

COMPATIBILITY DETERMINATION for PG&E Right of Way
Ellicott Slough National Wildlife Refuge

Use: Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) right-of-way to re-align the pathway of and maintain an electrical conductor (power lines) through the Harkins Slough Unit of the Ellicott Slough National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge), as part of the Green Valley Blitz Project. The conductor provides power for over 2,000 customers within the Santa Cruz County.

Refuge Name: Ellicott Slough National Wildlife Refuge, Santa Cruz County, California.

Establishing and Acquisition Authority:

Ellicott Slough National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1975. Legal authority includes the Endangered Species Act of 1973 as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543: 87 Statute 884).

Refuge Purpose(s): The Refuge's purposes are defined as the following:

...to conserve (A) fish or wildlife which are listed as endangered species or threatened species ... or (B) plants ...16 U.S.C. 1531 (Endangered Species Act of 1973)

... the conservation of the wetlands of the Nation in order to maintain the public benefits they provide and to help fulfill international obligations contained in various migratory bird treaties and conventions ... 16 U.S.C. 3901-3932 (Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986)

National Wildlife Refuge System Mission: "To administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans." (National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended [16 U.S.C. 668dd-ee]).

Description of Use: This Compatibility Determination addresses the proposed Green Valley Blitz Project. During summer of 2014, an existing electrical distribution pole within the Refuge collapsed, causing PG&E to respond with the installation of a temporary pole and emergency repairs to the conductor. Due to the temporary nature of the emergency work, PG&E has informed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) of their need to implement a permanent solution to ensure a safe and uninterrupted power supply to their customers.

PG&E's proposes to install 2 new electrical distribution poles on the north and south banks of Harkins Slough, within Santa Cruz County and private properties (see attached map). Using a helicopter, the existing conductor will be relocated to the new poles. All poles from the old distribution line, including the poles within the Refuge boundaries, will be pulled out and removed completely using an amphibious motor vehicle on the flooded Harkins Slough Rd. Project work on the Refuge is expected to take no longer than 1 month.

Upon completion of the project, only the repositioned conductor will cross 45 feet above the Slough and no poles will remain within the Refuge boundaries. Ongoing maintenance of the conductor will consist of visual inspections by foot, amphibious vehicle or helicopter. Should maintenance or repair work be required in the future that results in environmental impacts, PG&E will apply for all required permits and regulatory consultations, prior to conducting the work.

Availability of Resources: The Green Valley Blitz Project would be constructed and maintained by PG&E and would not require any Refuge staff time or materials.

Anticipated Impacts of Use: No disturbance or destruction of habitats on the Refuge are expected, as the repositioning and the new pathway of the conductor will occur overhead Refuge lands. The amphibious vehicle used to pull out the old electrical distribution poles will remain on the flooded Harkins Slough Road.

Noise and disturbance to wildlife in the project vicinity is expected to be temporary in nature and limited to the duration of the project. Bird collision with the existing conductor power lines is a possibility. In order to prevent bird collision, PG&E will be required to install visual markers on the re-aligned conductor to enhance the visibility of lines. No impacts to other wildlife, from the conductor, are expected.

No cultural resources are known to occur within the project vicinity on the Refuge, and no new ground disturbance on the Refuge will occur, as all work will be conducted from the flooded road or overhead. No trails or public access are allowed on the Harkins Slough Unit, therefore, no wildlife-oriented recreation opportunities will be affected.

Public Review and Comment: This compatibility determination will be posted on the Refuge website, at the Refuge headquarters on 1 Marshlands Road, Fremont, California, and at the Monterey Bay Office on 1100 Fiesta Way, Watsonville, California for 14 days to provide the public with the opportunity to comment.

Determination (check one below):

_____ Use is Not Compatible

_____ Use is Compatible with the Following Stipulations

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility:

1. PG&E will comply with the terms and conditions outlined in the Right-of-Way Easement.
2. PG&E will obtain all required regulatory permits and provide copies to the Refuge, prior to the start the Green Valley Blitz Project and for any future maintenance/repair work that results in environmental impacts.
3. Visual markers to prevent bird collisions will be installed on the conductor power lines.
4. All old poles from the existing distribution line will be removed.

5. All work will take place during the non-breeding season to prevent disturbance to nesting birds and other wildlife within the vicinity of the conductor.

Justification: The Green Valley Blitz Project addresses the improvement and re-positioning of an electrical distribution pole and conductor line, which is an existing use on the Refuge. Due to the need to re-align the pathway of the conductor, PG&E is required to request a new right-of-way easement from the Service. The alignment of only the conductor overhead and the new bird collision prevention measures ensures that the use would have no effect on the Refuge's purpose. The removal of all electrical distribution pole infrastructures on the Refuge also reduces impacts from the existing use.

