Topock Project Executive Abstract

Document Title:

Biological Resources Completion Report for Utility Potholing, Topock Compressor Station
Needles, California

Submitting Agency/Authored by: BLM, USFWS

Final Document? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Date of Document: January 14, 2014

Who Created this Document?: (i.e. PG&E, DTSC, DOI, Other)

PG&E

Priority Status: ☐ HIGH ☐ MED ☒ LOW
Is this time critical? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Type of Document:
☐ Draft ☒ Report ☐ Letter ☐ Memo
☐ Other / Explain:

Action Required:
☒ Information Only ☐ Review & Comment
Return to:_____
By Date: _____

☐ Other / Explain:

What does this information pertain to?
☐ Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Facility Assessment (RFA)/Preliminary Assessment (PA)
☐ RCRA Facility Investigation (RFI)/Remedial Investigation (RI) (including Risk Assessment)
☐ Corrective Measures Study (CMS)/Feasibility Study (FS)
☐ Corrective Measures Implementation (CMI)/Remedial Action
☐ California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)/Environmental Impact Report (EIR)
☐ Interim Measures
☒ Other / Explain: Programmatic Biological Assessment (PBA) General Project Management Measure 23

Is this a Regulatory Requirement?
☒ Yes
☐ No
If no, why is the document needed?

What is the consequence of NOT doing this item? What is the consequence of DOING this item?

This report is required by the approved PBA. Not performing the survey and preparing this report constitute non-compliance with the PBA.

Other Justification/s:
☐ Permit ☐ Other / Explain:

Brief Summary of attached document:

The Biological Resources Completion Report for Utility Potholing was prepared to determine if there were any adverse effects on species protected under the federal Endangered Species Act resulting from investigative activities during the Utility Potholing that was conducted in support of Groundwater Remedy Design at the Topock Compressor Station. The General Project Management Measures described in the PBA, and followed throughout the Utility Potholing, were effective in minimizing impacts to the work area and surrounding lands. The project was conducted under a "may affect, but not likely to adversely affect" determination in the 2007 PBA for the southwestern willow flycatcher, Mojave desert tortoise, Yuma clapper rail, razorback sucker, and bonytail chub and under a "no effect" determination for the Colorado pikeminnow. In compliance with these determinations, there was no take of these species.

Written by: PG&E

Recommendations:

This report is for information only.

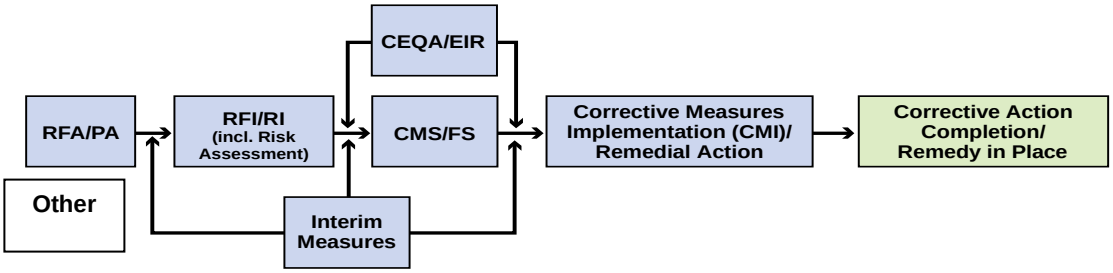
How is this information related to the Final Remedy or Regulatory Requirements:

This report is a requirement of the PBA upon the completion of construction activities.

Other requirements of this information?
None

Related Reports and Documents:

Click any boxes in the Regulatory Road Map (below) to be linked to the Documents Library on the DTSC Topock Web Site (www.dtsc-topock.com). **The link to the Documents Library is currently UNDER CONSTRUCTION.**



Legend
RFA/PA – RCRA Facility Assessment/Preliminary Assessment
RFI/RI – RCRA Facility Investigation/CERCLA Remedial Investigation (including Risk Assessment)
CMS/FS – RCRA Corrective Measure Study/CERCLA Feasibility Study
CEQA/EIR – California Environmental Quality Act/Environmental Impact Report

Version 9

Pacific Gas and Electric Company

Yvonne Meeks
Manager

Environmental Remediation
Gas T&D Department

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Email: yjm1@pge.com

January 14, 2014

Ms. Cathy Wolfe-White
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
2610 Sweetwater Avenue
Lake Havasu City, Arizona 86406

Ms. Carrie Marr
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Project Manager
2321 W Royal Palm Road, Suite 103
Phoenix, AZ 85021

Subject: Biological Resources Completion Report for Utility Potholing, PG&E Topock Compressor Station, Needles, California

Dear Ms. Wolfe-White & Ms. Marr:

This letter transmits the *Biological Resources Completion Report for Utility Potholing* at the Topock Compressor Station. The document is submitted in conformance with the January 2007 *Programmatic Biological Assessment for the Pacific Gas and Electric Topock Compressor Station Remedial and Investigative Actions* (PBA). This report has been prepared in compliance with the General Project Management Measure 23 of the PBA. This condition requires that a brief report shall be prepared and submitted to the Bureau of Land Management and the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge.

