

SISKIYOU TELEPHONE CO. HAPPY CAMP TO SOMES BAR FIBER CONNECTIVITY PROJECT

To: Connie Chen, Project Manager, CPUC
From: Vida Strong, Aspen Project Manager
Date: July 17, 2019
Subject: Monitoring Report #4 – June 9, 2019 to July 12, 2019

This report provides a summary of the construction and compliance activities associated with the Siskiyou Telephone Co. Happy Camp to Somes Bar Fiber Connectivity Project for the installation of a fiber optics line along Highway 96 in the Klamath National Forest.

A summary of the Notices to Proceed (NTP) for construction is provided in Table 1 below.

CPUC Environmental Monitors (EMs): Jody Fessler and Amanda Wild were on site July 10.

Phase 1

NTP #1 was issued on February 20, 2019 for Phase 1 of the Happy Camp to Somes Bar Fiber Connectivity Project (Project). Under this NTP, Siskiyou Telephone received CPUC authorization to proceed with the construction and installation of a new fiber optic broadband facility cable within or adjacent to State Highway 96 (Caltrans right-of-way) in the Klamath National Forest from mile post (MP) 32.41 south to MP 24.0. NTP #1 included conditions that had to be satisfied prior to the start of construction.

Phase 2

NTP #2 was issued on June 17, 2019 for Phase 2 of the Happy Camp to Somes Bar Fiber Connectivity Project. Under this NTP, Siskiyou Telephone received CPUC authorization to proceed with the construction and installation of a new fiber optic broadband facility cable within or adjacent to State Highway 96 (Caltrans right-of-way) in the Klamath National forest from MP 24.0 to MP 14.36. NTP #2 included conditions that had to be satisfied prior to the start of construction.

An additional NTP will be required for the remainder of the Project.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY

During the subject reporting period, all traffic controls were in place prior to the start of construction. All sensitive habitat and potential wetland areas were well marked and pointed out/discussed with the construction supervisor prior to equipment placement. All equipment, with the exception of the horizontal directional drilling (HDD) equipment, were staged within the road. HDD equipment were placed within the shoulder of the road, outside of all sensitive habitat and wetland areas.

Week specific activities are provided below.

Week of June 9-15, 2019

Between June 10 and 14, 2019, Siskiyou Telephone's biologist (Jacobs) conducted pre-construction sweeps and continued to monitor construction activities between MP 30.0 and MP 29.65. Construction consisted of two drilling crews working Monday through Thursday. The area between MP 27.8 and MP 26.9 is buffered Northern Spotted Owl habitat (NSO Core) designated by the Klamath National Forest and overseen by the Happy Camp Oak-Knoll Ranger District. This area has limited operating periods (LOPs) in

place which restrict disturbance between approximately March 15 and July 9, annually. Due to the LOPs in place for this area, Siskiyou telephone will avoid work in this area until after July 9. No frac-outs or other drill issues occurred, and all necessary BMPs were in place.

Biological surveys were conducted daily, and historic osprey nests monitored for activity. No nesting birds were found within the current work area. Several of the historic osprey nests are considered active. The buffer for osprey Nest #3 was updated in anticipation of work immediately upstream of the buffer. The buffer was increased from 1,000 to 1,300 feet.

Week of June 16-22, 2019

Pre-construction Survey of Phase 2

Between June 17 and 21, 2019, Siskiyou Telephone's biologist (Jacobs) conducted pre-construction surveys of Phase 2 of Happy Camp to Somes Bar Fiber Connectivity Project. The survey objective was to identify nesting birds and delineate environmentally sensitive areas within the Project area. This is in accordance with the project Mitigation Monitoring Plan (MMP) that was approved by the CPUC in August 2018. The survey was conducted by driving and walking Highway 96. A tablet computer preloaded with ArcGIS Collector application was used to navigate to National Wetlands Inventory (NWI), National Hydrography Dataset (NHD), and California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) mapped resources. Environmentally sensitive areas were mapped as either potential wetland (WET) areas or sensitive habitat (SH). Potential WET features were identified using vegetation and hydrology. No soil test pits were excavated to determine the presence/absence of hydric soils. Areas considered to be potential WET features contained hydrophytic vegetation and hydrologic indicators. These areas were conservatively estimated and may have included upland areas that could later be excluded upon a more detailed investigation. Environmentally sensitive areas were mapped using Collector application and synced into the GIS database daily. Resources were staked/flagged with orange/green lath. Three-foot stakes were used at the beginning and end points of features, as well as one-foot intermittent staking/flagging at intervals between 25 and 50 feet. In Phase 2, biologists staked and flagged 25 environmentally sensitive areas; 14 SH and 11 WET features.

