

potential to occur on-site, or where accessible, in areas adjacent to construction. Where nesting migratory birds are found in or near the project area, the birds and their nests will be evaluated by a qualified biologist. If nest disturbance is anticipated, the biologist will ensure adequate mitigation measures are implemented (MM 34).

**MM 34: Nesting Birds:** In accordance with the MBTA, if an active nest is observed in the project area during construction, PG&E will stop work within the appropriate buffer for the species and contact the biological monitor immediately. Nest disturbance is dependant on a number of site-specific and activity-specific factors, including the sensitivity of the species, proximity to work activity, amount of noise or frequency of the work activity, and intervening topography, vegetation, structures, etc. Additional mitigation may be required to minimize disturbance of detected nesting activity, such as allowing nesting activity to conclude before continuing construction in an area, restricting certain types of construction practices/activities, creating screening devices to shield nest sites from construction activity, and establishing buffer areas around active nest sites. For inactive nests, measures could include removal and/or handling of nest materials, which will be conducted under the supervision of a qualified biologist.

## **Burrowing Owls**

**MM 35: Burrowing Owl Surveys:** PG&E will retain a qualified biologist to conduct burrowing owl surveys and to identify any occupied burrows in all project sites and buffer zones with suitable habitat within the Dunnigan Hills area of Line 406. These surveys will be conducted not more than 30 days prior to initial ground-disturbing activities.

**MM 36: Burrow Avoidance:** If occupied burrows are identified during surveys, PG&E will maintain a buffer of approximately 160 feet from occupied burrows during the nonbreeding season of September 1 through January 31, and approximately 250 feet during the breeding season of February 1 through August 31. Occupied burrows will not be disturbed within these buffers during the nesting season, from February 1 through August 31, unless a qualified biologist has verified that the birds have not begun egg laying and incubation or that the juveniles from those burrows are foraging independently and capable of independent survival at an earlier date. Avoidance also requires that a minimum of 6.5 acres of foraging habitat be preserved contiguous with occupied burrow sites for each pair of breeding burrowing owls (with or without dependent young) or single unpaired resident bird. Any required mitigation will occur within a USFWS-approved mitigation bank.

**MM 37: Burrow Relocation:** If avoidance of occupied burrows is not possible during construction, PG&E will retain a qualified biologist to supervise and/or conduct passive relocation of burrows. Passive relocation is defined as encouraging owls to move from occupied burrows to alternate natural or artificial burrows that are beyond approximately 160 feet from the impact zone and that are within or contiguous to a minimum of 6.5 acres of foraging habitat for each pair of relocated owls. Relocation of owls will only be implemented during the non-breeding season. If relocation is necessary, the biologist will conduct the following measures:

- Owls will be excluded from burrows in the immediate impact zone and within an approximately 160-foot buffer zone by installing one-way doors in burrow entrances.
- One-way doors will be left in place 48 hours to insure owls have left the burrow before excavation.
- One alternate natural or artificial burrow will be provided for each burrow that will be excavated in the project impact zone.
- The project area will be monitored daily for one week to confirm owl use of alternate burrows before excavating burrows in the immediate impact zone.
- Whenever possible, burrows will be excavated using hand tools and refilled to prevent reoccupation. Sections of flexible plastic pipe or burlap bags will be inserted into the tunnels during excavation to maintain an escape route for any animals inside the burrow.

**MM 38:** Burrowing Owl Monitoring Plan: If relocation of burrows is required, PG&E will prepare a Burrowing Owl Monitoring Plan, which will include mitigation success criteria and a timeline for submittal of annual reports to the CDFG. Annual reports will describe the number and locations of relocations, relocation procedures used, and the degree of success.

### **Compensatory Mitigation**

**MM 39:** Species-specific and Habitat-specific Compensation: PG&E will provide compensatory mitigation for impacts to vernal pools, wetlands, GGS, and other special-status species as agreed upon through consultation with the USFWS, USACE, and/or CDFG. Proposed measures and compensation ratios have been outlined in the above sections by species. Total acreages of impact to special-status species and sensitive habitats will be calculated upon determination of a final route by the CEQA Lead Agency (California State Lands Commission), and final compensatory mitigation ratios will be determined in consultation with the appropriate resource agencies during permitting of the project. Compensatory mitigation will likely consist of a combination of restoration of habitat on-site, and creation of the appropriate habitat at a suitable location in the project vicinity, or at a suitable agency-approved mitigation bank.

## **9. CONCLUSIONS AND DETERMINATION STATEMENTS**

### **CONCLUSION**

Potential direct effects resulting from pipeline construction include species harassment, displacement, or mortality; habitat destruction; or impacted water quality resulting from accidental hazardous material spills, sedimentation, or altered hydrology. Potential indirect effects include loss or degradation of future habitat functionality or impacted water quality resulting from adverse habitat modification causing future sedimentation and/or altered hydrology.