PG&E appreciates your consideration of the attached report. Please contact me at (805) 234-2257 with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Yvonne Meeks

Yvonne Meeks
Topock Project Manager

cc: Pam Innis/DOI
Linda Miller/HNWR
Aaron Yue/DTSC
Virginia Strohl/PGE

Biological Resources Completion Report for Utility Potholing - Topock Compressor Station Groudwater Remedial and Investigative Project:

Prepared for
United States Bureau of Land Management
United States. Fish and Wildlife Services

On behalf of
Pacific Gas and Electric Company

Potholing for the Topock Remediation project

January 2014
WSA Technical Report No. 2013-61

William Self Associates, Inc.
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www.williamself.com

WSA

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act
Cr(VI)	hexavalent chromium
DOI	United States Department of the Interior
ESA	Endangered Species Act
GPMM	General Project Management Measures
PBA	*Programmatic Biological Assessment for the Pacific Gas and Electric Topock Compressor Station Remedial and Investigative Actions*
PG&E	Pacific Gas and Electric Company
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
RFI/RI	RCRA facility investigation/CERCLA remedial investigation
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service

1.0 Introduction

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) is addressing chromium in groundwater at the Topock Compressor Station (Station) located in eastern San Bernardino County, California, approximately 15 miles southeast of Needles, California. Figure 1 provides a site location map for the Station. As part of addressing the chromium groundwater contamination, PG&E has been conducting investigative and remedial activities at the Station and in the surrounding area.

Investigative and remedial activities are being performed under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) corrective action process under an agreement between PG&E and the California Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Toxic Substances Control, as well as under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) under an agreement between PG&E and the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI). Under the terms of these agreements, PG&E is conducting the RCRA facility investigation/remedial investigation (RFI/RI) to identify and evaluate the nature and extent of hazardous waste and constituent releases at the compressor station.

As part of the various investigative and remedial activities, PG&E will be installing underground pipelines. Pipeline installation is included in the Planned Activities of the Programmatic Biological Assessment (PBA) (CH2M HILL, 2007). In preparation for this activity, PG&E performed potholing activities to accurately locate existing utilities onsite. Potholing activities followed all applicable General Project Management Measures (GPMM) in the PBA (Appendix A), the 2007 United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) letter of concurrence (USFWS, 2007), and applicable minimization measures in the adopted Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan for the Topock Compressor Station Groundwater Remediation Project, dated January 2011 (DTSC, 2011).

To comply with these requirements, this report contains:

- Documentation of awareness training and compliance monitoring (Section 2).
- Project location and existing disturbed areas (Section 3).
- Pre- and post-activity surveys, including the observed listed species (Section 4)
- Conclusions, including a discussion of the effectiveness of the mitigation measures and recommendations for modifying the measures to enhance species protection (Section 5).

1.1 Regional Environmental Setting

The Topock Compressor Station is located in a sparsely populated, rural area. Much of the nearby surrounding land is publicly owned by the federal government and has important spiritual meaning to local Indian tribes. Public lands in the area are owned and/or managed by a number of federal and regional agencies, including the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), USFWS, Bureau of Reclamation, and San Bernardino County.

Dominant features of the area include the Colorado River to the east; the Chemehuevi Mountains to the south; the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad tracks and bridge; and Interstate 40, which

links Barstow, California, and Topock, Arizona. Topography is rugged, ranging from an elevation of approximately 450 feet (137 m) at the Colorado River to over 1,200 feet (365 m) within 1 mile (1.6 km) to the south and southwest.

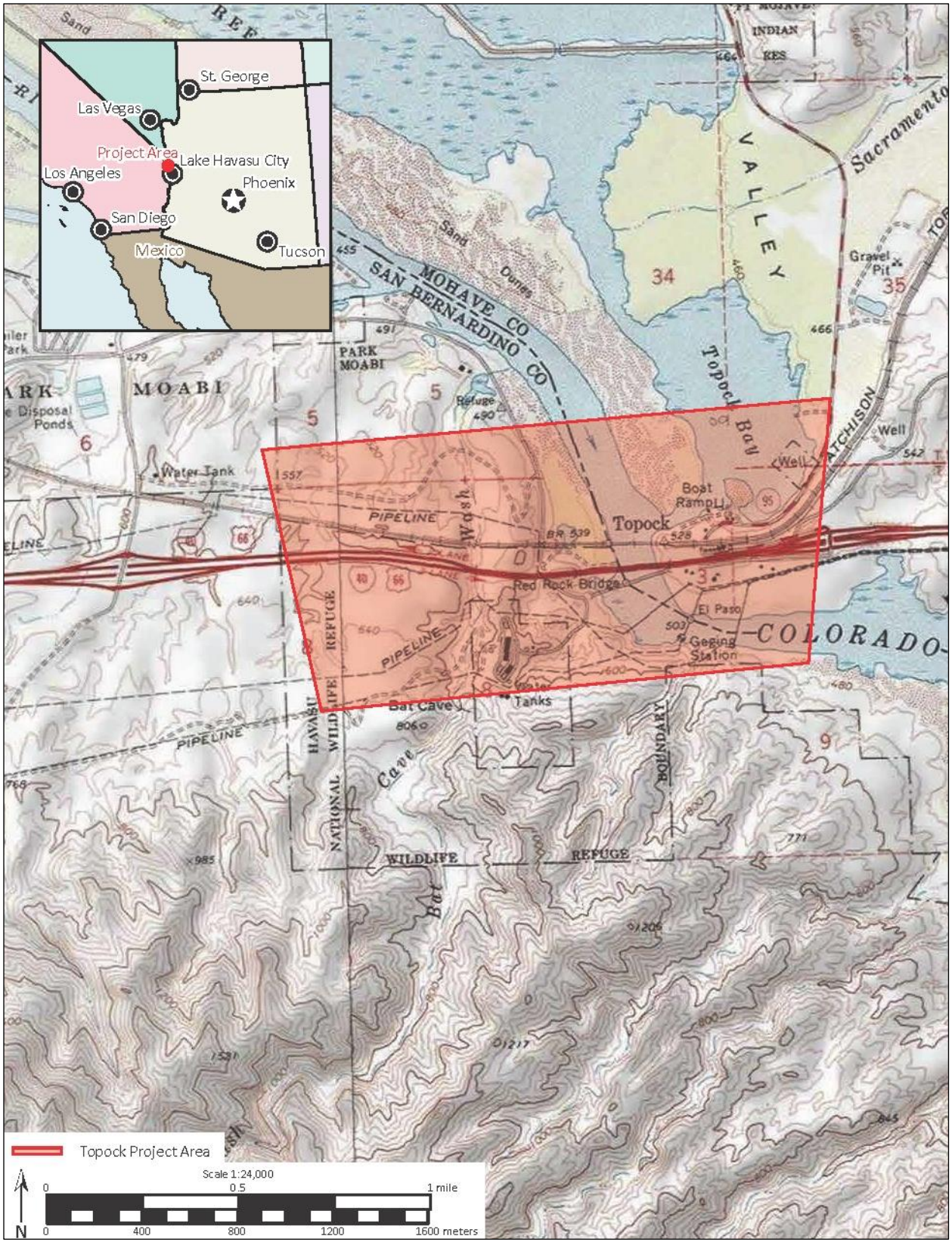


Figure 1. Site location map for the PG&E Topock Compressor Station.

The area is characterized by arid conditions and high temperatures. The surrounding land consists of a series of moderately sized terraces with steep slopes dissected by desert washes. The project area is considerably eroded and is best described as badlands. Terraces are composed of homogenous rocky soils with very sparse vegetation. Structurally diverse vegetation in the project area is primarily limited to the Colorado River floodplain and the ephemeral washes.

1.2 Report Objectives and Organization

This Biological Completion Report documents field activities associated with performing potholing activities at 39 sites from October 15 to October 24, 2013.

The PBA (CH2M HILL, 2007) was prepared to determine any potential effect on species protected under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) resulting from remedial and investigative activities at the Topock Compressor Station. The USFWS concurred with the determinations provided in the PBA, as documented in a letter dated February 8, 2007 (USFWS, 2007). The field activities addressed in this report are included in the PBA; therefore, this report, as part of the PBA, serves as supporting documentation under the ESA for the evaluation of project effects to federally listed species and resulting determinations.

This report has been prepared in compliance with the GPMM 23 of the PBA (CH2M HILL, 2007). This condition requires that within 60 days of completion of construction activities, a brief report shall be prepared for the BLM and the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge. This report shall document the effectiveness of the mitigation measures, make recommendations for modifying the measures to enhance species protection, and provide information on survey and monitoring activities, observed listed species, and the actual acreage disturbed by the project.

To comply with these requirements, this report contains:

- Documentation of awareness training and compliance monitoring
- Project location and existing disturbed areas
- Pre- and post-activity surveys, including the observed listed species
- Conclusions, including a discussion of the effectiveness of the mitigation measures and recommendations for modifying the measures to enhance species protection

2.0 Awareness Training and Compliance Monitoring

In accordance with General Project Management Measure (GPMM) 5 described in the PBA, awareness training was provided to personnel before the start of potholing activities. WSA biologist, Gabriel Valdes, and PG&E representative, Nathan Betts, provided training to onsite personnel during the initial kickoff meeting held at the PG&E Topock Compressor Station on October 14, 2013. Training included a description of each species potentially affected by the project; its habitat, natural history, threats, and legal protection under the ESA; potential penalties; current survey findings; management; and protection measures in the PBA.

During project activities, a designated Field Contact Representative (FCR), Gabriel Valdes or Nathan Betts, provided compliance monitoring. In accordance with GPMM 2, the FCR was responsible for overseeing compliance with the mitigation measures.

3.0 Project Location and Existing Disturbance

Proposed pothole sites were located throughout the project's Area of Potential Effect (APE), as defined in the PBA (CH2M HILL, 2007), on both the California and Arizona side of the Colorado River.

3.1 Pothole Sites

Pothole sites were located over existing utilities for the following utility companies: PG&E, Southwest Gas, Kinder Morgan, Transwestern Gas, Mojave Electric, Frontier Communications, and SoCal Gas. Each pothole was located in a previously disturbed area devoid of vegetation. Heavy equipment and vehicles were able to easily access the work areas without impacting surrounding vegetation.

Appendix A contains maps depicting all of the pothole sites listed in Table 1. Some of the pothole sites were not potholed during this effort (noted in the Comments column).

Table 1. Potholes for each utility company.

Utility Company	Pothole	Comments
PG&E	PGEG-HV-18	not potholed
PG&E	PGEG-HV-11	
PG&E	PGEG-HV-4	
PG&E	PGEG-HV-2	
PG&E	PGEG-HV-1	
PG&E	PGEG-HV-13	
PG&E	PGEG-HV-8	not potholed
PG&E	PGEG-HV-12	not potholed
PG&E	PGEG-HV-17	
PG&E	PGEG-HV-9	
PG&E	PGEG-HV-10	
PG&E	PGEG-HV-14	not potholed
PG&E	PGEG-HV-7	

Table 1. Potholes for each utility company.

Utility Company	Pothole	Comments
PG&E	PGEG-HV-6	
PG&E	PGEG-HV-5	
PG&E	PGEG-HV-19	not potholed
PG&E Remediation	PGER-HV-1	
PG&E Remediation	PGER-HV-2	not potholed
PG&E Remediation	PGER-HV-3	not potholed
PG&E Remediation	PGER-HV-6	not potholed
PG&E Remediation	PGER-HV-7	not potholed
PG&E Remediation	PGER-HV-8	not potholed
PG&E Remediation	PGER-HV-9	not potholed
PG&E Remediation	PGER-HV-4A	
PG&E Remediation	PGER-HV-5	not potholed
PG&E Remediation	PGER-HV-7A	not potholed
PG&E Remediation	PGER-HV-4B	
Frontier Communications	FRO-HV-4	not potholed
Frontier Communications	FRO-HV-5	not potholed
Frontier Communications	FRO-HV-7	
Frontier Communications	FRO-HV-1	not potholed
Frontier Communications	FRO-HV-2	
Frontier Communications	FRO-HV-3	not potholed
Frontier Communications	FRO-HV-8	
Frontier Communications	FRO-HV-6	
Frontier Communications	FRO-HV-10	
Kinder Morgan	KMG-HV-3	
Kinder Morgan	KMG-HV-1	
Kinder Morgan	KMG-HV-2	
Mojave Electric	PRVT-HV-6	
Mojave Electric	PRVT-HV-5	not potholed
Mojave Electric	PRVT-HV-7	
Mojave Electric	MEC-HV-4	
Mojave Electric	MEC-HV-3	not potholed
Mojave Electric	MEC-HV-2	
SoCal Gas	SCG-HV-8	not potholed
SoCal Gas	SCG-HV-9	not potholed

Table 1. Potholes for each utility company.

Utility Company	Pothole	Comments
SoCal Gas	SCG-HV-1	
SoCal Gas	SCG-HV-4	
SoCal Gas	SCG-HV-5	
SoCal Gas	SCG-HV-2	
SoCal Gas	SCG-HV-3	
SoCal Gas	SCG-HV-7	
SoCal Gas	SCG-HV-6	
Southwest Gas	SWG-HV-1	
Southwest Gas	SWG-HV-5	
Southwest Gas	SWG-HV-4	
Southwest Gas	SWG-HV-2	
Southwest Gas	SWG-HV-3	
Southwest Gas	SWG-HV-7	
Southwest Gas	SWG-HV-6	
Transwestern Gas	TWG-HV-6	not potholed
Transwestern Gas	TWG-HV-1	
Transwestern Gas	TWG-HV-3	
Transwestern Gas	TWG-HV-5	
Transwestern Gas	TWG-HV-4	
Transwestern Gas	TWG-HV-9	

Note: No potholing was done for those marked “not potholed.”

4.0 Pre- and Post-Activity Surveys

4.1 Pre-activity Surveys

Prior to the start of potholing activities, USFWS-qualified biologist, Gabriel Valdes/WSA, surveyed the pothole sites and surrounding areas for sensitive biological resources. No listed species or nesting birds were observed during the pre-activity survey. The sites in the California portion of the project area are within the range of the Mojave desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizzii*) and potentially suitable habitat is present in the project area. However, all sites were located within previously disturbed areas with little to no vegetation. The pothole sites in the Arizona portion of the project occurred in the range of the Sonoran desert tortoise (*Gopherus morafkai*) but all sites were located in unsuitable habitat that was heavily disturbed and devoid of vegetation. The three Mojave Electric sites located on private land were not surveyed due to lack of access. These sites are located in developed areas and do not support intact habitat. No tortoises or other sign was observed near any of the pothole sites. Table 2 contains the list of plants and wildlife sign observed in the general area surrounding the pothole sites.

Table 2. List of plants and wildlife sign observed near pothole sites during pre-construction surveys.

Common Name	Scientific Name
Plants	
Blue palo verde	*Parkinsonia florida*
Creosote bush	*Larrea tridentata*
Honey mesquite	*Prosopis glandulosa*
Tamarisk	*Tamarix sp.*
Mammals	
Wild burro	*Equus asinus*

4.2 Post-activity Surveys

Following pothole activities and demobilization, a post-activity survey was conducted by WSA biologist, Gabriel Valdes on November 7, 2013 to document field conditions at each of the pothole sites. No listed species were observed during the post-activity survey and no upland or floodplain habitat was disturbed. All existing vegetation was avoided and remained intact at each site. All activities were confined to areas with pre-existing disturbance. Representative photographs of potholing in progress, pre- and post-activity conditions are provided as Appendix B.

5.0 Conclusion

In conformance with the PBA GPMMs, personnel were provided with awareness training, and a qualified biologist conducted pre- and post-activity surveys in all areas subject to potholing activities. The designated FCR remained onsite during all potholing activities.

The GPMMs described in the PBA were effective in minimizing impacts to the work area and surrounding lands. The project was conducted under a "may affect, but not likely to adversely affect" determination for the Mojave desert tortoise. In compliance with these determinations (CH2M HILL, 2007; USFWS, 2007), there was no take of a desert tortoise or any other sensitive species during any of the potholing activities.

6.0 References

CH2M HILL

2007 *Programmatic Biological Assessment for Pacific Gas and Electric Topock Compressor Station Remedial and Investigative Actions*. CH2M HILL. Prepared for Pacific Gas and Electric, January 2007. Electronic document, http://www.dtsctopock.com/resources/Other_Documents/BiologicalReports/Final_PBA_woAppendices.pdf accessed June 2013.

California Department of Toxic Substances Control. *Final Environmental Impact Report for the Topock Compressor Station Groundwater Remediation Project: Volume II*. January 2011.

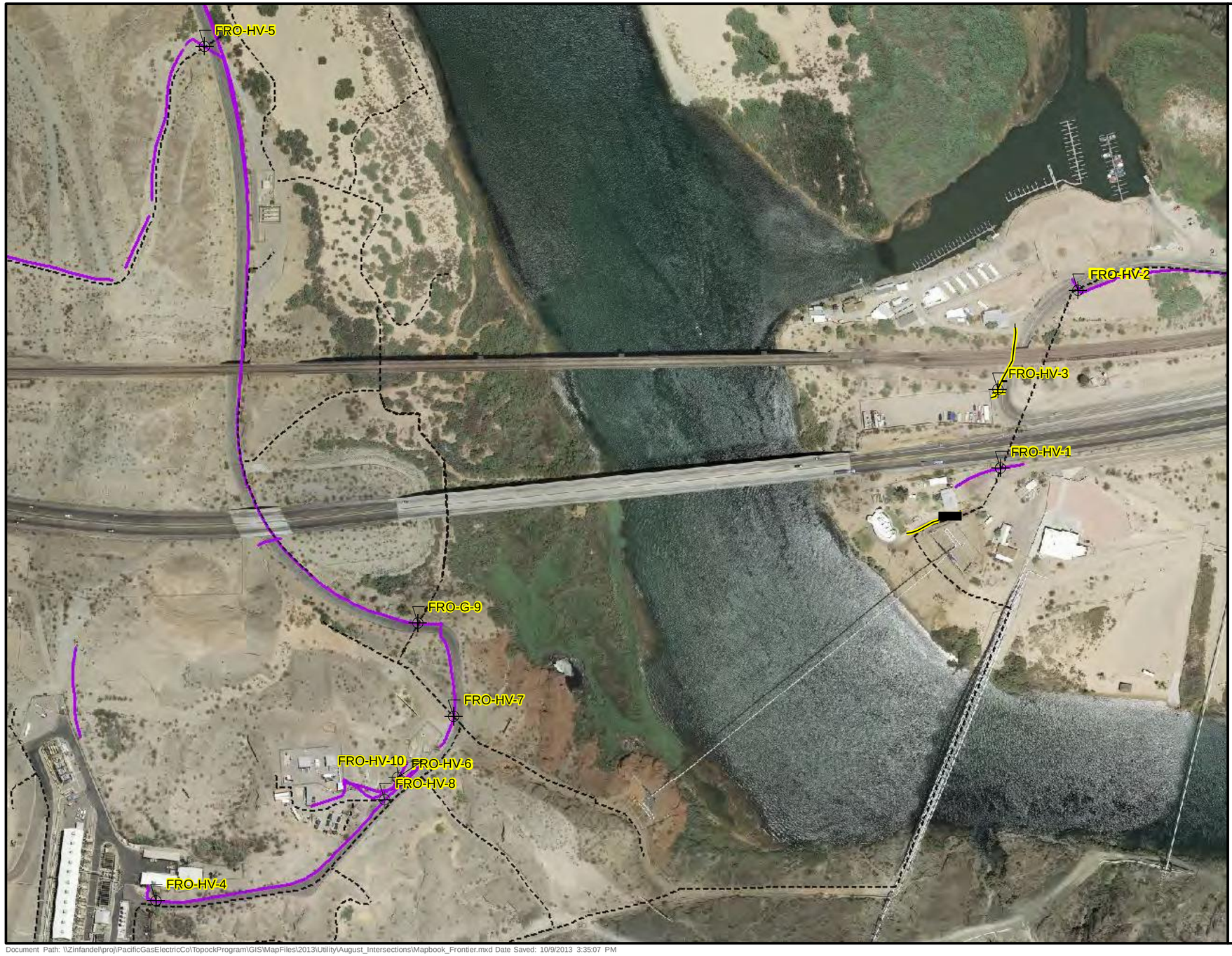
_____. *Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, Exhibit 2 to Attachment B, January 31, 2011 Memorandum to Karen Baker from Aaron Yue regarding Certification of the PG&E Topock Compressor Station Groundwater Remediation Final Environmental Impact Report*. January 2011.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

2007 Letter to Field Manager, Lake Havasu Field Office, Bureau of Land Management. "Programmatic Biological Assessment for Pacific Gas and Electric Topock Compressor Station Remedial Investigative Actions, January 2007." Dated February 8, 2007. On file, Bureau of Land Management, Havasu Field Office, Lake Havasu, Arizona.

APPENDIX A.

MAPS DEPICTING THE LOCATION OF PROJECT POTHOLE SITES



LEGEND

- Pothole Summary
- UNK Utility

Remedy Pipeline Route

- Aboveground
- Underground

Utility Infrastructure

- Underground Telephone Line

N

0 100 200 400 Feet

FRONTIER COMMUNICATIONS

POTENTIAL REMEDY PIPELINE/UTILITY INTERSECTIONS

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LEGEND

Pothole Summary

Utility Infrastructure

Aboveground Gas Line

Underground Gas Line

Remedy Pipeline Route

Above Ground Route

Underground Route

N

0 50 100 200 Feet

KINDER MORGAN

POTENTIAL REMEDY PIPELINE/UTILITY INTERSECTIONS

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LEGEND

- Pothole Summary
- UNK Utility

Utility Infrastructure

- Overhead Electric Line
- Underground Electric Line

Remedy Pipeline Route

- Above Ground Route
- Underground Route

N

0 40 80 160 Feet

MOJAVE ELECTRIC

POTENTIAL REMEDY PIPELINE/UTILITY INTERSECTIONS

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LEGEND

Pothole Summary

Utility Infrastructure

- Above Ground Gas Pipe
- Underground Gas Pipe
- Misc Line
- Above Ground Storm Drain
- Underground Storm Drain
- Above Ground Water Line
- Underground Water Line
- Electric Line, Aboveground
- Electric Line, Underground

Remedy Pipeline Route

- Aboveground
- Underground

N

0 25 50 100 Feet

PG&E - Gas

POTENTIAL REMEDY PIPELINE/UTILITY INTERSECTIONS

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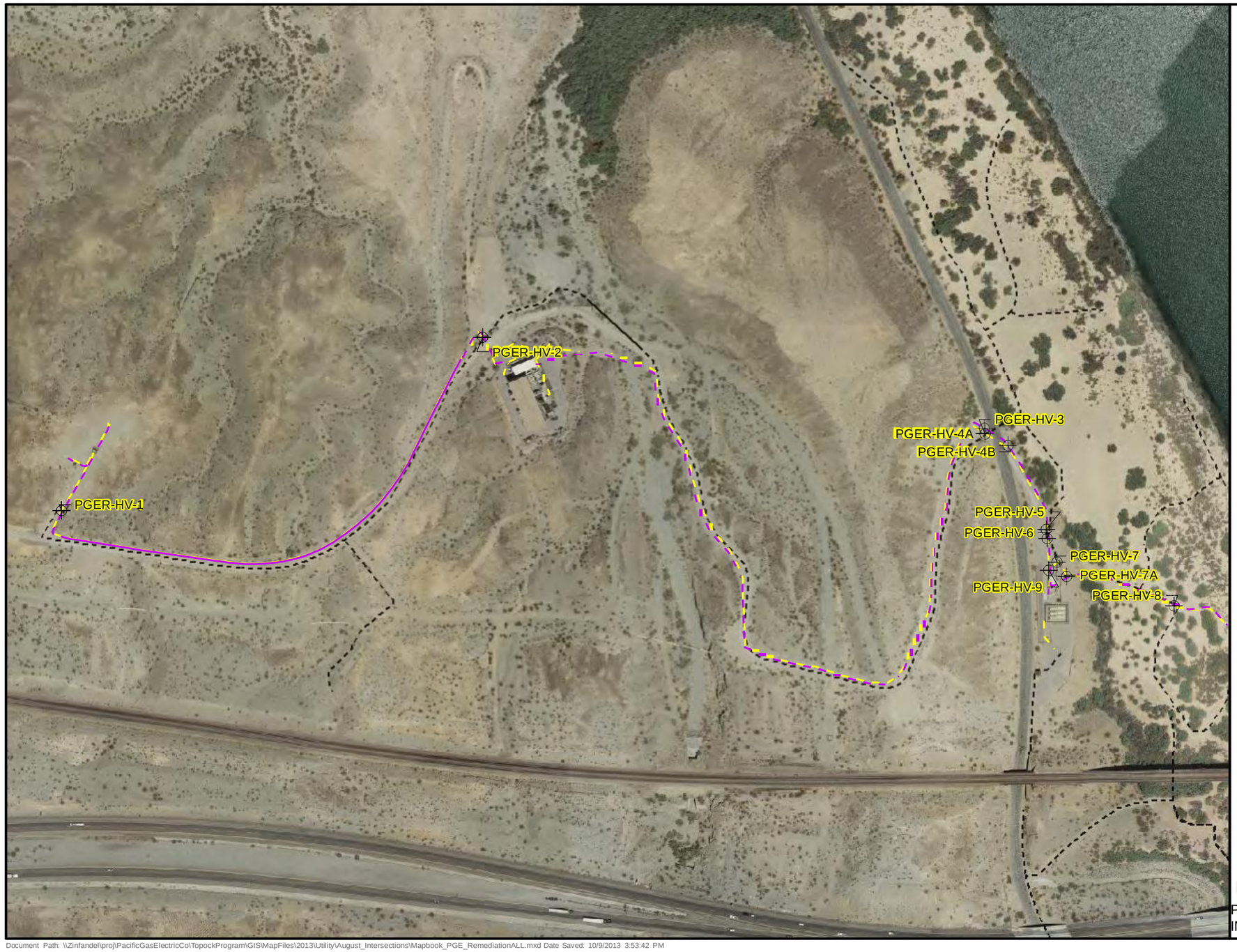

LEGEND

Pothole Summary

Utility Infrastructure

Underground CCTV Line

Above Ground Electric Line

Underground Electric Line

Above Ground Water Line

Underground Water Line

Remedy Pipeline Route

Aboveground

Underground

N

0 95 190 380 Feet

PG&E - Remediation

POTENTIAL REMEDY PIPELINE/UTILITY INTERSECTIONS

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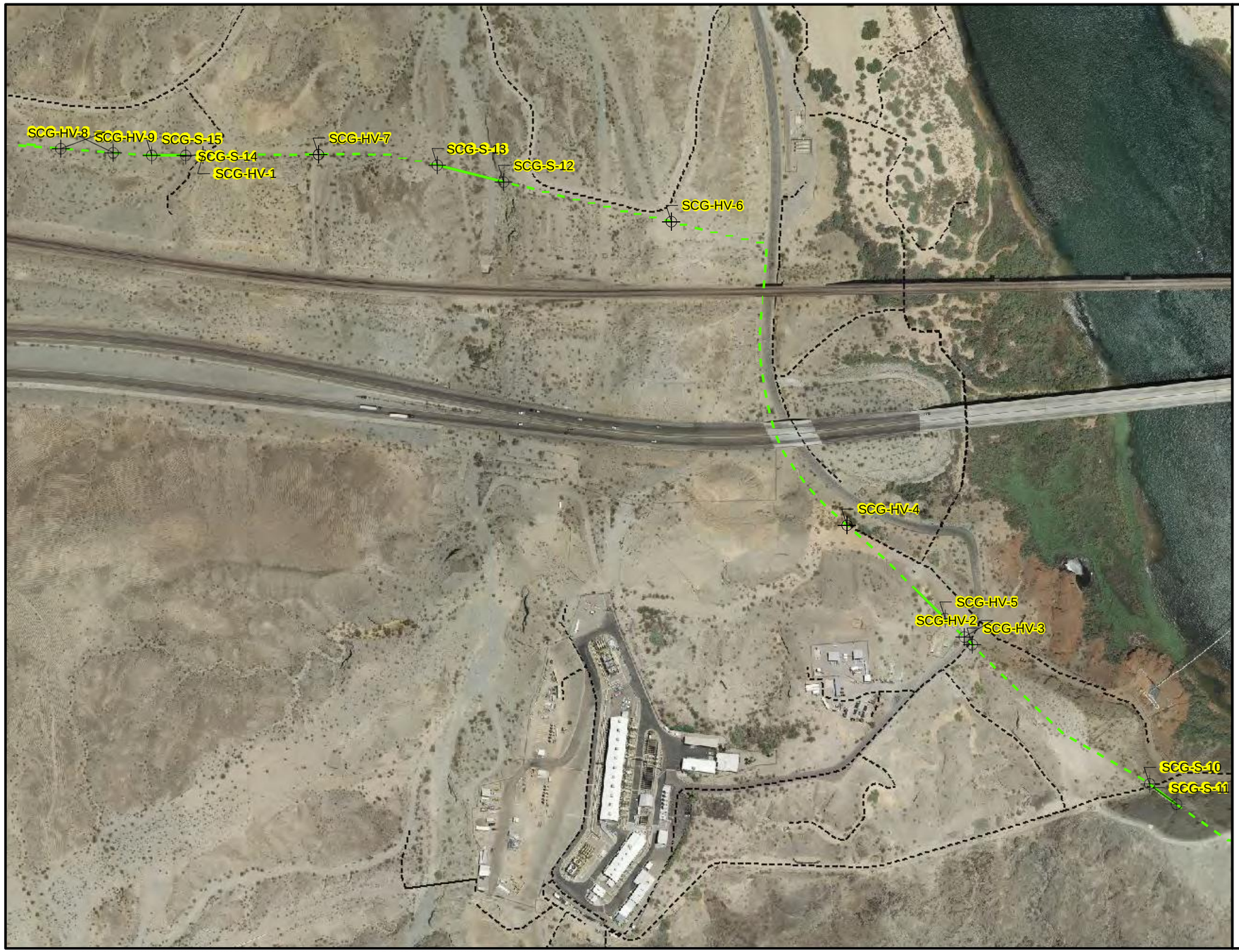

LEGEND

Pothole Summary

Utility Infrastructure

Above Ground Gas Line

Underground Gas Line

Remedy Pipeline Route

Aboveground

Underground

N

0 110 220 440 Feet

SOCAL GAS

POTENTIAL REMEDY PIPELINE/UTILITY INTERSECTIONS

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LEGEND

Utility Infrastructure

- Above Ground Gas Line
- Underground Gas Line

Remedy Pipeline Route

- Above Ground Route
- Underground Route

N

0 55 110 220 Feet

SOUTHWEST GAS

POTENTIAL REMEDY PIPELINE/UTILITY INTERSECTIONS

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LEGEND

Pothole Summary

Utility Infrastructure

Above Ground Gas Line

Underground Gas Line

Remedy Pipeline Route

Above Ground Route

Underground Route

0 70 140 280 Feet

N

TRANSWESTERN GAS

POTENTIAL REMEDY PIPELINE/UTILITY INTERSECTIONS

APPENDIX B.

PROJECT PHOTOGRAPHS

LIST OF PHOTOS

Photo 1. Potholing at SWG-HV- 4.

Photo 2. Pre-construction photo of SWG-HV- 4.

Photo 3. Post-construction photo SWG-HV- 4.

Photo 4. Pre-construction photo of PG&E Gas and Frontier Communications pothole sites near compressor station entrance.

Photo 5. Post-construction photo of PG&E Gas and Frontier Communications pothole sites near compressor station entrance.

Photo 6. Pre-construction photo of pothole site K MG-HV-3.

Photo 7. Post-construction photo of pothole site K MG-HV-3.

Photo 8. Pre-construction photo of pothole site SCG-HV-1.

Photo 9. Post-construction photo of pothole site SCG-HV-1.