

RECLAMATION

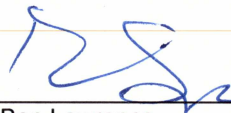
Managing Water in the West

Categorical Exclusion Checklist

South California Edison Removal of Idle Facilities

CEC-12-045 (Second Amendment)

Prepared by:



Ben Lawrence
Natural Resources Specialist
South-Central California Area Office

Date:

3-8-13

Concurred by:




Lisa Carlson
Wildlife Biologist
South-Central California Area Office

Date:

3/8/13

Concurred by:

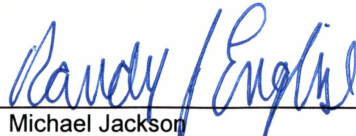


Chuck Siek
Supervisory Natural Resources Specialist
South-Central California Area Office

Date:

3/8/13

Approved by:



Michael Jackson
Area Manager
South-Central California Area Office

Date:

3/12/13



Background

The Ventura River Project was constructed in the early 1950s by the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) on behalf of Ventura County and Casitas Municipal Water District (Casitas). The project includes Casitas Dam, Lake Casitas, the developed recreation area at the north end of the lake, and the Open Space Lands north of the lake. Casitas operates the dam and manages the lake and recreation area under contract with Reclamation. Reclamation currently manages the Open Space Lands which are not open to the general public except for limited day-use in approved areas.

Title IV of the Reclamation Development Act of 1974 authorized Reclamation to purchase approximately 3,500 acres of privately-owned lands north of Lake Casitas, the Open Space Lands, to “provide for water quality in Lake Casitas, along with the preservation and enhancement of public outdoor recreation, fish and wildlife, and the environment.” In addition, Title IV mandated that the “land will be kept in its natural state as permanent open space.” In order to comply with Title IV, Reclamation is in the process of removing residences and improvements such as roads, guesthouses, detached garages, barns, stables, corrals, fences, landscaping and storage sheds left from the previous landowners.

On October 31, 2012, Reclamation approved Categorical Exclusion Checklist (CEC) 12-045 to allow Southern California Edison (SCE) to remove idle utility poles located within Open Space Lands north of Lake Casitas (see Figure 1). The CEC as approved dictated that all poles would be cut off within six inches of the ground surface, with no ground disturbance. However, after that approval it was determined that SCE policies do not allow for abandonment of poles in place, in whole or in part. Because of the potential for human or environmental harm from creosote in the poles, SCE must extract the poles in their entirety and remove them from the property. An amendment was approved to CEC 12-045 on January 1, 2013 to reflect the extraction of utility poles in their entirety. Substantive changes due to that amendment are indicated with a vertical line in the left margin.

This document further amends CEC 12-045 to reflect a need to remove a tree which has partially fallen onto the facilities scheduled to be removed. Substantive changes from this amendment are indicated with a double-vertical line in the left margin.

Purpose and Need for Action

Current goals for Open Space Lands call for unnecessary improvements to be removed from the property. The purpose of the proposed action is to remove utility elements that are no longer needed by the utility operator.

Proposed Action

Reclamation proposes to issue a temporary license that would allow Southern California Edison (SCE) to remove their idle poles located within the Open Space Lands north of Lake Casitas. Note that for infrastructure security purposes, the exact locations of utility features are not shown.