Mandatory Re-Evaluation Date (2024):

Mandatory 15-year Re-Evaluation; date will be provided in Final CCP/EA (for priority public uses)

Mandatory 10-year Re-Evaluation (for all uses other than priority public uses)

NEPA Compliance for Refuge Use Decision (check one below):

Categorical Exclusion without Environmental Action Statement
516 DM 8.5 C(4)

Categorical Exclusion and Environmental Action Statement

Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision

Refuge Determination

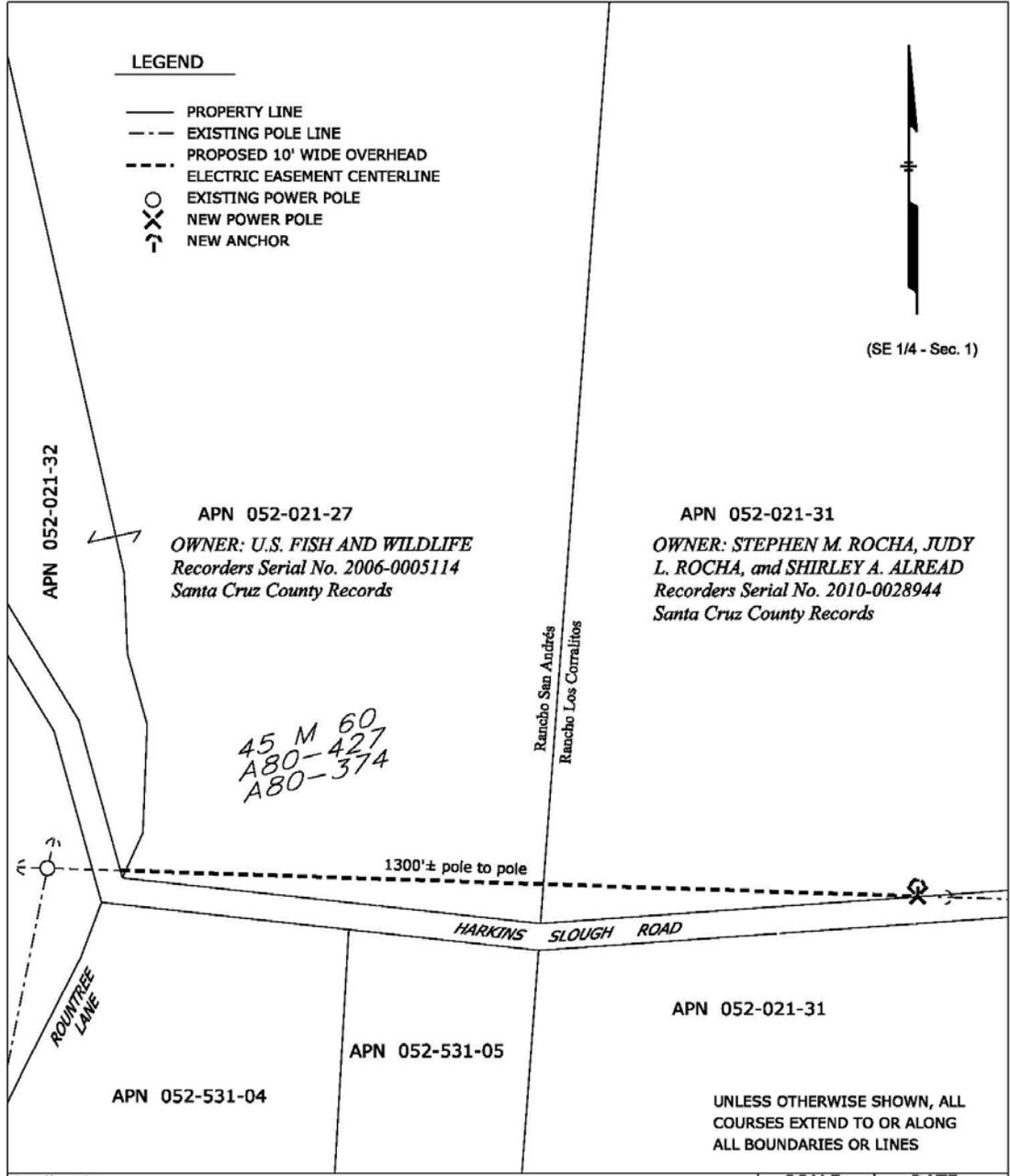
Prepared by: _____
(Signature) (Date)

Wildlife Refuge Manager/
Project Leader
Approval: _____
(Signature) (Date)

Concurrence

Refuge Supervisor: _____
(Signature) (Date)

Assistant Regional
Director, Refuges: _____
(Signature) (Date)



Applicant:				PG&E		SCALE	DATE
						1"=200'	7/8/2014
SECTION	TOWNSHIP	RANGE	MERIDIAN	COUNTY OF: SANTA CRUZ	CITY OF:		
(1)	(12 S.)	(1 E.)	M.D.B.&M.	F.B.:	DR. BY: CEKO	CH. BY: BFF3	
PLAT MAP REFERENCES	Q1903			PG&E	CENT. COAST DIVISION	31081570 AUTHORIZ	12-1-14S DRAWING NO.