



### Samples of New Aspen Projects

#### CPUC

Antelope-Pardee 500 kV Transmission Project EIR/EIS

#### Western Area Power Administration

North Area Transmission Right-of-Way

#### U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento

Blanket Purchase Agreement for public relations/public involvement as sub to Nanticoke, Inc.

#### South San Joaquin Irrigation District

EIR and Technical Support of its proposed Acquisition of PG&E Electric Distribution System

#### LAUSD

12 Task Orders assigned

#### Flood Control District of Maricopa County

Durango Regional Conveyance Channel, Hydrology Study

### Aspen 6th Annual Staff Retreat

Aspen staff recently returned from our annual company retreat, held this year at the Sheraton Universal. Staff members learned together, spent time with coworkers from other offices (whom they rarely see face to face), and heard updates about the growth of Aspen, which will celebrate its 15th anniversary in the coming year.

### Removing Matilija Dam

Over the past 100 years, the U.S. has built approximately 66,000 dams on rivers. Within the past few decades, the **environmental damage associated with dams** has become clear, with adverse effects extending the entire length of a river and beyond, affecting the watershed, estuaries, beaches and ocean, and the overall biodiversity of the region. **Dams block fish migrations, flood spawning and riparian habitat, and can degrade a river's ecosystems.** Today, many dams are old, unsafe, or no longer serve their intended purposes, so many are being considered for removal.



Matilija Dam in Ventura County, California

[Click here to continue on page 3](#)

### Transmission Planning in California

Aspen has been extremely active in the field of electric transmission. We have prepared several major EIRs for critical transmission projects throughout the past 12 years. High voltage transmission lines carry electricity from power generators to areas of demand. Because it is **increasingly difficult to locate generating facilities in developed areas, transmission is becoming increasingly important.** At the same time, continuing rapid growth limits the availability of the extensive linear corridors required for transmission line siting. California imported 5% more electricity in 2004 than it did the previous year; transmission constraints are recognized as a continuing major problem.

Aspen's involvement in the important arena of transmission expansion is summarized below:

Aspen participates in planning meetings in order to maintain our knowledge and expertise in transmission planning issues. For instance, the California Independent System Operator (CAISO), the investor-owned utilities (PG&E, SCE, and SDG&E),

and other stakeholders meet in regular transmission planning forums to address short-term and long-term system needs. These forums include the San Francisco Stakeholders Group and the Southwest Transmission Expansion Plan.

Under contract to the CPUC, Aspen is currently managing the first EIR that resulted from the Tehachapi planning group: the **Antelope-Pardee transmission line.** Accelerated development of renewable generation resources (particularly wind and geothermal resources) to meet Renewable Portfolio Standards will require new and expanded transmission service to resource areas. The CPUC and Energy Commission established planning groups to address these specific transmission needs, including the Tehachapi Study Group (studying transmission for wind resources in the Tehachapi Pass area) and the Imperial Valley Study Group (for geothermal resources in the Salton Sea area).

It is difficult to site transmission lines that run through multiple jurisdictions; rapid growth and lack of coordinated planning makes siting of long linear projects challenging. In response to this issue, the state legislature is considering a law (SB

[Click here to continue on page 2](#)



## Future Offshore Oil and Gas Development

Aspen has recently completed an **Environmental Information Document (EID)** for the **U.S. Department of the Interior, Minerals Management Service (MMS)**. The EID evaluates the potential environmental effects associated with the hypothetical exploration and development of currently undeveloped **Federal oil and gas leases offshore Santa Barbara, Ventura, and San Luis Obispo Counties, California**. These undeveloped leases lie between 3 and 12 miles offshore and are grouped into nine Units and one individual lease that has not been unitized.

The EID compliments a suite of Environmental Assessments (EAs) that have recently been prepared by the MMS to evaluate the potential environmental effects of activities that could occur on some of the leases, during the suspension period, if the MMS approves the suspensions. While the EAs address potential environmental effects of proposed "suspension" phase activities, the **EID evaluates potential effects of hypothetical "post-suspension" phase activities for the period 2006 through 2030**, including cumulative effects. These "post-suspension" phase activities include hypothetical exploration and delineation drilling, development and production operations, decommissioning, and administrative activities.