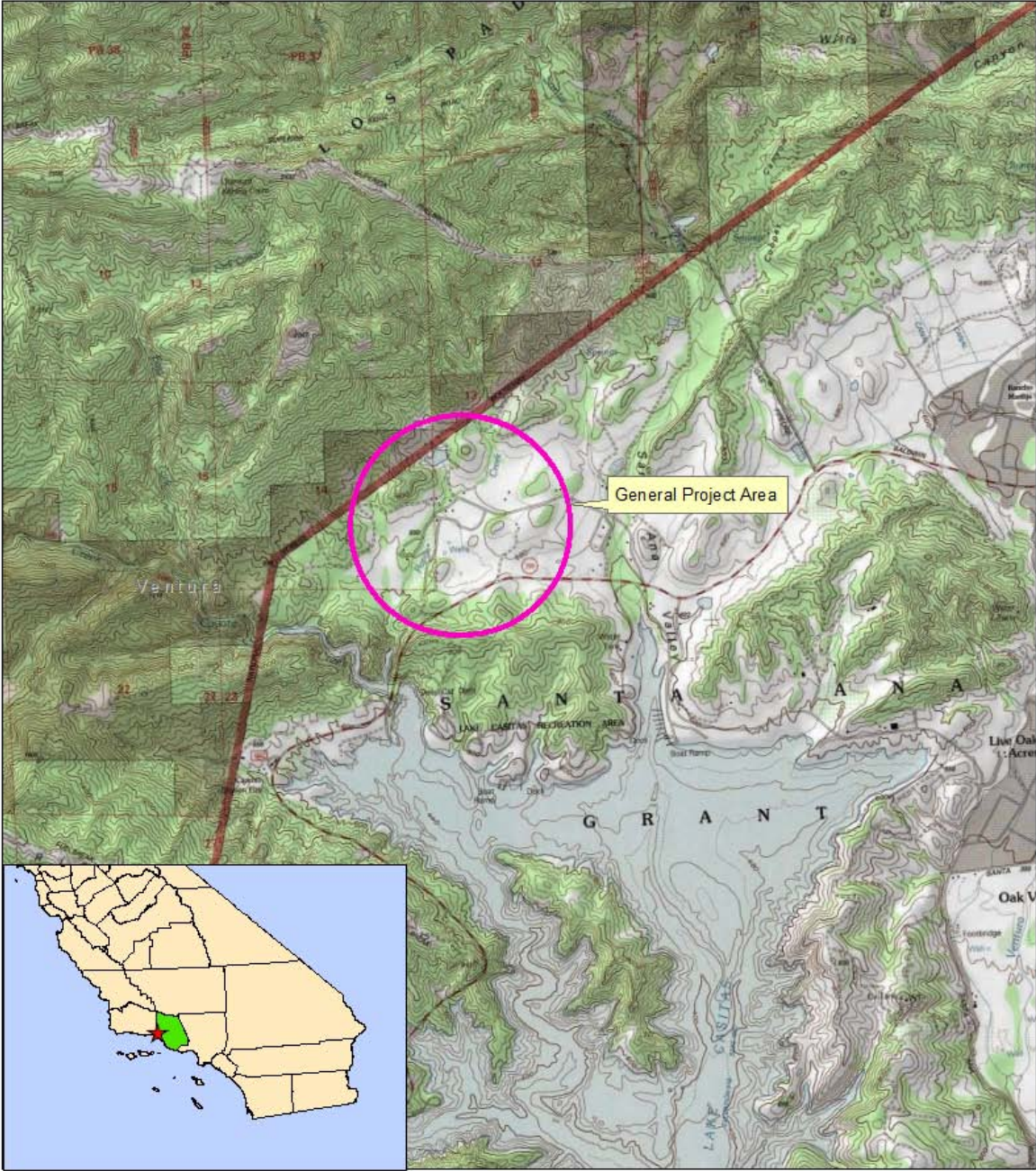
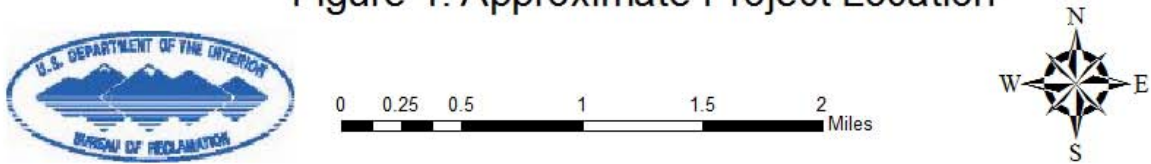


Figure 1. Approximate Project Location



This project involves the removal of ten idle utility poles and overhead and underground work on one existing utility pole on the Tico 16V distribution circuit (Table 1). Most poles are situated up to 250 feet away from the nearest road, so access to most of the project area will be pedestrian, utilizing a pneumatic pole jack to lift the poles from the ground and a rubber-wheeled cart to haul the poles away. If the subject poles will not budge, their removal may require excavation of up to a one-foot radius to a depth of up to three feet around their bases to help dislodge them from the ground. Additionally, four existing anchors would be cut approximately 12 inches below grade and left in place. Holes from the pole removal would be backfilled immediately using sterile soil. Some vegetation trimming would be required, including removal of a mature tree which has fallen over the idle facilities due to natural causes.

Equipment proposed consists of a bucket truck, auger-mounted boom truck, crew-cab pickup truck, pneumatic pole jack, and rubber-wheeled cart. Work is expected to take five days to complete.

Table 1: Pole Locations and Scope of Work

Pole	Access	Scope of Work
X4069E	Roadside vehicular access	Replace overhead hardware and install one queen post and anchor.
X6971E	Pedestrian access	Remove pole and conductor.
1509228E	Pedestrian access	Remove pole and conductor.
1509229E	Pedestrian access	Remove pole and conductor.
4651816E	Pedestrian access	Remove pole and conductor.
1562394E	Pedestrian access	Remove pole and conductor.
1562395E	Pedestrian access	Remove pole, conductor and transformer.
2024601E	Pedestrian access	Remove pole and conductor.
2024602E	Pedestrian access	Remove pole, conductor, two downguys and two anchors.
2024603E	Pedestrian access	Remove pole, conductor, down guy and anchor.
2024604E	Private driveway vehicular access	Remove pole, conductor, riser, down guy and anchor.

Environmental Commitments

Reclamation shall implement the following environmental protection measures:

Resource	Protection Measure
Biological Resources	If listed species are observed on or near the project, reschedule to avoid impacts.
Biological Resources	Carcasses of medium to large mammals will be removed from the action area immediately to discourage foraging by condors.
Biological Resources	Food-related trash (wrappers, cans, bottles, etc.) will be disposed of in closed containers and removed at least once a week from the site.

