



US Army Corps
of Engineers

Sacramento District
1325 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-2922

Public Notice

Public Notice Number: 200100383

Date: December 14, 2001

Comments Due: January 14, 2001

In reply, please refer to the Public Notice Number

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

SUBJECT: Application for a Department of the Army permit under authority of Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act to discharge fill material into waters of the United States, to expand an existing natural gas well pad and to construct a new natural gas pipeline, as shown in the attached drawings.

APPLICANT: Jeff Carlson
Wild Goose Gas Storage, Inc.
3900, 421 7th Ave, S.W.
Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2P 4K9

LOCATION: Butte Sink wetlands and the Cherokee Canal in the vicinity of the Wild Goose Country Club then proceeding west approximately 25 miles to approximately 5 miles northeast of the town of Delevan, in Butte and Colusa Counties, California.

PURPOSE: To expand an existing natural gas storage facility located on a 137-billion-cubic-foot underground natural gas reservoir.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The applicant is proposing to expand an existing well pad site by 1.4 acres to accommodate 19 new injection wells. Approximately 4 miles of two-way, 24-inch diameter gas pipeline to an existing compressor station which will be expanded by approximately 4.5 acres. The remote facility would then be connected to the Pacific Gas & Electric Company's (PG&E) L400 main line near the town of Delevan by the construction of a new 36-inch connector pipeline. The project would move natural gas between PG&E's line 167 and L400 and the Wild Goose storage facility. Gas would be stored within the underground storage field then withdrawn in accordance with demand and transmitted to market utilizing PG&E's system.

The applicant has submitted a wetland delineation of the project area for Corps of Engineer's verification. The stated wetland impact acreage is based on applicant submittals and have not been verified. The project will result in the temporary impact to approximately 38 acres of wetlands and 242 acres of farmed wetlands during the construction of the pipeline. The project will result in the permanent loss of 1.5 acres of waters of the United States, including wetlands during the expansion of the well pad and remote facilities site. The applicant proposes to mitigate for project impacts through a combination of onsite restoration and enhancement, and offsite purchase of credits at a wetlands mitigation bank.

The proposed well site expansion (diagram 2) will require the placement of approximately 27,000 cubic yards of material to raise the well site and construct the protective berm. The applicant proposes to obtain the fill material required from the giant garter snake (GGS) enhancement site located just South of the well pad site. The enhancement site is approximately 23 acres in size and comprised of wet meadow and freshwater marsh. As part of the GGS enhancement the applicant proposes creating a network of channels to create approximately 9 acres of open water habitat for the listed species within the 23 acre site. Diagram 4 represents a post project view of the GGS enhancement site.

AREA DESCRIPTION: The project is located in the Butte sink area and west along the pipeline route as depicted in diagram 1. The Butte sink area contains a large amount of wetland areas that are managed by waterfowl clubs. The area along the pipeline route is predominately agricultural land with the primary crop being rice.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

During the initial Wild Goose Gas Storage project no recorded prehistoric/historic archaeological resources eligible for inclusion on the California Register of Historical Resources(CRHR) or the National Record of Historic Places(NRHP) were located. The area surveyed included the well pad site, storage pipeline route, and the remote facilities site. One potentially NRHP/CRHR eligible historic district/landscape, Reclamation District 833, was previously identified along with two potentially contributing elements of this district. The identified contributing elements were the Main Drainage Canal and the Cherokee Canal.

A records search for the proposed Line 400 connection pipeline alignment identified one recorded historic site, one potentially eligible historic/cultural site, and two contributing elements to a potentially NRHP/CRHR eligible historic district/landscape. Coordination with local Native American tribes are being conducted by the applicant to identify any traditional/cultural properties within the area of potential affect. A field inventory has not been completed for the Line 400 connection pipeline. The applicant will conduct the field surveys once property access has been obtained.

Known cultural resource sites occur in the permit area, and it appears they potentially may be impacted by the proposed work. Presently unknown cultural resources may be located in the permit area. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Corps of Engineers and the California State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) was signed to ensure that identified and unidentified cultural resources were protected. The applicant proposes the modification of the existing MOA in consultation with the SHPO, to include the project components to mitigate any potential impacts.

The following endangered species are present in the permit area: Giant garter snake (*Thamnophis gigas*), Valley longhorn elderberry beetle (*Desmocerus californiacus dimorphus*), winter and spring run chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), central valley steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), and Sacramento splittail (*Pogonichthys macrolepidotus*).

The District Engineer has made this determination based on information provided by the applicant and on the Corps' preliminary investigation.

Interested parties are invited to submit written comments on or before **January 14, 2002**. Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, the reasons for holding a public hearing.

The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, consideration of property ownership, and in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

If additional information is required, please contact Jeff Carlson, telephone (403)266-8370, or Mr. Matthew Kelley, at the letterhead address, telephone (916) 557-7724.

Michael J. Conrad, Jr.
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Engineer

Enclosures: Drawings(4)