Hypothetical development of some of the undeveloped leases would require new platforms, pipelines and onshore processing facilities; others would utilize existing facilities and infrastructure. Use of either existing or new facilities is contingent upon the specific location of each of the undeveloped leases relative to existing infrastructure, and the nature of the oil and gas to be produced. In total 14 environmental resources and issue areas are assessed in the EID, ranging from marine biological resources to community characteristics and tourism. Additionally, several of the issue areas evaluated in the EID have both off- and onshore components, such as cultural and visual resources, recreation, and oil spill risk, movement and response. Existing conditions are assessed, as are future conditions both with and without hypothetical development of the undeveloped leases.

The EID concludes that the potential environmental consequences of post-suspension activities of the undeveloped leases may range from no or negligible to moderate and high effects. The majority of potentially moderate and high environmental effects from development of the undeveloped leases are associated with facility construction, decommissioning, and potential oil spills. Specific oil spill effects would depend on the volume of oil spilled, its location and dispersion, and factors such as weather and oceanographic conditions.

In addition to the EID, Aspen assisted the MMS with preparation of ten **Coastal Consistency Determinations addressing the suspension phase activities** associated with each of the undeveloped Units and the non-unitized lease. In April the MMS submitted the Coastal Consistency Determinations for the suspensions to the California Coastal Commission for review.

## Assistance to the California Energy Commission

Aspen continues to provide assistance to the **California Energy Commission** through approximately 170 Work Authorizations for power plant siting cases and energy planning projects.

These include: Salton Sea Geothermal Power Plant, Inland Empire Amendment; Los Esteros Combined Cycle; Blythe I Transmission Line; Blythe II Combined Cycle; Pastoria Phase 2 Expansion Project, and San Francisco Electric Reliability Project.

In addition to siting cases, **Aspen also provides assistance in planning areas**. The Aspen Team is preparing numerous white papers that support the following reports: Environmental Performance Report; Petroleum Infrastructure Environmental Performance Report; and the Integrated Energy Policy Report.

Aspen's Team is also providing assistance in such areas as:

- Gas supplies and demands
- LNG Action Plan
- Power Plant Safety and Security Audits
- Global Climate Change
- Energy Demand Forecast
- Water-Energy Relationship White Paper
- Border Energy Supply and Demand Assessment.

## Transmission Planning in California

[Cont. from page 1](#)

1059) that would allow either the Energy Commission or a transmission applicant to propose the establishment of a transmission corridor.



**C Corridor in Oak Valley Park, Devers-Palo Verde  
500 kV No. 2 Transmission Project**

Aspen is supporting the Energy Commission's Integrated Energy Policy Report (IEPR) process in a wide range of topics. As part of its 2005 IEPR, the Energy Commission is studying areas of identified transmission congestion, potential future transmission projects across the western U.S., and transmission needs for renewable resources.

Energy Commission's Public Interest Energy Research (PIER) group is sponsoring a contract to develop a GIS-based model to evaluate and compare potential transmission corridors based on a wide range of environmental, land use, and economic factors. Aspen is managing the modeling contract and coordinating the input from technical and policy specialists throughout the state.



## Removing Matilija Dam

[Cont. from page 1](#)

In the U.S., over 400 dams have been removed in the last forty years, and at least 100 more are either committed for removal or under active consideration for removal. Between 1999 and 2003, 15 dams were removed in California. The average life expectancy of a dam is 50 years, and one-quarter of all U.S. dams are now more than 50 years old.

In southern California, the **Corps and the Ventura County Watershed Protection District** have approved a plan to remove Matilija Dam. Located near the Ventura River headwaters, it was built in 1947 to provide water for the Ojai Valley. It has exceeded its life expectancy and no longer serves its intended purpose. Large volumes of sediment have been deposited behind Matilija Dam, causing loss of the majority of its water-supply function.

Due to the obstruction caused by Matilija Dam, **endangered steelhead trout are blocked from approximately 85% of their existing habitat.** Historically, the southern steelhead was a common inhabitant of California coastal streams as far south as San Diego. In the last 50 years, there has been a dramatic decline primarily due to the numerous dams and diversions that have blocked steelhead access into historic river habitat. The Ventura River system once supported approximately 4,000 to 5,000 spawning southern steelhead. Current population estimates are less than 100 adult individuals for the Ventura River system. The steelhead habitat upstream from Matilija Dam was historically the most productive spawning habitat in the Ventura River system.

Due to severe silt buildup behind the dam, Matilija Dam provides only minimal water storage capacity. The reservoir, which originally held 7,000 acre-feet of water, **now holds only 500 acre-feet--** and the storage capacity continues to decrease. It is estimated that 6 million cubic yards of sediment are located behind the dam. The build-up of sediments behind the dam has restricted the replenishment of sediment downstream and contributed to beach erosion along the Ventura coast line.

**Aspen recently completed the EIS/EIR for the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project** and provided technical support to the project's Environmental Working Group, which was responsible for quantifying the habitat benefits of the project for the cost-benefit analysis completed by the Corps.



Photo courtesy of US Army Corps of Engineers

## Joint Red Flag Exercise

Under contract with the **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps)** Aspen completed the Environmental Assessment and assisted in agency coordination for the **Joint Red Flag '05 military training exercise.** This action involved an Army's Air Defense Artillery battalion in an overall exercise involving ground-to-air, air-to-air, and air-to-ground combat scenarios in a combined multi-service arms setting that realistically replicates probable combat conditions. The exercise was developed to provide U.S. Air Force and U.S. Army personnel with the required practical training to ensure combat ready forces during emergency situations and to protect the national security of the United States.

## Restoration Efforts

Aspen is nearing completion of the **planning efforts for the restoration of Upper Sulphur Creek in Laguna Niguel, California.** Under contract to RBF Consulting (RBF), Aspen has prepared the Upper Sulphur Creek Initial Study and Conceptual Restoration Plan, final grading and landscape plans, and has obtained regulatory permits from the Corps, CDFG, and the

[Click here to continue on page 4](#)



**Removal of concrete v-ditch and restoration of low flow channel and flood plain in the Middle Reach of Upper Sulphur Creek.**

## Aspen Assists USFS During Recent Oil Spill

Earth movement stemming from historic rainfalls in southern California, resulted in a pipeline failure and a major oil spill. More than 126,000 gallons of spilled crude oil threatened one of Los Angeles' major sources of water at **Pyramid Lake.** Under an **emergency contract to the US Forest Service,** Aspen was consulted to assist the Forest Supervisor in reviewing the operator's request for temporary construction and operation of the pipeline in order to minimize impacts on an already sensitive supply of gasoline in California. Aspen and its long term partner and subcontractor, EDM, were retained to review the safety and engineering issues associated with operation of the pipeline, and to suggest appropriate measures to minimize any safety risks related to construction/operation of a temporary pipeline.

## Southern California Area/Corporate Office

30423 Canwood Street, Suite 215  
Agoura Hills, CA 91301-4316  
Tel. 818.597.3407; Fax 818.597.8001

## Bay Area and Northwest US

235 Montgomery Street, Suite 935  
San Francisco, CA 94104-3002  
Tel. 415.955.4775

## Sacramento and Central California

8801 Folsom Blvd., Suite 290  
Sacramento, CA 95826-3250  
Tel: 916.379.0350

## Phoenix and Southwest

### Aspen Consulting Engineers

426 N. 44th Street, Suite 370  
Phoenix, AZ 85008-7694  
Tel. 602.231.9221

## Restoration Efforts

Cont. from page 3

RWQCB. Local authorizations from the Orange County Flood Control and others are imminent. **Approximately 8,051 linear feet of the creek will be restored** by removing concrete and exotic species and grading and planting the active channel and creek terraces. Aspen will be on-site through the entire process to ensure that the restoration is a success. The project is expected to go out for bid in June and break ground in August.

Aspen is also currently developing restoration alternatives as part of our **Ormond Beach Wetlands Restoration Feasibility Study for the California Coastal Conservancy.**

## Aspen Expertise in the News

As a Consultant Report to the California Energy Commission (CEC), Aspen prepared the **“International and National Efforts to Address the Safety and Security Risks of Importing LNG: A Compendium.”** It was recently posted on the CEC website and has since garnered significant media attention. This includes articles in NGI’s Daily Gas Price Index, as well as an editorial in the San Jose Mercury News in which Ron Coleman states: “It significantly advances our knowledge and understanding about the safety of liquefied natural gas (LNG)...The compendium is required reading for state and local agencies now considering hosting liquefied natural gas facilities in California.”

For detailed information about Aspen and our project experience, please visit our website:

<http://www.AspenEG.com>

