



# **Aspen** *Environmental Group*

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

**To:** Jensen Uchida, CPUC  
**From:** Vida Strong, Aspen Project Manager  
**Date:** August 18, 2005  
**Subject:** Weekly Report #71: August 8, 2005 – August 12, 2005  
**CPUC Environmental Monitors (EMs):** Anne Sweet and Jenny Slaughter

Notice to Proceed (NTP) #6 was issued by CPUC for portions of Phase Three construction on June 29, 2005. Under NTP #6, construction of the following Phase Three components can occur: all roadway and vault pad grading, construction of the overhead transmission line and transition station, and preparation of the 0.33 acre mitigation area. NTP #7 was issued by CPUC on August 4, allowing construction of the underground component to commence and preparation of the 0.94 acre mitigation area. Opus Environmental will be providing the Environmental Inspectors for PG&E (PG&E EIs). Opus will provide environmental, as well as biological monitoring and oversight, including conducting environmental training of all new crew personnel. Road improvement and installation is being conducted by Granite Construction. The tower work is being conducted by PG&E. The underground construction is engineered by Wilson Construction and completed by Ranger Construction.

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

Weather was clear and hot throughout the subject week. The CPUC EMs toured the Phase Three sites on August 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>. During the subject week, the PG&E EIs conducted environmental trainings as new crew members joined the project. On August 16<sup>th</sup>, PG&E held a kick off meeting and environmental training for new crews arriving to construct the underground portion of the project.

The project mitigation measures require that the CPUC EM field validate the flagging of the right-of-way and resource exclusion boundaries prior to the start of construction. Per PG&E, gaps will need to be left in the fence to allow pasturing cows to move through the area. Additional areas cleared during the week include a portion of the underground alignment that had been flagged in the field and Access Road 5, which leads to the underground portion and the road to the transition station. These areas were verified by the CPUC EM prior to construction.

On August 17<sup>th</sup>, construction of the underground portion began just north of the Cayetano Substation on North Livermore Avenue (see Figure 1). Crews initially used a disk to break up the soil and then were able to strip the top soil and stockpile it along the side of the right-of-way. Excavation is being conducted using a trencher.

Granite Construction continued to work on the Moller Road access. Three earth movers and a grader are being used to shape and construct the access road. The area is being adequately watered by two water trucks. One area excavated during the week was an Army Corps of Engineers jurisdictional wetland. The area needed to be excavated and backfilled with rock in order to construct the access road. One biological monitor was present during the Moller Road construction. The barn owl nest is being monitored for signs of activity and disturbance. According to project biologists, the owls are still using the burrow.

Ten sightings of California red legged frogs were reported along Moller Road during the week. In one case, a frog was found immediately adjacent to construction and was relocated out of the work area (see Figure 2). The other sightings were outside of the work area. USFWS and CDFG were notified of the sightings.

PG&E crews continued to work on Towers 6, 7, 8, and 10 during the subject week. Materials are being transported to and from the work sites via helicopter or truck. A biological monitor was monitoring the tower crews during the week. Permission to reduce the 250-foot buffer for the active burrowing owl burrow along the access road to Towers 3–6 was given by CDFG. Crews can continue to use the access road which is within 240-feet of the burrow given the area is fenced to keep crews on the road.

Survey and fencing activity was conducted along Roads 5, 6, and 7 during the week for additional project staging areas and access routes. A California Native Plant Society status 1B (state special status) plant was identified in areas along Access Road 6 and consultation with CDFG is being conducted to discuss construction methods and avoidance measures in the area.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE:**

On July 26, a drainage off Manning Road was bridged by steel plates and the area extending upslope from the original bridging that had been graded up to, possibly within the drainage, without an approved CDFG Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA). Crews have been planning a bridge design for the drainage and plan to submit the plan to CDFG prior to construction.

Because the lay down areas needed for the construction of Road 6 have not been approved, crews are not working in this area.

Previously, the PG&E EI and biologist identified a barn owl nest containing a nesting pair and fledglings along the right-of-way. Subsequent correspondence with the CDFG has occurred. A 250-foot exclusion zone has been set up. Limited vehicle traffic will be allowed to progress through the area; and as agreed, a hay bale wall has been built to shield the nest. The PG&E EIs must monitor the nest closely to see if the birds appear harmed or harassed.