Biological Resources	Workers will avoid interaction with condors and immediately report any condor sightings to Reclamation.
Biological Resources	Work will be scheduled outside the bird breeding season (February 1 to September 30) to avoid take of nesting birds. If work must take place during the breeding season, a qualified biologist will conduct a pre-construction nest inspection of each pole. If nesting birds are found, work will be postponed until the nest is inactive.
Biological Resources	If the project will occur between February 15 and July 31, a preconstruction survey for Least Bell's Vireo nests will be conducted. If an active nest is found, no work will be allowed within 500 feet of the nest until the nest is inactive.
Biological Resources	Before commencement of work, the person in charge of work at the site will slowly walk the area that is subject to disturbance. The project area and all adjacent land within 25 feet will be visually surveyed for frogs. If any "frog" is observed, a general description (coloration and pattern, estimated length) will be noted, and if possible, pictures taken. Information on any potential frog(s) will be reviewed by a Reclamation biologist, who must give permission before work can proceed.
Cultural Resources	If human remains or cultural artifacts are encountered, work will stop immediately and Reclamation's Regional Archaeologist will be contacted for further guidance.

Environmental consequences for resource areas assume the measures specified would be fully implemented.

Exclusion Category

516 DM 14.5 paragraph D (10): *Issuance of permits, licenses, easements, and crossing agreements which provide right-of-way over Bureau lands where the action does not allow for or lead to a major public or private action.*

516 DM 14.5 paragraph C (3): *Minor construction activities associated with authorized projects which correct unsatisfactory environmental conditions or which merely augment or supplement, or are enclosed within existing facilities.*

Evaluation of Criteria for Categorical Exclusion:

- | | | | | | | |
|---|----|-------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|
| 1. This action would have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment (40 CFR 1502.3). | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. This action would have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (NEPA Section 102(2)(E) and 43 CFR 46.215(c)). | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. This action would have significant impacts on public health or safety (43 CFR 46.215(a)). | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. This action would have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographical characteristics as historic or cultural resources; parks, recreation, and refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (EO 11990); flood plains (EO 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas (43 CFR 46.215 (b)). | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. This action would have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks (43 CFR 46.215(d)). | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. This action would establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects (43 CFR 46.215 (e)). | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. This action would have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects (43 CFR 46.215 (f)). | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. This action would have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by Reclamation (LND 02-01) (43 CFR 46.215 (g)). | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. This action would have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Species, or have significant impacts on designated critical habitat for these species (43 CFR 46.215 (h)).

- | | | | | | | |
|--|----|-------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|
| 10. This action would violate a Federal, tribal, State, or local law or requirement imposed for protection of the environment (43 CFR 46.215 (i)). | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. This action would affect ITAs (512 DM 2, Policy Memorandum dated December 15, 1993). | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. This action would have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (EO 12898) (43 CFR 46.215 (j)). | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. This action would limit access to, and ceremonial use of, Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 13007, 43 CFR 46.215 (k), and 512 DM 3)). | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. This action would contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act, EO 13112, and 43 CFR 46.215 (l)). | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Regional Archeologist concurred with Item 8. Their determination is attached.

ITA Designee concurred with Item 11. Their determination is attached.

Area Office Biologist concurred with Item 9. Their determination is in the project file.

CEC 12-045, Second Amendment

Project Conversation Log

March 7, 2013

In-person conversation with Lisa Carlson, Biological Science Technician, and David Hyatt, Supervisory Biologist:

Discussed need to remove the damaged oak tree as part of idle pole/line removal. Lisa and Dave indicated that existing protection measures will be adequately protective, and no further analysis is needed. The tree should be included in preconstruction surveys.

Phone conversation with Amy Barnes, Archaeologist:

Discussed need to remove the damaged oak tree. Amy indicated that no further cultural resources analysis is needed to include the tree removal in the project.

Ben Lawrence

Natural Resource Specialist

From: [Rivera, Patricia L](#)
To: [Lawrence, Benjamin T](#); [Bowman, Lawrence C](#)
Subject: RE: Project Determinations Request, Idle Pole Removal (SCCAO 12-045)
Date: Monday, May 14, 2012 8:18:38 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Ben,

I reviewed the proposed action to remove ten idle utility poles and overhead and underground work on one existing utility pole. Access to most of the project area will be pedestrian, utilizing a pneumatic pole jack to lift the poles from the ground and a rubber-wheeled card to haul the poles away. If the subject poles will not budge, their removal may require excavation of up to a one-foot radius to a depth of up to three feet around their bases to help dislodge them from the ground. Four existing anchors shall be cut approximately 12 inches below grade and left in place. Holes from the pole removal shall be backfilled immediately using sterile soil. Some vegetation trimming will be required.

The proposed action does not have a potential to affect Indian Trust Assets. The nearest ITA is a PDA approximately 40 miles WNW of the project location.

Patricia Rivera
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