

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

## Categorical Exclusion Checklist

### Land Use Authorization to PG&E for Installation of an Overhead Electrical Service Line, Hills Valley Drain, off Friant- Kern Canal (MP 40.85)

CEC-16-053

Prepared by:

  
Stacy L. Holt  
Natural Resources Specialist  
South-Central California Area Office


Date: 07/13/2017

Concurred by:

See Attachment A  
Archaeologist  
Mid-Pacific Regional Office  
Regional Archeologist concurred with Item 8. Their determination has been placed within the project file.


Date: See Attachment A

Concurred by:

  
Ned Gruenhagen  
Wildlife Biologist  
South-Central California Area Office

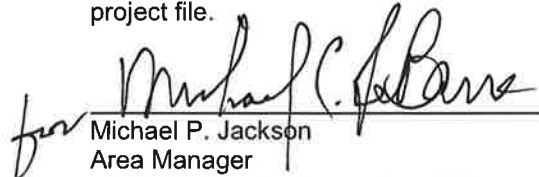
Date: 07/14/2017

Concurred by:

  
Rain L. Emerson  
Supervisory Natural Resources Specialist  
South-Central California Area Office  
ITA Designee concurred with Item 11. Their determination has been placed within the project file.

Date: 07/20/2017

Approved by:

  
for Michael P. Jackson  
Area Manager  
South-Central California Area Office

Date: 7/20/2017



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation  
South-Central California Area Office

July 2017



## Nature of the Action

Reclamation will issue a 25-year land-use authorization to Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) for the installation, operation, and maintenance of a 135-foot long overhead electrical transmission line crossing the Hills Valley Drain, a lateral off the Friant-Kern Canal, on Reclamation's right-of-way. There will be no ground disturbance in the right-of-way. This transmission line is located along the Hills Valley Drain, approximately 3,055 feet from the centerline of the Friant-Kern Canal at Milepost 40.85 in Orange Cove, Fresno County, California (Figure 1).

This transmission line would provide year-round service to operate a 50 horsepower agricultural water pump located on private property. The line would originate from an existing 45-foot pole and then be connected onto one, new, 30-foot PG&E pole located on the north side of the Hills Valley Drain. One transmission line (aerial copper (1/0) conductor) would extend over the Hills Valley Drain requiring a minimum 32 foot clearance above all ground levels in Reclamation's right-of-way over the canal.

Equipment that will be used to perform the work includes one line truck (auger), one line truck (no auger), and one work truck (<3/4 ton). The entire project would take approximately one day to complete and will be installed in line with and connected to PG&E's existing lines, poles, and related appurtenances (Figure 1).

## Environmental Commitments

PG&E shall implement the following environmental protection measures to avoid and/or reduce environmental consequences associated with the Proposed Action (Table 1).

Resource	Protection Measures
Biological	A qualified biologist shall survey the Project Site for San Joaquin kit fox following U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Standardized Recommendations (Service 2011). If evidence of San Joaquin kit fox is found (e.g., a den), Reclamation biologists shall be notified within two days of the survey and work shall not commence until further consultation, as necessary with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, has been completed for the project.
Biological	Speed of vehicles shall not exceed 15 miles per hour at the Project Site, unless otherwise permitted on a public roadway.
Biological	The location of burrows at the Project Site that could be affected (e.g., collapsed by vehicles driving over the site) by the work vehicles shall be flagged prior to the construction. Burrows shall be avoided so that no burrows would be collapsed. This would avoid effects to California Tiger Salamander that may occupy a burrow but which would not be detected. Additionally, take of burrowing owl's occupying a burrow during the non-nesting season (September through January) would be avoided.
Biological	If construction of the power line would occur during February 1 through August 31, which includes the avian breeding season, a survey for burrows and nesting migratory birds (including burrowing owl) at the Project Site shall be conducted using commonly accepted methods. If take of migratory birds would occur from project activities (e.g., collapse of a burrow used by nesting owls, or disturbance that would cause abandonment of a nest or young), then if possible, recommendations for avoiding take shall be implemented (e.g., establishing an appropriate avoidance buffer until the young have fledged from a nesting site or until a qualified biologist determines that nesting is no longer active and take would not occur). If take cannot be avoided, project activities shall be deferred to such time that take would not occur. If construction occurs during the non-breeding season of September 1 through January 31, construction would not cause take of migratory birds as long as burrows are not collapsed.

