

Memorandum: Historical Context of Barrel Springs (Palmdale / Antelope Valley Region)

Subject: Historical Significance of Barrel Springs and Its Relevance to Corridor Preservation and Land-Use Decisions

Prepared for: CalTrans District 7 / San Bernardino County Land Use Services

Prepared by: Lori Weston

Date: January 25, 2026

Purpose

This memorandum provides a concise historical overview of **Barrel Springs**, located in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains near Palmdale in the Antelope Valley. The intent is to document the site's long-standing cultural, transportation, and community significance as agencies evaluate development proposals that may affect the historic character of the region and adjacent scenic corridors.

1. Indigenous and Pre-Colonial Use

Barrel Springs served as a **critical natural water source** for Indigenous peoples, including the Kitanemuk, Tataviam, Serrano, Kawaiisu, and Mojave.

- The springs lay along established **Native trade and travel routes** connecting the Mojave Desert, Antelope Valley, and coastal regions.
- Its reliability made it a key waypoint in an otherwise arid landscape, shaping human movement for centuries.

2. Early California Travel Routes (1700s–1800s)

Barrel Springs became a recognized stop along **El Camino Viejo**, the inland route predating El Camino Real.

- Travelers used the springs for water, rest, and staging before crossing the desert flats.
- The site functioned as a junction between routes leading toward the San Gabriel Mountains and the Los Angeles Basin.

This early transportation role establishes Barrel Springs as part of California's pre-statehood mobility network.

3. Stagecoach, Freight, and Migration Era

During the mid-19th century, the springs supported:

- Stage and freight lines supplying ranches and mining operations
- Migrant travel toward Los Angeles and Tehachapi Pass
- Overland wagon routes that relied on dependable water sources

Although not directly on the Butterfield Overland Mail route, Barrel Springs served as a **feeder stop** for travelers and freight operators navigating the western Mojave.

4. Ranching and Homesteading (Late 1800s–Early 1900s)

As settlement expanded into the Antelope Valley:

- Barrel Springs became part of early **ranching and grazing operations**
- Homesteaders modified the spring area for livestock access
- Remnants of corrals, foundations, and troughs remain part of the historic landscape

These features reflect the valley’s transition from Indigenous land to agricultural and ranching use.

5. Transportation and Community Development

The historic **Barrel Springs Road** connected Palmdale, Littlerock, Pearblossom, and foothill communities.

- It functioned as a rural corridor for local travel long before modern highways were constructed.
- The surrounding area remained largely undeveloped, preserving the natural and historic character of the foothills.

Today, the site is associated with the **Barrel Springs Trailhead**, equestrian routes, and open-space conservation areas.

6. Relevance to Current Planning Considerations

Barrel Springs represents one of the few remaining locations in the Antelope Valley where:

- The original desert landscape is intact
- Historic travel patterns can still be interpreted
- A natural spring continues to define the cultural and environmental character of the region

Given its documented historical significance, any proposed development within or adjacent to scenic corridors, historic travel routes, or long-established rural communities should be evaluated for:

- Impacts on cultural and historical resources
- Compatibility with the region's rural and scenic character
- Potential conflicts with established community identity and land-use expectations

Conclusion

Barrel Springs is not merely a geographic feature; it is a **historic anchor point** that shaped Indigenous travel, early California transportation, ranching settlement, and the development of the Antelope Valley. Its preservation is consistent with the intent of scenic corridor protections and with long-standing community values in the region.

Further archival research—particularly Indigenous records, early transportation maps, and homestead documentation—may provide additional support for planning decisions that respect the historic and cultural integrity of this area.

Delanie Garlick

From: Lori Weston <lori.a.weston@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 25, 2026 6:48 PM
To: Mother Road Enterprises
Cc: Tami.Godfrey@bos.sbcounty.gov; Delanie Garlick; hsumd1945@gmail.com; info@pinonhillschamber.info; champet911@gmail.com; Ed Einboden; rodeocafepinonhills@gmail.com; jmshighdesert@gmail.com; francesconkle; Robin Greany; photographybyannettemarie@gmail.com; Sam Easley; revivaldancelab@gmail.com; awsum59elco@yahoo.com; Don Fish Jr; Jim@PULSEmedia.info; Vicky Rinek
Subject: Re: Request for Historical Review and Community Concerns Regarding Proposed CUP in Pinon Hills (92372)

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

You don't often get email from lori.a.weston@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Thank you, Pinon Hills has been my home for over 25 years.

Regards,
Lori Weston

760-680-9472

On Sun, Jan 25, 2026 at 5:23 PM Mother Road Enterprises <66jimconkle@gmail.com> wrote:
WOW LORI, you sure put a lot of heart into this message.

Jim

On Sun, Jan 25, 2026 at 15:22 Lori Weston <lori.a.weston@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear San Bernardino County Planning Staff,

I am writing in support of residents of Pinon Hills to request historical clarification, in addition to a careful review of a proposed Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for (PROJ-2024-00030) an 8 acre development of a parcel at the SW corner for the intersection of Highway 138 and Oasis Road. This proposal raises significant concerns because it appears to conflict with the long-established planning principles that shaped this community along Highway 138 and the Scenic Corridor's intent.

The area now known as Pinon Hills has deep historical roots. The earliest documented name for this region —**Barrel Springs**—appears in 19th-century travel accounts, ranching records, and early transportation notes (Attached is a Historic Timeline of this area). Barrel Springs served as a reliable water source and waypoint along routes skirting the northern foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains. Over time, as settlement patterns shifted and planning frameworks evolved, the community identity transitioned from Barrel Springs to **Pinon Hills**, the final name chosen to reflect the native piñon pine woodlands and the rural, scenic character of the foothill landscape.

This evolution was not accidental. When Highway 138 received its **Scenic Corridor designation**, the intent was to preserve the open views, natural desert-mountain setting, and low-impact land uses that defined the region. The community of Pinon Hills grew directly from that foundation. Its rural identity—quiet, spacious, and visually unobstructed—was shaped by planning decisions that recognized the corridor’s scenic and cultural importance.

For decades, residents have chosen Pinon Hills specifically because of this heritage. To date, no CUP of this scale or type has been approved on this portion of the corridor (in San Bernardino County) and the proposed development represents a significant departure from the established land-use pattern.

The community’s concerns include:

- **Traffic and Safety:** The project’s entrance on Oasis Road would introduce heavy truck traffic into a residential area, creating safety risks and altering daily living conditions for families who rely on this road for local access.
- **Incompatibility with Scenic Corridor Intent:** A high-intensity commercial use of this nature conflicts with the documented purpose of preserving the visual and environmental qualities that have defined the corridor since the Barrel Springs era.
- **Impact on Community Character:** Residents who moved here for peace, safety, and rural living would face impacts fundamentally inconsistent with the values that shaped both historic Barrel Springs and modern Pinon Hills.

Pinon Hills is not opposed to progress or economic opportunity. The community simply asks that development respect the history, intent, and character of the Scenic Corridor—an identity that traces back to the earliest recorded use of Barrel Springs and continues through the present-day planning framework.

To support an informed review, I am gathering historical materials, maps, and archival references that document the transition from Barrel Springs to Pinon Hills and the planning decisions that preserved this corridor’s scenic qualities. I respectfully request any guidance the County can provide regarding relevant archives, CalTrans records, or historical planning documents that speak to the original intent and ongoing obligations associated with a Scenic Corridor designation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for considering the historical and community context that makes Pinon Hills unique. Residents are eager to participate constructively in this process and ensure that future development aligns with the values and heritage of this region.

Sincerely,

Lori Weston
Pinon Hills Resident
760-680-9472

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Sent: Sunday, January 25, 2026 3:22 PM
To: Tami.Godfrey@bos.sbcounty.gov; Delanie Garlick; hsumd1945@gmail.com
Cc: info@pinonhillschamber.info; champet911@gmail.com; Ed Einboden; rodeocafepinonhills@gmail.com; jmshighdesert@gmail.com; francesconkle; Robin Greany; photographybyannettemarie@gmail.com; Sam Easley; revivaldancelab@gmail.com; awsum59elco@yahoo.com; Don Fish Jr; Jim@PULSEmedia.info; Vicky Rinek
Subject: Request for Historical Review and Community Concerns Regarding Proposed CUP in Pinon Hills (92372)
Attachments: Community Statement from LAW.docx
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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