Potential adverse impacts to these species and their habitats can be minimized or avoided if project conservation measures are implemented. Implementation of appropriate construction BMPs, restricting work to non-sensitive or designated areas, providing environmental awareness to the crew, careful handling of chemicals near waterways, use of non-invasive pipeline installation methods (such as bore or HDD), and restoring the site appropriately are general measures that will minimize or avoid the negative effects that may be associated with construction of the project. Additional conservation measures that may avoid or minimize adverse effects to potentially occurring special-status species include avoiding sensitive temporal windows for wildlife, conducting appropriate preconstruction surveys for wildlife species in the project action area, checking for wildlife beneath vehicles and equipment in the project area, restricting construction activities to daylight hours where feasible, and having a qualified biologist on-site for construction monitoring. Implementation of these measures will greatly reduce the potential for impact to special-status species and their habitats.

## **DETERMINATION STATEMENTS**

Per the FESA, biologists who surveyed the project area recommend the following determinations:

### **Conservancy Fairy Shrimp**

Pending results from the 2007-2008 wet-season vernal pool invertebrate survey, the proposed project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the federally endangered Conservancy fairy shrimp.

### **Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp**

Pending results from the 2007-2008 wet-season vernal pool invertebrate survey, the proposed project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the federally threatened vernal pool fairy shrimp.

### **Vernal Pool Tadpole Shrimp**

Pending results from the 2007-2008 wet-season vernal pool invertebrate survey, the proposed project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the federally threatened vernal pool tadpole shrimp.

### **Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle**

The proposed project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the federally threatened valley elderberry longhorn beetle.

### **Green Sturgeon**

The proposed project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the federally threatened green sturgeon.

### **California Central Valley Steelhead**

The proposed project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the federally threatened California Central Valley steelhead.

### **Critical Habitat for the California Central Valley Steelhead**

The proposed project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect critical habitat for the California Central Valley steelhead.

### **Central Valley Spring-run Chinook**

The proposed project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the federally threatened Central Valley spring-run chinook.

### **Critical Habitat for the Central Valley Spring-run Chinook**

The proposed project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect critical habitat for the Central Valley spring-run chinook.

### **Sacramento River Winter-run Chinook**

The proposed project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the federally endangered Sacramento River winter-run chinook.

### **Critical Habitat for the Sacramento River Winter-run Chinook**

The proposed project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect critical habitat for the Sacramento River winter-run chinook.

### **Essential Fish Habitat for Chinook Salmon**

The proposed project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect EFH for chinook salmon.

### **California Tiger Salamander**

The proposed project is likely to adversely affect the federally threatened CTS.

### **Giant Garter Snake**

The proposed project is likely to adversely affect the federally threatened GGS.

### **Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo**

The proposed project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the candidate for federal listing western yellow-billed cuckoo.

## Bald Eagle

The proposed project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the federally de-listed bald eagle.

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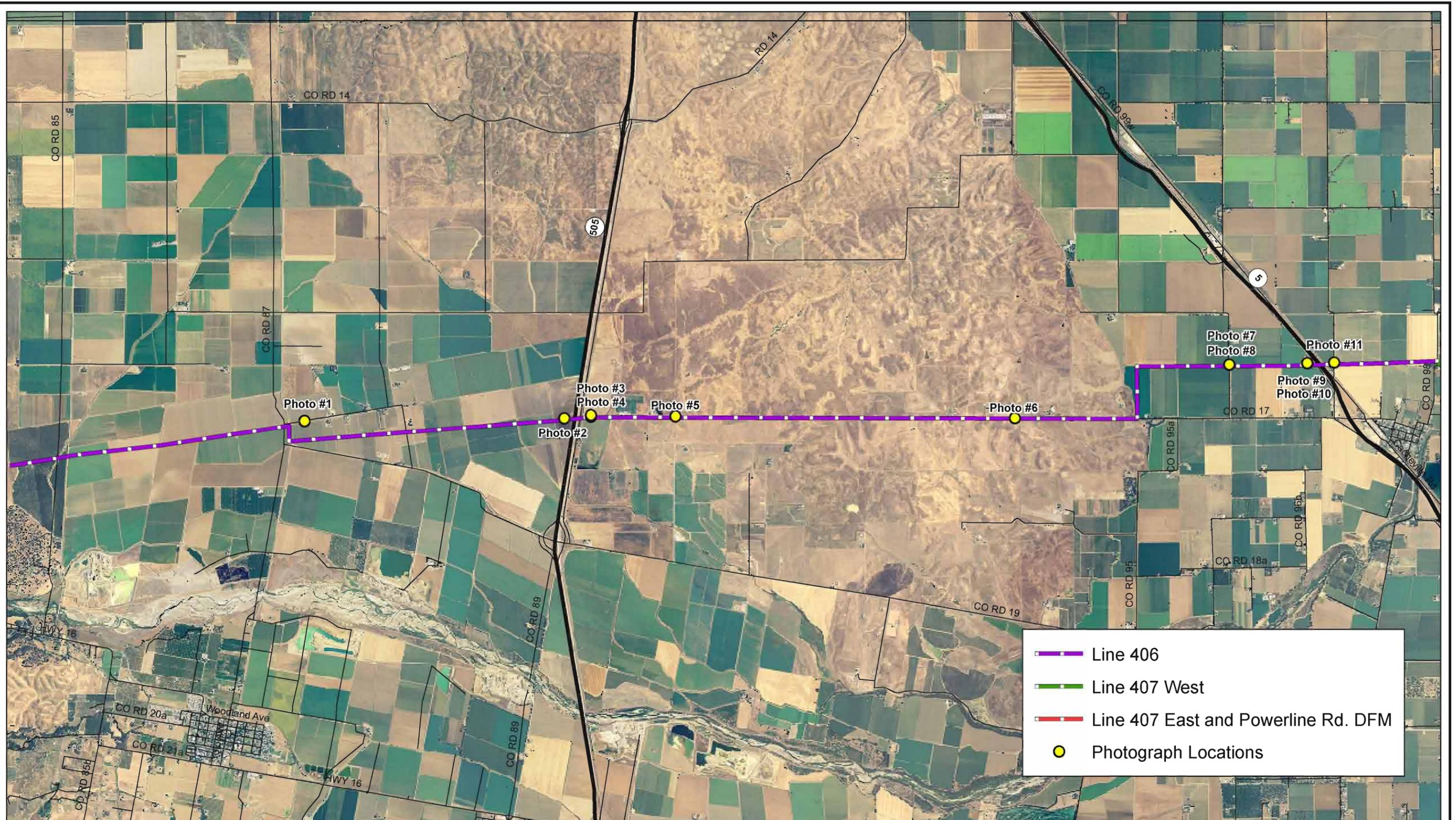
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**Attachment A: Photo Exhibit**



