



# **Aspen** *Environmental Group*

## **PROJECT MEMORANDUM**

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

**To:** Roosevelt Grant, CPUC

**From:** Vida Strong, Aspen Project Manager

**Date:** August 8, 2003

**Subject:** Weekly Report #46: July 28, 2003 – August 3, 2003

**CPUC Environmental Monitor (EM):** Anne Sweet

#### **Summary of Activity:**

Weather was clear throughout the subject week. The Essex Environmental Inspector (EI) conducted several environmental trainings throughout the week for new substation and trench construction personnel.

#### 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. The contractor has reduced crews and continues with restoration work concerning a land sinkage problem resulting from project construction activities near the Ruby Hills entrance location along Vineyard Avenue. The Essex Environmental Inspector (EI) continues to monitor periodically on a spot-check basis, and remains on-call.

#### Phase Two:

At the Cayetano Substation site, crews have completed grading operations. A water truck has been on-site continually watering the area for dust suppression. Crews have completed cutting roadways into the landing which have been graveled. A water sweeper is being used to clean the roadway outside of the substation. The contractor began foundation work for footing installation during the subject week week. Approximately 25 deep holes were drilled and steel cages inserted. At the end of each workday the holes were covered with plywood to avoid entrapment of wildlife. Substation components were also brought to the site (see Figure 1).

During the subject week, burrowing owls were spotted repeatedly in the PSD Yard foraging and perching on the transmission line reels. The Essex EI conducted additional tailgate trainings to remind the crews members and Foremen to inspect the yard and work areas on a daily basis and to inspect the inside of all conduit prior to movement of or passing materials through conduit. The burrow nest is located approximately 295 feet from the yard site and contains two adult owls and seven young. 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 had existed. Current mitigation states that unoccupied burrows near construction activities may be collapsed. On Monday, July 28, qualified biologists from Jones and Stokes were at the yard and scoped borrows. No evidence of occupation by burrowing owl or otherwise was observed and site burrows were collapsed.

Previously, Janice Gan, 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. On Friday, July 25, Essex submitted Variance Request #8, which asked 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, Variance Request #8 was approved by the CPUC on Monday, August 4.

Crews continued trenching and conduit installation operations along May School Road during the subject week (see Figure 2). Concrete was poured over completed installations, and backfilled first with subsoils up to base grade and then with the separated topsoils. At the end of each workday, the contractor ramped the ends of the trench line and installed caps at the ends of each conduit.

On July 29, an unanticipated cultural discovery was made on the right of way adjacent to historic May School cultural resource site. A concrete walkway was identified during clearing of the alignment area at Station 88+00. The CPUC EM and Lead EM were immediately notified of the find. Per procedures outlined in the Cultural Resources Treatment Plan, a 100-foot buffer was immediately established and barricade fencing and “*Sensitive Resource Area-Keep Out*” signs delineating the find were installed (see Figure 3). The Jones and Stokes Archeologist inspected the site and determined the walkway to be at least 45 years old. A consultation report was submitted to Aspen/CPUC followed by the submission of an NTP request to continue operations within the 100-foot buffer approaching the resource. Specific resource avoidance and protection criteria were outlined as well as additional CPUC consultation/inspection requirements and the NTP was approved by the CPUC on Monday, August 4.

In response to the July 21 occurrence where the CPUC EM witnessed a haul truck driver drive directly into a delineated resource area, the Essex EI installed additional barriers around environmentally sensitive areas between Dagnino Road and the Transition Station. The areas were strung with caution tape along the roadside and additional “*Sensitive Resource Area-Keep Out*” signs installed. The foremen and crew members were informed of the incident and reminded of the requirement to keep out of delineated resource exclusion zones.

During the subject week, the contractor began grading a permanent road down a steep slope along the alignment between Dagnino Road and the Transition Station outside of sensitive resource areas.

During the subject week, crews completed grading and soil compaction operations at the new Transition Station. The contractor also graded a temporary access road leading to the Transition Station to keep vehicular traffic within the approved work area. Previously installed silt fence was inspected along the west and north sides of the station landing.

**Environmental Compliance:**

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

**Notices to Proceed (NTP):**

On August 4, the CPUC approved an NTP request to construct within the 100-foot Unanticipated Discovery (UAD) buffer located along May School Road. Specific resource avoidance and protection criteria were outlined as well as additional CPUC consultation/inspection requirements.

**Variance Requests:**

On August 4, 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 approved by CPUC.

**Agency Personnel Contacts:**

Janice Gan, California Department of Fish and Game.

**TABLE 1**  
**VARIANCE REQUEST STATUS TABLE**  
(Updated 08/08/03)

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.	Completed	8/4/03



Figure 1 – Cayetano Substation, Phase Two.



Figure 2 – Trenching and conduit installation along May School Road, Phase Two.



Figure 3 – Unanticipated Cultural Discovery, Phase Two.  
Exclusion boundary established for the paved walkway found at Station 88+00.