



# **Aspen** *Environmental Group*

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

**To:** Jensen Uchida, CPUC  
**From:** Vida Strong, Aspen Project Manager  
**Date:** July 14, 2005  
**Subject:** Weekly Report #66: July 3, 2005 – July 9, 2005  
**CPUC Environmental Monitor (EM):** Anne Sweet

The major build activities of the Phase One section of the Tri-Valley Project are complete and the line was officially released to operations July 2003. However, in January 2004, sinkholes, slumping, and compaction issues throughout the Phase One alignment were identified at vault locations and along the entire length of the New Vineyard road trench line. PG&E called Mueller (the original contractor) back to the site to restore the areas. The New Vineyard Road and trench line sinkage restoration work was completed April 8, 2004.

Phase Two, including the Cayetano Substation and the 230 kV line, was energized on December 3, at which time the Phase Two segment was officially released for operations. On December 19, 2003 PG&E took over environmental inspection responsibilities for Essex Environmental.

A Notice to Proceed (NTP) was issued by CPUC for Phase Three construction on June 29, 2005. Opus Environmental won the contract for the last phase of construction, and will be providing the Environmental Inspectors (EI) for PG&E. Opus will provide environmental as well as biological monitoring and oversight, including conducting environmental training of all new crew personnel. Work will begin with road grading and tower installation. The road grading will be conducted by Granite Construction. The tower work will be conducted by PG&E.

### **Summary of Phase Three Activity:**

Weather was clear and warm throughout the subject week. The CPUC EM met with the PG&E Planner and jointly toured the Phase 3 sites on July 6<sup>th</sup> and July 8<sup>th</sup>. The site Principal Environmental Inspector (EI) and biologist on the project is Bill Fischer, who will be on-site Tuesdays through Thursdays. Sara Higgins will be the EI on Mondays and Fridays. As work picks up Opus will bring on additional inspectors in order to meet the monitoring requirements outlined in the USFWS Biological Opinion (BO). During the subject week, both the PG&E EI and the PG&E Planner conducted environmental trainings as new crewmembers joined the project.

The NTP for Phase Three requires that the CPUC EM field validate the flagging of the right-of-way and resource exclusion boundaries prior to the start of construction. The PG&E Planner informed the CPUC EM that a red legged frog was seen on the project location on the Moller access road. The survey crew stopped work and called PG&E on June 29, 2005. By the time an approved biologist arrive on-site to move the frog, the frog had left the area on its own.

The CPUC EM and PG&E Planner toured Doolan Canyon Road. The helicopter laydown area was first evaluated. During on-going surveys a borrowing owl nest was identified outside of the laydown area. Therefore, an area greater than the required 250-foot exclusion buffer was fenced off within the yard (see Figure 1).

The overland access area to Towers 33 through 36 was toured. The access path crosses through identified Historic Site C-Livermore-1H. The CPUC EM informed PG&E that a variance request would be required

if any work or access occurs within 100-feet of the cultural resource as outlined in the Project Cultural Resources Treatment Plan. The request was received by the CPUC Lead EM/archaeologist during a tour of the location on July 7<sup>th</sup> and recommendations for review by the CPUC Project Manager were prepared. Although the historic archaeological site extended further north than originally believed, the proposed access road utilizes a portion of the site likely used as a road as well. Variance Request #11 was approved by the CPUC July 8<sup>th</sup>.

Doolan Canyon Road is a paved and/or graveled existing project access road that extends north from the laydown area. Cottonwood Creek (currently dry) runs adjacent to Doolan Canyon Road on the eastern side and serves as potential breeding habitat for the California tiger salamander (CTS) and California red legged frog (CRLF). Exclusion signage has been placed along the length of the road every 100-feet. In addition, the grade drops off sharply along the paved road thus physically limiting vehicle access (see Figure 2). A confirmed CLRF breeding pond (see Figure 3) occurs east of the roadway. It occurs uphill from the access road and construction fencing has been placed around the resource. Finally, a cluster of borrows which serve as potential aestivation habitat were identified along the access road near this area. The CPUC EM requested that all clusters of borrows be fenced off per the USFWS BO recommendations.

Extending north and to the east of Doolan Canyon Road lies an overland travel route for access to Towers 37 and 38. Part of the route borders potential CTS and CRLF breeding habitat. The route has been fenced per the USFWS BO requirements (see Figure 4).

Down slope from Tower 37 lie sensitive vernal pools. Although the area will not be encountered through access or construction, a line of hay bales will be placed around the foundation pad boundary in order to protect the area from inadvertent construction spoils or concrete spills.

The CPUC EM and PG&E Planner toured the Moller access road. The Tassajara Creek bank stabilization will occur south along this area. Crews were installing exclusion fencing (see Figure 5) as well as sediment fencing in areas with potential for spoils to slide in to sensitive areas (see Figure 6). While driving through the dirt road area, the CPUC EM and PG&E Planner witnessed Granite Construction vehicles driving above the 10 mile per hour speed limit, kicking up a lot of dust. The PG&E Planner pulled the contractor and Foreman aside and told them to keep speeds down. Along the Moller access road, PG&E has designated numerous staging and laydown areas which extend outside of the project right-of-way. The CPUC EM told the PG&E Planner that a Variance Request will need to be prepared to allow use of the locations.

While on-site, the PG&E EI and biologist identified a barn owl nest containing a nesting pair and fledgling along the right-of-way. Subsequent correspondence with the CDFG has occurred. Work will be allowed to progress through the area; however, a haybale wall will be built to shield the nest and the site biologist must monitor the bird closely to see if the birds appear harmed or harassed.

