



# **Aspen** *Environmental Group*

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

**To:** Roosevelt Grant, CPUC  
**From:** Vida Strong, Aspen Project Manager  
**Date:** September 25, 2003  
**Subject:** Weekly Report #53: September 15, 2003 – September 21, 2003  
**CPUC Environmental Monitor (EM):** Anne Sweet and Jenny Slaughter

### **Summary of Activity:**

Weather was clear with occasional strong winds throughout the subject week. Crews applied additional water to suppress fugitive dust along the disturbed project right-of-way. 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 complete and the line was officially released to operations in early-July. Restoration work concerning a land sinkage problem resulting from project construction activities near the Ruby Hills entrance location along Vineyard Avenue has been done. Soil compaction tests have been conducted and final sign-offs will be obtained from landowners as well as the City of Pleasanton once all of the compaction reports are reviewed.

#### Phase Two:

At the Cayetano Substation site, the contractor continued component structure installation. Work also continues on the fence around the perimeter of the station. Numerous trenches and holes have been excavated within the substation pad. An additional trailer has been placed at the back of the substation site. At the end of each workday the Essex EI reported that all open holes are being covered by plywood, and within any open depressions, ramps are installed and maintained to prevent wildlife entrapment.

Recently, the burrowing owls, which had occupied the nest located approximately 295-feet from the PSD yard site, began to disperse. One young bird took residence in a burrow located approximately 130 feet west of the PSD yard and 140 feet north of the right of way along May School Road. A 160-foot buffer is required and has been put in place. On September 19, at the PSD Yard a sensitive resource sign delineating the burrowing owl buffer along the right-of way had fallen and was lying on the dirt. The CPUC EM contacted the Essex EI and notified him of the problem (see Figure 1). The EI returned to the site and replaced the sign. On September 19, the Essex PM distributed an E-mail stating that the Essex EI had not seen the burrowing owl at the burrow location since Wednesday, September 17, and that the buffer should no longer apply. The Aspen/CPUC PM asked if the CDFG had given concurrence for the latest request. The Essex PM responded that a request will be going to CDFG and asked if crews could remove equipment from the buffer area by hand. The Aspen/CPUC PM agreed that foot traffic within the buffer was acceptable. The CPUC EM inquired as to whether a survey had yet been conducted by a qualified biologist at the site to confirm the abandonment of the burrow by the fledging. The next day, a biologist reviewed the area and concluded that the subject burrow was no longer in use and that an owl had been spotted in the field across May School Road.

During the subject week, the contractor continued tie-ins to Vaults CC-1, CC-2, DC-20 and DC-21. Crews finished pulling cable between Vaults C-3 and C-4, and DC-22 and DC-23 and began pulling cable between Vaults CC-2 and CC-3, and DC-21 and D-22.

Crews finished trenching, conduit installation, and backfilling east from Dagnino Road along the access road, which follows the alignment to the Transition Station, part of which lies within a wetland exclusion buffer and future wetland mitigation site for the Dublin Ranch Development. On the morning of September 16, the Essex EI called to inform the CPUC EM that on September 15 crews had breached a CTS exclusion zone on the access Road leading to the Transition Station. Project spoils were dumped over the area and the Essex EI had crews clean out the area first with heavy equipment and then by moving dirt out of the burrows by hand. The Essex EI stated that this is the third documented breach of resource zones and that Essex will be issuing an NCR for the incident. Later in the week, Essex decided not to document the incident as a non-compliance. The Essex EI also mentioned that the contractor wants to expand the access road and that three of the existing CTS buffer areas will be removed. The Aspen/CPUC PM suggested to Essex that the removal of the buffer areas be discussed with CDFG since it was CDFG who requested the establishment of the buffers.

On September 16, at 6:00 pm, the CPUC EM arrived at the job after conduit installation crews had supposedly finished for the day. She found four ends of conduit bundles that were not capped for the night. It is required that all conduit be capped at the end of each workday. The CPUC EM stopped a contractor on his way out from the Transition Station and asked him if he knew why the conduit were not capped. He told her that he didn't know, but that he would take care of it. A PG&E Inspector, also from the Transition Station, stopped as well. He told her that the crews were all finished for the day. The crewmen and inspector went to the yard, got caps for the ends of the conduit and then returned and capped the conduit. The CPUC EM contacted the Essex EI to inform him that at 6:00 pm the CPUC EM had observed the uncapped conduit and that the crew from the Transition Station took care of the issue. The Essex EI stated that the conduit installation crews had simply been their lunch break and that they were working until 10:00 pm that evening, thus the work day was not officially over; however, there were no light banks on site. The Essex EI was informed that the CPUC EM would be able to monitor the site that evening at 9:30 pm. At approximately 8:30 pm, the Essex EI called back and said that crews were not really going to be working until 10:00 pm and that the CPUC EM does not need to monitor the site that evening.

On September 19, along the access road between the Transition Station and Dagnino Road, the CPUC EM observed that the USACE jurisdictional drainage culvert was blocked by dirt; in fact the culvert was no longer visible on one side. Conduit installation and backfilling has already been completed through the drainage; however, the general area had not yet been officially restored. The Essex EI was notified of the issue and replied that PG&E was in compliance, that current mitigation states that the watercourse cannot be changed and that PG&E does not need to take action at this time. The EM responded that the current condition of the drainage (blocked) would indeed change the watercourse. Upon returning to the USACE jurisdictional drainage a while later, the Essex EI and the contractor had completed digging out and clearing the culvert (see Figure 2).

At the new Transition Station, the contractor finished footing installation within foundation holes. The Essex EI reported that at the end of each workday, all open holes are being covered by plywood to avoid entrapment of wildlife. Previously installed silt fence was inspected along the west and north sides of the station landing.

**Environmental Compliance:**

On September 16, the Essex EI notified the CPUC EM that on September 15, crews had breached a CTS exclusion zone on the access Road leading to the Transition Station. Project spoils were dumped over the area and the Essex EI had crews clean out the area first with heavy equipment and then by moving dirt out of the burrows by hand. The Essex EI stated that this is the third documented breach of resource zones and that Essex will be issuing an NCR for the incident; however, later in the week Essex decided not to document the incident as a non-compliance.

On September 16, at 6:00 pm, the CPUC EM observed four ends of conduit bundles that were not capped for the night along the trench right-of-way. It is required that all conduit be capped at the end of each workday. A Transition Station crew member and PG&E Inspector went to the yard, got caps for the ends of the conduit, and then returned and capped the conduit.

On September 19, at the PSD Yard a sensitive resource sign delineating the burrowing owl buffer along the right-of way had fallen and was lying on the dirt. The CPUC EM contacted the Essex EI who returned to the site and replaced the sign.

On September 19, along the access road between the Transition Station and Dagnino Road, the CPUC EM observed that the USACE jurisdictional drainage culvert was blocked by dirt. Upon returning to the USACE jurisdictional drainage a while later, the Essex EI and the contractor had completed digging out and clearing the culvert.

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):**

No new NTPs were issued during the subject week.

**Variance Requests:**

None.

**Agency Personnel Contacts:**

Janis Gan, CDFG

## VARIANCE REQUEST STATUS TABLE

(Updated 09/25/03)

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
9	8/11/03	Variance to extend the PSD lay down yard, requesting an additional 82' by 270' area to the north of the yard, for parking and materials storage for the Phase Two portion of the project.	Completed	9/5/03



Figure 1- Burrowing Owl buffer signage at the PSD yard and adjacent alignment, Phase Two.



Figure 2 –USACE jurisdictional drainage along the access road between Dagnino Road and the Transition Station, Phase Two.