



# **Aspen** *Environmental Group*

## **PROJECT MEMORANDUM SCE – VIEJO SYSTEM PROJECT**

**To:** Michael Rosauer, CPUC  
**From:** Vida Strong, Aspen Project Manager  
**Date:** October 13, 2004  
**Subject:** Weekly Report #10: October 3, 2004 – October 9, 2004  
**CPUC Environmental Monitor (EM):** Christopher Meyer

The CPUC EM conducted site visits on October 5 and 7 and reviewed the substation and 220 kV construction activities, and Best Management Practices (BMPs) with SCE.

### **SUBSTATION CONSTRUCTION**

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

Both firewalls for the A transformers have been completed and the forms removed. The height of the firewalls is being extended with cinderblocks (see Figure 1). The purpose of the firewall is to protect the adjacent electrical building from a transformer fire and isolate the two A transformers in case of a problem. By the later part of the week, the framework for the main mechanical/electrical equipment room (MEER #1) was up (see Figure 2).

Concrete trucks were on-site to pour the foundations that were ready. The crews filled the forms to within a foot of the top, vibrating the concrete to remove air pockets, and then backfilling the edges before pouring to the top of the form. The crews worked quickly to set the anchor bolts and finish the top of the pedestals before the concrete set. The concrete truck drivers washed out in the lowboy haul-off in the southern laydown area at the substation site (see Figure 3).

#### **Environmental Compliance:**

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

The site vegetation has been removed from the substation site and a LSA Environmental Inspector (EI) will not be on-site full-time. The LSA EI is periodically checking the excavations and foundation holes for sensitive and common animals. The sensitive resources on the hillside are separated from the construction activities by a cyclone fence. A paleontologist was on-site to monitor foundation excavation and boring activities. No fossils were noted during the subject week.

A water truck was on-site at the substation site. The Aspen EM informed SCE that the soil on the site was dry and susceptible to wind erosion the previous week and the situation was improved.

### **220 kV TRANSMISSION LINE SEGMENT**

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

A drilling machine started working on the pole foundations during the subject week (see Figure 4). The drilling machine spent the week working on one foundation bore due to the hard rock. The spoils from the drilling operation were trucked back to the substation site for removal. Iron workers prepared the rebar cages for the 220 kV transmission line foundations.

A grader worked to improve the access road to the drilling pads and correct drainage issues before the first rains of the season. The CPUC EM reviewed the access road at the southern portion of the 220 kV section. The access road has been degraded by erosion from several years of rain runoff along the road. The road has continued to move upstream into the habitat as the downstream side eroded. The contractor needs additional space to move a large crane over the degraded section of the access road (see Figure 5). Due to Dept. of Fish and Game restrictions, the erosion to the access road cannot be repaired without a permit. SCE will place a steel plate over the eroded section of the road to allow safe passage of large equipment. SCE will look into getting Fish and Game and US Army Corps of Engineers permits to permanently repair the access road in the future.

**Environmental Compliance:**

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

SCE discovered that one of the crane pads was not properly situated for the crane and requested a modification of the exclusion area. The CPUC EM returned to the site and reviewed the SCE request with the LSA biologist. SCE proposed to expand the exclusion area in several sections in exchange to removing a small section to allow access for the equipment (see Figure 6). The change would result in a net increase in protected habitat and result in the salvage of healthier plants. The CPUC EM approved the shift in the exclusion area and photographed the proposed changes.

Coastal California gnatcatchers and cactus wren have been sighted between the substation site and the transmission right-of-way near the southern gate. No impacts to the birds are anticipated due to project activities.

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A water truck was on-site on the transmission line corridor to keep the access roads and work areas watered to prevent wind erosion.

**NOTICES TO PROCEED (NTP):**

NTP #1 was approved for substation construction by the CPUC on July 15, 2004, and NTP #2 was approved for the 220 kV upgrade on September 29, 2004. SCE is waiting for the City of Mission Viejo vote on October 30, 2004, regarding an assessment district to underground the proposed 66 kV subtransmission line through the City before moving forward with the 66 kV subtransmission line portion of the project.