Per Opus on Friday July 8<sup>th</sup>, a CTS was sighted at the northern portion of the Moller access road near the planned 0.33-acre wetland mitigation site. The CTS was found hiding in a crack in the soil in an area under the bridge in a sink hole at the edge of the road. Exclusion fence was erected around this location to protect the CTS and construction crews were redirected away from the area. The CDFG and USFWS were notified.

**Agency Personnel Contacts:** PG&E have made numerous contacts to both the CDFG and USFWS in regard to barn owl and CTS encountered along the project right of way.

#### **NOTICES TO PROCEED (NTP):**

Table 1 presents the NTPs issued by the CPUC for the Tri-Valley Project to date.

**TABLE 1**  
**NOTICES TO PROCEED**  
(Updated 7-14-05)

NTP #	Date Issued	Description
#1	September 12, 2002	Phase One: Construction on of six different sections of the underground portion of the Vineyard Segment, within the City of Pleasanton, City of Livermore, and unincorporated Alameda County.
#2	October 10, 2002	Phase One: Construction of six additional sections of the underground portion of the Vineyard Segment, within the Cities of Pleasanton, Livermore, and unincorporated Alameda County
#3	December 12, 2002	Phase One: Construct the final sections of the Phase One portion Tri-Valley 2002 Capacity Increase Project, within the City of Pleasanton.
#4	May 5, 2003	Phase Two: Construction of the new 5-acre Cayetano Substation located at the intersection of North Livermore Avenue and May School Road.
#5	July 14, 2003	Phase Two: Construction of 2.3 miles of underground transmission line installation extending from the Cayetano Substation to the North Livermore Transition Station to be constructed at the Contra-Costa-Newark Transmission Line Corridor
UAD NTP		Phase Two: Allow construction within the exclusion boundary of the May School road cultural resource discovery area.
#6	June 29, 2005	Phase 3: Construction of the overhead transmission line, the transition station , all roadway and vault pad grading, as well as the mitigation area.

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE:**

While driving through the dirt road area along the Moller access road, the CPUC EM and PG&E Planner witnessed Granite Construction vehicles driving above the 10 mile per hour speed limit kicking up a lot of dust. The PG&E Planner pulled the contractor and Foreman aside and told them to keep speeds down.

No Non-Compliance Reports (NCRs) nor Project Memorandums (PMs) have been issued for the Phase Three portion of the project to date (see Table 2).

**TABLE 2**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE STATUS**  
(Updated 7-14-05)

Project Memo or NCR	Date Issued	Description	Follow-Up Activities
Project Memorandum	8/27/03	August 27, the CPUC EM witnessed an unleashed dog on the project site; this is in violation to regulations outlined in the USFWS Biological Opinion as well as general project requirements. The dog was being ushered into a Kleinfelder Truck at the Cayetano Substation parking area. This marked the second time a loose dog had been observed on-site and a warning had been issued prior. A Project Memorandum was issued citing the loose dog, as well as the lack of training of some project contractors working on-site.	
Project Memorandum	9/24/03	A CPUC Project Memorandum was written when, on September 24, at the Cayetano Substation, crews had left the site with a trench unramped. The project USFWS Biological Opinion Conservation Measure 27 states: <i>To prevent accidental entrapment of San Joaquin kit fox during construction all excavated holes and trenches will be ramped, or escape boards will be placed in the trench to allow the animals to escape...</i> This issue marked the second instance in which a CPUC EM observed compliance failure in regard to San Joaquin Kit Fox protection requirements	
Project Memorandum	1/2/03	Construction activities occurred on January 2, 2003, within the proposed extra workspace outlined in Variance Request 02, without variance or applicable agency approval. Work occurred on the south, east, and west sides of the north bore pit associated with the Arroyo del Valle jack-and-bore at approximate Stationing 300+00.	
Project Memorandum	1/13/03	At Station 55+00, a lane of the Zone 7 Access road was blocked by operating equipment with out proper traffic controls or a flagger, and at Kalthoff Road, crews had the entire road way blocked. Repeated requests for proper traffic controls were made. The Memorandum documented the incidents and notifications made by the CPUC EM as well as issuing a request for a Traffic Control Plan (TCP) submittal and/or private road owner permission for usage. In response to the Memorandum, PG&E officially directed the contractor to provide traffic control in any situation where any portion of the traveled way is obstructed.	
Project Memorandum	4/17/03	On April 17, a project subcontractor truck and equipment was observed within the 250-foot exclusion zone of the identified Red Tail Hawk's nest active nest along the right-of-way at Station 61+00. This action was in violation of project Mitigation Measure B-5 and Applicant Proposed Measure 7.4. Note that sensitive resource signs delineated the exclusion zone.	

**VARIANCE REQUESTS:**

Variance Request #11 for an overland access path crosses through an identified Historic Site C-Livermore-1H was submitted on July 7. The subject request was approved by CPUC on July 8.

**TABLE 3  
VARIANCE REQUEST STATUS  
(Updated 7/14/05)**

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 laydown 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 laydown 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 laydown 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
10	3/24/04	Variance to use lattice towers instead of tubular steel pole structures for Phase Three construction.	Complete	6/3/04
11	7/7/05	Variance to allow travel through homestead archaeological site C-Livermore-1H..	Completed	7/8/05

## Photographs



**Figure 1** – Helicopter laydown area located along Doolan Canyon Road, Phase Three. Please note the yellow caution tape which delineates the burrowing owl nest exclusion buffer.



**Figure 2** – Doolan Canyon Road, Phase Three. Note the exclusion signage.





**Figure 3** – CRLF breeding pond which occurs east of Doolan Canyon Road, Phase Three.



**Figure 4** – Overland access area adjacent to CRLF and CTS potential breeding habitat, Phase Three





**Figure 5** – Moller access road exclusion fencing, Phase Three.



**Figure 6** – Moller access road sediment fence installation, Phase Three.