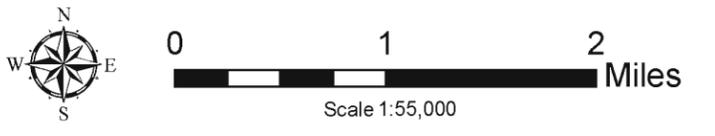


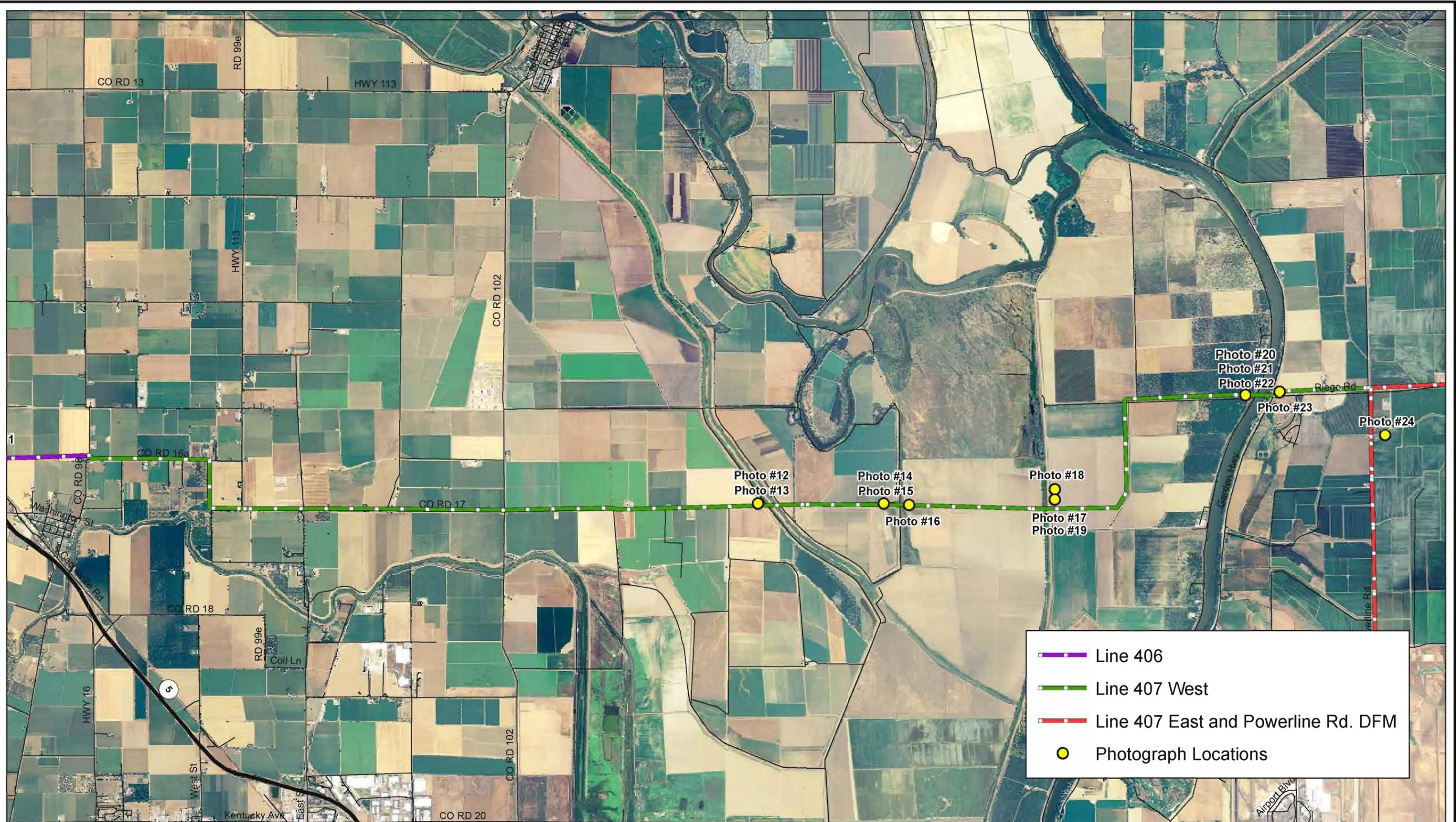
	Line 406
	Line 407 West
	Line 407 East and Powerline Rd. DFM
	Photograph Locations