Biologists searched for nests and observed bird behavior using binoculars. An active nest is defined as having presence of eggs or fledglings. Active nests of birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act will have an exclusion (avoidance) buffer erected until after young have fledged. The size of the buffer is dependent on the species. Inactive nests do not require an exclusion buffer but will be monitored in case they become active. No active nests were identified within Phase 2. Six inactive nests were observed, four raptor and two passerine nests. Five of the six nests were in poor condition and would take significant effort to be useable. One raptor nest was in good condition. Biologists revisited this good condition nest site June 17, 18 and 19 and determined it was inactive due to no raptor observations.

Wildlife observed throughout the week included Pacific tree frog, garter snake, Skilton's skink, Western fence lizard, American robin, bald eagle, black-headed grosbeak, blue grouse, common raven, gray jay, grebe species, mountain chickadee, mourning dove, northern flicker, northern mockingbird, osprey, Red-tailed hawk, Steller's jay, tree swallow, turkey vulture, Western (California) scrub jay, Western tanager, yellow warbler, black bear, elk, black-tailed deer, and Western gray squirrel.

Construction & Biological Monitoring

Between June 17 and 21, 2019, Siskiyou Telephone's biologist (Jacobs) conducted pre-construction sweeps and continued to monitor construction activities between MP 29.6 and MP 31.1. Construction consisted of three drill rigs on Monday and two for the remainder of the week.

Biological surveys were conducted daily, and historic osprey nests monitored for activity. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) recently mowed and knocked down some stakes, so the Biologist checked SH and WET areas and maintained the flagging and stakes. Construction continued to move upstream and away from Nest #3 osprey exclusion buffer. Monday, the flagger was downstream of the buffer, but by Tuesday all flaggers, crews and equipment were upstream of buffer.

Week of June 23 – June 29, 2019

Between June 24 and 28, 2019, Siskiyou Telephone's biologist (Jacobs) conducted pre-construction sweeps and continued to monitor construction activities between MP 30.4 and MP 31.9. On June 25 and 26, operators drilled at perennial stream Douglas Creek (MP 31.37) which is within California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) jurisdiction. The biological monitor was present and in constant communication with the operator during this activity. Construction consisted of three drill rigs Monday through Thursday and two on Friday, as well as intermittent gravel delivery. All necessary BMPs were in place.

One nominal frac-out occurred in unnamed drainage at MP 31.00. In accordance with MM B-3, the biological monitor reported this to CPUC Environmental Monitor in an email dated June 25, 2019. The frac-out was contained and cleaned-up. No other frac-outs or drill issues occurred within environmentally sensitive areas.

Biological surveys were conducted daily, and historic osprey nests monitored for activity. Sites were surveyed ahead of the drillers to ensure there were no nesting birds in the area. No nesting birds were found within the current work area. Construction continued to move upstream and away from the Nest #3 osprey exclusion buffer. The nest was active all week, and the biologist monitored the nest each day.

Biological surveys were conducted in Phase 2 on Friday, June 28, in preparation for construction the week of July 1, 2019. Phase 2 biological surveys occurred between MP 24.1 and MP 23.7, Coon Creek, and were no more than three days prior to start of ground disturbing activity in accordance with MM B-4. Wildlife observed throughout the week included garter snake, north Pacific rattlesnake, American robin, bald eagle, belted kingfisher, black-chinned hummingbird, common merganser, common raven, great blue heron, mountain chickadee, osprey, red-tailed hawk, Steller's jay, tree swallow, turkey vulture, Western (California scrub jay), Western tanager, wild turkey, yellow warbler, black bear, black-tailed deer, house mouse, and Western gray squirrel.

Week of June 30 to July 6, 2019

Between July 1 and 3, 2019, Siskiyou Telephone's biologist (Jacobs) conducted pre-construction sweeps and continued to monitor construction activities between MP 24.10 and MP 23.50. No work was conducted on July 4 and 5 due to the national holiday. Construction consisted of three drill rigs Monday through Wednesday. No frac-outs occurred during the week or any other HDD issues, and all necessary BMPs were in place.

Biological surveys were conducted daily, and historic osprey nests monitored for activity or disturbance. No nesting birds were observed within the current work areas. There was one active tree swallow nest observed in the cliff at MP 23.70 (outside of the work zone), and the biologist worked with the construction supervisor to reduce equipment disturbance. Osprey Nest #3 was active all week and was monitored on Monday and Wednesday by the biologist. No construction activities or staging occurred within the exclusion buffer.

On July 2 and 3, operators drilled at perennial stream Cooks Creek (MP 23.67) which is within CDFW jurisdiction. The biological monitor was present and in constant communication with the operator during this activity in accordance with MM B-3.

Wildlife observed throughout the week included Western fence lizard, Allen's hummingbird, bald eagle, black-chinned hummingbird, black-headed grosbeak, Canada goose, common merganser, common raven, olive-sided flycatcher, osprey, red-tailed hawk, Steller's jay, tree swallow, turkey vulture, yellow warbler, black-tailed deer, and Western gray squirrel.

