



# **Aspen** *Environmental Group*

## **PROJECT MEMORANDUM PG&E ATLANTIC-DEL MAR REINFORCEMENT PROJECT**

**To:** Jensen Uchida, CPUC  
**From:** Vida Strong, Aspen Project Manager  
**Date:** June 29, 2005  
**Subject:** Weekly Report #10: June 19, 2005 – June 25, 2005  
**CPUC Environmental Monitor (EM):** Anne Sweet

Aspen EM Anne Sweet was on site June 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Atlantic-Del Mar Project location to monitor construction activities. The weather was clear and very warm. The PG&E Environmental Inspector (EI) Kevin Kilpatrick was on-site June 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> to ensure compliance with the adopted Final Mitigated Negative Declaration and other permit requirements. The PG&E EI also served as the project biologist conducting California tiger salamander (CTS) aestivation surveys, ongoing bird surveys, as well as installation of resource flagging and managing the installation of sediment controls.

### **OVERHEAD:**

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

All overhead construction including pole, foundation, and line stringing work will be done by PG&E. The PG&E crews work Mondays through Thursdays.

On June 22, the PG&E EI and project biologist called to inform the CPUC EM that 22 trees had been removed by a PG&E contractor. He stated that he had not been notified that the work was occurring and had found out after most of the tree removal activities had been completed.

The CPUC EM arrived on-site June 23 and met with the PG&E EI in Rocklin to review the locations where trees had been removed (see Figures 1 through 5). From the remaining trunk size many of the trees which were removed were very large. The EI explained that Mike Gunby the PG&E Project Manager was out of town. He had been coordinating with the Cities of Rocklin and Roseville concerning tree removal permits, and his vacation replacement at PG&E didn't realize that the EI/biologist should be notified prior to releasing the work to the tree removal crew. The PG&E EI said that he found out about the tree removal activities because the PG&E pole foundation crew Foreman had driven by the work and had mentioned it to the PG&E EI.

The Final Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the project states in Mitigation Measure B-3 that "All tree removal activities shall occur between November 1 and February 15 to avoid avian breeding seasons . . . All trees within 250 feet of any construction activity shall be surveyed for active nests. If active raptor nests are found within 250 feet of tree removal...a construction free buffer of at least 250 feet around the nest shall be maintained."

The CPUC EM issued a Non-Compliance Report (NCR) which documented that 22 large trees were removed outside of the allowable window. Three removal crews were not environmentally trained prior to the work. Although project wide biological surveys were conducted this spring, pre-construction surveys were not completed. In addition the tree removal crew brought in heavy rubber tired equipment and traveled overland and off existing access roads in order to remove a few of the trees. The Final MND Project Description states that pre-existing access roads shall be used to access the site. In addition no measures to stop the spread of noxious weeds between tree removal locations were conducted. Per the PG&E EI, preliminary raptor nest surveys of the entire project route had been done in March prior to the

start of the project. The EI said that he had a chance to ask the tree removal crew if they had seen any nest in the trees removed. The reply was that they had found a stick nest in one tree, but it looked like the nest had not been used in a while. In the NCR the CPUC EM provided corrective measures which required that biological surveys shall be conducted immediately at all of the tree removal locations as well as the overland access areas. Surveys shall recount all sensitive resource issues including avian and CTS aestivation. Results shall be provided to the CPUC and the CDFG.

On June 23, the PG&E EI showed the CPUC EM four additional trees planned for removal in Roseville (see Figure 6). These trees were not removed with the others because Roseville inspectors need to field check the site prior to removal. The trees were identified by the arborist with a circular tag with a spray painted circle. Two additional oaks were not scheduled for removal in Rocklin because the property owner has stated that he does not want them to be removed (see Figure 7). PG&E is coordinating with the land owner. Because Mitigation Measure B-3 states that "All tree removal activities shall occur between November 1 and February 15 to avoid avian breeding seasons" the CPUC EM informed the PG&E EI that a Variance Request will be required in order to cut down the remaining trees. As part of the variance package verification the CDFG shall be consulted and concur with the tree removals.

Crew finished up work at Poles 12 and 13 during the subject week. Trees were also removed near these locations. The CPUC EM and PG&E EI toured the 12 and Pole 13 access areas. There exists an overgrown access road which leads to the Pole 12 location. The road lies adjacent to a drainage area which holds ponded water. Waddles were previously staked along the entire drainage area for erosion protection. Previously, exclusion fencing was placed around the drip line of an oak tree near Pole 12 and around the 30-foot buffer of an elderberry bush which lies along the access road to Pole 12. These resources did not appear to be impacted by the tree removal activities.