**Line 406 and Line 407  
Pipeline Project**

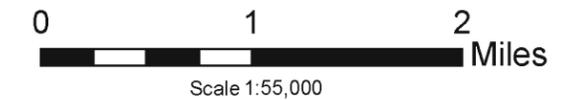
**Map # 1 of 3  
Photo Location Map**

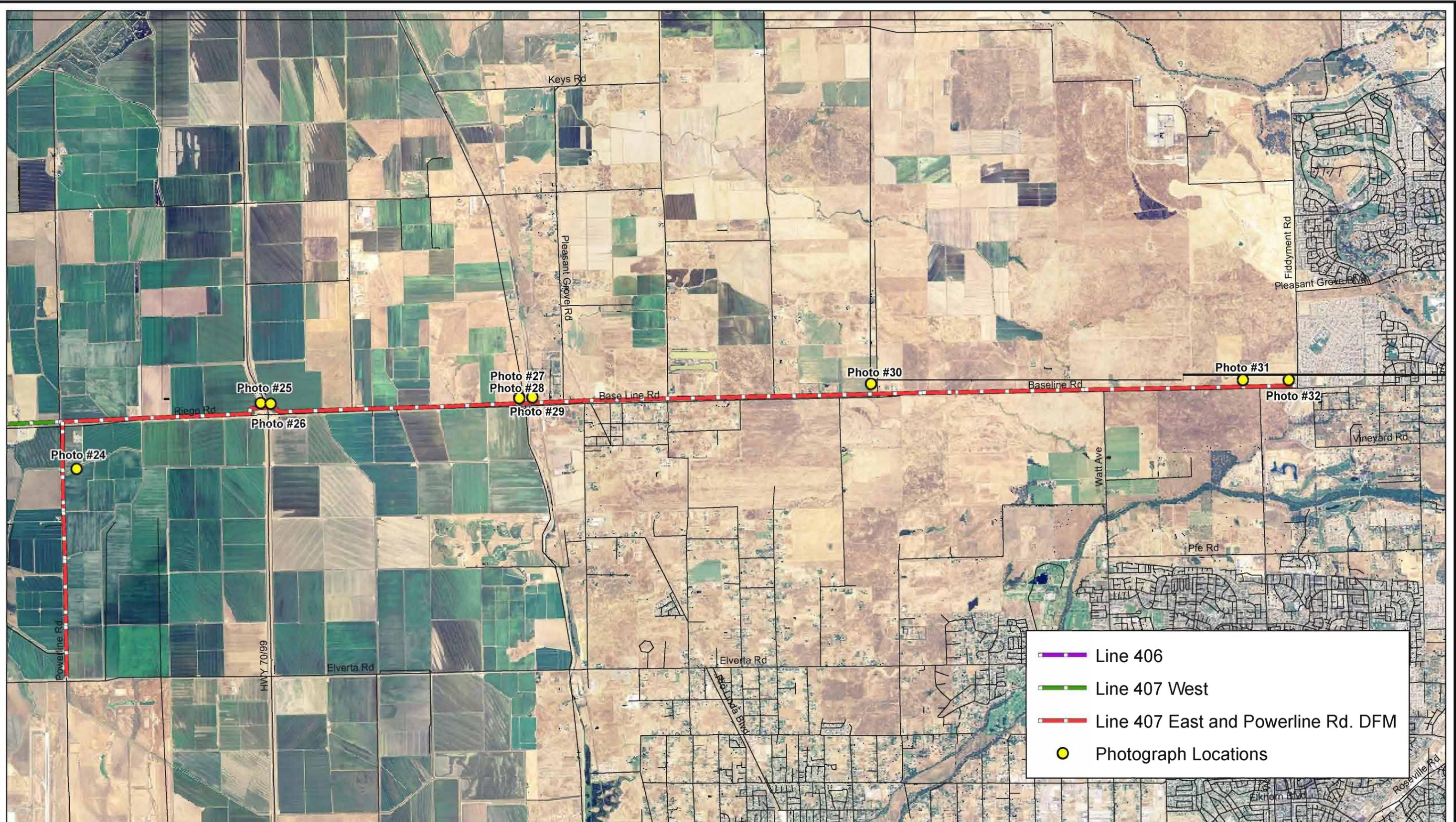




**Line 406 and Line 407  
Pipeline Project**

**Map # 2 of 3  
Photo Location Map**





**Line 406 and Line 407  
Pipeline Project**

**Map # 3 of 3  
Photo Location Map**

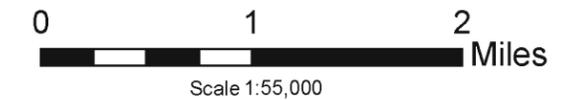




Photo 1: View west toward Lines 400 and 401 and future Capay Station along Line 406 alignment at junction of County Road (CR) 17 and CR 85