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

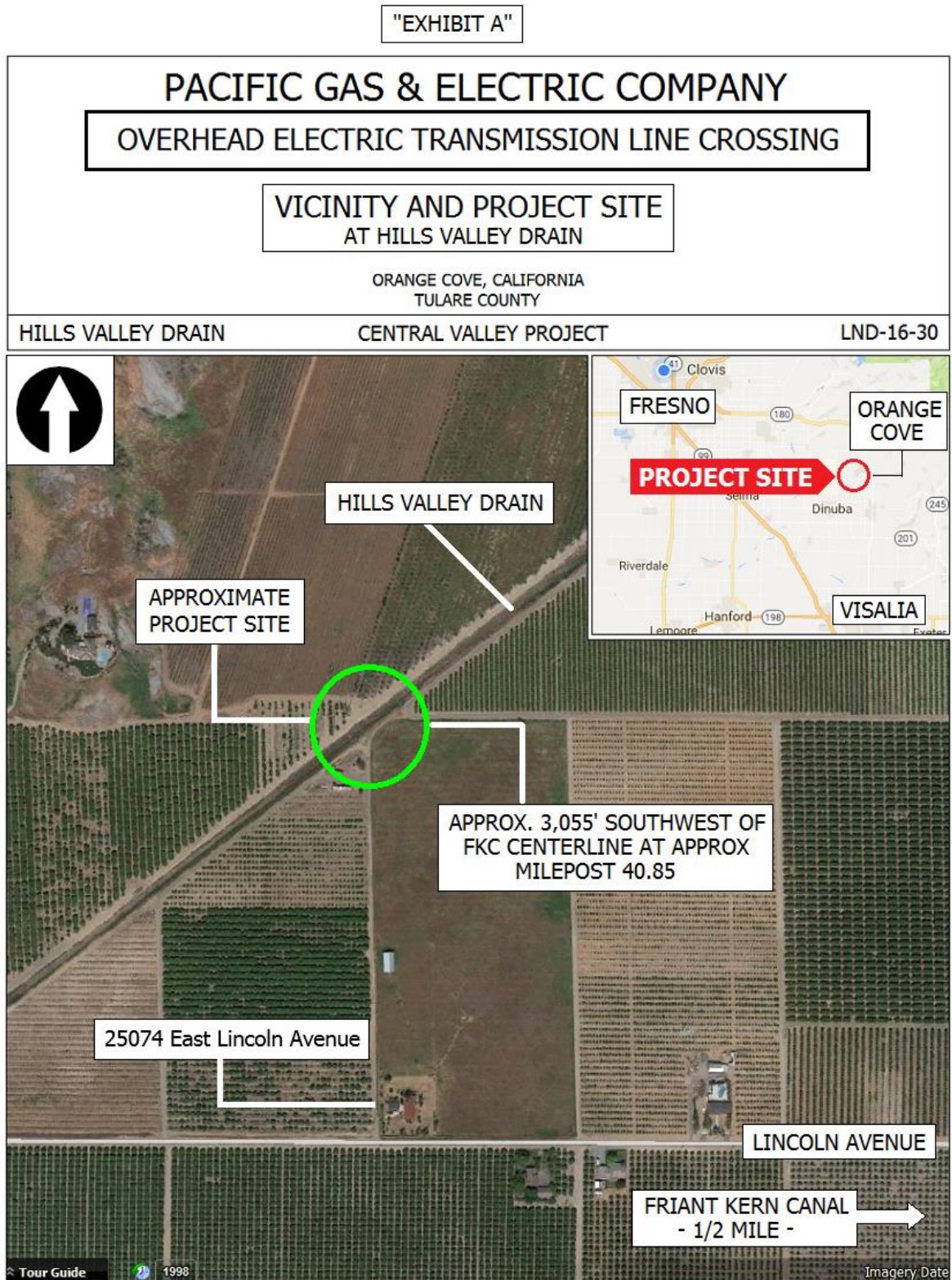


Figure 1 Location of proposed aerial crossing over the Friant-Kern Canal at approximately mile post 40.85

## 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.

## 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<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Yes<br><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<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. This action would have significant impacts on public health or safety (43 CFR 46.215(a)).  | No<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Yes<br><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<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Yes<br><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<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Yes<br><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<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Yes<br><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<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Yes<br><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<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Yes<br><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 Species, or have significant impacts on designated critical habitat for these species (43 CFR 46.215 (h)).  | No<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 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<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. This action would affect ITAs (512 DM 2, Policy Memorandum dated December 15, 1993).   | No<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Yes<br><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<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Yes<br><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<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Yes<br><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<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> |

### NEPA Action: Categorical Exclusion

The Proposed Action is covered by the exclusion category and no extraordinary circumstances exist. The Action is excluded from further documentation in an EA or EIS.

## **Attachment A: Cultural Resources Determination**




**CULTURAL RESOURCES COMPLIANCE**  
**Division of Environmental Affairs**  
**Cultural Resources Branch (MP-153)**

**MP-153 Tracking Number:** 17-SCAO-054

**Project Name:** Land Use Authorization to PG&E for Installation of an Overhead Electrical Service Line, Hills Valley Drain, off Friant-Kern Canal (MP 40.85).

**NEPA Document:** 16-053 (Lands number: LND-16-30)

**NEPA Contact:** Rain Emmerson, Natural Resource Specialist

**MP 153 Cultural Resources Reviewer:** Scott Williams, Archaeologist 

**Date:** February 28, 2017

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Reclamation has been requested to authorize a project for a new overhead electrical transmission line crossing project over the Friant Kern Canal, on Reclamation Right of Way (ROW), with no ground disturbance in the ROW. This is the type of undertaking that does not have the potential to cause effects to historic properties, should such properties be present, pursuant to the NHPA Section 106 regulations codified at 36 CFR § 800.3(a)(1). Reclamation has no further obligations under NHPA Section 106, pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.3(a)(1).

The new overhead electrical transmission line crossing will cross over the Hills Valley Drain, on Reclamation ROW, at approximate milepost station number 40.85, in Tulare County, California. The lands action would be to issue a new long-term lands use authorization that would allow access to install, operate and maintain the project. The purpose of this project is to provide electrical service to a water pump. There will be no poles or ground disturbance within Reclamation ROW.

This document is intended to convey the completion of the NHPA Section 106 process for this undertaking. Please retain a copy in the administrative record for this action. Should changes be made to this project, additional NHPA Section 106 review, possibly including consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer, may be necessary. Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment.