



# Public Notice

US Army Corps  
of Engineers

Sacramento District  
1325 J Street

Sacramento, CA 95814-2922

Number: 200600716

Date: October 18, 2006

Comments Due: November 18, 2006

**SUBJECT:** The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District, (Corps) is evaluating a permit application for the Shiloh II/Montezuma Wind Transmission 230kV Powerline Reconductoring project, which would require dredging 165,000 cubic yards of material from approximately 12.5 acres of navigable waters of the United States, including wetlands, near and on Donlon Island, a predominantly submerged island in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, near Antioch, California. This notice is to inform interested parties of the proposed activity and to solicit comments. This notice may also be viewed at the Corps web site at <http://www.spk.usace.army.mil/regulatory.html>.

**AUTHORITY:** This application is being evaluated under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 for structures or work in or affecting navigable waters of the United States and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act for the discharge of dredged or fill material in waters of the United States.

**APPLICANT:** Pacific Gas and Electric Company  
Attn: Mr. Robert Bonderud  
Mail Code N10A  
P.O. Box 770000  
San Francisco, California 94177-0001  
415-973-5698

**LOCATION:** The project site is located near and on Donlon Island, in Sacramento County, California, about 2 miles northeast of the town of Antioch. and can be seen on the Antioch North USGS Topographic Quadrangle. The project also includes an existing powerline corridor route that extends from the north bank of the Sacramento River across Sherman Island, Donlon Island, West Island, to the south bank of San Joaquin River, and continues south towards the City of Antioch. The reconductoring project also extends beyond the north bank of the Sacramento River, and beyond the south bank of the San Joaquin River, but no Army Corps of Engineers authorization is needed for the applicant to conduct the work described in his project description in those areas.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The applicant is proposing to replace existing wires (conductors) on an existing electric power transmission line route that crosses from the north bank of the Sacramento River to the south bank of San Joaquin River. The existing electric power transmission line crosses from the north bank of the Sacramento River to Sherman Island, crosses Mayberry Slough, then crosses Donlon Island, West Island, and the San Joaquin River and continues south through Pacific Gas and Electric company property adjacent to the east boundary of the Antioch Dunes National Wildlife Refuge. The applicant has had Army Corps of

Engineers permit authorization since the 1920's to cross navigable waters of the United States with electrical power lines at these locations. The applicant proposes to retain existing height clearances between the electric power transmission lines and navigable waters that were authorized by the prior Army Corps of Engineers, Section 10 Rivers and Harbors Act permit. The applicant states that reconductoring is necessary to provide sufficient capacity to transmit additional electrical power from various new sources that are anticipated to be completed in the future. In order to complete this work, the applicant states he must use winches to replace the powerline conductors. At most locations the topography allows for access by a land-based or barge-based winches. At Sherman Island, temporary timber mats will be used if needed to access Towers 33 - 36, but no fill is proposed. At Donlon Island, the applicant's site survey determined that insufficient water depth is present to tow winch barges to Tower 38 and a 10-foot deep access channel must be dredged to provide access. The applicant proposes to dredge to a 10-foot depth and to remove approximately 165,000 cubic yards of material to provide access to Tower 38 for the winch-equipped barges. The dredging would result in the removal of approximately 1.8 acres of emergent wetland vegetation on partially submerged Donlon Island. The applicant proposes to dispose of the dredged material at the Montezuma Wetlands L.L.C. dredge material disposal and beneficial reuse facility, which was previously permitted by the Corps in accordance with the San Francisco District's permit #19405N. Should dredge sediment testing show that some material is unsuitable for the Montezuma Wetlands facility, or that facility is otherwise unavailable, the applicant would have to propose an alternative location for disposal of the dredge material. The applicant currently anticipates that no ground access through the Antioch Dunes National Wildlife Refuge will be required for the project. Attached drawings provide additional project details.

#### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

**Environmental Setting.** There are approximately 10.7 acres of open water and 1.8 acres of wetlands within the project area that would be disturbed by the proposed dredging activity. Donlon Island is an area of predominately open water with areas of emergent vegetation characterized by Tules (*Scripus* sp.) and cattails (*Typha*). Most of Donlon Island is submerged. There are additional areas of open water, uplands, and undisturbed and farmed wetlands below the route of the powerline between Powerline Tower 28 located north of the Sacramento River and Powerline Tower 42, located south of the San Joaquin River. The area labeled rare plant exclusion zone on the drawings represents an area containing a population of Mason's *Lilaeopsis*, which is listed by the State of California as rare. South of the San Joaquin River the powerline crosses dune habitat on Pacific Gas and Electric Company property adjacent to the east boundary of the Antioch Dunes National Wildlife Refuge.

**Alternatives.** The applicant has not provided information concerning project alternatives. Additional information concerning project alternatives may be available from the applicant or their agent. Other alternatives may develop during the review process for this permit application. All reasonable project alternatives, in particular those which may be less damaging to the aquatic environment, will be considered.

**Mitigation.** The Corps requires that applicants consider and use all reasonable and practical measures to avoid and minimize impacts to aquatic resources. If the applicant is unable to avoid or minimize all impacts, the Corps may require compensatory mitigation. The applicant has not proposed compensatory mitigation at this time.

**OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORIZATIONS:** None established as of the date of this public notice. A water quality certification or waiver is not required for this project.

**HISTORIC PROPERTIES:** Based on the available information (including applicant's report entitled "Archaeological Reconnaissance of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company 230kV Delta Transmission Line Reconductoring Project, Solano, Sacramento, and Contra Costa Counties, California,") no cultural resources are within the project's area of potential effect.

**ENDANGERED SPECIES:** The proposed activity may affect Federally-listed endangered or threatened species or their critical habitat including the Central Valley steelhead, Central Valley spring-run chinook salmon, Sacramento River winter-run chinook salmon, Green sturgeon, Delta smelt, and Giant garter snake. The applicant proposes to conduct dredging between July 1 and September 30, in accordance with the Long Term Management Strategy Plan for the placement of dredged material in the San Francisco Bay region in order to minimize any potential effect of the dredging activity on listed species. Potential Giant garter snake habitat is present on Sherman, Donlon, and West Islands. The Contra Costa Wallflower and Antioch Dunes Evening Primrose occur on dune habitat on Pacific Gas and Electric company property at the south end of the project area, adjacent to the east boundary of the Antioch Dunes National Wildlife Refuge. Elderberry bushes, potential habitat of the Valley Elderberry Longhorn beetle, occur at Antioch Dunes National Wildlife Refuge. The Corps will initiate consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or the National Marine Fisheries Service, pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, as appropriate.

**ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT:** The proposed project may adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat. The Corps will initiate consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service, pursuant to Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, as appropriate.

The above determinations are based on information provided by the applicant and our preliminary review.

**EVALUATION FACTORS:** The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts, of the described 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 described activity, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the described activity will be considered, including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain 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 activity's impact on the public interest will include application of the Section Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency (40 CFR Part 230).

The Corps 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 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 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.

**SUBMITTING COMMENTS:** Written comments, referencing Public Notice 200600716, must be submitted to the office listed below on or before November 18, 2006:

William Ness, Project Manager  
US Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District  
Sacramento District Regulatory Office  
1325 "J" Street - Room 1480  
Sacramento, California 94814-2922  
Email: [William.W.Ness@usace.army.mil](mailto:William.W.Ness@usace.army.mil)

The Corps is particularly interested in receiving comments related to the proposal's probable impacts on the affected aquatic environment and the secondary and cumulative effects. Anyone may request, in writing, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests shall specifically state, with particularity, the reason(s) for holding a public hearing. If the Corps determines that the information received in response to this notice is inadequate for thorough evaluation, a public hearing may be warranted. If a public hearing is warranted, interested parties will be notified of the time, date, and location. Please note that all comment letters received are subject to release to the public through the Freedom of Information Act. If you have questions or need additional information please contact the applicant or the Corps' project manager William Ness, 916-557-5268, [William.W.Ness@usace.army.mil](mailto:William.W.Ness@usace.army.mil).

Attachments: 6 drawings