Photo 2: View east across Hwy. 505 toward CR 17 and Goodnow Slough



Photo 3: View west across Hwy. 505 along alignment from CR 90A



Photo 4: View east along CR 17 from CR 90A; Goodnow Slough in foreground; HDD workspace in field behind fence



Photo 5: View east along CR 17 into the Dunnigan Hills; proposed alignment on right side of road



Photo 6: View west along CR 17 in Dunnigan Hills; proposed alignment on left side of road



Photo 7: View west along alignment toward Dunnigan Hills from CR 96



Photo 8: Oak trees along Acacia Canal; view east along alignment toward Hwy. 5 from CR 96



Photo 9: View west toward Dunnigan Hills along Line 406 alignment; HDD location in field, west side of Hwy. 5



Photo 10: View east across Hwy. 5 toward Yolo Junction Station



Photo 11: View east from CR 97 toward future Yolo Junction Station (near white stand pipe and hay stacks), Line 172A, and future Line 407 West



Photo 12: View west from Knights Landing Ridge Cut western levee along Line 407 West alignment and CR 17; HDD location in field to left of road



Photo 13: View east across Knights Landing Ridge Cut



Photo 14: View west toward Knights Landing Ridge Cut from western levee of Yolo Bypass; HDD location in field



Photo 15: Western Yolo Bypass canal, view east from top of western Yolo Bypass levee



Photo 16: View east toward Tule Canal; dry season row crop farming in the Yolo Bypass



Photo 17: Tule Canal in summer; view west from top of eastern Yolo Bypass levee



Photo 18: Yolo Bypass flooded in winter, view west from top of eastern Yolo Bypass levee; Tule Canal in foreground between levee and riparian area



Photo 19: Fallow agricultural fields; view east toward Sacramento River from top of east Yolo Bypass levee



Photo 20: View west along Line 407 West alignment in walnut orchard near west side of Sacramento River crossing HDD site



Photo 21: Sacramento River HDD location from top of western Sacramento River levee; view west



Photo 22: View east along Line 407 West alignment from top of west Sacramento River levee near corner of CR 16 and CR 117



Photo 23: View east along Line 407 West alignment from east levee of Sacramento River toward Riego Rd. Station, future Line 407 East, and future Powerline Rd. DFM; HDD location in field right of Riego Rd.



Photo 24: North Drainage Canal adjacent to Powerline Rd. and flooded rice fields in background; view east



Photo 25: View west from Hwy. 70/99 HDD location toward Sacramento River; rice fields and GGS habitat



Photo 26: View east from Hwy. 70/99 HDD location along north side of Riego Rd.



Photo 27: View west along Line 407 East alignment and Riego Road toward Highway 70/99 from East Levee Rd.; HDD location in foreground



Photo 28: Freshwater emergent wetland in Natomas East Main Drainage Canal (Steelhead Creek) in summer; view north



Photo 29: View west near HDD location on east side of East Levee Rd., Steelhead Creek, railroad, and vernal pool crossing



Photo 30: Line 407 East alignment; view east toward Curry Creek and Roseville along north side of Baseline Rd.



Photo 31: Grasslands and vernal pool complex at Curry Creek; view north from Baseline Rd.



Photo 32: View west from junction of Baseline Rd. and Fiddyment Rd. at existing Line 123 tie-in point

**Attachment B: PG&E Best Management Practices Manual**

**This document is available from PG&E upon request**

**Attachment C: USFWS and CNDDDB Records**



# Federal Endangered and Threatened Species that Occur in or may be Affected by Projects in the Counties and/or U.S.G.S. 7 1/2 Minute Quads you requested

Document Number: 080324025508

Database Last Updated: January 31, 2008

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## Quad Lists

### Listed Species

#### Invertebrates

- Branchinecta lynchi*  
vernal pool fairy shrimp (T)
- Desmocerus californicus dimorphus*  
valley elderberry longhorn beetle (T)
- Lepidurus packardii*  
vernal pool tadpole shrimp (E)
- Syncaris pacifica*  
California freshwater shrimp (E)

#### Fish

- Acipenser medirostris*  
green sturgeon (T) (NMFS)
- Hypomesus transpacificus*  
delta smelt (T)
- Oncorhynchus mykiss*  
Central Valley steelhead (T) (NMFS)  
Critical habitat, Central Valley steelhead (X) (NMFS)
- Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*  
Central Valley spring-run chinook salmon (T) (NMFS)  
Critical Habitat, Central Valley spring-run chinook (X) (NMFS)  
Critical habitat, winter-run chinook salmon (X) (NMFS)  
winter-run chinook salmon, Sacramento River (E) (NMFS)

#### Amphibians

- Ambystoma californiense*  
California tiger salamander, central population (T)  
Critical habitat, CA tiger salamander, central population (X)
- Rana aurora draytonii*  
California red-legged frog (T)

