

Meeting Notes
June 25, 2020
Tour of SCE Lee Vining Substation Re-build Project

Attendees:

SCE Substation Rebuild Construction Manager: Michael Calvitti
SCE Environmental Advisor: Chris May
Mono County Community Development: Planner Bentley Regehr
Mono Basin RPAC Chairperson: Duncan King
Mono Basin RPAC Member: Ilene Mandelbaum

Mr. Ray Pok of SCE, who organized the tour was unable to attend.

Mr. Calvitti explained that work to underground power distribution lines within the Scenic Highway boundaries is being conducted on the westside of highway 395, north and south of the substation.

The old substation on the westside of creek is being removed and replaced with a new one on the eastside. The old site will be tested for contaminants and contaminants removed as regulated. That area will not be revegetated but likely will be used as an equipment storage or staging area.

The large fuses facility in the front of the project area and the transfer station on the ridge top west of the Pumice Property are temporary infrastructure and will be removed.

Wooden power poles within the facility will be replaced with metal poles with muted color treatment.

The Historic Stucco Neoclassical Substation building will remain and will continue to be used as a storage area.

Ms. May explained that application for a Stream Alteration Agreement with California Dept. Fish and Wildlife was made prior to project initiation, except for the removal of a few trees on the creek on the westside of the project in 2019. The linear feet and acreage of permanent alteration, ie, removal of dogwood and cottonwood and replacement with rip-rap, was increased with an Amendment. Biological pre-activity surveys were done and a biologist present on-site during construction. No nesting birds were found. Erosion and flood control treatments were placed on all excavated and altered areas. Disturbed areas will be revegetated with a seeding of native shrubs or hardened with concrete mix to prevent erosion of steeper slopes.

Mr. Calvitti explained that the perimeter fence on the south-side will be brought closer to the contained infrastructure. The road going up the slope to the Pumice Plant will remain.

The temporary access road leading into the site from highway 395 from the south in the CalTrans right-of way will remain, although the entry will be blocked and the road narrowed with rehabilitation by contouring and seeding with native grasses.

Ms. May stated that a CalTrans-approved grasses seed mix would be applied to the areas adjacent to that road and shrub seed mix around the catchment basin.

Questions RPAC members asked, that Mr. Calvitti said he would investigate are:

1. Will the public continue to be able to access the east side of Lee Vining Creek and the Pumice Plant by using the historic bridge across Lee Vining Creek on the westside of the substation facility and continuing on the historic access road up the hill south of the substation?
2. The power lines that rim ridge north of the Pumice Plant are a visual intrusion from both the Scenic Highway and the Pumice Plant residential zone. What is the possibility of listing them for under grounding?
3. Can SCE add a native shrub mix to the seed mix (besides native grasses) for the areas on either side of the newly created access road from Highway 395 and find ways to screen that road which is quite visible from 395.
4. Can SCE do some revegetation treatments on the very steep slopes overhanging Lee Vining Creek toward the back of the project area.
5. RPAC members asked whether SCE would be willing to consider a pedestrian trail and bridge through their property along the creek as a mitigation for the permanent impacts of the Substation Rebuild.

Notes by: Ilene Mandelbaum