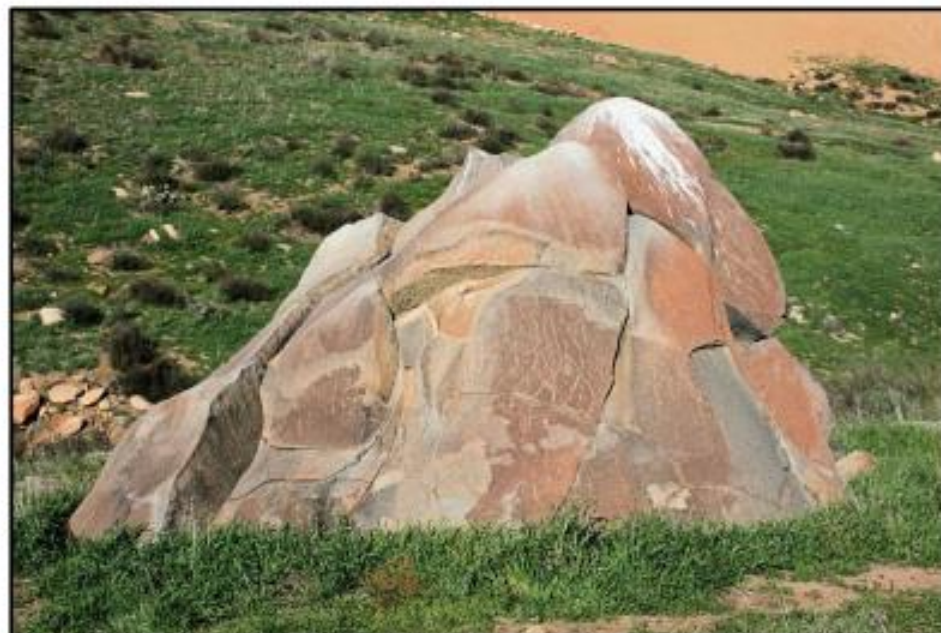


While the Pechanga called this area Paxávxa (pah-HAUV-hah), Leandro Serrano referred to his home as Rancho Temescal. The word "Temescal" comes from the Uto Aztecan language spoken by the Pechanga. "Teme" means to bathe and "calli" means house, referring to the sweat lodges built here by the Native Americans, who favored the Temescal Valley area for its running water and the hot springs that bubbled up from the earth.

Visible artifacts of the Pechanga culture in Paxávxa still remain in Temescal Valley, primarily petroglyphs and metates (grinding stones). Not so visible, but equally important, are buried villages and possible human remains. The Native American heritage is strongly protected by today's Indian tribes, as well as by federal and state law.

A major segment of environmental impact reports required of property owners when developing their land is devoted to cultural heritage. Notification is sent to tribal leaders seeking their input on the proposed development. Projects have been known to be rejected based on the validity of opposition noted by the tribes. (The proposed Liberty Quarry near Temecula in 2012.)

While petroglyphs (etched or pecked into stone), and pictographs (painted stone), are extremely important because they might tell a story of a tribe, a chieftain or serve as a map, metates are more common. The tribe will usually give permission to a developer to grade and construct over metates, not moving the artifact but, instead, leaving them where they were found.



PHOTOS

LEFT: Metates were used by the Pechanga to grind nuts and seeds. These two are located here.

ABOVE: This petroglyph is in Temescal Valley on difficult-to-reach private property. Petroglyphs are drawings etched or pecked into stone.

RIGHT: These figures are on the petroglyph pictured above.

BELOW: This pictograph, also in Temescal Valley, has been the target of vandalism through the years.