An active burrowing owl colony was identified along the access road to Towers 3-6. Notifications were made to CDFG and a fence was installed to keep project vehicles on the access road. Project biologists have identified seven owls in the burrows and continue to monitor the owls for signs of disturbance.

The CPUC EM observed that all other Phase Three construction activities were in compliance with mitigation measures adopted in the EIR and other permit requirements.

Three Non-Compliance Reports (NCRs) and one Project Memorandum (PMs) have been issued for the Phase Three portion of the project to date (see Table 1).

**TABLE 1**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE STATUS**  
(Updated 08-18-05)

Project Memo or NCR	Date Issued	Description	Follow-Up Activities
PHASE THREE			
Project Memorandum	7/20/05	Crews have installed exclusion fencing as well as sediment fencing in areas with potential for spoils to slide in to sensitive areas. Numerous gaps were left in the fencing to allow moving cows. However, no exclusion signs have been installed in the gaps after repeated requests. In addition, the CTS exclusion zone was toured and no sensitive resource or exclusion signs to notify crews of the resource have been installed. Notifications were made to the PG&E EI. On July 14, an operator was not aware of the 500 foot CTS exclusion zone and a 400-foot by 20-foot area was scraped within the zone coming within 100 feet of the CTS burrow. The site Foreman when he realized what was occurring immediately stopped the operator. Opus notified Mary Hammer of the USFWS in an e-mail.	
NCR	7/26/05	A drainage off Manning Road was bridged by steel plates and the area extending upslope from the bridge had been graded up to and possibly within the drainage without an approved CDFG Streambed Alteration Agreement.	CDFG notification required
NCR	7/26/05	Construction at Pole location 9, 10, 11 and 12 and use of associated access roads were started prior to the CPUCEM verifying that proper flagging and exclusion fencing had been installed as required by Project mitigation measures. Directly upslope of a CTS/CRLF breeding pond burrow clusters were not fenced off and the site was left unmonitored though construction was occurring within 200-ft of the pond. Crews were using new routes which were not previously surveyed or approved.	PG&E must properly flag and fence the work and access areas, and provide maps and survey results. Burrow clusters must be fenced for exclusion.
NCR	7/29/05	Crews graded the other side of the drainage referred to in an NCR issued 7/26/05. Note that a CDFG Streambed Alteration Agreement has not been issued for the site.	CDFG notification required

**AGENCY PERSONNEL CONTACTS:**

None.

**NOTICES TO PROCEED (NTP):**

Table 2 presents the NTPs issued by the CPUC for the Tri-Valley Project to date.

**TABLE 2**  
**NOTICES TO PROCEED**  
(Updated 8-18-05)

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 Three: Construction of the overhead transmission line, the transition station, all roadway and vault pad grading, and preparation of 0.33 acre mitigation area.
#7	August 4, 2005	Phase Three: Underground construction and preparation of the 0.94 acre mitigation area.

**VARIANCE REQUESTS:**

On August 12, Variance Request #14 was submitted for three access roads. The request is under review, subject to the submittal of complete biological survey data. Table 3 presents the Phase Three Variance Requests reviewed to date.

**TABLE 3**  
**VARIANCE REQUEST STATUS**  
(Updated 8/18/05)

Variance Request #	Date Submitted	Description	Status	CPUC Approval Date
PHASE THREE				
11	7/7/05	Variance to allow travel through homestead archaeological site C-Livermore-1H.	Completed	7/8/05
12	7/15/05	Variance to allow the use of staging areas as outlined in road plan drawings along the Phase 3 alignment.	Completed	7/26/05
13	7/29/05	Variance to use three staging areas. Two are located along the Moller Ranch Road. The last is located adjacent to the Cayetano Substation.	Incorporated into NTP #7.	
14	8/12/05	Variance to use three access roads.	Biological survey data pending.	

## Photographs



**Figure 1** – Construction of the underground portion began August 10, 2005.



**Figure 2** – A California red legged frog was found in the project area and relocated along Moller Road, August 10, 2005.