Week of July 7-13

Between July 8 and 12, 2019, Siskiyou Telephone's biologist (Jacobs) conducted pre-construction sweeps and continued to monitor construction activities between MP 24.10 and MP 23.00. Construction consisted of four drill rigs Monday through Thursday, and two crews excavating and setting tie-in-boxes Wednesday through Friday. No frac-outs occurred during the week or any other HDD issues, and all necessary BMPs were in place.

Biological surveys were conducted daily, and historic osprey nests monitored for activity or disturbance. No nesting birds were observed within the current work areas. Osprey Nest #3 was active all week and was monitored Monday through Friday by the biologist in accordance with MM B-4. No construction activities or staging occurred within the exclusion buffer.

On July 8, 10 and 11, operators drilled at perennial stream Swillup Creek (MP 23.28), which is within CDFW jurisdiction. The biological monitor was present and in constant communication with the operator during this activity in accordance with MM B-3. Due to drilling obstacles, the bore was not completed and postponed until a later date.

Wildlife observed throughout the week included Western fence lizard, American robin, bald eagle, belted kingfisher, black-headed grosbeak, California scrub jay, Canada goose, common merganser, common raven, downy woodpecker, mallard, olive-sided flycatcher, osprey, red-tailed hawk, song sparrow, Steller's jay, tree swallow, turkey vulture, Western tanager, yellow-breasted chat, yellow warbler, black-tailed deer, and Western gray squirrel.

CPUC EM Site Visit

The CPUC Environmental Monitors (EMs) conducted a site visit on July 10 and met with Siskiyou Telephone's two biologists in the field. The CPUC EMs monitored several crews; the first crew was excavating and digging a hole for a tie-in-box at MP 24.04 (see Figure 1). Another crew was installing a tie-in-box at MP 24.08 (see Figure 2). The third crew was drilling at MP 23.6 (see Figure 3). The fourth crew was pulling conduit from MP 23.85 to MP 23.77 (see Figure 4). There were two more crews, one drilling at MP 23.12 and one drilling at MP 23.3 north. Each drill crew had the required spill containment materials and a vac-truck. The biologist was in the process of providing WEAP training for the new construction workers on site. Traffic controls and a pilot vehicle were set up along Highway 96. An environmentally sensitive/wetland area was noted between MP 24.04 and MP 24.08 (between active work areas) and was to be flagged that day. Caltrans has been conducting vegetation management along Highway 96, and they may have knocked down the stakes and flagging. The CPUC EMs observed Western tanagers, osprey, and common raven.

The CPUC EMs drove the area of Phase 2 (MP 24.0 – MP 14.3) to check the staking and flagging for SH and WET areas (see Figure 5). Several of the previously flagged sites had been impacted by the Caltrans vegetation management and caused the staking and flagging to be less visible. The affected areas were re-flagged by the biologist.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

1. Siskiyou Telephone's biologist conducted monitoring and inspections each day of construction activities. Sensitive habitat and wetland areas were checked while inspecting the sites. Ongoing surveys for special-status species and nesting birds were also performed. The historic Osprey Nest #3 had an extended buffer established around it and a "no work zone".

2. One HDD frac-out occurred into a drainage area on June 25, 2019. The spill was immediately cleaned-up and the CPUC EM was notified by email.
3. Tribal Monitors were on site during the subject reporting period and no cultural resources were found.
4. The CPUC EMs noted that the sites were neat and clean, and that SWPPP measures were in place. The sensitive habitat and wetland areas were staked/flagged for the most part; however, some needed to be redone to correct for Caltrans vegetation management impacts. Traffic control signs were setup along Highway 96 with flaggers in place, and pilot cars escorted vehicles through the work areas. The site was in compliance with mitigation measures, Applicant Proposed Measures, and other permit requirements.

Notices to Proceed

Table 1 summarizes the Notices to Proceed (NTP) for the Siskiyou Telephone Project.

Table 1
Notice to Proceeds (NTPs)

(Updated 7/17/19)

NTP #	Date Requested	Date Issued	Phase	Description
NTP #1	2/08/19	2/20/19	Phase I	Construction and installation of a new fiber optic broadband facility cable within or adjacent to State Highway 96 (Caltrans right-of-way) in the Klamath National Forest from MP 32.41 south to MP 24.0
NTP #2	6/10/2019	6/17/19	Phase II	Construction and installation of a new fiber optic broadband facility cable within or adjacent to State Highway 96 (Caltrans right-of-way) in the Klamath National Forest from MP 24.0 south to MP 14.36

Minor Project Changes (MPCs)

None at this time.

PROJECT PHOTOS



Figure 1 – Crew digging and excavating for tie-in-box at MP 24.04 southwest along Hwy 96 – view north, July 10, 2019.



Figure 2 – Crew installing tie-in-box at MP 24.08 – July 10, 2019.



Figure 3 – Crew drilling at MP 23.6 southwest along Hwy 96 – view north, July 10, 2019.



Figure 4 – Crew pulling conduit from MP 23.85 to MP 23.77 – view north, July 10, 2019.



Figure 5 – Example of wetland flagging at MP 23.7 – July 10, 2019