



Aspen

Environmental Group

Recent Accomplishments and Ongoing Projects

Fall 2003

Issue No. 10

NEW CONTRACTS AWARDED

In the past nine months, Aspen has focused on achieving our vision of being the premier consultant for energy and infrastructure projects in the Western

United States. To that end, we have not only opened a new engineering office in Phoenix but are in the process of home-steading in San Diego. We have also rounded out our roster of clients to include some of the largest public agencies in the energy/infrastructure sector. These now include a second contract with the California Energy Commission, and new contracts with the California Department of Water Resources, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. We have also taken major steps to become a leader in restoration and watershed management planning through the award of new contracts by the California Coastal Conservancy and San Diego County. Below, learn more about Aspen's newest ventures.

Otay River Watershed

The County of San Diego chose Aspen to complete the **Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) and Watershed Management Plan for the Otay River watershed**, in southern San Diego County. These innovative and proactive plans will provide a robust regulatory and technical framework for balancing reasonable economic development with preservation and restoration of aquatic resources in this watershed. Aspen sees great potential for using these holistic and balanced approaches in other watersheds in the region and nationwide. Aspen and the County of San Diego are finalizing the terms of the contract.

See our next newsletter to learn details about the SAMP process and its benefits!

California Coastal Conservancy

We will conduct a **restoration feasibility study for Ormond Beach**, located between Port Hueneme and Point Mugu, in Ventura County, for the **California State Coastal Conservancy (SCC)**. Despite the numerous land uses and impacts to the area, this 2-mile length of shoreline supports a

rich assemblage of wetland, coastal dune, and scrub habitats. It is home to over 200 bird species, including several sensitive species such as western snowy plover, California least tern, and belding's savannah



SCC's Peter Brand and Aspen Project Manager Spencer MacNeil at Aug. 18 kick-off event for the Ormond Beach restoration project hosted by the Wishtoyo Foundation.

Electronic Newsletter Survey

We are trying to decide whether to offer an email version of this newsletter. If you are interested and would like to be on our e-list, please send a brief reply to: editor@AspenEG.com
Your comments are appreciated.

sparrow. The SCC seeks to restore at least 750 acres of this ecologically rich area, making it one of the most significant wetland restoration projects in southern California. Our study will identify function- and value-based project goals, assess the various opportunities and constraints, develop and evaluate project alternatives, and provide short-term and long-term recommendations to the SCC regarding potential acquisition and restoration targets at Ormond Beach. Ultimately, this study will provide the SCC with a comprehensive assessment of the scientific, engineering, and community interests fundamental to ensuring the successful restoration of Ormond Beach.

Department of Water and Power

Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) awarded us a 3-year on-call contract to provide environmental assessment services. LADWP is the **largest municipal utility agency in the country** and has facilities across much of California. Aspen will assist with CEQA/NEPA compliance and environmental permitting for water infrastructure and power generation and transmission projects. LADWP's projects are a perfect match for our experience and expertise in conducting environmental analysis of water and power projects for public agencies. For the first task order under this contract, Aspen is assisting with CEQA review of facility upgrades at the Hollywood Reservoir.

Metropolitan Water District

The **Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan)** recently awarded Aspen a 3-year on-call contract to provide environmental and regulatory services. We are very excited to provide these wide-ranging services to one of the **key water providers in southern California**. We just received our first assignment to obtain regulatory approvals from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the Department of Fish and Game as part of an upgrade to Metropolitan's Lake Skinner Filtration plant.

California Energy Commission

Aspen was awarded its **2nd multi-million dollar contract** with the **Energy Commission** to provide engineering and environmental technical assistance to support the energy facility planning and licensing programs. This contract adds Aspen's support to this key client in electricity planning, transmission system engineering, natural gas planning, siting trends and policy planning. We are training new team members in preparation for new siting projects and planning studies over the next three years.

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Ventura Watershed Protection District

For the Ventura County Watershed Protection District (VCWPD), under our recently renewed on-call environmental consulting contract, Aspen provides permitting and related environmental services for several VCWPD projects. **Ventura County Watershed Protection District** operates rain gages in Los Padres National Forest to track rainfall and increased runoff that may affect downstream residences and resources. Aspen assisted with environmental surveys required for the County's application to the Forest Service to renew their Special Use Permit. Many gages are located in remote areas, not accessible by vehicle; some require a full day hike. Ventura County Sheriff Search & Rescue helicopters are the most efficient way to access remote sites.



Ventura County Sheriff Search and Rescue helicopter used by Aspen to access rain gages.

WATER RESOURCES AND HABITAT RESTORATION

DWR Projects Update

Aspen continues to assist the **Department of Water Resources (DWR)** with a variety of environmental assignments related to the California Aqueduct. As part of Aspen's five-year task-order contract with DWR, we are conducting CEQA review, environmental permitting, and mitigation monitoring for projects on the Aqueduct in southern California. Current projects include:

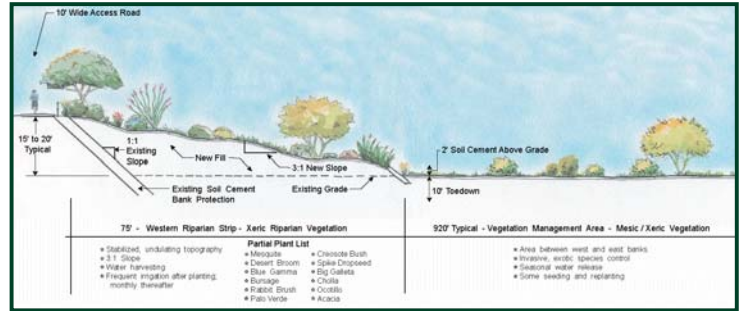


Cottonwood Chute - California Aqueduct East Branch

1. **Piru Creek Erosion Repairs and Seismic Retrofit Project** (CEQA, permitting, biological surveys)
2. **Tehachapi Second Afterbay Project** (CEQA, FERC license amendment, biological surveys)
3. **Santa Ana Valley Pipeline Repairs** (CEQA, permitting, construction monitoring)
4. **Creel Surveys: Castaic Lake, Pyramid Lake, & Piru Creek** (surveys of fish caught by anglers)

Agua Fria Restoration

The **Agua Fria Ecosystem Restoration Project** is nearing the end of its feasibility phase. The **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers** and local sponsors, the **Flood Control District of Maricopa County** and the **City of Avondale**, plan to restore approximately 120 acres of riparian habitat within the lower Agua Fria River in two locations: the crossing of I-10; and the area around the outfall from the Avondale Wastewater Treatment Plant. Restoration will rely on a combination of effluent, intermittent flows from surface water runoff, and groundwater to support revegetation of riparian strips for more than 7,000 feet along the eastern and western levees. Vegetation management areas will be designated where non-native plant species will be controlled to encourage the growth of native vegetation. Projects for which Aspen is performing similar work for the Corps include Sulphur Creek, Wood Canyon, and El Vado.



Agua Fria River Ecosystem Restoration Project - Cross Section

Lower Colorado River

Aspen biologists recently conducted vegetation mapping and ground-truthing of riparian and upland communities of the Limitrophe region of the **Lower Colorado River in Yuma, Arizona**. The Limitrophe, a 23-mile section of the Colorado River, acts as the international boundary between the U.S. and Mexico and contains habitat for several threatened, endangered or sensitive species including the California black rail, Yuma clapper rail, yellow-billed cuckoo, and southwest willow flycatcher. These activities were undertaken in cooperation with the **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the International Boundary Water Commission** as part of an ongoing project to ensure the preservation and stability of the U.S. and Mexico border (in accordance with the Treaty of November 23, 1970).

