



# **Aspen** *Environmental Group*

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

**To:** Jensen Uchida, CPUC  
**From:** Vida Strong, Aspen Project Manager  
**Date:** July 6, 2005  
**Subject:** Weekly Report #11: June 26, 2005 – June 25, 2005  
**CPUC Environmental Monitor (EM):** Anne Sweet

Aspen EM Anne Sweet was on site June 30<sup>th</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 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.

During the subject week crews finished drilling at Pole 8. During drilling, the crews hit very hard “in-penetrable” white granite at 13 feet deep. PG&E engineers were consulted and for that location the foundation will not need to be any deeper. On June 30, at Pole 7, adjacent to the railroad tracks, crews encountered hard rock at 13.5 feet and the auger broke down. Crews tracked it to along the access road away from the pole location and started work to fix the machine (see Figure 1). During the CPUC EM tour, a number of PG&E engineers met at the location to determine a solution to deal with the hard rock encountered during augering Pole 7. Pole 7 is a point where then line angles, so the full foundation depth will be necessary. The area is very narrow, so the alternate solution of widening the foundation base is not an option. Crews might enter the 5.5-ft diameter, 13.5-ft deep hole and drill individual smaller holes into the rock (see Figure 2).

On June 23, the CPUC EM issued a Non-Compliance Report (NCR) which documented the removal of 22 large trees without notifying the PG&E EI/biologist, thus the required pre-removal nesting surveys were not conducted. In addition, the trees were removed outside of the allowable window. Mitigation Measure B-3 of the Final Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the project states:

“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.”

In addition to the issues noted, the tree removal crews were not environmentally trained prior to the work. Finally, 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. 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. During the subject week, the PG&E EI contacted CDFG to notify them of the tree removals. The PG&E EI has conducted the post removal surveys as outlined in the NCR, but the report has not yet been submitted to the CPUC.

During the subject week the PG&E EI relayed that he had spoken to the superintendent of an adjacent housing development and informed him of the site resources such as the vernal pool which lies adjacent to the building site. The superintendent was unaware of the highly sensitive resources and said that he was planning to spread spoils over the area, but having become aware of the resource he will take the spoils elsewhere.

**Environmental Compliance Activities:**

Previously, 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 the 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 toward the end of 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 7-06-05)

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. The NCR detailed notification and reporting actions, which have not yet been submitted to the CPUC.

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

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 them with the survey results.

**VARIANCE REQUESTS:**

On June 23, the PG&E EI showed the CPUC EM four additional trees planned for removal in Roseville. These trees were not removed with the others because Roseville inspectors needed to field check the site prior to removal. Per the PG&E EI, he met with the City of Roseville and they have given their final approval to remove the four trees. 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 would be required in order to cut down the remaining trees. On June 28, PG&E submitted Variance Request #3 requesting permission to remove the additional trees. The request is currently under review.

PG&E also submitted Variance Request #4 asking to be able to drive over a cultural resource site YH-2 in order to access pole sites along the railroad right-of-way. The request is currently under review.

**TABLE 3**  
**VARIANCE REQUEST STATUS**  
 (Updated 7-06-05)

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
3	6-28-05	Allow specific tree removals outside of the allowable window of November 1 to February 15 as outlined in Mitigation Measure B-3.	Under Review	
4	6-28-05	Allow movement of track and rubber tired equipment through approximately 15 feet by 100 feet of Cultural Resource site Y2.	Under Review	

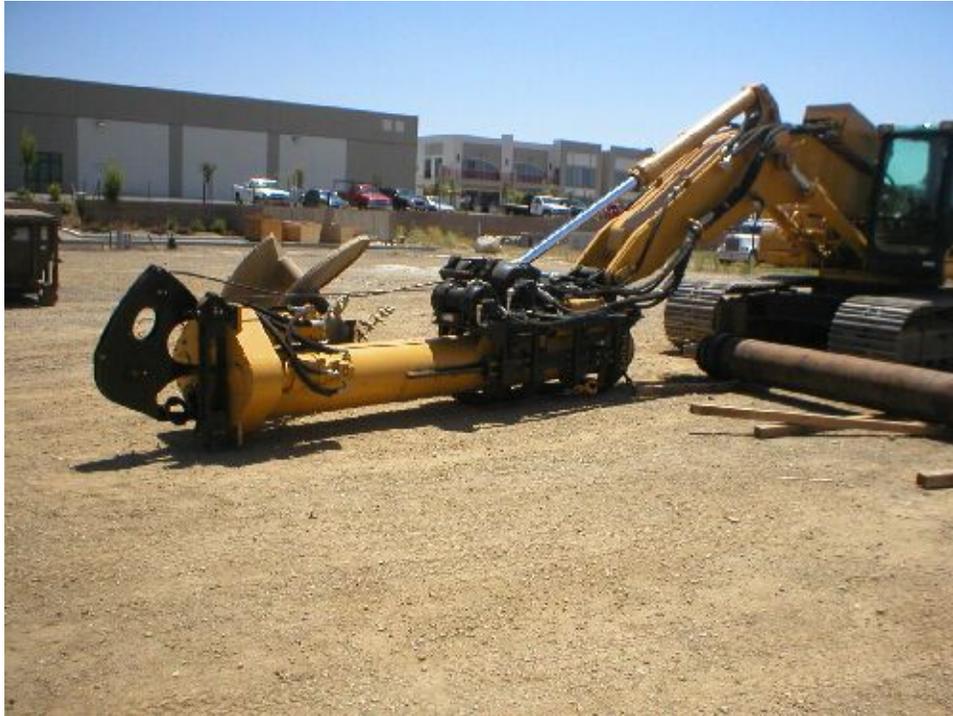
**UPCOMING ITEMS:**

Transmission poles are scheduled for delivery to the completed foundation areas next week.

**AGENCY PERSONNEL CONTACTS:**

None.

## Photographs



**Figure 1** – Broken auger equipment near Pole 7, June 30, 2005.



**Figure 2** – Crew Forman, PG&E engineers, and PG&E EI on-site at Pole 7 (the foundation hole is covered by wood to the right of the meeting area) to discuss feasible options to complete the foundation work due to the encountered rock, June 30, 2005.