The CPUC EM and PG&E EI toured the area near the planned transition station. The PG&E EI showed the CPUC EM some burrows he had just found at the location (see Figure 8). The burrows, which serve as potential CTS aestivation habitat, were roped off by the PG&E EI for exclusion in the field (see Figure 9). The PG&E EI said that the location of the burrows could be a problem because they are located where the transition station construction is planned.

During the tour crews were on-site finishing up work at the Pole 11 site near the Kinder Morgan tank farm. The foundation hole had been augered and the foundation cage had been set. A concrete truck was on-site to finishing the pour. The site looked clean (see Figure 10).

#### **Environmental Compliance Activities:**

The PG&E EI evaluated the construction areas at Towers 6, 7, 8, and 11, (located from American Way in Rocklin to the Kinder Morgan tank farm) for potential burrows for California tiger salamander in compliance with Mitigation Measure APM 7-11. No burrows were located in the work areas. The PG&E EI also evaluated the Tower 9 construction area (the transition tower located at Midas Road). Several potential CTS burrows were observed underneath the canopy of some adjacent oak trees. An exclusion fence was established to protect both the potential burrows and the oak trees.

The CPUC EM observed that outside of the tree removal activities described above all other overhead construction activities were in compliance with mitigation measures adopted in the MND and other permit requirements. Erosion controls were in place around the construction areas.

#### **UNDERGROUND:**

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

The underground work including trenching and conduit installation has been contracted to Wilson Construction. The horizontal bore work will be subcontracted. Construction will most likely start with the boring operation at Sunset Avenue, which is tentatively scheduled to start in July.

**Environmental Compliance Activities:** None.

**NOTICES TO PROCEED (NTP):**

Table 1 presents the NTPs issued by the CPUC for the Atlantic–Del Mar Project to date.

**TABLE 1  
NOTICES TO PROCEED  
(Updated 6-28-05)**

NTP #	Date Issued	Description
1	11-03-03	Mobilization within the Atlantic and Del Mar Substations, and overhead installation from the Del Mar Substation to the railroad right-of-way (northern 0.25 miles), City of Rocklin.
2	3-08-05	Construction of the remaining overhead portion (approximately 4 miles) and the underground portion (approximately 1.3 miles) of the Atlantic–Del Mar Reinforcement Project, within the Cities of Roseville and Rocklin in Placer County.

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE:**

On June 23rd a NCR was issued for not complying with Mitigation Measure B-3 and APM 7-6 in regard to tree removal activities.

**TABLE 2  
ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE STATUS  
(Updated 6-28-05)**

Project Memo or NCR	Date Issued	Description	Follow-Up Activities
NCR (Level 2)	6-23-05	PG&E contractors removed 22 large trees without notifying the project EI and without conducting avian nest surveys prior to removal, which is a violation of Mitigation Measure B-3 and APM 7-6. Additionally, the trees were removed outside of the allowable window of November 1 through February 15 as established in Mitigation Measure B-3 and overland travel was used instead of existing access roads.	PG&E shall conduct post-removal surveys at the tree removal sites and surrounding area, and supply the CPUC with results. PG&E shall also notify CDFG and supply it with the survey results.

**VARIANCE REQUESTS:**

No Variance Requests were submitted during the subject week.

**TABLE 3  
VARIANCE REQUEST STATUS  
(Updated 6-28-05)**

Variance Request #	Date Submitted	Description	Status	CPUC Approval Date
1	4-19-05	Modify the implementation of Applicant Proposed Measure 7.2 at Wetlands #2 and #30 to allow the use of non-rubber tired vehicles and to allow discretionary re-fueling on the project right-of-way.	Approved	5-2-05
2	5-19-05	Allow overland travel from an existing access road to the Pole 3/19 site.	Approved	5-25-05

**UPCOMING ITEMS:** None.

**AGENCY PERSONNEL CONTACTS:** None.

## Photographs



**Figure 1** – Tree removal location north of the transition station location, June 23, 2005.



**Figure 2** – Tree removal location north of the transition station location, June 23, 2005.



**Figure 3** – Tree removal location north of the transition station location, June 23, 2005.



**Figure 4** – Tree removal location north of the transition station location, June 23, 2005.



**Figure 5** – Tree removal location north of Pole 7 location, June 23, 2005.



**Figure 6** – Oaks slated for removal in Roseville, June 14, 2005.



**Figure 7** – Large oak trees shown in the middleground are slated for removal; however, the landowner has expressed to PG&E that he does not want them removed, June 23, 2005.



**Figure 8** – Burrows discovered at the planned transition location, which could serve as potential CTS aestivation habitat, June 23, 2005.



**Figure 9** – Exclusion roping around discovered burrows which could serve as potential CTS aestivation habitat, June 23, 2005.



**Figure 10** – Pole 11 foundation hole, June 23, 2005.