SCHOOLS AND EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

In addition to our ongoing work on the **Program EIR for Phase II** and future phases of the **Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD's)** new school construction program, Aspen has been awarded several **CEQA documents for Phase I projects** intended to meet existing seat needs. Recently awarded projects under our on-call Master Services Agreement with the LAUSD, include CEQA documentation for: three portable classroom addition projects at Polytechnic, Washington, and Fairfax Senior High Schools; the Hughes Middle School site re-opening; the Mt. Washington Elementary School Multi-Purpose Room Addition; and general historic and cultural resources consulting services.

PIPELINES

Aspen's significant pipeline expertise continues to grow through our work on environmental documentation and mitigation monitoring for a number of petroleum products, natural gas, and water supply pipelines. We recently completed a Final EIR for the **California State Lands Commission** for a proposed 70-mile, 20-inch **Kinder Morgan Energy Partners petroleum products pipeline from Concord to Sacramento**. In addition, we prepared documentation in support of a Class 1 and 2 CEQA Categorical Exemption for the **DWR's Santa Ana Valley Pipeline (SAPL) Repairs Project** (underground portion of the California Aqueduct east branch) located in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. We are now in the process of developing the mitigation monitoring training program for the SAPL Repairs Project.



Concord Station, the start of the Concord-to-Sacramento pipeline.

ENERGY GENERATION

In addition to conducting the environmental and engineering review of new power plant cases, our Team is conducting a variety of special study projects for the **California Energy Commission** represented below:

Hydroelectric Power Plant Inventory Project - Helped collect engineering specifications, operational data, economic data, and environmental information associated with 235 power plants with a dependable capacity of 13,225 MWs. This information was used to support policies developed for hydroelectric power plants in the Integrated Energy Policy Report (IEPR - SB 1389), which is due to the Governor November 2003.

LNG Risk Assessment Study - Draft report is summarized in the featured article in the next column.

Aircraft Safety Assessment for Blythe I & II Power Plants - We will assess the visual plume and exhaust turbulence impacts of this existing (and the adjacent proposed power plant) on aircraft using the Blythe Airport, assess their safety, and provide solutions to any impacts discovered.

Evaluation of the Relative Risk of Anhydrous and Aqueous Ammonia Systems at Power Plants - Our Team is in the process of evaluating the relative risk of transporting and storing anhydrous and aqueous ammonia at generating facilities.

PHASE ONE--MARANA HERITAGE PARK MASTER PLAN PROJECT FOR THE TOWN OF MARANA

Aspen Consulting Engineers is currently working on Phase One of the **Marana Heritage Park Master Plan** for a 91-acre site in the Town of Marana, Arizona. The Town plans construction of a new Municipal Complex, and also seeks to showcase its unique past and rich cultural heritage. The proposed Marana Heritage Park will tell the story of Marana and celebrate, honor, and interpret the community's history and culture.

In Phase One, Aspen prepared a Conceptual Plan to launch the Heritage Park master planning process. It assessed the suitability of the project site for the park development, beginning the programmatic planning, and integrating program elements with a preliminary Concept Plan. Aspen recently presented the Concept Plan to the Mayor and Council including designated space for a Cultural Arts Center, a Train Depot, Recreation Areas, Habitat Restoration, Equestrian Facilities, a Trail System, a Water Facility, Agricultural Exhibits and a Heritage Museum. The next phase of the project will be the actual design of the Marana Heritage Park Master Plan.

