



# **Aspen** *Environmental Group*

## **PROJECT MEMORANDUM PG&E – TRI-VALLEY 2002 CAPACITY INCREASE PROJECT**

**To:** Roosevelt Grant, CPUC  
**From:** Vida Strong, Aspen Project Manager  
**Date:** July 30, 2003  
**Subject:** Weekly Report #45: July 21, 2003 – July 27, 2003  
**CPUC Environmental Monitor (EM):** Anne Sweet

### **Summary of Activity:**

Weather was clear throughout the subject week. The Essex Environmental Inspector conducted several environmental trainings throughout the week for new substation and trench construction personnel. Notice to Proceed (NTP) #5 for all remaining Phase Two work (trenching and Transition Station) was approved by the CPUC on Thursday, July 10. Trenching operations began during the subject week.

#### Phase One:

The major build activities of the Phase One section of the Tri-Valley Project are now complete and the line was officially released to operations in early-July. Mueller has reduced crews and continued with minor restoration and clean-up activities. During the subject week, crews cleared the Mueller Contractor Yard of remaining vehicles and equipment. The Essex Environmental Inspector (EI) continues to monitor on a twice-weekly spot-check basis, but remains on-call.

After bioremediation efforts of the diesel spill area near the Vault 4 location, Universal Environmental Inc. collected composite soil samples. Results were submitted and showed that the Total Petroleum Hydrocarbon content was within acceptable levels. The CPUC EM also visited the site during the subject week and smelled some of the impacted soil. No Diesel smell was detected; prior to the bioremediation efforts the soils smelled strongly of diesel contamination.

#### Phase Two:

At the Cayetano Substation site, crews continue grading operations. A water truck has been on-site continually watering the area for dust suppression. Crews also begun cutting roadways into the landing. A water sweeper is being used to clean the roadway outside of the substation. The contractor plans to begin foundation installation next week. The CPUC EM inspected silt fence around the station site.

On July 14, the Essex EI called to inform the CPUC EM that a burrowing owl was spotted in the PSD Yard. The bird had appeared to be foraging, and eventually left the site. On July 15, Jones and Stokes conducted a survey to determine the location of the owl burrow. The burrow is located approximately 295-feet from the yard site and contains two adult owls and seven young. On July 17, the Essex EI informed the CPUC EM that the burrowing owls have been spotted numerous mornings in the PSD yard foraging and perching on the transmission line reels. The young birds will be leaving the parent nest soon and will be looking for nearby borrows to take up residence. Within the PSD yard numerous burrows already exist. Current mitigation states that unoccupied burrows near construction activities may be collapsed. If the owls take up habitation in the yard, a 250-foot buffer will need to be enforced which could impact project activities.

On Monday, July 21, Janice Gan of the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) visited the project site. She reviewed the PSD Yard and owl nest location and stated that she wanted to work with PG&E to dissuade the young owls from taking up occupation within the yard site, as well as deal with possible burrow occupation along the entire Phase Two route. Essex typed up a correspondence letter, which was signed by Ms. Gan on Friday July 25, and submitted the corresponding Variance Request which asks for permission to install one-way doors within the PSD Yard prior the end of the current breeding season (August 31) and to adjust burrowing owl nest buffers in direct consultation with the CDFG on a case-by-case basis. As noted below, a recommendation for Variance Request #8 and the CDFG signed letter prepared by Essex was forwarded to CPUC for their consideration.

While on-site, Ms. Gan also discussed “potential” California tiger salamander (CTS) habitat which exists on the Phase Two alignment (during pre-construction surveys conducted in June 2003, no CTS habitat was noted by Jones and Stokes). As a protective measure for the CTS, Ms. Gan requested that PG&E isolate and install orange fencing around specified burrows along the alignment to prevent soil storage at the locations. The Essex EI installed the fencing as requested. The Essex EI also installed fencing around other environmentally sensitive areas between Dagnino Road and the Transition Station. Three drainage areas were fenced and the 100-foot buffer delineating the aquatic species habitat was strung with caution tape and “*Sensitive Resource Area-Keep Out*” signs. On Monday, July 21, the CPUC EM witnessed a haul truck driver drive directly into the delineated resource area. The Essex EI was immediately notified of the problem.