**VARIANCE REQUESTS:**

No variance requests were submitted for review during the subject week.

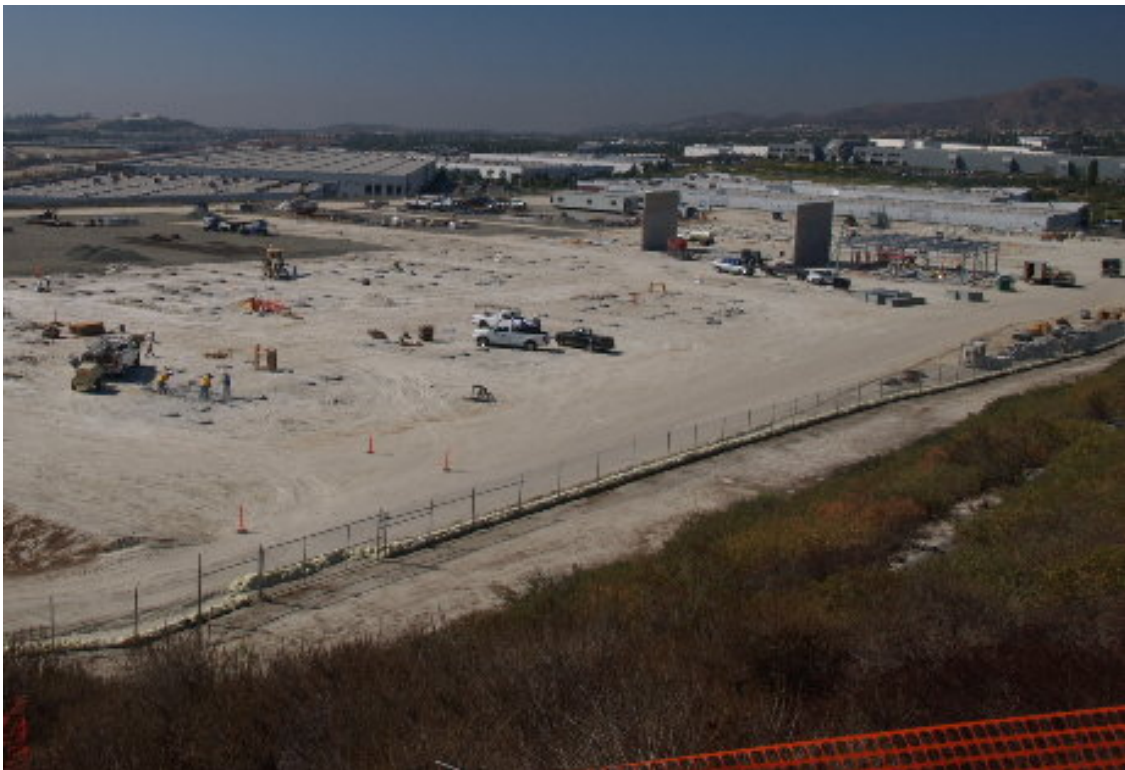
**UPCOMING ITEMS:** SCE is working to submit the pre-construction compliance documents for the 66 kV towers immediately north of the substation site.

**AGENCY PERSONNEL CONTACTS:** None

## Photographs



**Figure 1** – The firewalls for the A transformers were poured and crews worked to top the walls with cinderblocks.



**Figure 2** – Workers erected the metal framework for MEER #1 during the later part of the week (top, right corner).



**Figure 3** – Concrete trucks were properly washed at a lowboy dumpster set up in the southern laydown area.



**Figure 4** – Drilling of the tower foundations on the 220 kV section started during the subject week.



**Figure 5** – A section of the access road for the 220 kV line has eroded and needs to be prepared for the safe passage of larger equipment.



**Figure 6** – A section of degraded coastal sage scrub habitat to be impacted in exchange for a larger amount of healthier, contiguous habitat.