TRANSMISSION LINES

Aspen continues to provide environmental assessment services for power transmission lines throughout California. Our two major ongoing projects with the **California Public Utilities Commission** (CPUC) include the following:

Jefferson-Martin 230 kV Transmission Project (San Francisco Bay Region) - The Final EIR is being prepared, and is scheduled to be released in October 2003. [click here to cont. on page 4](#)

FEATURE: ASPEN UNDERTAKES SAFETY/RISK ASSESSMENT REVIEW OF LNG PROJECTS

A multitude of new Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) facilities are being proposed for the West Coast of California and Baja Mexico. Judging by media coverage and citizen websites, these facilities are of keen interest to all. The California Energy Commission has taken a central role in educating the public and providing coordination of state regulatory agencies regarding LNG. The key question is "How safe is LNG?" The Energy Commission has asked Aspen to review risk assessment studies associated with a variety of recent LNG projects, including:

1. LNG shipping (i.e., tankers)
2. Off-shore LNG facilities
3. Expansion of existing onshore LNG facilities, and
4. Construction of new onshore LNG facilities.

In order to set the context for the review, Aspen identified the pertinent (and extensive) foreign and domestic regulations, standards and guidelines relating to the safe operation of LNG facilities, including the recently published maritime security regulations. The threat from terrorism was specifically addressed. A variety of risk assessments and safety reviews for individual facilities were evaluated. In the U.S., these were typically Environmental Impacts Statements. Aspen especially looked at how and what information was presented and whether the environmental reports fully answered the public's questions.



LNG Tanker used to transport Liquefied Natural Gas to platforms offshore.

The report addresses the following:

1. Do the plethora of LNG regulations/standards/guidelines for tankers and terminals address the critical safety issues associated with LNG?
2. Is Agency jurisdiction clear-cut and coordinated?
3. What is the likelihood and outcome of a terrorist attack?
4. Are risk assessments effective risk communication tools? Do they incorporate the concerns of those "at risk?" and
5. How well is safety/risk information shared among regulatory agencies, particularly Mexico and California?

This CEC report, prepared by Aspen, follows up on the July 2003 California Energy Commission Staff White Paper "Liquefied Natural Gas in California: History, Risks, and Siting" (Report No. 700-03-005) and will help the Commission define its position and role vis-a-vis LNG. View this White Paper, which responds to most of the issues raised above, at: http://www.energy.ca.gov/reports/2003-07-17_700-03-005.PDF.

Transmission Lines, cont. from page 3

Miguel-Mission 230 kV #2 Project (San Diego Area) - Aspen completed a Scoping Meeting in Santee and Spring Valley in mid-September. We are in the process of formulating alternatives and preparing a Draft EIR, which is projected to be released in January or February 2004.

Our newest project is the **Viejo System Project**, proposed by Southern California Edison Company (SCE) in south Orange County. Aspen is conducting CEQA review for SCE's proposed new Viejo Substation, and 66 kV subtransmission line to improve reliability and meet projected electrical demand.

Aspen recently completed mitigation monitoring for a major PG&E 230 kV project, the **Northeast San Jose Transmission Reinforcement Project**, which included the State's first major 230 kV underground transmission line construction. We continue to implement mitigation monitoring programs for the CPUC on two other PG&E transmission line and power line projects: the **Tri-Valley Capacity Increase Project** (a 230 kV project with both underground and overhead components in the Livermore area) and the **Atlantic-Del Mar Project** (a 60 kV line with both underground and overhead segments, north of Sacramento).

NEW LEAVES ON THE ASPEN TREE

Jim Bartridge, who worked with us on the Energy Commission siting contract, has joined our Sacramento office as Senior Associate. Jim served as project manager in recent years in reviewing the engineering and environmental aspects of new power plant projects. He is currently working for the proposed Miguel-Mission 230 kV #2 transmission line project, located in San Diego County.

Michelle Mattson is our new Associate, Ecology/Restoration Planning. With seven years experience as a specialist in ecology/wetlands and regulatory services, she brings extensive knowledge of the various aquatic regulatory programs, wetland delineation and functional assessment, and habitat restoration and will be working in the San Diego area.

Carolina Morgan recently joined our Agoura Hills office as an Environmental Planner. She has a masters degree in Environmental Science and Management with a specialty in Water Resources Management. As an undergraduate she emphasized watershed restoration. Carolina worked as a watershed education coordinator drafting portions of CEQA documents and other environmental reports.

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