



Edi No. 276 21. Western Area Power Administration San Joaquin Valley Right-of-Way Maintenance Environmental Assessment

Table with 3 columns: Year Completed Professional Service, Year Completed Construction, Contract Role. Includes CAGE Code and DUNS Number.

Table with 3 columns: Project Owner/Customer, Point of Contact Name, POC Contact Info. Includes Garcia and Associates, John McCarthy, and contact details.

Table with 4 columns: Key Personnel. Includes Ross Dimmick, Project Manager, Albuquerque Corporate Office, RDimmick@edi-nm.com, 505.341.3578.

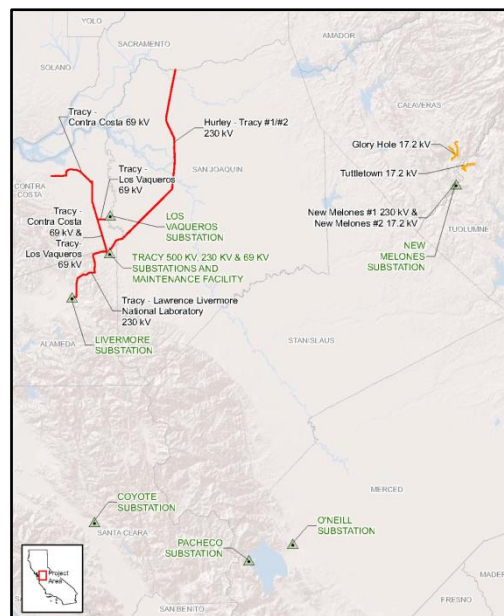
24. (Include scope, size, and cost) Brief Description of Project and Relevance to this Contract:

Table with 2 columns: Awarded Price, Final/Projected Cost. Includes Award Date, Contract No., Period of Performance, Final or Projected Schedule, Contract Type, Type of Work Performed, and % of Work as Subcontractor.

Table with 3 columns: Contracting Officer, Contracting Agency & Address, Contracting Officer Contact Info. Includes Carole Garcia, Garcia and Associates, and contact details.

Background

The Western Area Power Administration (Western), a power marketing administration of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), owns, operates, and maintains transmission lines throughout the western United States. To ensure human safety and maintain the reliable operation of the transmission system, Western has begun a phased implementation of an integrated vegetation management (IVM) program for right-of-way (ROW) maintenance in California's Central Valley. The IVM approach represents a significant departure from previous maintenance practices, particularly with the expansion of herbicide use. This change in practices requires an environmental assessment (EA) to identify threatened and endangered species and their habitats and identify avoidance measures for purposes of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Section 7 consultation; evaluate potential impacts to cultural resources; and address potential air, water, recreational, esthetic, and public health.



San Joaquin Valley ROW Maintenance EA Project

**Scope of Work**

EDi provided technical support services to Western under a subcontract with Garcia and Associates for the preparation of the EA for ROW maintenance in the San Joaquin Valley, California. EDi is responsible for all *National Environmental Policy Act*- (NEPA)-related aspects of the project including development, review, production, and distribution of the EA; Garcia and Associates performed the biological and cultural field surveys and prepared those deliverables. This large EA (with appendices, greater than 400 pages), covering activities on approximately 175 miles of transmission line and 27 miles of access road ROWs. Transmission lines are primarily 230-kV.

Though not technically a Programmatic EA, the EA discussed a broad range of maintenance methods and equipment to allow the EA to provide NEPA coverage for the evolution of Western’s future maintenance needs. Maintenance activities evaluated in the EA included:

- ❑ **Vegetation maintenance** (transmission line and access road ROWs). Vegetation maintenance ensures vegetation does not interfere with human safety, transmission line conductors, towers, or other hardware or impede access to the transmission line for maintenance crews. This maintenance can be performed using a variety of methods including manual (hand-controlled, powered or non-powered tools such as chainsaws and clippers), mechanical (such as heavy-duty mowers and graders), and herbicidal (used either to kill vegetation or retard growth).
- ❑ **Access road maintenance.** Access road maintenance includes activities to ensure access roads are in appropriate condition for maintenance crews to drive to transmission lines. These activities are grading, surfacing, and constructing water diversions such as culverts, ditches, and water bars.
- ❑ **Transmission lines and associated structures, hardware, and equipment maintenance.** This category of activities includes routine aerial and ground patrols of transmission lines and ROWs and line and tower repairs.

The EA examined methods (for example, manual, mechanical, and herbicidal to control vegetation) and management approaches (such as promoting low-growth vegetation and improving access roads) to achieve the goals stated in the purpose and need. The EA compared environmental effects of current methods and management approaches (essentially, need-driven maintenance) with those in the proposed action.

The EA relied on a combination of existing data and data acquired through biological and cultural surveys conducted along the transmission line ROWs and associated access road ROWs. Resource areas evaluated are land use, habitats and vegetation, wildlife, special status species, fisheries, soils, air quality, water quality, public health, recreation, cultural resources, esthetics, and environmental justice. Noise is evaluated for its effects on wildlife and special-status species. Numerous special-status species are evaluated in the EA including the California tiger salamander, San Joaquin kit fox, the Valley elderberry longhorn beetle, and the Vernal pool fairy shrimp.



*Vernal pool fairy shrimp—one of several special-status species with specific and critical habitat within the San Joaquin Valley ROW Maintenance EA project area.*

25. **Firms/Subcontractors involved with this Project:**

	(1) Firm Name	(2) City and State	(3) Role
a.	PlanIt <sup>2</sup> , Inc. Brian Boose 330.980.0034 (p) • bboose@planit2.com	4198 State Route 305 Southington, OH 44470-9723	Review of Appendix G, Herbicides