Crews made preparations for and began trenching and conduit installation operations during the subject week. Prior to trenching, crews scraped the topsoil layer to the side of the trench (see Figure 1). Crews fenced the trench line along May School Road; however, on Monday, July 21, a compliance issue occurred when crews removed the barricade fencing and “*Sensitive Resource Area-Keep Out*” signs delineating the historic May School cultural resource site, while installing the construction fencing. The Essex EI documented the issue as a minor problem, replaced the exclusion fencing and signage, re-instructed crewmembers about established resource exclusion zones, and notified the CPUC EM. At this time, the Essex EI discovered that some of the crew members had not received environmental training. The Essex EI promptly gave a training session and notified the CPUC EM.

During the subject week crews began grading at the new Transition Station (see Figure 2). Silt fence was installed along the west and north sides of the station landing.

### **Environmental Compliance:**

July 21, the CPUC EM witnessed a haul truck driver drive directly into a delineated resource area. The Essex EI was immediately notified of the problem.

July 21, crews removed the barricade fencing and “*Sensitive Resource Area-Keep Out*” signs delineating the historic May School cultural resource site, while installing the construction fencing. The Essex EI documented the issue as a minor problem, replaced the exclusion fencing and signage, and re-instructed crew members about established resource exclusion zones.

July 21, the Essex EI discovered that some of the crew members had not received environmental training and promptly gave a training session.

For all other operations, the CPUC EM observed that construction was in compliance with mitigation measures adopted in EIR and other permitting requirements.

**Notices to Proceed (NTP):**

All necessary NTPs for Phase Two construction have been issued by CPUC.

**Variance Requests:**

On July 22, Variance Request #7 which requests a variance of Mitigation Measure 7.3 trench cover requirements to protect the San Joaquin Kit Fox deferring to the protocol outlined in the USFWS Biological Opinion was approved by the CPUC.

On July 23, Variance Request #8, which requests a variance of Mitigation 7.4 for adjustments to burrowing owl protection mitigation measures per site-specific recommendations made by CDFG, was submitted by PG&E. A revised request was submitted on July 25. On July 28, a recommendation regarding Variance Request #8 was forwarded to CPUC.

**Agency Personnel Contacts:**

Janice Gan, California Department of Fish and Game.

**TABLE 1**  
**VARIANCE REQUEST STATUS TABLE**  
(Updated 07/31/03)

Variance Request #	Date Submitted	Description	Status	CPUC Approval Date
1	10/3/02	Temporary storage of bore pit spoils on the north side of the Arroyo del Valle bore crossing Stations 304+00 to 306+00.	Completed	10/17/02
2	12/19/02	40 feet of extra work space was requested on the south, east and west sides of the north bore pit associated with the Arroyo Del Valle jack and bore to install a sound barrier around boring operations, so that 24-hour construction could occur.	Completed	1/6/03
3	01/29/03	Approximate 200' by 300' extra workspace area east of the Isabel Ave jack & bore.	Completed	2/18/03
4	01/29/03	Approximate 120' by 320' extra workspace area north of the Hwy 84 jack & bore, and an 80' by 200' area south of the Hwy 84 bore.	Completed	2/18/03
5	02/12/03	Approximate 2.6-acre expansion of the approved Mueller Contractor Yard, City of Pleasanton.	Completed	2/25/03
6	05/19/03	Approximate 2.5 acre lay down area adjacent to the north side of May School Road for equipment and materials storage and contractor staging for the Phase Two portion of the project.	Completed	5/23/03
6-Modification	06/06/03	Allow clearing and grading at the 2.5 acre lay down area adjacent to the north side of May School Road.	Completed	7/8/03
7	07/01/03	Variance of Mitigation Measure 7.3 trench cover requirements to protect the San Joaquin Kit Fox deferring to the protocol outlined in the USFWS Biological Opinion.	Completed	7/22/03
8	7/25/03	Variance of Mitigation 7.4 for adjustments to burrowing owl protection mitigation measures per site-specific recommendations made by CDFG.	7/28 – Recommendation to CPUC	



Figure 1 – Trench line preparation between Dagnino Road and the PSD Yard, Phase Two.  
Crews have begun scraping the topsoil layer to the side of the trench.



Figure 2 – Transition Station landing, Phase Two.