#### Reptiles

- Thamnophis gigas*  
giant garter snake (T)

#### Birds

- Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*  
western snowy plover (T)
- Strix occidentalis caurina*  
northern spotted owl (T)

#### Plants

- Cordylanthus palmatus*  
palmate-bracted bird's-beak (E)

### Candidate Species

#### Birds

*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*  
Western yellow-billed cuckoo (C)

### Quads Containing Listed, Proposed or Candidate Species:

CITRUS HEIGHTS (512A)  
RIO LINDA (512B)  
TAYLOR MONUMENT (513A)  
GRAYS BEND (513B)  
WOODLAND (514A)  
MADISON (514B)  
ESPARTO (515A)  
PLEASANT GROVE (528C)  
ROSEVILLE (528D)  
KNIGHTS LANDING (529C)  
VERONA (529D)  
ZAMORA (530C)  
ELDORADO BEND (530D)  
BIRD VALLEY (531D)

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## County Lists

No county species lists requested.

### Key:

- (E) *Endangered* - Listed as being in danger of extinction.
- (T) *Threatened* - Listed as likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future.
- (P) *Proposed* - Officially proposed in the Federal Register for listing as endangered or threatened.
- (NMFS) Species under the Jurisdiction of the [National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Service](#). Consult with them directly about these species.
- Critical Habitat* - Area essential to the conservation of a species.
- (PX) *Proposed Critical Habitat* - The species is already listed. Critical habitat is being proposed for it.
- (C) *Candidate* - Candidate to become a proposed species.
- (V) Vacated by a court order. Not currently in effect. Being reviewed by the Service.
- (X) *Critical Habitat* designated for this species

## Important Information About Your Species List

### How We Make Species Lists

We store information about endangered and threatened species lists by U.S. Geological Survey 7½ minute quads. The United States is divided into these quads, which are about the size of San Francisco.

The animals on your species list are ones that occur within, **or may be affected by** projects within, the quads covered by the list.

- Fish and other aquatic species appear on your list if they are in the same watershed as your quad or if water use in your quad might affect them.
- Amphibians will be on the list for a quad or county if pesticides applied in that area may be carried to their habitat by air currents.
- Birds are shown regardless of whether they are resident or migratory. Relevant birds on the county list should be considered regardless of whether they appear on a quad list.

### Plants

Any plants on your list are ones that have actually been observed in the area covered by the list. Plants may exist in an area without ever having been detected there. You can find out what's in the surrounding quads through the California Native Plant Society's online [Inventory of Rare and](#)

California Department of Fish and Game  
 Natural Diversity Database  
 Selected Elements by Scientific Name - Portrait

Scientific Name/Common Name	Element Code	Federal Status	State Status	GRank	SRank	CDFG or CNPS
1 <i>Ambystoma californiense</i> California tiger salamander	AAAAA01180	Threatened		G2G3	S2S3	SC
2 <i>Branchinecta lynchi</i> vernal pool fairy shrimp	ICBRA03030	Threatened		G3	S2S3	
3 <i>Buteo swainsoni</i> Swainson's hawk	ABNKC19070		Threatened	G5	S2	
4 <i>Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus</i> western snowy plover	ABNNB03031	Threatened		G4T3	S2	SC
5 <i>Cordylanthus palmatus</i> palmate-bracted bird's-beak	PDSCR0J0J0	Endangered	Endangered	G1	S1.1	1B.1
6 <i>Desmocerus californicus dimorphus</i> valley elderberry longhorn beetle	IICOL48011	Threatened		G3T2	S2	
7 <i>Gratiola heterosepala</i> Boggs Lake hedge-hyssop	PDSCR0R060		Endangered	G3	S3.1	1B.2
8 <i>Lepidurus packardii</i> vernal pool tadpole shrimp	ICBRA10010	Endangered		G3	S2S3	
9 <i>Riparia riparia</i> bank swallow	ABPAU08010		Threatened	G5	S2S3	
10 <i>Thamnophis gigas</i> giant garter snake	ARADB36150	Threatened	Threatened	G2G3	S2S3	

**Attachment D: USFWS Comment Letter**





## United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office  
2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2605  
Sacramento, California 95825-1846

In reply refer to:  
1-1-07-TA-1220

OCT 29 2007

Christoffer Ellis  
Pacific Gas and Electric Company  
Technical and Land Services  
2730 Gateway Oaks Drive  
Sacramento, CA95833

Subject: Pacific Gas and Electric Line 406 and 407 Project in Yolo, Sutter,  
Sacramento, and Placer Counties, California

Dear Mr. Ellis:

This responds to the *Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report and Notice of Public Scoping Meeting* (NOP) for the proposed Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) Line 406 and 407 project (proposed project). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) received this NOP on June 21, 2007. Due to staffing constraints, the Service was not able to respond within the mandated comment period. The Service provides the following comments to aid PG&E and the California State Lands Commission, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) lead agency, to prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) that comprehensively addresses potential impacts to federally-listed species. The primary concern and mandate of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is the protection of federally-listed species pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) (Act).

