



# **Aspen** *Environmental Group*

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

**To:** Jensen Uchida, CPUC  
**From:** Vida Strong, Aspen Project Manager  
**Date:** July 14, 2005  
**Subject:** Weekly Report #12: July 3, 2005 – July 9, 2005  
**CPUC Environmental Monitor (EM):** Jody Fessler

Aspen EM Jody Fessler was on site July 5<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 no pole foundation work occurred. The tower crew worked at Pole Sites 15 to 20, where six towers were delivered and partially assembled. Per the PG&E EI, the towers were delivered in two to three piece segments and placed on the ground near the foundations. Equipment stayed within previously disturbed areas or on existing access roads.

On July 5, the CPUC EM drove the overhead route sites with the PG&E EI. North of the Atlantic Substation, Poles 21 through 24 were reviewed (see Figures 1 through 3). These sites occur near sensitive vernal pool areas. The work areas were marked with yellow tape and the dirt access road defined by straw bales near any vernal pools. The PG&E EI said that he would fix some of the yellow tape that had blown down, and that he would also be with the crews when they set the poles down near each pole location. The CPUC EM inquired if the PG&E EI had done any follow-up surveys for birds. He said he was almost done with his report on the areas where they removed the trees. He also said he was keeping an eye on all raptor nests and that this week's construction would not impact any nesting birds.

Previously the PG&E EI had noted that a nearby residential construction project had stockpiled soils in front of a silt fence and hay bale barrier placed near Pole 15 to protect nearby sensitive vernal pool areas. The silt fence will remain in place per the PG&E/USFWS agreement letter; however, the PG&E EI noted that if a significant amount of precipitation were to occur, the erosion controls in place might be insufficient to control sediment from the residential construction. The PG&E EI had previously met with the residential project superintendent and informed him of the environmental sensitivity of the area.

As reported by the PG&E EI, an existing elderberry bush which is located approximately 300 feet northwest of Pole 15 and approximately 30 feet from the same residential project discussed above has suddenly appeared to be rapidly dying. The PG&E EI has been spot checking the sensitive resource and until recently it had appeared very healthy. No PG&E work has occurred near the bush, thus this situation is not considered to be a consequence of the ADM project. The PG&E EI stated that he will contact the resource agencies to notify them of the issue for their evaluation.

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 of November 1 to February 15, as outlined in Mitigation Measure B-3. 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. 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.

**Environmental Compliance Activities:**

Previously, the PG&E EI evaluated the construction areas at Poles 15 to 24 (where tower work is currently being conducted) 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 7-14-05)

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 an 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 7-14-05)

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 was approved by CPUC on July 7, 2005.

PG&E also submitted Variance Request #4 to allow overland travel over a cultural resource site YH-2 in order to access pole sites along the railroad right-of-way. The request was approved by CPUC on July 7, 2005.

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

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.	Approved	7-7-05
4	6-28-05	Allow movement of track and rubber tired equipment through approximately 15 feet by 100 feet of Cultural Resource site Y2.	Approved	7-7-05

**UPCOMING ITEMS:** Transmission poles are scheduled for delivery to the completed foundation areas next week.

**AGENCY PERSONNEL CONTACTS:** None.

## Photographs



**Figure 1** – Pole 22, July 5, 2005. Note the hay bales and sediment fence located beyond the pole location which protects a sensitive vernal pool area.



**Figure 2** – Pole 23, July 5, 2005.



**Figure 3** – Pole 24 looking southwest, July 5, 2005.