PG&E proposes to construct a new 30-inch diameter, 40-mile long natural gas pipeline to transmit and distribute natural gas to growing communities in Placer, Sutter, and Sacramento counties. Line 406 would begin on the existing Line 400 and 401 in Yolo County at the base of the Coast Range and extend to the existing Line 172A near the town of Yolo. Line 407 would extend from Line 172A east to the existing Line 123 near the city of Roseville in Placer County. A proposed distribution feeder main would extend south from Line 407 along Riego Road in Sutter County along Power Line Road and terminate at Elverta Road in Sacramento County.

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Of primary concern to the Service are the potential for the proposed project to affect the following species:

- endangered vernal pool tadpole shrimp (*Lepidurus packardii*),
- endangered Conservancy fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta conservatio*),
- endangered Sacramento orcutt grass (*Orcuttia viscida*),
- endangered palmate-bracted bird's-beak (*Cordylanthus palmatus*),
- threatened slender orcutt grass (*Orcuttia tenuis*),
- threatened vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*),
- threatened giant garter snake (*Thamnophis gigas*),
- threatened California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*),
- threatened California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*),
- threatened Colusa grass (*Neostapfia colusana*),
- threatened valley elderberry longhorn beetle (*Desmocerus californicus dimorphus*),
- threatened delta green ground beetle (*Elaphrus viridis*),

### **Direct Effects**

The Service believes that the proposed project may directly affect the aforementioned species. Temporary and permanent ground disturbance from the clearing of pipeline right-of-way (ROW), trenching to install the pipeline, and construction of permanent and temporary access roads are all activities of concern. Excavation activities may result in increased erosion, leading to siltation of wetlands and other receiving water features, including drainage and irrigation canals (habitat for giant garter snake), and vernal pool features (habitat for vernal pool fairy shrimp, vernal pool tadpole shrimp, and vernal pool plants).

Giant garter snakes may be killed or injured by trenching activities to install pipeline. Giant garter snakes typically utilize aquatic habitats during their "active period" (May 1 – October 1) and are better able to escape danger associated with ground disturbance from heavy equipment. In the inactive period (October 2 – April 30), giant garter snakes typically retreat into terrestrial uplands to overwinter in mammal burrows and crevices, and are less mobile. The Service is concerned that activities associated with installing pipeline may result in adverse effects to giant garter snakes through direct mortality, harm, or harassment. The Service recommends that the DEIR address how these effects will be avoided, minimized, and, if necessary, off-set through compensatory mitigation by PG&E.

Vernal pool species are threatened primarily by loss and fragmentation of existing habitat. Vernal pool complexes, which are mosaics of wetted pools which are hydrologically connected and include the associated upland habitat and local watersheds essential for the function of the pools, must be preserved on a landscape level to ensure the persistence of the species that inhabit them. Although dispersal of vernal pool crustaceans between complexes is and probably always

has been relatively low, fragmentation of existing intact complexes could contribute to the loss of genetic diversity of vernal pool species, and reduce the likelihood of recolonization from other populations. Fragmentation by conversion or degradation of habitat may essentially serve as a barrier to dispersal. It is essential that large, contiguous areas of uninterrupted vernal pool habitat, including both wetted and upland components, be preserved across the range of each of the listed species to “buffer” against unforeseen stochastic events.

Construction of access roads or pipeline ROWs may serve to fragment existing vernal pool complexes by introducing impermeable or hardpacked surface which may disrupt the hydrology and mechanisms by which vernal pool species disperse. Vernal swales, which are sometimes present in vernal pool complexes and serve to “connect” pools, could be truncated by access roads or ROWs.

Ground disturbance associated with pipeline installation may result in colonization by non-native plants, animals, and insects. Non-native species may outcompete with crustaceans and plants in vernal pools, prey directly on native vernal pool species, and outcompete or prey on species which pollinate vernal pool plants. In addition, depending on the local soil and geological conditions, the hardpan may be as little as a few inches below the surface, in which case subsurface excavation could “break” the hardpan. Maintaining the hardpan is necessary to ensure surface and subsurface water contributions to the vernal pool features remain intact; otherwise, the inundation period of features, which is critical for the vernal pool crustaceans to complete their life cycle, may be irreparably disrupted. The Service encourages PG&E to strive to route the pipeline to areas outside of and as far away as possible from existing vernal pool complexes to prevent this from occurring.

Elderberry (*Sambucus* sp.) shrubs are the sole host plant and food source for the valley elderberry longhorn beetle (beetle). If proposed activities include removing or transplanting elderberry shrubs, or any ground disturbing activities within 100 feet of elderberry shrubs, PG&E should use the Service’s July 9, 1999, *Conservation Guidelines for the Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle*, which can be found at the website [http://www.fws.gov/sacramento/es/documents/velb\\_conservation.PDF](http://www.fws.gov/sacramento/es/documents/velb_conservation.PDF).

### **Indirect and Cumulative Effects**

CEQA guidelines require a discussion of the ways in which a project could potentially foster economic or population growth or the construction of additional housing in the surrounding environment. The DEIR should address the potential for the proposed project to contribute to economic or population growth or the construction of additional housing in the surrounding environment. The Service recommends that the DEIR provide the above discussion by

examining the relationship between energy supply and land use planning for this project, and demonstrate how growth inducing impacts to federally-listed species will be avoided or reduced to a level below significance.

The Service recommends the DEIR include an analysis of how the proposed project may affect implementation of existing and pending habitat conservation plans.

### **Potential Impacts on the Natomas Basin Habitat Conservation Plan**

The DEIR should assess impacts of the proposed project on the Natomas Basin Habitat Conservation Plan's (NBHCP) operating conservation program. In particular, the DEIR should include a comprehensive and meaningful analysis of the proposed projects' effects on giant garter snake, the state-listed as threatened Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), and other Covered Species.

While the Service acknowledges that the proposed project is not urban development, the proposed project may result in significant effects to listed species in the Natomas Basin as a result of permanent and temporary habitat modification and disturbance, and is likely to adversely affect the implementation of the NBHCP (City of Sacramento *et al.* 2003). The proposed installation of natural gas pipeline could result in a loss habitat beyond that anticipated, analyzed and covered for take under Incidental Take Permits (ITPs) issued to the City of Sacramento (City), Sutter County, and the Natomas Basin Conservancy (Conservancy) for the NBHCP and could constitute a significant departure from the NBHCP's Operating Conservation Program. The NBHCP's ITPs cover the take of 22 plant and animal species, many of which are listed as endangered or threatened under the California Endangered Species Act and/or the Federal Endangered Species Act.

The ITPs issued to the Conservancy authorized the take of covered species associated with the restoration, enhancement, operation, and management of 7,758.5 acres of upland, managed marsh and rice preserves set aside as mitigation for the City's and Sutter County's development activities under the NBHCP. It appears that the route of the proposed Line 407 traverses through or directly adjacent to Conservancy preserves along Riego and Power Line roads. Activities associated with installation of a natural gas pipeline and establishment of a permanent utility easements in these preserves may negatively impact these preserves by: (1) resulting in additional direct, indirect and cumulative impacts to the NBHCP's 22 covered species; (2) negatively impacting restoration activities that have occurred or are planned in these preserves; (3) decrease biological connectivity between and within the Natomas Basin's three major geographic areas; (4) decrease the available acreage and locations of potential Conservancy acquisitions; and (5) adversely affect implementation of the NBHCP and its operating conservation strategy. The DEIR should address the impacts of the proposed project on the NBHCP's Operating Conservation Program.

Finally, the DEIR's should consider the potential indirect and cumulative impacts on the NBHCP's Covered Species. The following is a list of possible future projects that may represent reasonably foreseeable cumulative development in the basin. If they are deemed cumulative, the effects of the proposed project may be considerably greater in light of these potential land use changes, and result in increased conservation needs for the Covered Species in the basin.

Possible future projects in the Natomas Basin:

- Natomas Fish Screen Replacement Project
- Bureau of Reclamation's Sacramento River Water Reliability Study Project
- Sacramento Metropolitan Airport Expansion Project
- Sacramento Metropolitan Airport Master Plan
- Natomas Joint Vision Project
- Downtown to Natomas Rail Light Rail Transportation Project
- Sacramento Municipal Utility Substation Expansion Projects (numerous)
- Placer Parkway
- Western Area Power Agency's Sacramento Area Voltage Support Project
- Camino Norte (residential)
- Greenbriar (residential)

In highlighting what we view may be probable and reasonably foreseeable future development in the Natomas Basin, the Services recognizes that additional development in the basin beyond that authorized under the existing federal and State permits is proposed and all concerned parties should reasonably expect that to occur. Even though specific details regarding individual projects may not be available, the effects analysis needs to provide a more thorough assessment of reasonably foreseeable additional development in the basin and the cumulative impact of the proposed project in light of other reasonably foreseeable development on the long-term viability of the operating conservation program.

#### **Potential Impacts on the proposed Placer County Conservation Plan**

The proposed Placer County Conservation Plan (PCCP) is currently being developed. It is designed to address the increasing demand for urban development in western Placer County, while establishing a conservation strategy designed to avoid, minimize, and compensate for the loss or modification of wetlands, waters, and species habitat. Although the PCCP is not yet approved, the Service encourages PG&E to coordinate with Placer County, the City of Lincoln, and the other PCCP proponents to design their project which would avoid selecting an alternative which would preclude the success of a future PCCP.

Mr. Christoffer Ellis

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Please contact Jana Milliken, Senior Staff Biologist, at (916) 414-6561 if you have any questions concerning these comments for the Pacific Gas and Electric Line 406 and 407 Project.

Sincerely,



Kenneth Sanchez  
Assistant Field Supervisor

cc:

Mr. Todd Gardner and Mr. Jeff Finn, California Department of Fish and Game, Rancho Cordova, California  
Ms. Crystal Spurr, California State Lands Commission, Sacramento, California  
Mr. John Roberts, The Natomas Basin Conservancy, Sacramento, California  
Mr. Scot Mende, City of Sacramento Planning Department, Sacramento, California  
Mr. Larry Bagley, County of Sutter, Yuba City, California

## **Attachment E: Field Survey Reports**